



TONČI ČERINA

KINETIC ARCHITECTURE CREATIONS

KINETIČKE ARHITEKTONSKE KREACIJE

ANDRIJA MUTNJAKOVIĆ



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“Kinetičke arhitektonske kreacije / Kinetic Architecture Creations” by Andrija Mutnjaković is a reduced reprint of the architectural map *Kinetic Architecture 1964-1990*, with an addition of the author’s original texts in Croatian. The aim of publishing the map was to adequately present the architectural thought of academician Mutnjaković as a key representative of the powerful and innovative imagination of Croatian architecture in the second half of the 20th century. The map was printed in 50 numbered and signed copies and sent to various relevant addresses in Croatia and abroad, with an ambition to be included in research on kinetic architecture.

The promotion of the book took place at the opening of the exhibition “Andrija Mutnjaković: Kinetic Architecture 1964-1990” in April 2022 in the lobby of the National and University Library (author of the exhibition Borka Bobovec). In addition to the map, four models of projects are on display at the exhibition, a model by Aleksandar Srncic / Kinetic Art, old maps and acknowledgements.

The book contains four selected projects of kinetic architecture by A. Mutnjaković: family houses *Homobil / Domobil* in Hollywood and in Ornitottero, Reggio Emilia, Kineticdome – St. Peter’s Cathedral in Split, and the pavilion in Venice *Flower-House / House Flower*.

Research on kinetic architecture begins in the introductory part of the book with an inspired prolegomenon by academician Velimir Neidhardt, reminding the reader of the historical continuity of thought and examples questioning the use of machines in architecture, but making a clear distinction between examples that are only partially dynamic and are basically still static, and Mutnjaković’s truly dynamic ideas in which all parts of the house are movable, able to create meaningful spatial compositions, achieving complete unity in mutual communication with man.

Next is the author’s foreward, which is also key to understanding kinetic architecture, because we must first abandon our own prejudices about the use of machines in architecture. With a meticulous series of conclusions, Mutnjaković reminds us how long machines have been an integral part of our lives and we

are completely accustomed to it, except in architecture. By incorporating essential properties of the machine into architecture, the house of today should communicate with men directly and be an extension of man’s desires and wills. This kind of thinking originated almost sixty years ago, but it is still contemporary, unrealized, untested.

The introductory chapter concludes with a review of the map edition by academician Branko Kincl. He emphasizes that these projects include only one part of Mutnjaković’s tireless research approach to architecture. Its relevance in the field of kinetic architecture on a global scale was confirmed by his 1995 inclusion of the book *Kinetička arhitektura / Kinetic Architecture* in the Oxford Lexicon Dictionary of Architecture, Oxford 2016, under Kinetic architecture.

The presentation of each of these four projects begins with a text in which the author lucidly and precisely communicates the basic settings and thoughts about the project. It is followed by a presentation of the project richly illustrated with sketches, drawings and visualizations that alternate with gentle and suggestive photographs of models. The blueprints were made analytically convincing and further enhanced by depictions of endless permutations of surfaces, floor plans and cross-sections as a series of frozen frames suggesting movement, and no less important 1964, anticipating a future in which architectural projects will be shown in videos, animations and gifs.

In *Domobil*, where the house-machine becomes one with the user, the house becomes a direct projection of the person who lives in it, his wishes and moods. Although the house-machine meets all the functional and physiological requirements of a house, its primary goal, according to the author, is *to achieve the joy of life*. The man-made machine, which enables a direct man-house connection, is elaborated in the essential features that function at the time when the project was created as it is today. Although with the development of technology such proposed machines can be even simpler and more practical, the kinetic architecture of the house-machine has not yet been realized.

Similar settings are built into the 1988 Ornitottero project in Reggio Emilia, where the author explores a modest variant that adapts to a given program and the realities of the stage of technology development at that particular time.

St. Peter’s Cathedral in Split from 1970 is a project that, creates a dynamic spiritual space that connects the earth and the sky with the man in the centre thanks to the possibilities of kinetic architecture. It is a project that is so logical and powerful in appearance that we can only wonder how come it was never built.

In *Flower for Venice*, the moving elements of the pavilion become an interpretation of the lace of Venetian floral gothic style, creating a new ambience that seems to have always been in that place, belonging to it.

Re-published projects and texts in English with the addition of a Croatian translation can be particularly interesting as a guide for young or future architects who are just beginning to see their own path and place in the architectural world. A step forward in architecture is always risk, true research and experiment, but without it, architecture remains a mere service. The author notes at the beginning of the book that all four presented projects are competitive works, which confirms the truth that architectural competitions are an inherent platform for architects to question new concepts, thoughts and ideas. Another area of freedom that needs to be preserved and improved.

Freed from the imperatives of physical realization, experimental and research projects give the opportunity to dive deeper and look wider at different social phenomena and respond to them with architectural language: drawings, models, education, actions and words. Because the idea does not depend on the realization, the idea exists independently and is pivotal in every phase and/or part of the project. With the publication of this book on kinetic architecture, Mutnjaković is proving this truth to us as tirelessly and passionately today as at the time when he first took his graduation exam.