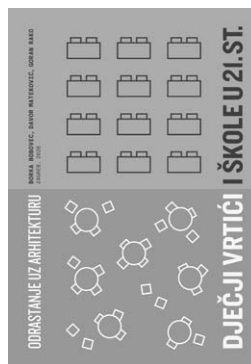


NIKOLA BAŠIĆ

## GROWING UP WITH ARCHITECTURE KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

ODRASTANJE UZ ARHITEKTURU  
DJEČJI VRTIČI I ŠKOLE U 21. STOLJEĆU

BORKA BOBOVEC, DAVOR MATEKOVIĆ, GORAN RAKO



Publisher: Oris d.o.o., Oris Kuća arhitekture  
Zagreb, 2020

Reviewers: Nikola Bašić, Tadej Glazar, Ines Nizic  
Foreword: Maroje Mrduljaš  
Editor: Ariana Stulhofer  
Proofreading and revision: Katarina Rožar  
Design and layout: Puder / Ana Rako and Goran Raukar

ISBN 978-953-6888-63-4 [Oris]  
ISBN 978-953-8096-36-5 [Oris Kuća arhitekture]  
CIP 001062616 [National University Library, Zagreb]

At a time of social debate on the educational system, here comes the monograph *Growing up With Architecture: Kindergartens and Schools of the 21st Century* by Bobovec, Mateković and Rako. With or without intent, the book corresponds to Croatia's painstaking attempts to shape the educational curriculum within a network of complex interests, worldviews and political crosswords. At the same time, one does not want to admit that no one can actually predict what shall happen in the education system in schools in the next ten years, let alone in half a century. That is why today, in this accelerated world, all school system reforms (and this is not just the Croatian experience) are most akin to the race of Achilles and the turtle.

As much as the book *Growing up With Architecture: Kindergartens and Schools of the 21st Century* emphasizes the necessity of achieving the spatial and structural properties of a school building that will leave it open to the most capricious and unpredictable educational methods in the increasingly uncertain future, its special dimension presents a reflex of Croatia's specific educational necessity, which boils down to two words: *the culture of space*. It is this book that tells us why it is important for Croatian society and its future to develop the culture of space and how this can be achieved through architecture. The awareness that the inherited space, after the people, is the greatest Croatian treasure, thus becomes the prevailing social thought. However, in order to be promoted from the accidental heirs of this God's *particella* to its authentic heirs, we shall also have to accept the legacy of the *culture* of space.

That is to say that only those who are able to also understand what is above the material value of the inherited can be considered credible heirs – and the first knowledge about space and the culture of space get acquired as early as in the kindergarten. When a kindergarten or school, as an organized, conceived and shaped architectural space become teachers of the culture of space by themselves, then we can hope that we shall succeed in making involuntary heirs credible heirs. Only then will we – through culture, not

through punitive laws – truly be able to also successfully manage the treasures of our space. Because, it is well known, every inheritance without heirs is doomed to failure.

Although the book addresses stakeholders who directly influence the building of schools – namely architects, clients and users – it moves away from a template of a manual that would like to interpret norms, standards and preferred typologies of schools. Instead, this book contains sample reflections and selectively presented information for an interactive scholarly, professional and social discourse in which the school emerges as a work of architecture.

The book has an original structure and its multiple authors have not resulted in an obstacle to a linguistically and stylistically coherent text. The foreword is followed by a brief historical overview of kindergartens and schools, from the first examples created in the tradition of modernity, all the way to more recent architectural achievements. The correlation between education and architecture is established, and education is emphasized by architecture itself. In the most comprehensive chapter *Indirect and Direct Influences on Quality*, it is stated that there is no ideal prototype of a school. It stems from the fate of an architecture that, like Ahasuerus, is doomed to an eternal pursuit. Also, the spatial and organizational structure of the school building must never be predetermined. In other words, neither the educational nor its cultural function is ever its basic constant. If educational processes are transformed, social and cultural policies must be a constant.

When considering the problem of school construction, schooling standards, the efficiency of the school network, the issue of work in shifts, as well as other things, have been put into focus. Furthermore, there is the issue of inequality between schools in urban centers and rural areas, where construction is approached with less ambition in terms of investment and architectural design, as well as the survival of schools in areas with an evident decline in demographic vitality, a problem to which potential solutions are offered

through selected examples. The final part of the book provides an overview of systematically selected instances of successful architecture of kindergartens and schools. For easier and simpler understanding and the possibility of adopting and applying quality elements that are already present in modern architecture of kindergartens and schools around the world and in our country, various models executed after the year 2000 have been selected. A total of forty-four kindergartens and schools, of which twenty-seven foreign ones from fifteen countries on four continents and seventeen that were built locally. The special value of the book, which is an exceptional and commendable achievement, are the personal descriptions and explanations of domestic and foreign realizations of their authors—architects, skillfully merged with the authorial text of the book.

Graphic and pictorial overviews refer to an exhaustive list of literature, but more importantly, to the Internet sources through which readers can get acquainted with particular architectural work in accordance with the depth and breadth of their interest. Through this process, the scope and reach of this book literally step out of its cover and turn it into a thematic system of information about the architecture of kindergartens and schools today.

The book is an exceptionally valuable and largely innovative scientific and professional experiment with a strong focus on the architecture of modern kindergartens and schools as educational and cultural mediums. It is of great value to know that it is a medium that also develops the culture and awareness of space, which in Croatian proportions gives it special onus. The book is an instructive and effective handbook for all those who build Croatian schools, maintain them, or study and work in them. However, it is also an interesting reading for all who intentionally or accidentally come across this important social topic, especially for those who share the belief that the paradigm shift in the care of the most precious Croatian treasure, namely people and inherited space, begins in a beautiful, pleasant, harmonious and playful space of any Croatian kindergarten.