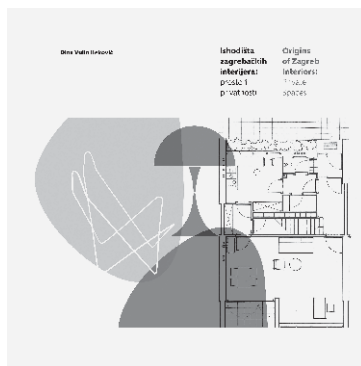


VANJA BRDAR MUSTAPIĆ, LENKO PLEŠTINA

ORIGINS OF ZAGREB INTERIORS:  
PRIVATE SPACESISHODIŠTA ZAGREBAČKIH INTERIJERA:  
PROSTORI PRIVATNOSTIDINA VULIN ILEKOVIĆ  
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The work was primarily conceived for required reading for the course Interior, part of the master's programme at the Architecture Faculty and taught without interruption since the year 1942. To date, there has been no systematic, integrated and expert work enabling parallel insights into achievements in this country and comparable architectural accomplishments elsewhere in Europe. The material of the course Interior, which the principal author has run since 2010, is now publicly accessible, facilitating a thoroughgoing overview of information relevant to a number of courses for students of Architecture Faculty and those of Design School.

With its artistic sensitivity and academic approach, the work *Origins of Zagreb Interiors: Private Spaces* offers a layered overview of Zagreb's outstanding interiors in the context of general architectural factors of the most intriguing period of the twentieth century. The use of ample records from the leading world and local archives and institutions provides "parallel insights into local characteristics of private spaces as compared with those of the broader international context". In the complex interrelations of the string "architect – building – interior – use object" we witness the incontestably impressive quality of Zagreb's architecture.

This bilingual volume consists of an introduction and nine chapters, on 160 pages with 285 illustrations, comprising photographs and original drawings as well as 56 bibliographical references. Used in the composition of the work was material from 45 separate sources, including world and local archives, museum institutions and private collections. In the alphabetical index of names, there are 296 authors whose material has been used in the work or who are mentioned in the text. Clearly and perspicuously conceived, written in a language of admirable stylistic competence, it also possesses an impressive visual identity so important for writing dealing with themes in design and architecture.

The first four and the ninth and final chapters are the sole work of author and editor Dina

Vulin Ileković. Chapters about prominent individual Zagreb designers are the work of other writers, either singly or in collaboration. Chapter Four was co-written by Dina Vulin Ileković and Hela Vukadin-Doronjga and Chapter Five was composed by Ivana Haničar Buljan. The sixth and seventh chapters were written by the editor and Iva Ceraj, the latter of whom also wrote Chapter 8.

Thanks to extensive and thorough research, the book provides an extremely well-informed, substantial, layered and relevant presentation of the history of residential interiors in Zagreb from the end of the nineteenth century to the nineteen-seventies.

A multi-layered presentation with components that can be followed consistently in all chapters, an alternating rhythm of treatment of the work's building blocks, with accents on the most important personalities, examples and phenomena and the sublimation of ideas and viewpoints in the juxtaposed quotations are only some of the qualities and characteristics of the synthesising approach found in the work *Origins of Zagreb Interiors: Private Spaces*.

The writing is coupled with lavish illustrative material, expertly selected photographs of key works and examples for comparison. The comments adjoined to the illustrations allow a still more substantial analysis, understanding and contextualisation in time and space. Presented side by side with a selection of photographs from world and local archives and museums are privately owned pictures of Zagreb interiors, some of them, it is worth pointing out, shown for the first time. The selection of information conveyed is well-considered and logically structured, showing the subtle network of influences and collaboration of the actors on the scene, the development of tendencies, the application of principles in architecture and design and, finally, the employment of furnishing. In a theme as complex as this, which impinges on the domains of architecture, and art history as well as design history, it is fully justified to highlight a synoptic and interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the interior, architecture on a large and a small scale.

As a logical consequence, furniture constitutes an integral part of some of the units, primarily the design of chairs, with an emphasis on the functional and formal aspects of its development. The intention is to point out that for architects this was a task as important as that of architectural design, and that it was, indeed, a professional challenge in which they developed ideas in consistence with their own idiom.

Such an approach is important for both a comprehensive understanding of architectural work and for reference to the fact that the design of interiors, furnishing and objects of applied art is part of the cultural identity and heritage, and particularly because it is most exposed to change and frequent devastation, as well as a lack of understanding of its importance for the history of art and culture.

What is more, in professional and academic writing, in the area of art history, architecture and design, interiors are a theme which is much less featured and in general addressed as part of some other discourse.

It is of great importance that the work is published in two languages, Croatian and English, enabling students from other countries to become acquainted with the superb achievements, the authenticity and distinctive features of Zagreb residential interiors in the context of international trends.

In January 2023 the book was listed among the best designed Croatian books for the international competition and exhibition *Best Book Design from all over the World* for the Leipzig Book Fair and for the exhibition *Book Art International* at the Frankfurt Book Fair. In March 2023 it was nominated for the Neven Šegvić Prize in the category of the work of journalism, criticism, scientific research or theory in the domain of architecture for 2022, while on March 2023 the Zagreb University Senate adopted a decision assigning the manuscript *Origins of Zagreb Interiors: Private Spaces* the right to use the title *Manualia Universitatis Studiorum Zagabiensis*.

[Translated by Graham McMaster]