

Le Corbusier in Yugoslavia and the Balkans (Sarajevo, 22–23 Sep 23)

Sarajevo, Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sep 22–23, 2023

Deadline: Jul 5, 2023

Docomomo Bosnia and Herzegovina / MAO Ljubljana / IPU Zagreb / Docomomo
Serbia

[Extended deadline: 05.07.2023]

Le Corbusier, the central figure of the Modern Movement in architecture, traveled across the Balkans and researched its houses, cities and landscapes. In turn, many architects from the Balkan states, including key authors from former Socialist Yugoslavia, worked in Le Corbusier's atelier in Paris. After this formative working experience, they returned to Yugoslavia or other countries of origin, and transformed their built environments through projects, strongly inspired by what they learned in the course of their collaborations with Le Corbusier.

In 1953, the exhibition of Corbusier's work that traveled across Yugoslavia elaborated on the singular testimonies of his collaborators and "rounded off" the picture about his personality and his work in Yugoslav architecture and popular culture.

However, his legacy in the Balkans, in the form of permanent influence on architectural thought, culture and practice, has never been studied as an integral historical manifestation of knowledge transfer. The thematic conference, titled "Le Corbusier in Yugoslavia and the Balkans - reception and interpretation of modernist architectural postulates in the peripheral region" is performing the first step towards the evaluation of Le Corbusier's role in the modernization of Yugoslav and Balkan built environment, the results of which we still live today.

Juraj Neidhardt, Ernest Weissmann, Edvard Ravnikar and Milorad Pantović are just some of those Yugoslav architect's whose life's work was profoundly marked by their professional encounter with Le Corbusier. Experimentation with Le Corbusier's basic architectural and urbanistic types in Yugoslavia and the Balkans was limited by social and material circumstances, while at the same time they served as basic tools of social modernization and urbanization. Harnessed in post-war reconstruction and mass construction, architects saw Le Corbusier as both a role model and saviour. The 1953 traveling exhibition of his architectural, urbanistic and artistic work, which has been put on display in Belgrade, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje and Zagreb, as well as Split and Mostar, was supposed to reinstate architecture as the principal visual art. Indirectly, the exhibition had an important homogenizing effect on national production, which in each of the former Yugoslav republics had its own specific, although similar, course.

The 70th anniversary of this exhibition (organized by the Union of Architects of Yugoslavia), as well as a 100th anniversary of Le Corbusier's capital work „Vers une Architecture“ (published in 1923), create an exceptional occasion for a complex insight into the knowledge transfer between Le Corbusier and Yugoslav and Balkan architecture.

With this goal, the thematic conference “Le Corbusier in Yugoslavia and the Balkans,” organized by Docomomo Bosnia and Herzegovina and Association of Architects in B&H, with the support of Museum of Architecture and Design - MAO (Ljubljana), Institute for Art History (Zagreb) and Docomomo Serbia and Association of Architects of Belgrade (Belgrade), invites architecture and art historians to investigate the transfers, mediations, results and consequences of Le Corbusier’s teaching and practice in Yugoslavia and the Balkans.

Proposals submitted to the conference may choose to address the following questions:

Which particular concepts and/or techniques of Le Corbusier’s doctrine of modern architecture and urbanism had the most agency and impact on architecture theory, practice and culture in Yugoslavia and the Balkans?

What were the channels, genres and media active in the dissemination of Le Corbusier’s thoughts (journals, translated books, television, popular press) and what was the impact of these media on the contents of the knowledge transfer?

What was the popular and institutional reception of these ideas, including politics and policies of spatial development, heritage protection and their relationship to the environment?

Which particular projects by local authors in Yugoslavia and the Balkans concretized Le Corbusier’s principles and provided for their further dissemination and popularization?

What were local variations and answers to the provocation of Le Corbusier’s discourse, as possible elements of the reversed knowledge transfer?

Submit proposals (300 words), and bio (200 words) to the email docomomo.bh@aabh.ba.

Deadline: 5th of July 2023.

The scientific committee of the conference will go through, select and organize proposals around themed sessions.

Notifications on participation will be sent by June 30, 2023.

The participation in the conference is free, with no registration fees.

Selected papers will be invited to prepare a submission for an edited, peer-reviewed volume.

Scientific Committee

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Tamara Bjažić-Klarin, Institute of Art History (IPU) Zagreb

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Isidora Karan, University of Banja Luka

Dijana Alić, University of New South Wales

Reference:

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(accessed Aug 29, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/39221>>.