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## Dokle dopire autonomija arhitekta

Obnove nekolicine ključnih slovenskih arhitektonskih djela posljednjih godina ukazuju na izvjesno karakteristično stanje suvremenog društva. Stanje u kojem često ostaje nedorečeno pitanje vrednovanja onih elementa kolektivnog sjećanja, koji predstavljaju temelj društvenog identiteta, kulture, prepoznatljivosti i samosvijesti. Pitanje, na koje bi trebale odgovoriti odgovorne institucije, jest koji su kulturni spomenici 20. stoljeća od takve vrijednosti da ih treba očuvati u originalnom stanju, a s druge strane trebalo bi odrediti i takva djela kojima se može osigurati opstojnost tek radikalnijom obnovom, odnosno očuvanjem nekih od njihovih značajnih kvaliteta. Dakle, u kojim je slučajevima od potrebe filološka, a u kojima aktivna obnova? Bitna razlika tih dvaju pristupa leži prije svega u tome da se prvi temelji na izrazito znanstvenim postupcima, dočim je drugi kreativan, autorski i kao takav podložan subjektivnom prosuđivanju. Stoga se za tu vrstu rješenja obično raspisuju

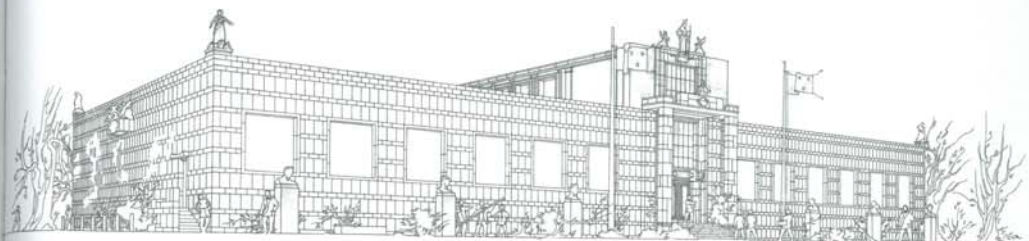


Edvard Ravnikar

## The Limits of the Architect's Autonomy

The renovation of several key Slovene architectural works in recent years indicates a certain characteristic state of contemporary society. A state that often leaves open the question of the evaluation of those elements of collective memory that are the basis of social identity, culture, recognition and self-awareness. The question to be answered by competent institutions is which cultural monuments of the 20th century have such a value that they should be preserved in their original state, and on the other hand, which works can survive only if they are refurbished rather radically, while keeping some of their significant qualities? Which cases need a philological restoration and which need an active restoration? The important difference between these two approaches lies primarily in the fact that the first is based on highly scientific procedures, whereas the other is creative, personal and consequently open to subjective judgments. Therefore, this type of solution usually requires architectural competitions or is entrusted to renowned architects. But in a society where the interest of the individual is crucial, how is it possible to define the criteria for decisions concerning the public good? If we compare the reconstruction of some first rate cultural monuments in Ljubljana, we will notice that the renovation concepts are incredibly similar. These works of different architects and architectural practices are related, in spite of their completely different architectural expressions. The new intervention created mimicry in all of them, and the uninformed visitor cannot distinguish the original architecture from the contemporary intervention. So this is some kind of a compromise approach,

## MODERNA GALERIJA



▲ skica iz rane faze  
▲ early sketch

arhitektonski natječaji, odnosno povjeravaju se afirmiranim arhitektima. No, kako je moguće u jednom društvu, u kojem je bitan interes pojedinca, oblikovati kriterije za odluke koje se odnose na javnu korist? Uspoređujući rekonstrukcije nekih ljubljanskih kulturnih spomenika vrhunske vrijednosti, zapaziti ćemo nevjerojatnu sličnost u odnosu na koncepte obnove. Ta djela raznih arhitekata ili arhitektonskih biroa su unatoč posve različitim arhitektonskim izrazima ipak srodna. Kod svih je pri novom zahvatu došlo do izvjesne mimikrije, pa neupućeni posjetilac ne može razlikovati originalnu arhitekturu od suvremenog zahvata. Dakle, riječ je o nekoj vrsti kompromisnog pristupa, po svojoj prirodi manje radikalnog te na prvi pogled neškodljivog i suptilnog. Najaktualniji slučaj je obnova Moderne galerije (MG). Opisom okolnosti njenog nastanka i nekih ključnih arhitektonskih elemenata, rado bih pojasnio veliko značenje njene kulturne i arhitektonske vrijednosti. Okolnosti koje su pratile projekt MG-a iznimno su zanimljive, naime uz ovu zadaću je vezano razilaženje centralnih osoba slovenske arhitekture 20. stoljeća, profesora i njegova mladog diplomca. Projekt je postao predmetom razdvajanja dvaju stvaralačkih svjetova i u smislu nazora i u smislu kreativnosti. Naime, naručitelj je izazvao neku vrstu prikrivenog natjecanja između Plečnika i Ravnikara. Prvi je bio na vrhuncu svoje stvaralačke moći, a drugi na početku, označenom idejama modernizma. U doba kada je došlo do potrebe za MG-om, Ravnikar je u Plečnikovu seminaru crtao izvedbene planove za Nacionalnu sveučilišnu knjižnicu (NUK). Profesora Izidora Cankara poznao je posjećujući ga kod kuće

less radical by its nature, harmless and subtle at the first glance. The most recent case is the renovation of the Modern Gallery (MG). I will describe the circumstances of its origin and some of its key architectural elements to clarify the great significance of its cultural and architectural value. The circumstances around the MG project are extremely interesting; in fact, this task is related to a split between the central figures of the Slovenian architecture of the 20th century, the professor and his young graduate. The project became the cause of a division between two creative worlds in terms of creativity as well as attitude. The client caused some kind of a covert competition between Plečnik and Ravnikar. The one was at the height of his creative powers, the other at the beginning, marked by the ideas of modernism. At the time when the need for MG arose, Ravnikar was in Plečnik's seminar, engaged in working on drawings for the National University Library (NUK). He knew Professor Izidor Cankar and visited him in his home, like some other students who would later become prominent intellectuals. The documents discovered during the preparations for the first review exhibition of the architect's work on the occasion of Ravnikar's centenary, in the Jakopič Gallery in Ljubljana in 2007, show that Izidor Cankar had confirmed Ravnikar's basic idea for MG by August 1936, and his plans that led to the acceptance of the MG founding document in 1937 - two years before Ravnikar worked in Le Corbusier's practice for a few months. Until that discovery, it was believed that Ravnikar's experience in Paris significantly influenced the concept of the MG building and the ambivalent



poput i nekih drugih studenata, poslije poznatih intelektualaca. Dokumenti koje smo otkrili tijekom priprema za prvu preglednu izložbu arhitektova rada prigodom Ravnikarove stogodišnjice, 2007. godine u Jakopićevoj galeriji u Ljubljani, svjedoče o tome da je Ravnikarovu osnovnu ideju za MG Izidor Cankar potvrdio već u kolovozu 1936., a planove na osnovi kojih je prihvaćen osnivački dokument za MG 1937. godine. Dakle dvije godine prije no što je Ravnikar nekoliko mjeseci radio u Le Corbusierovu uredu. Do tada je, naime, vladalo uvjerenje da je Ravnikarovo pariško iskustvo bitno utjecalo na koncept zgrade MG-a, kao i dvostruku prirodu njene arhitekture, koja je polazila od dva različita arhitektonska nazora. Dakako, to je u načelu i dalje tako, izvedbeni su planovi bili dovršeni tek nakon Ravnikarova povratka iz Pariza. Međutim bitnih prostornih promjena zgrade na konceptualnoj razini, osim smanjenja obujma skulpturne opreme na fasadi, nije bilo. Razvoj događaja opisuje Ravnikar podrobno u pismu iz 1940. godine uredništvu časopisa Slovenija, koji je objavio kritiku

nature of its architecture, which had two different architectural conceptions as its starting points. Certainly, in principle this is still so, for the working drawings were finished only after Ravnikar returned from Paris. However, there were no significant spatial changes in the building on a conceptual level, except for a reduction in the volume of the sculptural elements of the façade. The course of events was described in detail by Ravnikar in his letter from 1940 to the editorial board of Slovenija magazine, which published a criticism of the MG project. That letter summarizes Ravnikar's diary entries during the creation of the sketch designs. The architecture of MG is characterized by a duality between the highly rational spatial concept, stemming from the architect's comparative study of the latest achievements in museum buildings in the world, and the façade that decently and systematically is pursuing the themes of Plečnik's school, but on the regular modernist grid of the stone envelope. The reason for the characteristically neutral design of the interior is not only the relatively small

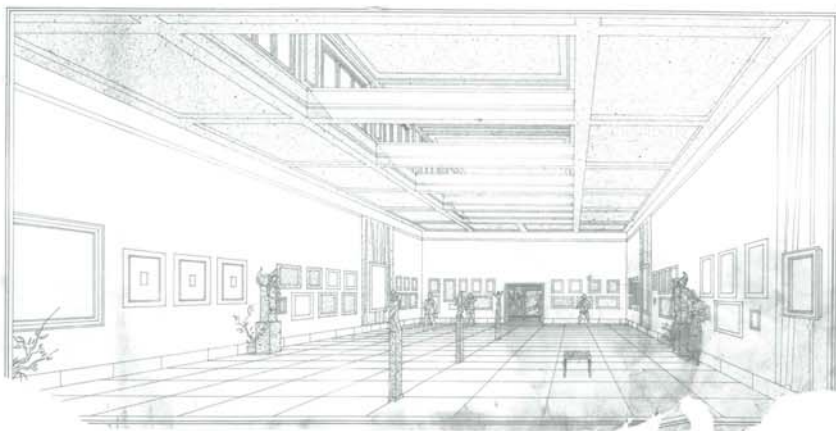
projekta MG-a. To je pismo zapravo sažetak Ravnikarovih dnevničkih zapisa u doba nastajanja idejnih nacrti. Za arhitekturu MG-a je karakteristična dvojnost između izrazito racionalnoga prostornog koncepta, koji proizlazi iz arhitektove komparativne studije najnovijih dostiga galerijskih zgrada u svijetu, i fasade koja se na doduše pravilnom, modernističkom rasteru kamene obloge, na decentni način sustavno bavi temama Plečnikove škole. Razlog karakteristično neutralnog oblikovanja unutarnjeg prostora ne proizlazi samo iz relativno skromnih sredstava izgradnje, nego leži u svjesnom podređivanju izloženoj umjetnosti. Pri tome odlučnu ulogu, uz vođenje svjetlosti, ima funkcionalna shema rasporeda izložbenih dvorana. Ravnikar objašnjava koncept dvorana ovako: "...kod svakog muzeja ili galerije stojimo pred zadatkom rješavanja problema kako će posjetitelj bez zamornoga i ometajućeg traženja po raznim dvoranama doći do zbirke koja ga zanima. U našoj Modernoj galeriji to je riješeno tako da su sve izložbene dvorane dostupne iz centralne dvorane koja će poslužiti kao vestibul, centralni prostor, koji razdvaja i povezuje pojedine izložbene dvorane. Razdvajati će izložbene prostorije od stalnog postava moderne galerije, a ako se u svim prostorijama postavi jedna jedina izložba, u toj će dvorani biti izložena glavna djela izložbe. Ako bismo ubuduće dobili vlastiti paviljon za izložbe, mogla bi se cijela zgrada urediti kao galerija žive umjetnosti 20. stoljeća. Sadašnje izložbene prostorije mogle bi poslužiti općenitijoj posjeti, sadašnje prostorije Moderne galerije studiju i posebnim zbirka, centralni prostor najvećim umjetničkim djelima..." Ulazna zona Moderne galerije je tako koncipirana da imamo dojam, da preko slijeda prostornih doživljaja ulazimo u posvećeni prostor. Kad monumentalnim stubištem ispod ulaznog baldahina stignemo do niskih, bakrenim limom obloženih vrata, koja se otvaraju u polutamu vjetrobrana, ulazimo u pretprostor, u kojem se prtajeno osvijetljenje reflektira na oblogama od travertina. Odavde nam se, na ponešto podignutom nivou otvara visoki, dnevnim svjetlom preplavljeni prostor centralne dvorane. Nekada nam se ovdje obračala samo umjetnost. Nakon obnove je centralna dvorana namijenjena informacijskoj funkciji, prodaji karata i knjžari. Umjesto umjetnosti nam se, usred toga posvećenog prostora, poput oltara pokazuje informacijski pult. Na njega se nastavlja mala, za tako značajnu instituciju bitno premala knjžara. Prostorni nerazmjer, proizašao iz programskih promjena, razriješen je oblikovanjem. Element rasvijete, koji u prostoru lebdi, u vizualnom smislu umiruje konflikt između relativno velikog volumena postojeće dvorane i elemenata novog programa. U ratno doba je izgradnja Moderne galerije bila zaustavljena. Izgrađena do krova poslužila je kao vojno



construction budget, but also the deliberate subordination of the architecture to the exhibited art. A crucial role here, aside from the directions of light, is played by the functional scheme of the layout of the exhibition halls. This is how Ravnikar describes the concept of the halls: "...in every museum or gallery we are faced with the task of resolving the issue of how the visitors can reach the collection that interests them without a tiring and distracting search across the halls. In our Modern Gallery, we resolved it by making all the exhibition halls accessible from a central hall, which will be used as a vestibule, a central space, separating and connecting specific exhibition halls. It will separate the exhibition halls from the permanent display of the Modern gallery, and when there is a need to put a single exhibition in all the halls, this central hall will exhibit the main works. If we get our own exhibition pavilion in the future, the entire building could be organized as a gallery of living art of the 20th century. The current exhibition halls could be used for general visits, the current premises of the Modern

Edvard Ravnikar, ▶  
perspektiva srednjeg  
prostora

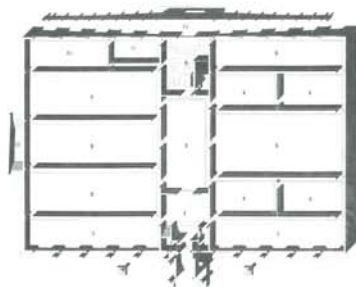
Edvard Ravnikar, ▶  
perspective drawing  
central hall



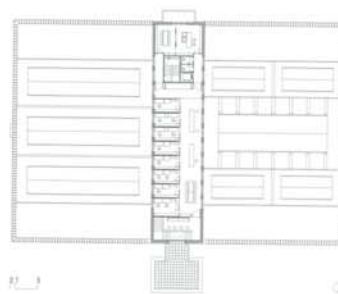
skladište. U prvim poratnim godinama, kada su se radovi na objektu nastavili, pokazala se potreba za dodatnim izložbenim prostorijama i informacijskim centrom u postojećim podrumskim prostorijama, koje su tada bile pristupačne samo preko stražnjega, servisnog stubišta. Došlo je do Ravnikarove intervencije s vanjskim stubištem uz današnju Prešernovu ulicu i do dodatnoga unutarnjeg stubišta u pobočnoj izložbenoj dvorani. U međuvremenu su prve odstranjene prigodom regulacije ulice, a druge, sve do najnovije rekonstrukcije, rječit su svjedočile o arhitektovu vlastitom strukovnom credu. Smještajem kao i oblikovanjem iskazivale su arhitektov suvereni pristup, koji sam obrazlaže kao "...proces, kod kojeg prva ishodišta mogu biti posljedica i pogrešnih pretpostavki, pri čemu možemo, kad ih iskušavamo, mnogo naučiti. Stalno isprobavanje, ispunjavanje koncepata tako postaje njihovo unutarnje obogaćivanje koje se sastoji u tome da se postignuti rezultati pročišćuju kroz spoznaje, koje su u danom trenutku već nepobitne i neproblematične, jer tako postupno učimo iz greški, možemo kazati, da idemo putem na kojem uvijek samo eksperiment vodi do novih otkrića". Dodatno dvokrako stubište bilo je oblikovano kao izvjesna parabola privremenosti. Tako kako ga je arhitekt smjestio izvan centralne osi zgrade, uspostavio je svojevrstnu napetost između centralne kompozicije postojećega i pridodanog novog. Ublažio je simetrični koncept kuće, što je i inače karakteristično za većinu njegovih

Edvard Ravnikar, aksonometrija  
izložbene etaže

Edvard Ravnikar, exhibition  
floor axonometry



Gallery for the studies and special collections, and the central space for the greatest works of art...". The entrance zone of the Modern Gallery is conceived so that a sequence of spatial experiences gives us the impression of entering into a sacred space. When we take the monumental staircase under the entrance canopy, we arrive at a low door covered in copper sheeting, opening into the half-darkness of the entrance lobby, and we enter into the antechamber where concealed sources of light are reflected on the travertine coating. Here, on a slightly raised level, we have a good view of the tall, daylight-drenched space of the central hall. Once, we were greeted here only by art. Since the renovation, the central hall has been used for information services, ticket sales and a bookstore. So, instead of art, we are shown the information desk like an altar in the middle of that sacred space. It is followed by a small

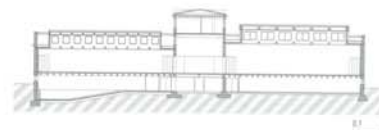


▶ tlocrt podruma

▶ basement plan

presjek

▶ section



▶ Matija Bevk, Vasa Perović: obnova  
Moderne galerije, 2010.

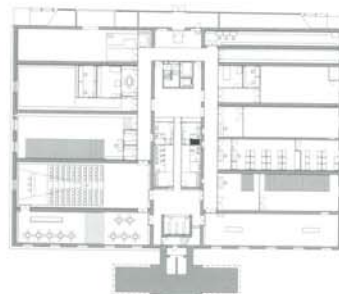
▶ Matija Bevk, Vasa Perović: Modern  
Gallery renovation, 2010



▶ tlocrt prizemlja

▶ ground floor plan

bookstore, far too small for such a significant institution. The spatial disparity, arising from content changes, is resolved with design. The element of lighting, which floats in space, has a visually calming effect on the conflict between the relatively large volume of the old hall and the elements of the new contents. During WWII, the construction of the Modern Gallery was stopped. It had a roof, so it was used as a military warehouse. In the first post-war years, when the work on the building continued, the need arose for additional exhibition premises and an information centre inside the existing basement premises, which were accessible only by the outside service staircase. Then Ravnikar used the outside staircase along today's Prešernova Street and an additional inside staircase in the lateral exhibition hall. In the meantime, the first one was removed when the street was reorganized, while the other, until the most recent reconstruction, testified eloquently to the architect's own professional beliefs. The location and design showed the architect's unmatched approach, which he himself described as "...a process where the first starting points can also be the consequences of wrong assumptions, where we can learn much when we try them out. Constant testing and realization of concepts becomes in this way their interior enrichment; the achieved results are tested by means of ideas which are already unquestionable and unproblematic at the given moment, because that is how we



▶ tlocrt kata

▶ floor plan

arhitektonskih ostvarenja, koja su u osnovi simetrična, pa se tijekom 'razvoja' ublažavaju u smislu uravnotežene asimetrične kompozicije, što Ravnikar naziva 'živom simetrijom'. Na toj dvojnosti temelje se i neka njegova najčuvenija djela (zgrada dvorane OLO u Kranju, neboderi na Trgu republike, FAGG, banke u Kranju i Celju...). Osim toga je stubište na taj način oslobođio isključivo utilitarne funkcije, naime postavljeno u izložbenu dvoranu, postalo je elementom prostora, u njega unosi dinamiku pa tako i vizualno i percepcijski povezuje oba nivoa. U pogledu opsega podrumskog programa zajamčeno im je kako fizički tako i značenijski primjereno dimenzioniran prostor. To bi se teško moglo tvrditi za novo, zamjensko stubište, nastalo nakon nove rekonstrukcije. Novo je stubište, koje vodi u podrumске izložbene prostorije, kavanu, predavaonicu i garderobu, doduše logično provedeno ispod postojećeg, koje vodi u prostor uprave na prvom kat, ali time preuzima i njegov karakter, ponešto izmaknutoga internog stubišta, koje nije namijenjeno posjetiteljima. ❖ Odsutnost kritičkog pogleda na izgrađenu arhitekturu i na obnove je karakteristična za arhitektonski diskurs u suvremenom slovenskom društvu. To se odvija prije svega na bazi boljeg ili lošijeg poznavanja projekata i prije svega je u službi medija. U trenutku kad dolazi do materijalizacije, tema u pravilu više ne izaziva zanimanje. Kao da stvarni prostori arhitekture više ne zanimaju stručnu javnost. A upravo bi to bila iznimna prilika, iako za aktualne primjere zakasnijela, da postane dragocjena za sve sljedeće. ❖ Kako bilo, zgrada MG-a je prije posljednje rekonstrukcije predstavljala u autorskom smislu zaokruženu cjelinu pa je uza svoju kulturnu ulogu, u svim detaljima svjedočila o počecima jedne velike arhitektonske priče. Je li to ona baština koja bi zaslužila potpuno konzerviranje, pitanje je prije svega ontološke naravi. No činjenica je da nužno potrebna tehnička poboljšanja, poput sanacije nosivih konstrukcija, obnove dotrajalih instalacija i postavljanje novog dizala nisu zahtijevala opisane zahvate, koji svakako krnje svjedočanstvo o Ravnikarovoј arhitekturi. ❖ U odnosu na to da kod nas još ne postoje raščišćeni odgovori na pitanje kako zaštititi baštinu moderne, te što je uopće autentičnog još preostalo, bilo bi potrebno zatražiti savjet kod sličnih primjera u drugim europskim zemljama i drugdje u svijetu. Primjerno obnovljena arhitektonska djela kao u slučajevima Aalta u Finskoj, LC u Francuskoj, Scarpe u Italiji, Line bo Bardi u Brazilu, Wrighta u SAD, Tangea u Japanu, Loosa u Češkoj itd., koje tako rado odlazimo vidjeti, teško možemo zamisliti u kakvom suvremenom preoblikovanju, nego očekujemo da ćemo ih moći istražiti u svakom detalju. Nesumnjivo je tako i kad se stranci zanimaju za našu baštinu. Prije svega takav odnos dugujemo dolazećim gene-

*gradually learn from our mistakes. We can say that we have taken the course where only experiments can lead to new discoveries.'* ❖ The additional two-flight staircase was designed as a parable of temporariness. By placing it outside the central axis of the building, the architect created some kind of tension between the central composition of the old and the added new. He softened the symmetric concept of the house, characteristic of most of his architectural creations, which are basically symmetrical and get softened during the 'development' in the sense of a balanced asymmetric composition, which Ravnikar calls 'living symmetry'. This dualistic quality is the basis of some of his most famous works (the OLO hall building in Kranj, the skyscrapers on the Republic Square, FAGG, banks in Kranj and Celje). In this way, moreover, he relieved the staircase from its purely utilitarian function; as it was set up in the exhibition hall, it became an element of the space, making it dynamic and connecting both levels perceptually as well as visually. Regarding the scope of the basement contents, he guaranteed a space with a physically and meaningfully appropriate size. It would be hard to claim the same thing for the new replacement staircase, created after the new reconstruction. The new staircase, leading into the basement exhibition rooms, a café, a lecture room and the cloakroom, is indeed logically placed under the old one, leading to the management offices on the first floor, but it also takes over its character of a somewhat displaced internal stairway that is not intended for the visitors. ❖ One characteristic of the architectural discourse in contemporary Slovenian society is the lack of critical considerations about built architecture and renovations. They are seen primarily on the basis of better or worse knowledge about the project and serve the media before anything else. As a rule, at the moment of its materialization, the topic does not elicit interest any more. As if the real spaces of architecture no longer hold any interest for the informed public. But this is precisely what would be an excellent opportunity: coming too late for the current example, but priceless for any future pieces. ❖ Anyway, before the last reconstruction, the MG building was complete and finished as an original work, so aside from its cultural mission, all its details showed the beginning of a great architectural story. Is it a heritage deserving to be completely preserved? The question is primarily ontological. But it is a fact that the technical improvements, which were absolutely necessary, such as the repairs of load bearing structures, the renovation of the decrepit services and the installation of a new lift did not require the described undertakings, which certainly do damage to the features of Ravnikar's architecture. ❖ Since there is still no clear answer to the questions of how to protect the modernist heritage and what



❖ Fotografija izložbe Zdenka Kalina, 1985.

❖ Photograph of the Zdenko Kalin exhibition, 1985

racijama domaćih stručnjaka, za potrebe istraživanja i poznavanja vlastitih temelja. ❖ Ipak, sudbina arhitektonske baštine naše moderne, rad međunarodno priznatih autora, prepuštena je etičkim mjerilima i vrednovanju stručnjaka koji nažalost nemaju takvu stručnu širinu i senzibilnost kakvu je opisivao arhitekt i profesor Marjan Mušič: 'Sa zgradama je kao i s nama samima. Kad organizam počinje zakazivati, treba mu umjetno produživati život. Zgrade također imaju svoje liječnike. To su konzervatori koji se unose u najdublje tajne nekog spomenika, te mu vjerno i nesebično služe, a da mu nimalo ne nameću svoju volju i osobnost. Sva svoja velika znanja podređuju spomeniku, a dobro su obavili svoj posao ako je očima ostao prikriven.'

authentic work still remains, it would be necessary to look for advice from comparable examples in other European countries or the world. The exemplary renovations of architectural works, such as those by Aalto in Finland, LC in France, Scarpa in Italy, Line Bo Bardi in Brazil, Wright in the US, Tange in Japan, Loos in the Czech Republic, which we so love to visit, would be hard to imagine refurbished in a contemporary style, since we expect to examine them in their every detail. No doubt, the same applies to foreigners interested in our heritage. First and foremost, we should do it for the future generations of Slovenian professionals, who will need to research into and recognize their roots. ❖ Yet the fate of our modernist architectural heritage, the work of internationally recognized authors, is left to the ethical norms and evaluations of experts who unfortunately do not have the professional scope and sensibility described by the architect and teacher Marjan Mušič: 'It is the same with buildings as with people. When the body is decaying, it must have its life prolonged in an artificial way. Buildings also have their doctors. They are the conservators, who pry the deepest secrets of a monument, serving it faithfully and unselfishly, without imposing their will or personality in any way. They subordinate all their vast knowledge to the monument and feel they did a good job if it has remained invisible to the eyes.'