

napisao  
written by



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## Richterov paviljon u Bruxellesu u pedesetoj

U trenutku pisanja ovih riječi navršilo se točno pedeset godina od kada je Univerzalna i međunarodna izložba u Bruxellesu zatvorila svoja vrata. Bilo je to 19. listopada 1958. godine. EXPO 58, kako su svi nazivali tu izložbu, bila je prvi 'svjetski sajam' nakon gotovo dvadeset godina zamišljen kao izlog sveopće suradnje između naroda i zabilješka ljudskog napretka nakon neizmjenih destrukcija Drugog svjetskog rata. Međutim, unatoč velikom uloženom optimizmu, ti uzvišeni ciljevi ostali su u sjeni novih političkih suparničtava i starih uzoraka dominacije: hladni je rat bjesnio, kolonijalizam se nastavljao, a jaz između razvijenog i nerazvijenog svijeta bio je sve veći.

arhitekt  
architect



Vjenceslav Richter

JUGOSLAVENSKI PAVILJON, EXPO 58, BRUXELLES,  
BELGIJA, 1958.

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## Richter's Brussels Pavilion at 50

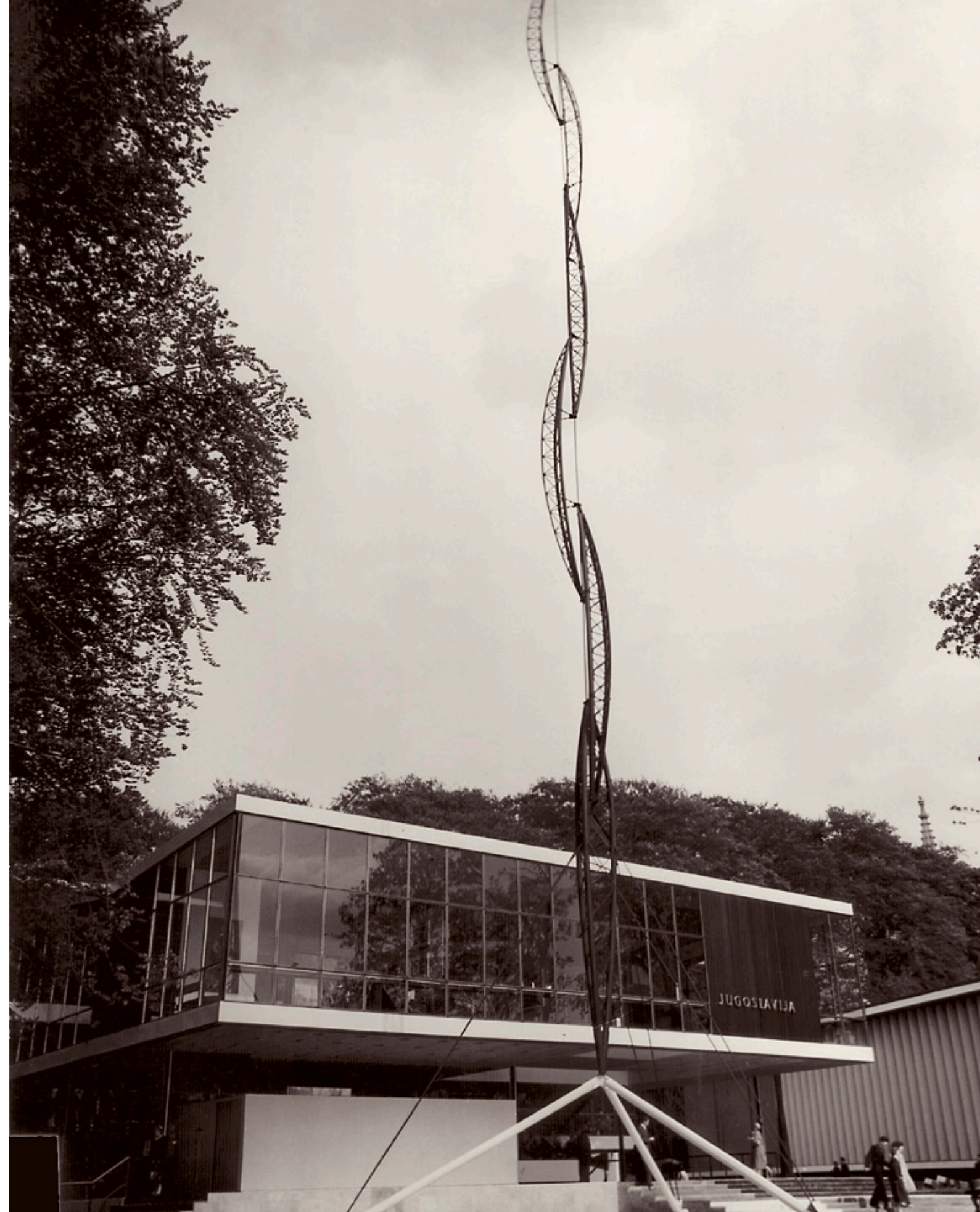
As I write these lines, it is exactly fifty years since the Universal and International Exposition in Brussels closed its gates on October 19, 1958. The EXPO 58, as the show became widely known, was the first 'world fair' in almost twenty years, envisioned as a showcase of universal cooperation between nations and a record of humanity's progress since the immense destructions of World War II. But despite the great optimism invested in them, these lofty goals remained in the shadow of new political rivalries and old patterns of domination: the raging Cold War, continuing colonialism, and the growing gap between the developed and undeveloped world.

**EXPO: FAILURES AND SUCCESSES** Architectural purists do not remember the Brussels EXPO particularly fondly either. Sure enough, modernism finally secured its world domination; but this was now a highly diversified modernism increasingly ready to compromise its principles for the sake of extra-archi-

Vjenceslav Richter: Paviljon  
Jugoslavije s jarbolom u prvom planu,  
Bruxelles, 1958.

Vjenceslav Richter: The Pavilion  
of Yugoslavia with the mast in the  
foreground, Brussels, 1958

JUGOSLAV PAVILION, EXPO 58, BRUXELLES,  
BELGIUM, 1958







▲ Paviljon Francuske (lijevo) i SSSR-a (desno), Bruxelles, 1958.

▲ The Pavilion of France (left) and of the USSR (right), Brussels, 1958

**EXPO: PROMAŠAJI I USPJESI** ◀ Arhitektonski puristi nemaju posebno lijepa sjećanja na EXPO u Bruxellesu. Sigurno je da je modernizam napokon osigurao svoju dominaciju u svijetu, ali sada je to bio izuzetno raznolik modernizam, koji je bio sve spremniji kompromitirati vlastite principe u ime motivacija i svrha izvan arhitekture.<sup>1</sup> Koliko god različiti po svojim ideološkim porukama – jedna koja prodaje užitke ‘američkog načina života’, a druga prednosti komunizma – divovski paviljoni dviju supersila bili su neobično slični u svojem vrlo formalnom, klasičnom monumentalizmu. Još je više uznemirujuća činjenica da je ovaj EXPO bio znak podlijevanja modernizma popularnom ukusu, posebno vidljivog u dolasku američke komercijalne arhitekture u Europu. Belgijska sekcija je bila naročito na udaru ružnih riječi zbog obilja ornamenata iz ‘svemirskog doba’ u krestavim bojama, koji je postao poznat pod imenom ‘Expo stil’ ili ‘atomski stil’. Atomium – glavno obilježje izložbe – dobro odražava duh EXPO-a i njegovu fascinaciju znanošću i tehnologijom. On je pretvoren u najomiljeniju atrakciju u Bruxellesu, bezbroj puta reproduciran u turističkim materijalima, ali nije rezultirao inovatorskom arhitekturom na razini svojih britanskih i francuskih pandana iz 19. stoljeća. ◀ Samo je šačica paviljona dobila pozitivne kritike u tisku. Le Corbusierova *poème électronique*, materijalizirana u paviljonu ‘Phillipsa’, činila je zasebnu kategoriju. Zatim, bio je tu paviljon Egona Eiermanna iz Zapadne Njemačke, koji se, razumljivo, udaljio od klasicističke monumentalnosti što je dalje moguće kako bi izbjegao još uvijek svježija sjećanja na

<sup>1</sup> Za detaljniji pregled EXPO-a u Bruxellesu pogledajte: Rika Devos i Mil De Kooning, *L'Architecture moderne à l'Expo 58. 'Pour un monde plus humain,'* (Bruxelles: Fonds Mercator i Dexia Banque, 2006.); isto tako: Rika Devos, ‘Smaltz, google and honky-tonk? Belgijski arhitekti na Expo-u 58 i atomski stil,’ može se naći na: [https://archive.ugent.be/retrieve/1829/def+devos\\_JDS8.pdf](https://archive.ugent.be/retrieve/1829/def+devos_JDS8.pdf), preuzeto 10. listopada 2008.



tectural motivations and purposes.<sup>1</sup> However different in their ideological messages – one selling the pleasures of the ‘American way of life’, the other the advantages of communism – the gargantuan pavilions of the two superpowers were strangely similar in their highly formal, classicized monumentality. Even more disturbingly, the EXPO was a sign of modernism succumbing to popular taste, particularly through the arrival of American commercial architecture in Europe. The Belgian section was especially reviled for its abundance of brightly-colored ‘space-age’ ornament that became known as the Expo Style or the Atomic Style. The Atomium – the chief landmark of the exhibition – captures the spirit of the EXPO and its fascination with science and technology, which was translated into one of Brussels’ favorite attractions endlessly reproduced in tourist merchandise, but which did not result in a ground-breaking piece of architecture on par with its British and French counterparts of the 19th century. ◀ Only a handful of pavilions received favorable reviews in the press. Le Corbusier’s *poème électronique*, materialized as the Phillips Pavilion, was in a category of its own. Then there was Egon Eiermann’s Pavilion of West Germany, which, understandably, steered away from classicized monumentality as far as possible in order to avoid the still fresh memories of Nazism. Sverre Fehn’s Pavilion of Norway was a masterpiece of the emerging Scandinavian version of regionalist modernism. And among the few remaining buildings praised for their architectural quality was one of the great surprises of the exhibition,

<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth overview of the Brussels EXPO, see: Rika Devos and Mil De Kooning, *L'Architecture Moderne à l'Expo 58. 'Pour un Monde Plus Humain,'* (Brussels: Fonds Mercator and Dexia Banque, 2006); also: Rika Devos, ‘Smaltz, google and honky-tonk? Belgian architects at Expo 58 and the Atomic Style,’ available at: [https://archive.ugent.be/retrieve/1829/def+devos\\_JDS8.pdf](https://archive.ugent.be/retrieve/1829/def+devos_JDS8.pdf), retrieved October 10, 2008.



nacizam. Paviljon Sverrea Fehna iz Norveške bio je remek-djelo novonastale skandinavske verzije regionalnog modernizma. A između još samo nekoliko preostalih građevina koje su hvaljene zbog svoje arhitektonske kvalitete jedno od velikih iznenađenja izložbe bio je – paviljon Jugoslavije, rad Vjenceslava Richtera. *Architectural review* ga je rangirao među ‘šest iznimnih paviljona’ na EXPO-u; u francuskim dnevnim novinama *L'Express* prošao je još bolje – bio je među četiri najbolja. Gurui modernizma kao što su Alfred Barr ml. iz newyorškog Muzeja moderne umjetnosti i Jean Cassou iz pariškog Muzeja suvremene umjetnosti hvalili su taj paviljon, a studenti arhitekture hrlili su ga vidjeti.<sup>2</sup>

**RICHTEROV PAVILJON** ◀ Ovaj je paviljon zaista bio malo remek-djelo. Bio je obješen na tanke čelične stupove, a njegovi su bestežinski, međusobno spojeni volumeni izgledali kao da lebde iznad platoa popločenog mramorom tako stvarajući dinamičnu kaskadu prostora koji teku, bez prepreka između eksterijera i interijera. Dio uspjeha ovog paviljona leži u činjenici da je, u usporedbi s pretrpanim komercijalizmom najvećeg dijela EXPO-a, djelovao kao utjelovljenje dobrog ukusa. Nije toliko izgledao kao sajamski paviljon, već je nalikovao nekoj elegantnoj, oskudno namještenoj umjetničkoj galeriji, koja je i sama bila umjetničko djelo: pažljivo orkestrirani modernistički *Gesamtkunstwerk* u kojemu je svaki izložak uzmicao pred dominantnom mondrianovskom estetikom trodimenzionalnog rastera, jedna ‘crno-bijela simfonija’ prot-

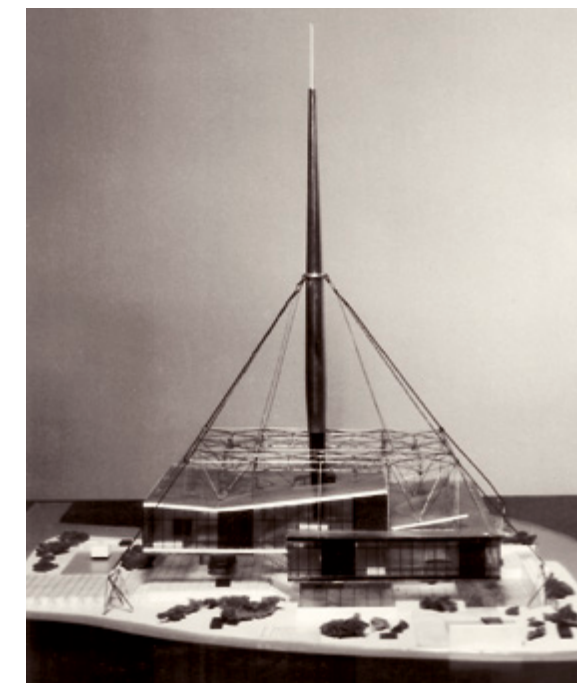
<sup>2</sup> Domaćini paviljona izvijestili su o brojnim arhitektima i studentima arhitekture koji su dolazili vidjeti paviljon posebno zbog njegove arhitektonske reputacije; pogledajte: ‘Izveštaji domaćina paviljona,’ n.p., ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

Vjenceslav Richter’s Pavilion of Yugoslavia. The *Architectural Review* ranked it among the ‘six outstanding pavilions’ at the EXPO; for the French daily *L'Express*, it fared even better, among the top four.<sup>2</sup> Gurus of modernism, such as Alfred Barr Jr. of the New York Museum of Modern Art and Jean Cassou of the Paris Museum of Contemporary Art praised the pavilion and students of architecture flocked to see it.<sup>3</sup>

**RICHTER'S PAVILION** ◀ The pavilion was indeed a small masterpiece. Suspended on thin steel columns, its weightless interlocking volumes appeared to float above a marble-paved plaza, creating a dynamic cascade of flowing spaces with no barriers between the exterior and interior. Part of the building’s success lay in the fact that, compared to the overcrowded commercialism of much of the EXPO, it seemed like an embodiment of good taste. Rather than a fair pavilion, it resembled an elegant, sparsely furnished art gallery that itself was an artwork: a carefully orchestrated modernist *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which every exhibit yielded to a dominating Mondrianesque aesthetic of three-dimensional grids, a ‘symphony in black and white’ interspersed with occasional

<sup>2</sup> *Architectural Review*, for example, ranked Richter’s Pavilion among the ‘six outstanding pavilions’ at the EXPO; see: ‘Six Outstanding Pavilions: Yugoslavia’, in: *Architectural Review* 124, no. 739 (August 1958): 116-18.

<sup>3</sup> The hosts of the pavilion reported about numerous architects and architecture students who came to see the pavilion specifically for its architectural reputation; see: ‘Izveštaji domaćina paviljona,’ n.p., ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.



◀ Paviljon SAD-a, Bruxelles, 1958.

◀ The Pavilion of the USA, Brussels, 1958

◀ Richterov prijedlog projekta u drugom krugu natječaja za paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1956.

◀ Richter’s entry for the second round of the competition for the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1956





kana tu i tamo mrljama boje.<sup>3</sup> U takvom postavu čak su i izloženi komadi industrijskih strojeva izgledali kao umjetnički predmeti. Belgijske su novine opisale taj paviljon kao 'palaču od čelika, stakla, drveta i mramora, čija elegancija leži u vlastitoj suzdržanosti.'<sup>4</sup> Mnogi posjetitelji i novinari komentirali su kako je Richterov paviljon, u vizualnoj buci EXPO-a, nudio dobrodošlo mjesto spokoja i tišine.<sup>5</sup> Jedan je novinar posebno istaknuo fotografsku privlačnost građevine, primjećujući kako ona privlači amaterske fotografe u potrazi za dobrim snimkama.<sup>6</sup> Ako ovi opisi podsjećaju na najikoničniji paviljon 20. stoljeća – paviljon Njemačke u Barceloni 1929. godine – tada nije čudno da je Richterova građevina neke

<sup>3</sup> 'Crno-bijela simfonija' bio je opis objavljen u belgijskim komunističkim dnevničkim novinama *Drapeau Rouge*; 'Izveštaj TANJUG-u,' 10. svibnja 1958., ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

<sup>4</sup> 'Première manifestation au pavillon yougoslave,' *Le Peuple* (Bruxelles), 4. veljače 1958.

<sup>5</sup> Pogledajte komentare posjetitelja (Knjiga utisaka), ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

<sup>6</sup> Belgijski *Le Peuple* pisao je u jednom članku pod naslovom 'Čudo elegancije i dobrog ukusa': 'Ovdje se nitko ne uzbuđuje. Bez žurbe čovjek može šetati ili sjesti, gledajući kako se fotografi šecu uokolo. Jer, izgleda da su amateri lijepih fotografija zakazali sastanak u jugoslavenskom paviljonu, što dokazuje njegov potpuni arhitektonski uspjeh.' Djelomični prijevod izvornog teksta u: 'Izveštaj TANJUG-u,' 10. svibnja 1958., ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

splashes of colour.<sup>4</sup> In such settings, even the exhibited pieces of industrial machinery looked like objects of art. The Belgian press described the pavilion as a 'palace in steel, glass, wood, and marble whose elegance lies in its restraint.'<sup>5</sup> Many visitors and journalists commented that, in the visual noise of the EXPO, Richter's pavilion offered a welcome point of calm and repose.<sup>6</sup> One journalist particularly highlighted the building's photographic appeal, noting how it attracts amateur photographers always in search of good shots.<sup>7</sup> If these descriptions bring to mind that most iconic of 20th century exhibition pavilions – the 1929 Pavilion of Germany in Barcelona – then it is no wonder that Richter's building

<sup>4</sup> 'Symphony in black and white' was a description published in the Belgian communist daily *Drapeau Rouge*; 'Izveštaj TANJUG-u,' May 10, 1958, ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

<sup>5</sup> 'Première manifestation au pavillon yougoslave,' *Le Peuple* (Brussels), February 4, 1958.

<sup>6</sup> See Visitors' comments (Knjiga utisaka), ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.

<sup>7</sup> Belgian *Le Peuple* wrote in an article entitled 'A Miracle of Elegance and Good Taste': 'No one gets upset here. One can peacefully stroll or sit down, watching how photographers walk around. For it seems that lovers of good photography scheduled a meeting at the Yugoslav pavilion, which proves its complete architectural success.' Partial translation of the original text in: 'Izveštaj TANJUG-u,' May 10, 1958, ASCG, Fond 56, Fascikla 26.



od posjetitelja podsjetila na rad Miesa van der Rohea.<sup>7</sup> Zaista, opis fotogenične građevine bez vrata, čiji 'tekući prostori' zamućuju razliku između onoga unutra i onoga vani i čija se minimalistička estetika temelji na 'lebdećim' plohamo dobro odgovara i Miesovom i Richterovom paviljonu. Ipak, možda je najzanimljivija paralela činjenica da je u oba slučaja upravo estetika građevine bila ono što je najbolje formuliralo moćne političke poruke. Ako je Miesov modernizam predstavljao modernu, demokratsku weimarsku Njemačku, različitu od ratnohuškačkog Wilhelmskog Carstva, Richterov je projekt bio shvaćen kao reprezentacija reformiranog, liberalnog, samoupravnog socijalizma Jugoslavije, različitog od svijeta iza 'željezne zavjese'.<sup>8</sup> Ta je interpretacija bila samo djelomično proizvod izložbe o političkom i društvenom sustavu kakva je bila postavljena unutar paviljona, a mnogo više o već utvr-

<sup>7</sup> Kako su izvijestili domaćini paviljona, jedan američki arhitekt čak je izrazio iznenađenje da se Richter obrazovao u Zagrebu, a ne negdje u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama; 'Izveštaji domaćina paviljona.'

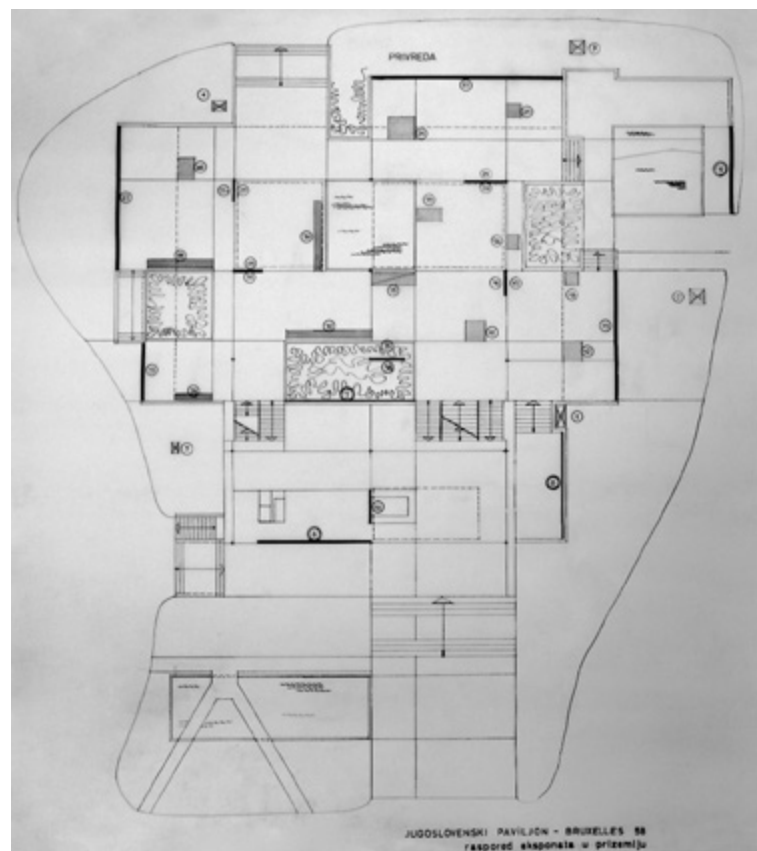
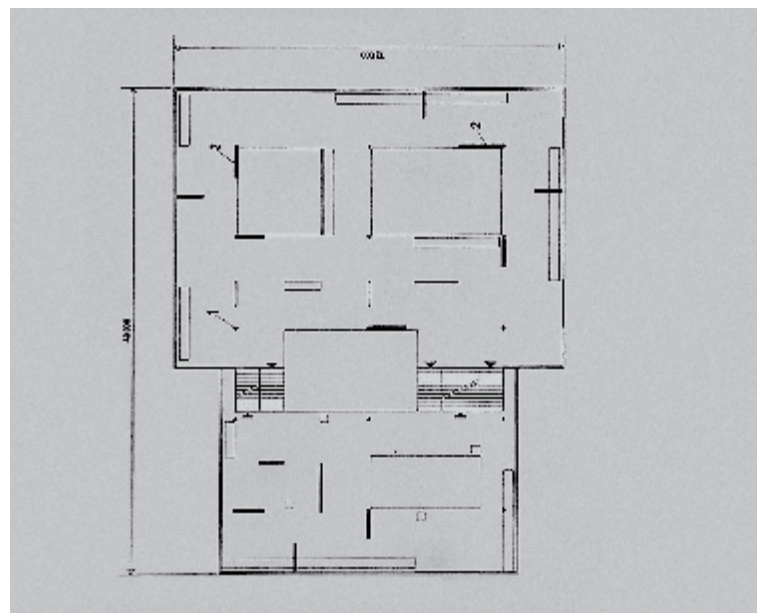
<sup>8</sup> Za raspravu o političkim značenjima Miesovog paviljona, pogledajte: Wolf Tegethoff, 'Od opskurnosti do zrelosti: prodor Miesa van der Rohea u modernizam,' u: *Mies van der Rohe: kritički eseji*, uredio Franz Schulze (New York: Muzej moderne umjetnosti, 1989.), 29-94.

reminded some of its visitors of Mies van der Rohe's work.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the description of a photogenic building with no doors, whose 'flowing spaces' blurred the distinction between the inside and outside, and whose minimalist aesthetic was based on 'floating' planes, fits well both Mies's and Richter's pavilions. But perhaps the most interesting parallel was the fact that in both cases it was the very aesthetics of the building that couched powerful political messages. If Mies's modernism represented a modern, democratic Weimar Germany distinct from the warmongering Wilhelmine Empire, Richter's design was understood as a representation of Yugoslavia's reformed, liberal, self-managing socialism distinct from the world behind the Iron Curtain.<sup>9</sup> This interpretation was only partly a product of an exhibition on the political and social system that was mounted inside the pavilion and much

<sup>8</sup> As the pavilion hosts reported, one American architect even expressed surprise that Richter was educated in Zagreb and not somewhere in the United States; 'Izveštaji domaćina paviljona.'

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of political meanings of Mies's pavilion, see: Wolf Tegethoff, 'From Obscurity to Maturity: Mies van der Rohe's Breakthrough to Modernism,' in: *Mies van der Rohe: Critical Essays*, edited by Franz Schulze (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1989.), 29-94.





▲ Planovi druge galerije i prizemlja, paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1958.

▲ Second gallery and ground floor plans, the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1958

more of the already well established manner in which the West viewed Yugoslav modern art.<sup>10</sup> In this view, the pavilion's modernism was a symptom of the country's break from the Soviet orbit and the absence of Socialist Realism confirmed the absence of direct political intrusion on artistic liberties.<sup>11</sup> The building's completely open ground floor and the fact that it had no doors were understood as analogous to Yugoslavia's open borders and its recently established international policy of 'peaceful active coexistence'. Modesty and restraint were seen as signs of a focus on human values instead of megalomaniac representation, etc.<sup>12</sup> It is questionable to what extent the architect and the Commissariat of the Yugoslav Section consciously pursued some of the finer points of these interpretations. An uncompromising modernism and avoidance of anything stereotypically folksy were from the start main points in the concept of the pavilion; but Richter himself doubted the ability of architects to literally capture the character of their nations, even though he eventually acknowledged that his pavilion expressed Yugoslavia's 'optimism and openness'.<sup>13</sup> The careful aesthetic coordination of the building and the exhibitions shown inside was also very much in line with his ideas on the synthesis of visual arts, which he expressed in the Manifesto of the group Exat 51. But 'modesty and restraint' were not initially on Richter's mind and they emerged only as a circumstantial result of the fact that his original design, which had won the second round of a pan-Yugoslav competition in 1956, could not be executed.

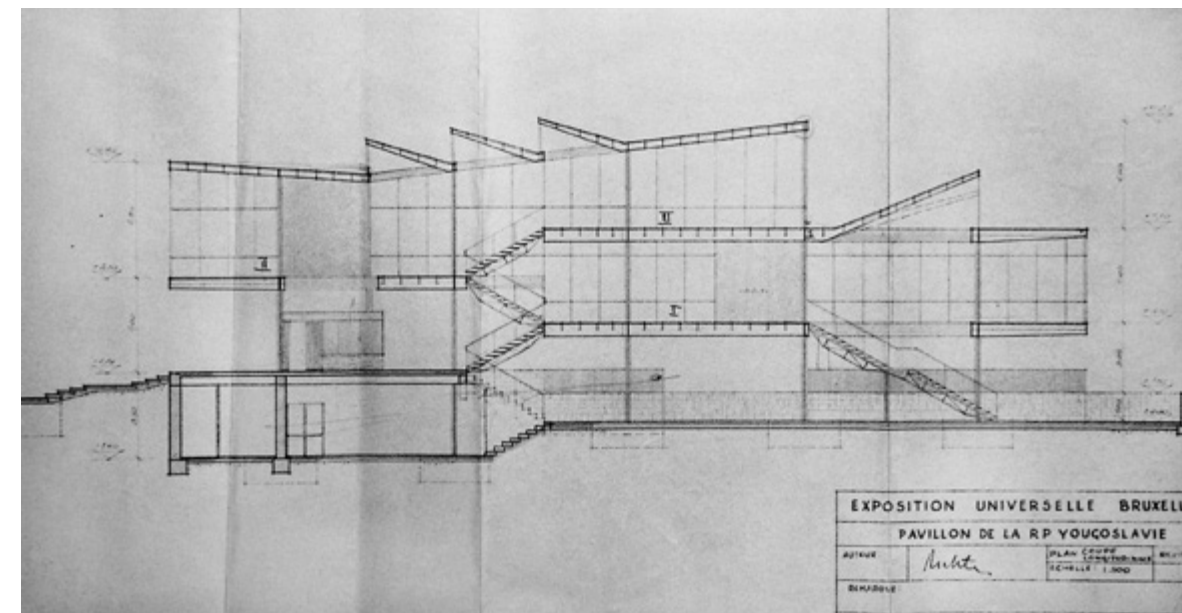
**THE ORIGINAL DESIGN** According to competition entry, the whole building was supposed to be suspended from a gigantic cable-stayed mast, thus focusing the support to only one point and completely opening the ground floor. This was a spectacular concept, calculated to attract attention through sheer technological daring, revealing a different set of values from the cooler, aestheticized restraint of the final product. Despite Richter's persistent attempts to convince the Commissariat that such a structure was viable – he even

<sup>10</sup> About foreign views of Yugoslav architecture, see my forthcoming text 'East? West? Or Both?' Foreign interpretations of Architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia', in: *Journal of Architecture* (December 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, the three other socialist states participating at the EXPO 58, the USSR, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, also presented pavilions whose architecture could be described as modern. But they were equipped with artworks that revealed traces of Socialist Realism, especially in the Soviet pavilion, so that Richter's building, devoid of any obvious ideological symbols, still presented an immediate visual distinction.

<sup>12</sup> These were all comments of foreign visitors; see: 'Izveštaji domaćina paviljona', n.p., Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

<sup>13</sup> See: Vjenceslav Richter, 'Osvrt na arhitektonске rezultate izložbe u Bruxellesu 1958.', in: *Arhitektura* (Zagreb) XII, no. 1-6 (1958): 56-62.



◀ Uzdužni presjek, paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1958.

◀ Longitudinal section, the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1958

denom načinu na koji je tadašnji Zapad vidio jugoslavensku modernu umjetnost.<sup>9</sup> U tom smislu je modernizam paviljona bio simptom razlaza Jugoslavije sa sovjetskom sferom, a odsutnost socijalističkog realizma potvrdila je nepostojanje izravne političke umiješanosti u umjetničke slobode.<sup>10</sup> Potpuno otvoreno prizemlje građevine i činjenica da nije imala vrata shvaćalo se kao analogija s otvorenim granicama Jugoslavije i njenom nedavno uspostavljenom međunarodnom politikom 'mirnog aktivnog suživota'. Skromnost i suzdržanost viđene su kao znakovi usredotočenosti na ljudske vrijednosti, a ne na megalomansku reprezentaciju, itd.<sup>11</sup> Otvoreno je za raspravu do koje su mjere arhitekta i Komesarijat jugoslavenske sekcije svjesno slijedili neke od finijih točaka ovih interpretacija. Beskompromisni modernizam i izbjegavanje bilo čega što je stereotipno folklorno od početka su bile glavne točke u konceptu paviljona; ali, sam Richter je sumnjao u sposobnost arhitekata da doslovno odraze karakter svojih naroda, iako je na kraju priznao da je njegov paviljon izražavao 'optimizam i otvorenost' Jugoslavije.<sup>12</sup> Pažljiva

<sup>9</sup> O inozemnim stavovima o jugoslavenskoj arhitekturi, pogledajte moj predstojeći tekst 'Istok? Zapad? Ili oboje?' Inozemne interpretacije o arhitekturi u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji' u: *Journal of Architecture* (prosinac 2008.).

<sup>10</sup> Doduše, druge tri socijalističke zemlje na EXPO-u 58, SSSR, Mađarska i Čehoslovačka, također su predstavile paviljone čija se arhitektura mogla opisati kao moderna. Ali, oni su imali umjetničke radove koji su otkrivali tragove socijalističkog realizma, posebno sovjetski paviljon, tako da je Richterova zgrada, oslobođena bilo kakvih očiglednih ideoloških simbola i dalje bila vizualno različita na prvi pogled.

<sup>11</sup> Ovo su sve bili komentari stranih posjetitelja; pogledajte: 'Izveštaji domaćina paviljona, n.p., Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Fond 56, Fascikla 6.

<sup>12</sup> Pogledajte: Vjenceslav Richter, 'Osvrt na arhitektonске rezultate izložbe u Bruxellesu 1958.', u: *Arhitektura* (Zagreb) XII, br. 1-6 (1958.): 56-62.

privately hired a structural engineer to confirm this – the mast concept was deemed unbuildable with the required deadlines and replaced with a grid of twelve conventional columns. At one point, even some of Yugoslavia's leading politicians expressed their opinions on the competing concepts: some members of the Federal Executive Council, as well as Moša Pijade, himself a painter, were very enthusiastic about Richter's solution; Edvard Kardelj thought it was too extravagant and hoped for something 'quieter'.<sup>14</sup> There is no proof, however, that their opinions mattered in the final decision, which seems to have been made purely on technical grounds. Instead of a central mast, Richter succeeded in constructing a daring free-standing sculpture, a light obelisk consisting of six tensile arches that functioned as a visual marker of the pavilion. The mast concept revealed Richter's self-professed interest in constructivism, displaying an affinity with the movement's penchant for suspended and cable-stayed structures evident in such iconic projects as Hannes Meyer's *Petersschule* and Ivan Leonidov's Lenin Institute of Librarianship. The removal of the mast therefore also meant the removal of some of the project's (neo)avant-garde connotations, putting it more in line with the exhibition of modern art shown within and around the pavilion, which largely belonged to what critics later called 'socialist aestheticism'.<sup>15</sup> It was a 'moderate' modernism that

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Vojo Pekić to 'comrade Bata' (probably Mihailo Bata Javorski, the Ambassador of Yugoslavia to Belgium) of October 5, 1956, Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Fond 56, Fascikla 1.

<sup>15</sup> It included the crème de la crème of Yugoslav painting and sculpture: Hegedušić, Bakić, Murtić, Protić, Lubarda, and others.



estetska koordinacija zgrade i izložbi postavljenih unutar nje bila je itekako u skladu s njegovim idejama o sintezi vizualnih umjetnosti, koje je izrazio u Manifestu grupe Exat 51. Ali, 'skromnost i suzdržanost' nisu postojale u Richterovim početnim razmišljanjima, nego su se javile samo kao uvjetima uzrokovani rezultat činjenice da njegov originalni projekt, koji je pobijedio u drugom krugu općejugoslavenskog natječaja 1956. godine, nije mogao biti realiziran.

**ORIGINALNI PROJEKT** ¶ Prema natječajnom prijedlogu cijela zgrada trebala je visiti s gigantskog jarbola poduprtog kablovima, čime bi se potporanj usredotočio na samo jednu točku, a prizemlje potpuno otvorilo. To je bio spektakularan koncept, zamišljen da privuče pažnju isključivo tehnološkom smionošću, otkrivajući vrijednosti drugačije od hladnije, estetizirane suzdržanosti konačnog proizvoda. Unatoč Richterovim upornim pokušajima da uvjeri Komesarijat kako je takva struktura moguća – čak je i privatno unajmio statičara da to i potvrdi – koncept jarbola smatran je nemogućim za izvedbu u traženim rokovima, te je zamijenjen rasterom od dvanaest konvencionalnih stupova. U jednom trenutku su čak i neki od vodećih jugoslavenskih političara izrazili svoje mišljenje o konceptima koji su se natjecali: neki članovi Izvršnog Vijeća Federacije, kao i Moša Pijade, slikar, bili su jako oduševljeni Richterovim rješenjem, Edvard Kardelj je smatrao da je previše ekstravagantno i nadao se nečemu 'umjerenijem'.<sup>13</sup> Ipak, ne postoje dokazi da su njihova razmišljanja utjecala na konačnu odluku, koja je, čini se, donesena iz sasvim tehničkih razloga. Umjesto središnjeg jarbola Richter je uspio konstruirati smionu samostojeću skulpturu, jednostavni obelisk koji se sastojao od šest vlačnih lukova koji su funkcionirali kao vizualna obilježja paviljona. ¶ Koncept jarbola otkrio je Richterovo samozvano zanimanje za konstruktivizam, pokazujući njegov afinitet za sklonosti tog pokreta prema visećim i kablovskim strukturama, očitim u ikoničnim projektima kao što su Petersschule Hannesa Meyera i Lenjinov Knjižničarski institut Ivana Leonidova. Uklanjanje jarbola stoga je značilo i uklanjanje dijela (neo)avangardnih konotacija projekta, smještajući ga više na liniju izložbe moderne umjetnosti, izložene unutar i izvan paviljona, što je najvećim dijelom spadalo u ono što su kritičari kasnije nazivali 'socijalistička estetičnost'.<sup>14</sup> To je bio 'skromni' modernizam koji je zamijenio socijalistički realizam

<sup>13</sup> Pismo Voje Pekića 'drugaru Bati' (vjerojatno Mihailu Bati Javorskom, ambasadoru Jugoslavije u Belgiji) iz 5. listopada 1956., Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, Fond 56, Fascikla 1.

<sup>14</sup> Ovdje je uvršten vrh vrhova jugoslavenskog slikarstva i kiparstva: Hegedušić, Bakić, Murtić, Protić, Lubarda i drugi.







◀ Umjetnička izložba u drugoj galeriji, paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1958.

◀ An art exhibition at the second gallery, the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1958

replaced Socialist Realism as the ‘official’ art in Yugoslavia in the 1950s; focusing on artistic autonomy, it refused to engage with critiquing and changing reality. Because of their taste for experiment and calls for radical changes of visual environment, Richter and the circle around Exat 51 have been often described as a direct antipode to socialist aestheticism, an avant-garde ‘other line’ in Croatian art.<sup>16</sup> Richter’s pavilion thus brought together, to paraphrase Matei Calinescu’s famous classification, two ‘faces of modernity’ of varying levels of radicalism, modernism and avant-gardism, seemingly without contradiction.<sup>17</sup>

**MODERNISM AT A CROSSROADS** ¶ The resulting synthesis was an unqualified success with educated elites: critics, artists, architects. But the popular reception was much cooler. Many ordinary Yugoslavs who visited the EXPO thought that the pavilion was ‘empty’ and ‘too modern’. Some foreigners, too, observed that the elegant but cool building conveyed nothing of the country’s ‘vibrancy’ and that it was more suited to a quiet Switzerland than the colourful Yugoslavia – it obviously frustrated the stereotypical views of a Balkan country.<sup>18</sup> Faced with such criticisms and dwindling numbers of visitors, the Commissariat decided to make some adjustments and during the last month of the exhibition showed a collection of hand-made dolls in folk costumes by an amateur ethnographer. Obviously playing up to folksy stereotypes, these dolls were finally a great popular success that significantly boosted visits and attracted attention from the media. ¶ A third, populist ‘face of modernity’ thus emerged in the pavilion alongside the two elite ones.<sup>19</sup> This effectively summed up the range

<sup>16</sup> The term ‘another line’ was coined by Ješa Denegri; among other sources, see his book *Prilozi za drugu liniju: kronika jednog kritičarskog zalaganja* (Zagreb: Horetzky, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> Calinescu traces five faces of modernity: modernism, avant-garde, decadence, kitsch, and postmodernism; see: Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, second edition (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> See Visitors’ comments (Knjiga utisaka).

<sup>19</sup> In Calinescu’s taxonomy, the populist ‘face of modernity’ is kitsch, which, in my opinion, does not precisely apply to the exhibited dolls, since they were not industrially produced for mass-consumption. But their cuteness, ‘folksiness’ and playing up to stereotypes were clearly aimed at easy consumption by a broad audience.

◀ Izložba društvene i političke organizacije (dolje) i turizma (gore), paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1958.

◀ Exhibitions of social and political organization (below) and tourism (above), the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Brussels, 1958



kao ‘oficijelnu’ umjetnost u Jugoslaviji 1950-ih; fokusirajući se na umjetničku autonomiju, on se odbijao baviti kritiziranjem i mijenjanjem stvarnosti. Zbog svoje sklonosti prema eksperimentu i pozivima na radikalne promjene vizualnog okoliša Richter i krug oko Exata 51 često se opisuju kao direktni antipodi socijalističkom esteticizmu, jedna avangarda ‘druge linije’ u hrvatskoj umjetnosti.<sup>15</sup> Richterov paviljon je stoga spojio, da parafraziram Matei Calinescuovu čuvenu klasifikaciju, dva ‘lica modernosti’ različitih razina radikalizma, modernizma i avangarde, naizgled bez kontradikcija.<sup>16</sup>

**MODERNIZAM NA PREKRETNICI** ¶ Rezultirajuća sinteza bila je potpuni uspjeh među obrazovanom elitom: kritičarima, umjetnicima, arhitektima. Ali su široke mase paviljon prihvatile mnogo hladnije. Mnogi obični Jugoslaveni koji su posjetili EXPO smatrali su da je ‘prazan’ i ‘previše moderan’. I neki su stranci također primijetili da elegantna, ali hladna zgrada nije prenila ništa od ‘vibrantnosti’ ove zemlje i da je više odgovarala smirenoj Švicarskoj, nego šarolikoj Jugoslaviji – očigledno je narušavala stereotipna shvaćanja o balkanskoj zemlji.<sup>17</sup> Suočeni s takvim kritikama i sve manjim brojem posjetitelja, u Komesarijatu su odlučili napraviti neke preinake, pa su tijekom posljednjeg mjeseca izložbe izložili kolekciju rukom rađenih lutaka u narodnim nošnjama, rad jednog amaterskog etnografa. Očigledno igrajući na kartu folklornog stereotipa, te su lutke na kraju postigle velik uspjeh koji je značajno povećao posjet i privukao pažnju medija. ¶ Treće, populističko ‘lice modernosti,’ tako se javilo u paviljonu uz dva elitna.<sup>18</sup> To je zapravo rezimiralo raspon pitanja koja je EXPO postavio pred modernu arhitekturu, jer je postiglo široko prihvaćanje uskih krugova diljem svijeta: problem raskida elitne i popularne kulture, slabljenja avangardnog radikalizma i djelotvorne političke reprezentacije. Pokušaji bavljenja tim pitanjima doveli su do velikog broja različitih novih arhitektonskih i umjetničkih praksi u desetljeću koje je uslijedilo iza EXPO-a, ali u Bruxellesu su ona očigledno još uvijek bila bez odgovora. Richterov paviljon u Bruxellesu stoga je zauzeo posebni položaj prekretnice, kao zakašnjeli završetak jedne ere herojskog

<sup>15</sup> Termin ‘druga linija’ osmislio je Ješa Denegri; između ostalih izvora, pogledajte njegovu knjigu *Prilozi za drugu liniju: kronika jednog kritičarskog zalaganja* (Zagreb: Horetzky, 2003.).

<sup>16</sup> Calinescu je uspostavio pet lica modernosti: modernizam, avangardu, dekadenciju, kič i postmodernizam; pogledajte: Matei Calinescu, *Pet lica modernosti*, drugo izdanje (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987.).

<sup>17</sup> Pogledajte komentare posjetitelja (Knjiga utisaka).

<sup>18</sup> U Calinescuovoj klasifikaciji, populističko ‘lice modernosti’ je kič koji, po mom mišljenju, nije precizno primjenjiv na izložene lutke, jer one nisu bile industrijski proizvedene za masovnu potrošnju. Ali, njihov zgodni izgled, ‘narodnost’ i igranje na kartu stereotipa jasno su ciljali na veliku potrošnju od strane široke javnosti.

of questions that the EXPO posed modern architecture as it acquired broad acceptance from the establishments around the world: the problem of the divorce between the elite and popular culture; of the blunting of avant-garde radicalism; and of effective political representation. Attempts to address these questions would lead to a variety of new architectural and artistic practices in the decade that followed the EXPO,



▲ Izložba lutaka u narodnim nošnjama, paviljon Jugoslavije, Bruxelles, 1958.

▲ Exhibition of dolls in folk costumes, the Pavilion of Yugoslavia, Bruxelles, 1958

but in Brussels they were still without clear answers. Richter’s Brussels pavilion thus occupied a peculiar watershed position, as a belated closure of an era of heroic modernism and at the same time an announcement of a more complex time that would question the basic assumptions of its predecessors. ¶ The legend of Mies’s Barcelona Pavilion led to the creation of its replica more than fifty years after the original was dismantled. Richter’s Brussels Pavilion, on the other hand, still exists, as it was reassembled as the St. Paulus College in Wevelgem, Belgium. And even though its original elegance has been diminished because of the enclosed ground-floor and partitioned interior, it is still a handsome building that eloquently speaks of the extraordinary inspiration and skills of its architect. At its fiftieth birthday, it deserves to be remembered as one of the most remarkable buildings that former Yugoslavia produced, a veritable ‘Barcelona Pavilion’ of Croatian architecture.

**NOTES** ¶ The basis for the article was research conducted at the Archive of Serbia and Montenegro (Arhiv Srbije i Crne Gore, ASCG) in Belgrade, which is also the source of all illustrations presented here. My warmest thanks go to the friendly staff of the Archive for their friendly patience with my incessant demands.



modernizma i u isto vrijeme najava jednog složenijeg vremena, koje će propitkivati temeljne pretpostavke svojih prethodnika.

Legendarni Miesov paviljon u Barceloni dovela je do stvaranja njegove replike više od pedeset godina nakon što je original demontiran. Richterov paviljon u Bruxellesu, s druge strane, i dalje postoji, jer je ponovo sastavljen kao zgrada St. Paulus koledža u Wevelgemu u Belgiji. Iako je njegova izvorna elegancija umanjena zbog zatvorenog prizemlja i pregrađenog interijera, još uvijek je to lijepa zgrada koja rječito govori o izvanrednoj inspiraciji i vještinama njenog arhitekta. Na svoj pedeseti rođendan zaslužuje da ju upamtimo kao jednu od najizuzetnijih građevina koje je bivša Jugoslavija proizvela, kao pravi pravcati 'Barcelonski paviljon' hrvatske arhitekture.

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