



# ARCHITECTURE & POLITICS OF XX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

From invention to heritage



**9-10.06.2022**  
**NDK, BTA**



# XX

9-10  
JUNE  
2022

Official languages of the  
forum: French, Bulgarian,  
English.

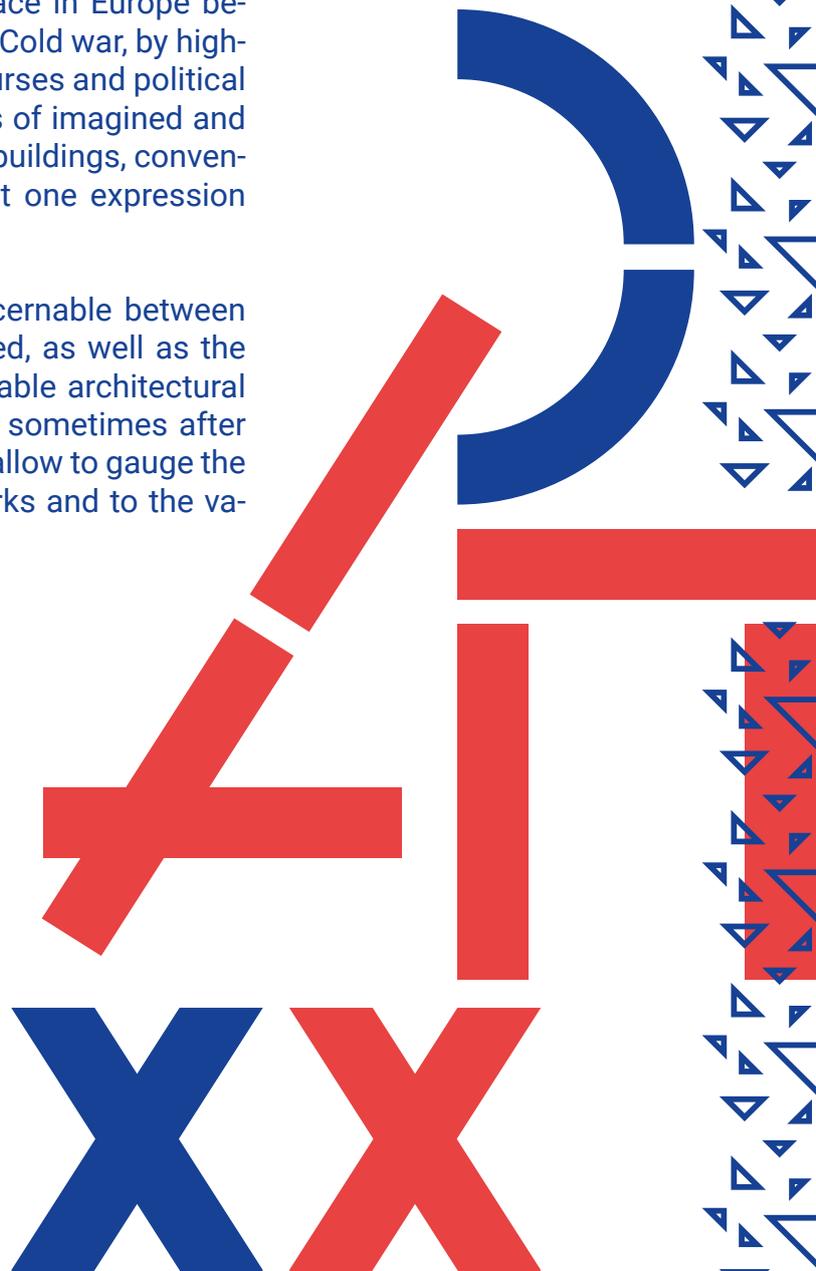
Simultaneous translations  
provided in the 3 languages.

No other art transcribes the politics of nations as directly as architecture, be it at an urban scale or at the scale of a single building. And few historical eras other than the 20th century have seen such considerable upheaval occur within architecture and politics at the same time.

Without any pretense to establish an impossible overall cartography, this forum intends to confront some of the most significant experiences to have taken place in Europe between the end of WW1 and the end of the Cold war, by highlighting the complex links between discourses and political strategies, as well as the transformations of imagined and built vocabularies, of which monumental buildings, conventionally linked to totalitarianisms, are but one expression among others.

Continuity lines and breaking points discernable between the 1920s and the 1980s will be identified, as well as the ways in which many of the most remarkable architectural creations have become heritage objects, sometimes after intense polemics, since these processes allow to gauge the citizens' adherence to the architects' works and to the values that these works seem to embody.

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## 09.00 Opening

Florence Robine, Ambassador of France, Atanas Atanasov, Minister of Culture (TBC), Yordanka Fandakova, Mayor of Sofia (TBC)

### 09.20 The "New European Bauhaus", the power of a project, a century later: videoconference

Lauriane Bertrand, member of the cabinet of the Commissioner Gabriel, in charge of Culture and New European Bauhaus

### 09.30 Introductory conference: The government of space, or the political dimension of architecture.

Prof. Jean-Louis Cohen

## 10.15 Session 1 - Nationalism and modernism, 1918-1939

The period between the two World wars was scarred by the physical, social and mental trauma from the First World War. The feeling of safety and balance from previous years was now bogged down in the mud of suffering and extremes. Rejecting everything old in the name of a radical renewal was a major intellectual impulse during the 1920s. The tendential universality of the avant-garde vocabulary then entered in a fruitful dialogue with local and national values, interpreted from very different perspectives.

What is the relationship between that time's radical architectural visions and reformist and totalitarian political strategies? How did the modern discourse coexist with eclecticism and patriotic monumentalism? How have the tensions between utopian social views, technocratic visions and the expectations of the rulers in power molded the urban landscapes of a continent already anxious about what was to come?

### Good blocks – Bad blocks

Prof. Dr. Angelika Schnell, Institute for Arts and Architecture, Vienna

### 1919-1940: Behind the façades of architectural modernism in Romania

Arch. Dr. Radu Tudor Ponta, University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu, Bucharest

### Architecture and politics in Italy under Fascism

Prof. Marida Talamona, Roma Tre University, Rome

### Ukrainian national communist heritage under Russian threat

Arch. Ievgeniia Gubkina, co-founder of NGO Urban Forms Center, Kharkiv

## 12.30 - 13.30 Debate

## 15.00 Session 2 – Socialist realism and Soviet hegemony, 1945-1955

In the wake of WW2, Fascism and Nazism were wiped out, while Stalin's USSR extended its sphere of influence and exported the monumental themes of the so-called "socialist" realism. What is the specific vocabulary of an architecture implemented during a rather short, albeit intense period of time, and how has this vocabulary integrated – or rejected – the modern forms from before the war? How have the precepts enacted in the Soviet Union been inflected by local architectural cultures, which remained partially permeable to Western inputs? And how can such a modernized historicism be considered in comparison with what Western Europe was implementing at that same time?

### Tirana, or how Mussolini's urbanism met Soviet esthetics. Form follows ideology...

Prof. Dr. Armand Vokshi and Associate professor Denada Veizaj, Polytechnic University of Tirana

### Is Socialist Realism (de)colonial? The Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, 1952-2022

Dr. Michal Murawski, University College London

### On Socialist Realism in Romania. Achievements and failures

Arch. Dr. Irina Tulbure, University of Architecture and Urbanism Ion Mincu, Bucharest

### Le Havre is not Stalingrad-sur-Mer. The monumental project of Auguste Perret

Arch. Dr. Ana-bela de Araujo, National School of Architecture, Marseille

### The Non-Synchronicity of Politics and Urbanism: the Largo Ensemble of Sofia

Dr. Elitza Stanoeva, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia

## 17.30 – 18.30 Debate

Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>  
NDK, hall 8



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### 09.00 Session 3 – A rediscovered modernity, 1956-1991

With the détente of the 1960s and the muted continuation of the Cold War through the 1970s and 1980s, European architecture continued to be guided by state policies, while in the East previous aesthetic subordination to the precepts of the State-party progressively dissipated. Aspirations towards more social well-being and a relative emancipation coincided with ambitious economic, cultural and urban projects. During this phase, convergences between the two Europes were numerous, from the common emphasis on the industrialization of housing production, to the search for expressive forms, inspired by the work of Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto or Oscar Niemeyer.

#### Architecture in Global Socialism

Prof. Dr. Lukasz Stanek, University of Manchester

#### Socialist Modern. Architecture in the GDR 1950 – 1990

Dr. Thomas Flierl, Art and Architecture historian, Berlin

#### A Modern language on the seaside

Prof. Todor Krestev, architect, Sofia

#### The Case of the Central Zone of New Belgrade

Arch. PHD student, Jelica Jovanovic, Belgrade

#### Oscar Niemeyer and the monuments of culture in France

Prof. Dr. Richard Klein, National School of Architecture, Lille

11.45 – 12.45 Debate

### 14.00 Session 4 - Preserving a polemic heritage

Two decades after the end of the 20th century, the recomposition of the European political landscape goes together with the emergence of a distinct heritage awareness depending on the country. Buildings and some urban ensembles made by modern heroes have appeared on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Meanwhile, the sites and large complexes created by totalitarian regimes have become bearers of memory - so strong is their link to the construction of the so-called "real" socialism. They remain an embodiment of its program, and generate, depending on the case, a retrospective horror or an indefinable nostalgia.

While they are being reused – some destinations haven't changed – or repurposed, the question about the meaning of their form is still omnipresent. Such as they are, these buildings constitute unquestionable historical documents, just as well as the edifices built for the technocratic programs of Western Europe. Together, they all form the plural heritage of our continent.

#### Contested heritage: contextualizing difficult pasts

Arch. Dr. Aneta Vasileva and Arch. Dr. Emilia Kaleva, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy, Sofia

#### The Commodification of history: architecture and heritage in Hungary since the 2010s

PhD candidate Orsolya Sudar, Budapest

#### Collective Authorship. From the Palace of Ceaușescu to the House of the People

Călin Dan, director of the National Contemporary Art Museum, Bucharest

#### Nowa Huta, the Socialist-realist twin of Cracow – a continuing history

Dr. Dorota Jedruch, Institute of Art History of the Jagiellonian University, Krakow

#### The Stalinallee and the Hansaviertel – conceptual oppositions and heritage complementarity in Berlin

Prof. Dr. Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, Berlin

16.45-17.45 Debate

17.45-18.00 Conclusions

#### MODERATORS

**Andrei Țârnea**, diplomat, former director of the Aspen Romania think tank

**Jean-Louis Cohen**, international architecture historian of the XXth century, scientific advisor of the Forum

**Richard Klein**, architect, historian, president of Docomomo France

**Georges Angelov**, journalist, television presenter and producer (BNT), translator

**BTA**  
**Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup>**

