

Romanian Postmodern Daydreaming. Drawings, Discourses, and Competitions in Late Socialist Romania

This paper is intending to present some Romanian architecture creations devised in the period spanning from the late 1970s and the 1980s up to the Revolutions of 1989. It will follow a series of themes, from the cultural appropriation of the postmodern phenomenon, magazines, autonomous forms of creation to international competitions and some Romanian groups.

A truncated appropriation—European context, postmodern heroes—theories, schools and magazines

As much as society and culture are concerned, the European 1970s and 1980s are usually analysed through the perspective of the great divide: the free, capitalist Western Bloc and the repressed, ideologically controlled Eastern Bloc. This article seeks to present a common perspective in architecture, through the lens of graphical representation and critical discourse.

An important subject in 1980s Romania was the postmodern phenomenon. Romanian architects had a delayed but sincere fascination with the subject. One must understand that the way postmodernism is assimilated in such a closed context is unique. Postmodernity is in itself a complex and multifaceted current. If one were only to dive into it from the perspective of architecture theory, its relationship to Modernism, the 1960s, the 1970s, the American avant-garde, the European avant-garde, how it all crossed the Iron Curtain is, to say the least, truncated. Huyssen's conclusions on postmodernism, a "noticeable change in sensibility"¹, in comparison to the preceding period and a "growing nostalgia for various life form the past seems to be a strong undercurrent in the culture of the 1970s and 1980s"² are truly adequate in the case of Late Socialist Romanian architecture. Mainly, under the influence of Western trends, the well-established modernist recipes of the architecture schools are being slowly infused with postmodern ingredients.

The state of continuously worsening cultural isolation and censorship has failed to completely shut off the Eastern Bloc. This isolation has produced

1 Huyssen 1986: 181.

2 Huyssen 1986: 186.

some interesting cultural leakages. Regarding the subject of architecture—as a cultural manifestation—it is worth mentioning some particular developments. For one, the cultural thirst has produced a peculiar way of fetishizing Western architecture magazines like *Domus*, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, *Architectural Design* or *Japan Architect*. These were the main vessels of Western postmodern trends in 1980s Romania.

I have interviewed some of the architects which were, at first, architecture students at the Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture (hereinafter referred to as Ion Mincu) and afterwards practicing architects, working in the state-run Institute de Proiectare (translated as Design Institutes), during the 1980s. One of these architects, Marius Marcu-Lapadat, remembers “When you no longer had access to information, the moment you reached it you devoured it with great appetite. I remember, for example, the first time I travelled to a Western school in Turin in 1992. I had received a *Domus* magazine in 1989 from someone who had come from Italy, and I knew even the advertisements by heart. The articles, even more so. And speaking of the respective issue to someone in Turin, I started to give all kinds of details that impressed them, they probably imagined that we Romanians read the magazines with such attention.”³

3 Sabău, Marcu-Lapadat 2019.

Dorin Ștefan remembers that “In the summer I would go to the seaside, at Mamaia or Venus and look around the hotel reception because they would bring a *Domus* every now and then. It was a colossal hunt.”⁴ At the same time, these magazines did not feel enough, as Dorin Ștefan admits, “we often took all the information from an image and a rather truncated image.”⁵

4 Sabău, Ștefan 2019.

5 Ibid.

These individuals grew accustomed to living double lives—practicing architects during the first part of the day and escapist dreamers after work. Others simply accepted that they could not express themselves in the state-run Institutes and needed to find escape routes through alternative practices. One must also understand that these individuals were not dissidents or subversive in the true sense of the word. Despite extreme opinions that if you were not against the political regime, you were silently accepting it, the situation was never so clearly painted in black and white. This is the reason behind the misunderstanding of these times and the creations of this decade. Expressing neutrality or passivity towards official requests and practicing marginal, escapist discourses was the path towards a form of cultural survival.

As professor Virgil Pop recently argued, there was never such a great discrepancy between what the schools were proposing through projects and what the Institutes were building. He would rather call the paper architectures of this era “works of frustration”.⁶ Practicing architects were gladly and enthusiastically ready to help draft diploma projects with graduating students. The feeling of professional despair was at its apex.

6 These ideas were shared by prof. Virgil Pop during the draft presentation of the author's PhD thesis.

The relationship of Ion Mincu in Bucharest with the official practice is presented by Ana-Maria Vesa Dobre in the book *2,14 Types of Architecture Schools*, noting “a total, irremediable disconnection of the School from the real architectural life”⁷ and an emphasis of the conceptual dimension of school projects, noting how “the concepts behind the projects are all more complex

7 Vesa Dobre 2016: 102.

and philosophical, as they distance themselves from the immediate reality, somehow floating in a state of weightlessness”⁸.

As much as postmodern heroes are concerned, there were the usual suspects from the 1960s and 1970s: Robert Venturi, Richard Meier, or Aldo Rossi.⁹ There were also the rising stars from the Architectural Association in London: Elia Zenghelis, Rem Koolhaas or Zaha Hadid. Vlad Gaivoronschi from the Timișoara group remembers Rem Koolhaas’s *Delirious New York* and Zaha Hadid’s Peak Hotel proposal,

“ ... Delirious New York was essential for us, and under Koolhaas’s influence, we turned towards Russian Constructivism. Zaha Hadid's Peak Club was awarded in Hong Kong after we finished school. At that time I had a Domus magazine subscription through an acquaintance and I remember going to the IPROTIM Design Institute with a magazine and the Peak Hotel and we all stared in awe.”¹⁰

Dorin Ștefan felt more interested in high-tech architecture, looking towards built works like Piano and Rogers’s Centre Pompidou and the technological avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s, Archigram and Superstudio. More than an attraction towards specific Western architectural figures or trends, these architects had a profound desire to inform themselves about the architectural developments of those years.

An autonomous démarche—the utopian tradition, some re-discovered visionaries and architecture for the sake of itself. The postmodern storyline on which this paper builds itself is concerned with paper architecture. To outline a context, one can first look towards the English paradigm—mainly, London’s Architectural Association (AA) and the groups and architects who defined its vanguard during the 1970s and the 1980s. Be it groups like Peter Cook, Ron Herron and Michael Webb’s Archigram or names like Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind, they all have a common denominator: the AA. Some particularly flourishing years were those of Alvin Boyarsky’s chairmanship, as he built “a postmodern pedagogy that positioned architecture as an intellectual and critical practice”¹¹. This post-modern pedagogy has its philosophy centred around the architectural drawing, “as both object and action, as both collectible commodity and discursive tool”¹².

Regarding a synchronous sensibility in the Eastern Bloc, the Tchoban Foundation held an interesting exhibition in 2017, entitled “Centrifugal Tendencies. Tallinn—Moscow—Novosibirsk”, curated by Andres Kurg and Yuri Avvakumov and showcasing Estonian and Russian works of paper architecture from the middle of the 1970s up to 1990. It intended to present a certain zeitgeist that crossed the Eastern Bloc, of synchronous qualities with Western practices, but somewhat differently fuelled. Whilst Western avant-garde groups and architects were at the beginning of their careers and asserting their unbuilt philosophies, Eastern Bloc architects had an additional purpose: the

8 Vesa Dobre 2016: 102.

9 Dorin Ștefan received a scholarship to Italy in 1988. One of the most important landmarks he wanted to visit was the Gallarate district of Milan, especially the Monte Amiata housing complex, designed by Aldo Rossi and Carlo Aymonino and built between 1967 and 1972. The design of the Youth House of Science and Technology in Slatina was influenced by the richly fragmented and sculptural architectural language of this housing complex.

10 Sabău, Gaivoronschi 2019.

11 Sunwoo 2012: 24.

12 Marjanovic 2017: 24.

safekeeping of a critical way of creating architecture, in the context of an ideologically controlled and decaying praxis. Looking further back to the 1950s, one must mention the postmodern reappreciation of some historical practices and visionary architects. In 1952, historian Emil Kaufmann publishes *Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu*, shedding light on the idiosyncratic practices of French visionaries Étienne-Louis Boullée or Jean-Jacques Lequeu. Later in the 1960s, postmodern pioneer Aldo Rossi's idiosyncratic works claim a certain kinship with these visionaries.

In the 1980s, the engravings of Russian architects Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin, part of the escapist current called Paper Architecture, presents us with a new iteration of drawn discourse. Andres Kurg speaks of these unbuilt architectures as “a body of work that countered inflexible building regulations and norms by using imaginative drawings, symbols, narration and allegory, and saw graphic work as its end result.”¹³ The common denominator that is of interest to this article is the use of graphical representation as a vehicle for critical discourse, equally shared by all the above-mentioned architects and groups. The determinant of this drawn discourse is of a postmodern nature.

13 Kurg 2015: 121.

Some Romanian escapists—upbringing, readings, reveries

The Romanian groups and individuals that I will write about next have similar trajectories in terms of education, readings, and aspirations. For one, they were attracted to postmodern trends and works that were shown through Western magazines. On the other hand, they were all preoccupied with architecture as a cultural act, as an intellectual discipline. This cultural ambition was incompatible with the requirements of the communist regime, so it could not be fulfilled through official professional practice. The groups that I will present are not exhaustive, they are simply some of the most known and more present in the Romanian architecture magazine called *Revista Uniunii Arhitecților din Republica Socialistă România* (translated as *The Journal of the Socialist Republic of Romania's Union of Architects*)—abbreviated as *Arhitectura*. In the following, I will list them:

- the Timișoara group—Vlad Gaivoronschi, Ioan Andreescu, Alexandru Florin Colpacci, Adrian Ionașiu and Claudiu Panaitescu (the group had a variable composition from one project to another);
- Dorin Ștefan;
- Marius Marcu-Lapadat and Horia Gavriș.

The Timișoara group were somewhat unique in the Romanian architecture scene. Firstly, they started their architecture studies in Timișoara. They were thereby exposed to particular artistic and cultural circumstances. Ionașiu and Gaivoronschi spoke about a school library brought up to date with foreign, Western magazines and a certain freedom of thought, atypical compared to the usual architecture schools of 1980s Romania. There were also avant-garde artistic groups, whose members worked as teachers in the city's art school

and in the architecture faculty. That is the case of the Sigma group, an interdisciplinary group of artists and mathematicians inspired by Bauhaus methods and readings. But that was not all. These architects were formed through the mixture between this avant-garde influence and the Beaux-Arts teachings of architects like Sorin Gavra, respectively a local brutalism practiced by teachers like Hans Fackelmann. There was a certain effervescence and desire for artistic expression that characterized Timișoara in the 1970s and the first part of the 1980s. The members of the Timișoara group were influenced by this effervescence.

After three years of education in Timișoara, Gaivoronschi, Andreescu, Ionașiu and Panaitescu left for Bucharest, to continue three more years of study. Colpacci joined them in Bucharest as an assistant, being a few years older and already an architecture graduate. During these years in Bucharest, the group coagulated and created works that I will further detail in the fourth chapter. Dorin Ștefan was a different kind of breed. First of all, he graduated from architecture school in 1975. He stated that since the beginning of his studies he was driven by a certain non-conformist attitude. Even if one is to speak of the official works in which he collaborated or the career path he chose—there is a certain non-conformist drive. As much as his official works are concerned, he stated in an interview,

“The way I tried to work was not against the system, but letting the system allow me, so as to take advantage of it and get a little out of it. Even now, I don’t believe in the whole anti-system thing. Because in fact, even when you want to be anti-system, you are a product of the system”.¹⁴

14 Sabău, Ștefan 2019.

In addition to this, Dorin Ștefan was active in several forms: as a teacher at Ion Mincu, as a writer for the *Mișcarea Ideilor* (translated as *The Movement*

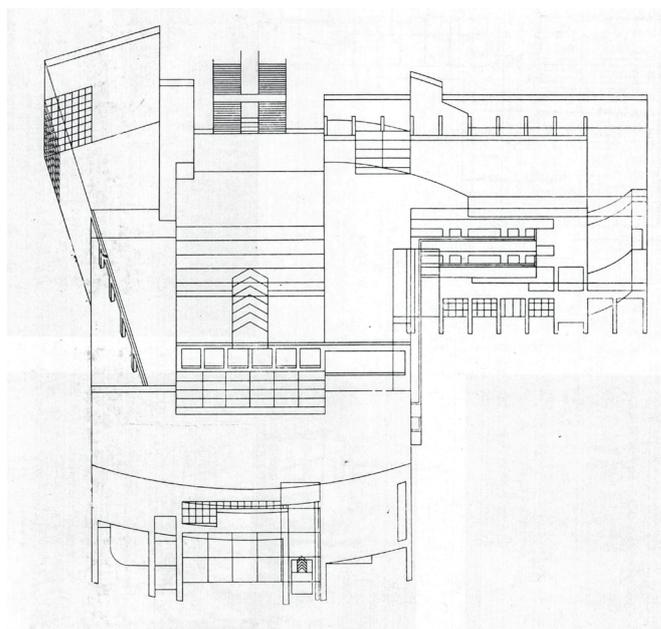


Fig. 1 Axonometric view of The Youth House of Science and Technology in Slatina.



Fig.2 Photo of the main façade, The Youth House of Science and Technology in Slatina, by Dorin Ștefan, 1979–1986.

15 Sabău, Ștefan 2019.

16 One must briefly detail the cultural and social context. The 1960s in Socialist Romania were witnessing an ideological relaxation but afterwards, the 1970s and the 1980s were shadowed by the so-called July Theses, presented by the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1971, after visiting the People's Republic of China and witnessing Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. Aiming to strengthen censorship and ideological propaganda in humanities and social sciences, the theses marked the renewal of culture as a political instrument. A return to the aesthetic of socialist realism was also imposed. Architecture was supposed to adhere to these aesthetic requirements as the rest of the arts but the Youth House of Science and Technology in Slatina project, with its postmodern references, distanced itself from these requirements and for some reason, it evaded censorship.

17 Sabău, Ștefan 2019.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 He published a total of eight Contextualism articles, numbered from I to VIII, starting in 1985 with the third issue of *Arhitectura* magazine, ending with Contextualism VIII Omul și Locul in the 1989 third issue of the magazine.

22 Dorin Ștefan 2016: 95.

of Ideas) column of the *Arhitectura* magazine, and as a practicing architect in several groups and institutes.

Dorin Ștefan was also responsible for conceiving a valuable 1980s piece of architecture. The Youth House of Science and Technology in Slatina (fig.1, fig. 2) is an example of the non-conformist attitude he practiced during those years. It was designed between 1979 and 1981 and built between 1982 and 1986. Whilst the façades are devised in a neo-Corbusian manner, the volumetric syntax and playful architectural accoutrements are rooted in postmodern references, like Aldo Rossi and Carlo Aymonino's Gallarate district in Milan. Dorin Ștefan calls it "quite incoherent in terms of stylistic coherence because it's actually an architecture of confluences."¹⁵

These confluences that he invokes are felt in the way the façades are composed, each having a certain role to play. The main façade towards the Alexandru Ioan Cuza Boulevard is the official, state-requested one. It is composed in a neo-Corbusian, Richard Meieresque fashion, with gridded glazings and a slightly convex curvature, and utterly failing at satisfying the representative needs of the regime¹⁶. The accolades and international appreciation delayed the façade from being revised and the fall of the Communist regime in 1989 further stopped any such intentions. The façade towards Ecaterina Teodoroiu street is functional, given by the accommodation rooms, whilst the northern one is "... the expression of the formal rationalism in which I strongly believed back then"¹⁷—overlapping grids, expressed in emphasized squares and angular intersections. The eastern one, the back of the building, is what Dorin Ștefan wanted to be "the façade that would represent me and be able to say what I wanted because no one cared. Those who came to see or approve looked at the main façade."¹⁸ This part of the building has a bold functional approach, being fitted with two flights of stairs leading to an open-air amphitheatre flanked by the lateral wings of the building.

Dorin Ștefan also wrote critical articles for the *Arhitectura* magazine, in the *Mișcarea Ideilor* column. These articles were a way in which he would try to elevate the architectural discourse of the magazine, feeling that "Architecture magazine articles were written very journalistically. They were writing descriptions, there was no criticism of any kind."¹⁹ Another motivation was an attempt to explain the postmodern phenomenon to himself. The language he used was also one of a structuralist and hermeneutic fashion, "... so that not everyone understands it, like a little architectural secret that forces you to make an intellectual effort."²⁰

One of the most elaborate series of articles was the one entitled Contextualism²¹ where he debated on a multitude of topics under this chosen umbrella term—from Gestalt, architectural tautology and literature to postmodern architects and works. In his biography, Dorin Ștefan argues that

"... I tried to explain to myself what architecture that is placed in context at the present time means, understanding by context not only the physical one, the site, the built neighbours, but rather a contextual time, more than a contextual space."²²

Regarding competition proposals, the one that encapsulates Dorin Ștefan’s philosophy in the most accurate way is for the 1983 Theatre for Tours competition, supported by the International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians—OISTAT (fig. 3). This mobile theatre is essentially a piece of high-tech machinery that can be transported to various locations, on a set of rails, as the collage presents (fig. 4).

Marius Marcu-Lapadat and Horia Gavriș were more inclined towards the artistic side of architecture, experimenting with collages in the airbrush technique. Marcu-Lapadat started participating in competitions during college after a friend suggested he was wasting time with his usual summer vacation activities and proposed to look up some competitions from Domus or L’Architecture. Marcu-Lapadat said “... I was living in the rhythm of communist stagnation”²³ until that moment. One of the first competitions they participated in was the 1983 Theatre for Tours competition in which Dorin Ștefan also participated. They were inspired by Walter Gropius’s Total Theater, proposing a “synthetic image of the different relations between the scene and the spectator”²⁴. As Marcu-Lapadat remembers, “We didn’t win anything but it was a first common experience. We got the taste of it.”²⁵

After graduating in 1983, Marcu-Lapadat was dispatched to the Vâlcea Design Institute and Gavriș at the Carpați Design Institute in Bucharest. Whilst Marcu Lapadat worked in Vâlcea, he continued experimenting with what he called imaginary architectures, in airbrush technique (fig. 5). The exemplified collage showcases a postmodern sensibility, bringing together domes from representative monuments like the Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, separated by massive walls with stereotomy on a huge scale - one can compare the atmosphere of this collage to the works of Superstudio. These experiments will culminate in the 1985 Bulwark of Resistance competition which I will detail in the following chapter.

The Japanese competitions and the Eastern European enthusiasts

Beginning with the 1970s, the *Japan Architect* magazine opened two competitions to international participation - the Central Glass International Architectural Design Competition and the Shinken-chiku Residential Design Competition. These competitions were kept locally until the 1970s.

Competitions like Central Glass proved interesting for young architects and architecture students from the Eastern Bloc, and what is more important for the subject of the article, the works of these architects were also interesting for the competition juries. Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin won first prize in 1982, at the 17th edition, entitled Crystal Palace, with a nostalgic, Piranesian engraving (fig. 6). Later, in 1985, Mikhail Filipov and Nadie Bronzova won first prize at the 20th edition—A Space with An Atrium (fig. 7). Romanian groups also participated and won various prizes, from mentions to second place. One of the most interesting ones was the second-prize winner of the 16th edition of the Central Glass competition—Meditation Chapel

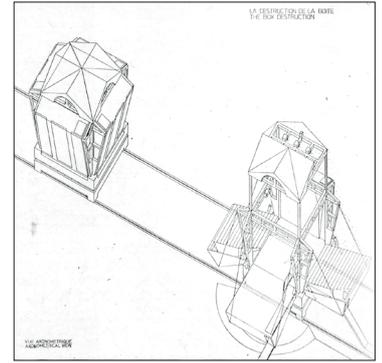


Fig. 3 Axonometric view of the mobile theatre, Theatre for Tours Competition organized by OISTAT, by Dorin Ștefan, 1983.

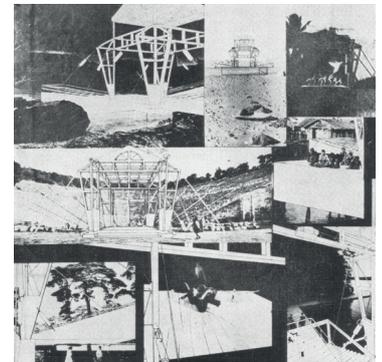


Fig. 4 Collages the mobile theater, Theater for Tours Competition organized by OISTAT, by Dorin Ștefan, 1983.



Fig. 5 Imaginary architectures, airbrush and photographic collage, by Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1983–1985.

23 Sabău, Marcu-Lapadat 2019.

24 Arhitectura 1/86, 65.

25 Sabău, Marcu-Lapadat 2019.

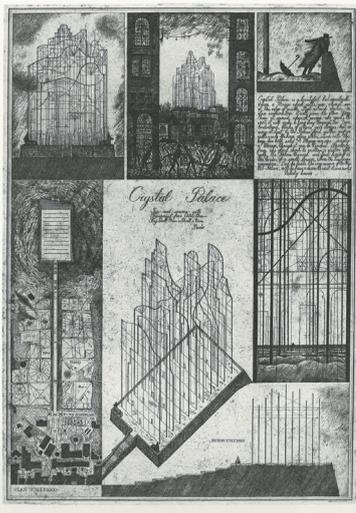


Fig. 6 Crystal Palace, engraving for the 17th edition of the Central Glass Competition, by Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin, 1982.

26 Arhitectura 2/82, 73–74.

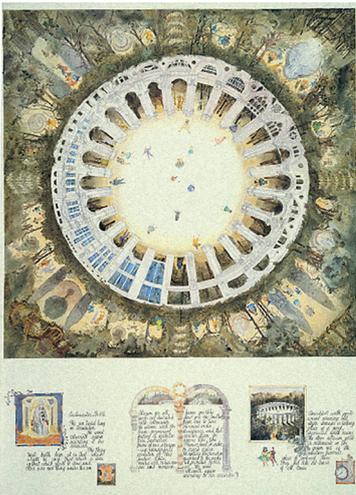


Fig. 7 A space with an atrium, competition proposal for the 20th edition of the Central Glass Competition by Mikhail Filippov and Nadie Bronzova, 1985.

27 Sabău, Gaivoronschi 2019.

28 Sabău, Marcu-Lapadat 2019.

29 Sabău, Marcu-Lapadat 2019.

in 1981 (fig.8). The proposal was made by the Timișoara group. The *Arhitectura* magazine mentions the proposal in the second volume of 1982²⁶.

As Gaivoronschi explains, the composition describes the stages of knowledge according to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) whilst the actual eight perimetral frames numbered from A to H are inspired by paintings and engravings such as Velasquez’s *Las Meninas*, Albrecht Dürer’s *Melancholia I*, El Greco’s *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* and others. The architecture itself is a secondary actor in this composition, but still a well-crafted background for the story. The centre of the composition is a labyrinth, fading out towards the exterior of the composition, illuminated in the centre from the upper right frame. It unfolds at the lower right corner, revealing the real, built, labyrinthian city, i.e., Venice. The way the frames work is reminiscent of a comic strip. In an interview with the author, Adrian Ionașiu revealed his interest in comic books and his attempts at transferring lessons from comic strips towards architectural exercises, as a professor at the Timișoara school of architecture.

The group were ”obsessed with this idea of the centre, the labyrinth, the path, and the palimpsest”²⁷ and were inspired by the duality of the sacred and the profane, in the spirit of readings from Mircea Eliade. They continued doing competition proposals in a different team format, even whilst working at the IPROTIM Design Institute in Timișoara. A memorable one is a proposal for the 1983 Theatre for Tours competition, supported by the International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians—OISTAT (the same that Marcu-Lapadat and Gavriș as well as Ștefan had participated in). This proposal was important in a more professional manner—the site the group chose to use (the competition was speculative, without an imposed site) was a decommissioned riding hall of a Habsburg barracks in Timișoara that they reused—inspired by paintings of the surrealist Giorgio de Chirico (fig. 9). This reuse was part of a more ample reconsideration of how to intervene in the historic centre in a more sensitive manner. Even Gaivoronschi’s diploma project from 1982 had a similar topic, a complex insertion in the historical centre of Timișoara, well received by the school and the professional environment. The fourth issue from 1983 of the *Arhitectura* magazine presents it and even uses the main façade of the proposal as a cover (fig. 10).

Whilst working in the Bucharest Carpați Design Institute on the House of the Republic project (today the Palace of the Romanian Parliament), Marcu-Lapadat and Horia Gavriș won an honourable mention at the 1985 edition of the Shinkenchiku competition—entitled *Bulwark of Resistance* (fig. 11). As Marcu-Lapadat states, this proposal was made “with that background, the lack of perspective, dreams, or hope”²⁸. The competition proposal was presented in the first issue of the 1986 *Arhitectura* magazine. In an interview with the author, Marcu-Lapadat stated that this work represents „... an imaginary space, a cocktail of memories, through which you pass from one space to another, outside the laws of physics”²⁹.

The composition brings together images from the ruins of the Cantacuzino palace from Prahova, Hadrian’s villa in Tivoli, façade grids, section views

and axonometric views of some imaginary spaces and a brick tower that the authors were admiring by train, en route towards Bucharest, reflected in the glazings of an industrial building (fig. 12). As the authors stated for the *Arhitectura* magazine, all these elements “... define our personality, constituting our affective memory, through fragments of feelings, crumbs of longing, which we must protect, so that, in turn, we feel protected from the aggressions of contemporaneity.”³⁰

In conclusion

These works were not as well defined or stylistically consistent as their Russian counterparts. These groups and architects were also preoccupied with real architecture, not having a trenchant attitude towards the State-run practice. Some of them were even highly regarded and gradually raised in the ranks of Design Institutes, influencing and instilling sensibilities.

Today we can see these works for what they truly are, as time has passed, and hasty judgments can be avoided. We are confronted with a couple of perspectives: for one, we have an emphasis on the philosophical, theoretical, and discursive dimensions of the architectural discipline, in the absence of an official, state-endorsed one. On the other hand, this paper architecture surge which has its roots in the gap between the official practice and the individual discursive desire in the Eastern Bloc coincides with this spirit of drawn architecture, present both in the West and in the Eastern Bloc.

These works are part of a body of postmodern creations—paper architectures—that can be linked to a certain visionary tradition (of architecture parlante or postmodern idiosyncratic creators like Aldo Rossi) that emphasizes architectural drawing in lieu of built objects. The social and political context is important, of course, because you could not actually build anything significant, as much as a personal discourse was concerned.

Rather than emphasizing the escapist characteristic of these works, it is more important to understand them through what Andres Kurg proposed as “a different trajectory” that underlines the “active dialogue with the transformations of the late 1970s and 1980s”³¹. What we see here is a current of thought that demands a reinvigoration of the profession, and as much as the professional environment was concerned, it was slowly but steadily accepted. The fall of the communist regime in 1989 did not produce a sudden openness, it was rather equally accompanied by a cultural reluctance and attempts at synchronization that are continued to this day.

The Romanian 1980s are still a topic in an early stage of research, the period being complex and multifaceted. This paper architecture narrative is rather uncorrupted by the communist regime, but it is still a secondary narrative, with little effect on the official professional practice. Rather, the architects who were attracted to these competitions or had an incentive to create such works were exemplary, and this fact was visible in their official professional lives as well. They were appreciated and promoted in the Design Institutes. Gaivoronschi recalls being allowed by the director of the IPROTIM

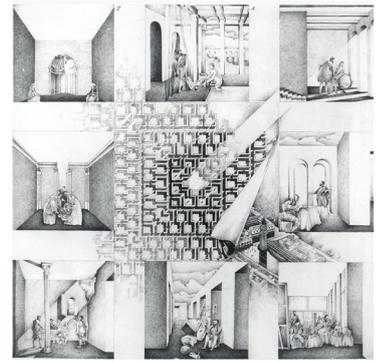


Fig. 8 Meditation as a Journey into the Labyrinth, competition proposal for the 16th edition of the Central Glass competition entitled Meditation Chapel by the Timișoara Group (Vlad Gaivoronschi, Ioan Andreescu, Alexandru Florin Colpacci, Adrian Ionașiu and Claudiu Panaitescu), 1981.

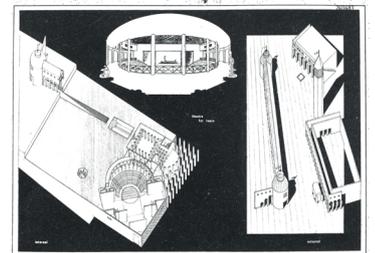


Fig. 9 Competition proposal, Theater for Tours Competition organized OISTAT by the Timișoara Group (Vlad Gaivoronschi, Ioan Andreescu, Alexandru Florin Colpacci, Adrian Ionașiu and Claudiu Panaitescu), 1983.

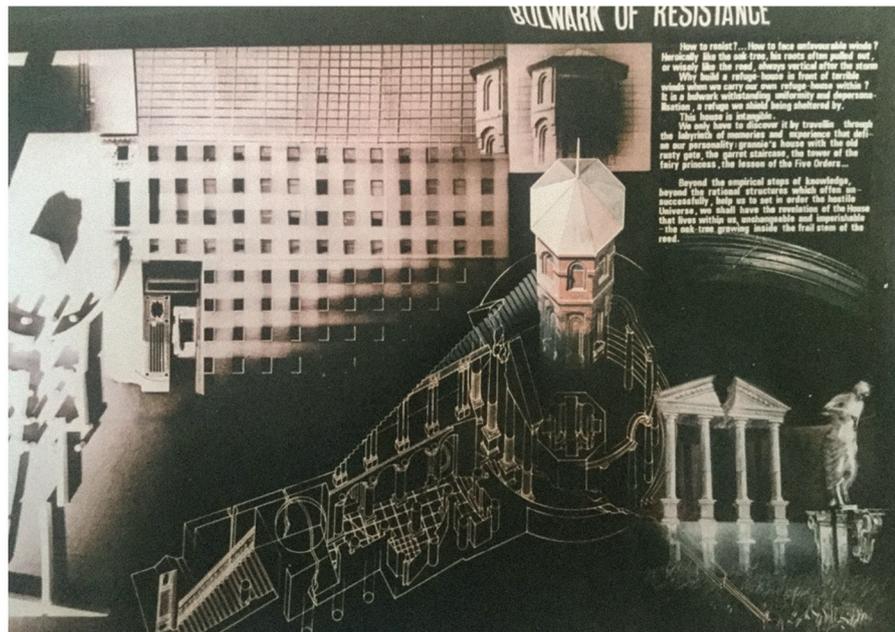
30 *Arhitectura* 1/86, 64–65.

31 Kurg 2015: 121.



Fig. 10 Cover of the *Arhitectura* magazine, original drawing by Vlad Gaivoronschi, cover art by Dan Marin 1983.

Fig. 11 Bulwark of Resistance competition proposal, airbrush and photographic collage, by Horia Gavriş and Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1985.



Design Institute to leave during work hours, together with other colleagues, to work on a competition proposal in 1989 (The Tokyo Forum competition organised by the UIA).

It is also relevant to mention how the activity of these architects and groups resumes after the Revolution of 1989. They have continued to work as architects in private offices, some were involved in professional organizations and in administrative functions. Most of them have been present as educators in universities and colleges. Ioan Andreescu is dean of the Architecture Faculty of Timișoara since 2016, Vlad Gaivoronschi is a professor at the Architecture Faculty of Timișoara and was president of the Romanian Order of Architects between 2010 and 2014.

Fig. 12 Bulwark of Resistance competition proposal, airbrush and photographic collage, by Horia Gavriş and Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1985.



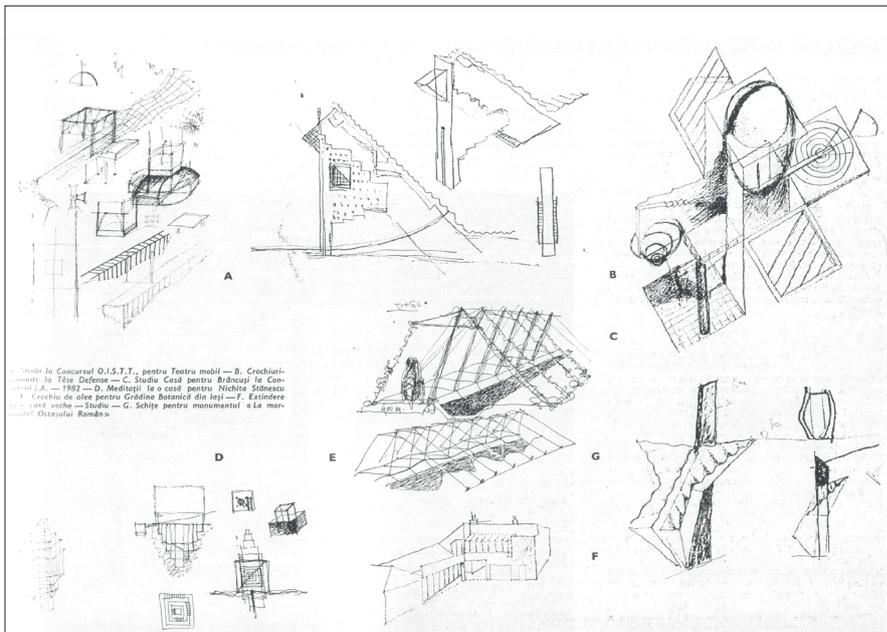


Fig. 13 Various sketches by Dorin Ștefan for the Japan Architect Competition, 1982. Sketch C is a study for a House for Brâncuși.

The two are partners at Andreescu & Gaivoronschi, founded in 1990, shortly after the fall of the communist regime. Vlad Gaivoronschi talks about a continuity of his interests and how these early searches influenced his career as a whole.³² They have published two books about their works and writings in 2008 (*Discursurile (post)moderne ale Arhitecturii = The (post)modern Dialogues of Architecture*) and 2009 (*Identitate și alteritate în spațiul urban*). Adrian Ionașiu was active both at the faculty in Timișoara and in public administration, as chief architect of Timișoara. He also worked with Ioan Andreescu and Vlad Gaivoronschi in the 1990s before opening an office on his own. Marius Marcu-Lapadat is a professor at Ion Mincu in Bucharest. He was dean of the Faculty of Interior Architecture at Ion Mincu University between 2012 and 2016. He also opened his own architecture office in Bucharest in 1994. Dorin Ștefan continued his university career within Ion Mincu and works in his own architecture office, DSBA, founded in 1990. Some of his 1980s explorations have materialized in recent projects. One can mention two projects: the Brâncuși Pavilion, currently being under construction in the interior courtyard of the Oltenia Museum in Craiova. The pavilion is part architecture, part sculpture, and is rooted in ideas developed since the early 1980s. The third issue from 1985 of the *Arhitectura* magazine shows us a sketch for a Japanese competition (fig.13). The other relevant example is the proposal for the Taiwan Tower Conceptual Design International Competition (2010). It won first place and is representative of Dorin Ștefan's fascination with high-tech architecture.

³² He argues that the 1980s competition proposals are part of a broader narrative that begins in the 1980s, goes through the 1990s and brings us to the present, stating "As far as I am concerned [...] I think the continuities are very interesting. I never parted with what we did in the '80s." (Sabău, Gaivoronschi 2019)

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Figures

Fig. 1 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 5, 1987, p. 14.

Fig. 2 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 5, 1987, p. 11.

Fig. 3 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 3, 1985, p. 20.

Fig. 4 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 3, 1985, p. 20.

Fig. 5 Photo from the personal archive of Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1983–1985.

Fig. 6 Photo from Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Uktin, (ed.) Ronald Feldman, Lois Nesbitt and Aleksandr Mergold, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2015, plate 6.

Fig. 7 Photo from the Central Glass International Architectural Design Competition site: http://www.cgc-jp.com/kyougi/archive/11th_20th/#anc10 (August 27, 2020).

Fig. 8 Scan from the personal archive of Vlad Gaivoronschi.

Fig. 9 Scan from the personal archive of Vlad Gaivoronschi.

Fig. 10 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 4, 1983.

Fig. 11 Photo from the personal archive of Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1985.

Fig. 12 Photo from the personal archive of Marius Marcu-Lapadat, 1985.

Fig. 13 *Arhitectura* magazine issue, no: 3, 1985, p. 21.

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