

Review

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# A REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION *NIKOLA DOBROVIĆ: UNDER THE BANNERS OF MODERNIST MOVEMENTS*

(SASA GALLERY, BELGRADE, MAY 24 – OCTOBER 2, 2022)

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The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) has dedicated the year 2022 to Academician Nikola Dobrović (February 12, 1897, Pécs, the Hungarian County of Baranya, Austro-Hungarian Empire – January 11, 1967, Belgrade, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and to celebrating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of this prominent Serbian and Yugoslav architect of the modern era.

The exhibition *Nikola Dobrović: Under the Banners of Modernist Movements*, curated by Professor Marta Vukotić Lazar, PhD, and Bojan Kovačević, MSc, and opened at the SASA Gallery on May 24, 2022, to run until October 2, 2022, occupies a central place in the program *Marking the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Architect Nikola Dobrović*.

The curators of the exhibition decided to consider the periods of Dobrović's growing up and schooling, and then the entire independent activities of the architect, not only through a chronological display of completed buildings, competition entries, and unexecuted projects, but also through extensive correspondence between Petar and Nikola Dobrović, which chronologically fits into the Prague and Dubrovnik periods of Nikola's creative work and illuminates them from another angle, important for the cultural history of Belgrade, Serbia, as well as for the spirit of the cities and areas to which this builder belonged.

The most significant source for studying Nikola Dobrović's oeuvre is his *Legacy*, which in 1995 Stanislava Pešić, Yugoslav and Serbian actress, after inheriting it from her aunt Ivanka Dobrović (the architect's wife), donated to the Museum of Science and Technology in Belgrade.<sup>3</sup>

The extensive legacy of Petar Dobrović in the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (the SASA Archives) in Belgrade, a gift from Olga Dobrović (1993), the wife of Petar Dobrović (the SASA Archives, Historical Collection No 14758), is organized into eight classification groups and has a

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<sup>2</sup> The project of celebrating the jubilee, along with a wide range of accompanying events for the duration of the exhibition and throughout 2022, has been realised with the support of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia.

<sup>3</sup> The Legacy of Nikola Dobrović was received from Mrs Stanislava Pešić on November 11, 1995.

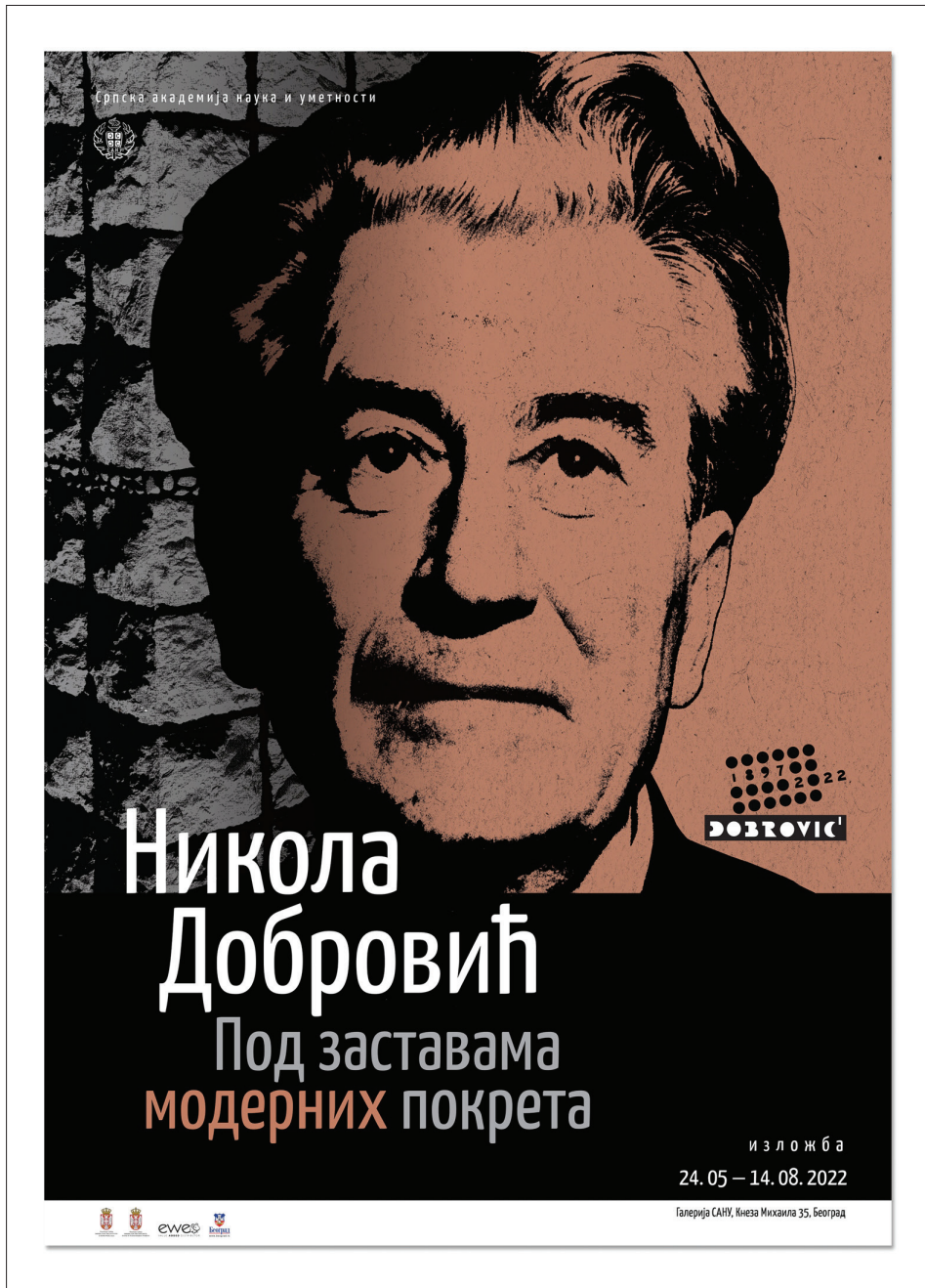


Figure 1. Dragana Lacmanović, Poster for the exhibition *Nikola Dobrović: Under the Banners of Modernist Movements* (Gallery of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, 24/05/2022 – 02/10/2022).

total of 1,916 documents.<sup>4</sup> The legacy of Nikola Dobrović, which is kept in the same place (Historical Collection No 14878), and which was separated from the bequest of Ivanka Dobrović, wife of Nikola Dobrović, to the Library of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (the SASA Library, 1995), is arranged into five classification groups with a total of 121 documents and was also researched for the purposes of the exhibition.<sup>5</sup> As a gift, according to her will dated June 9, 1995, Nikola Dobrović's wife, Ivanka Dobrović, donated his rich personal library to the SASA Library,<sup>6</sup> which also gave impetus to the explorations aimed at the realisation of the exhibition. In 2018, as an act of support for the forthcoming celebration of Nikola Dobrović's jubilee, Dr Relja Živojnović donated to the SASA Archives the legacy of his father, Dr Svetozar Živojnović from Herceg Novi, who was the founder and long-time director of the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Dr Simo Milošević in Igalo, and through whose efforts the architect Dobrović had left significant achievements in Herceg Novi and Igalo. This legacy was added to the Legacy of Nikola Dobrović (the SASA Archives, Historical Collection 14878–II) and was also a valuable incentive for the realisation of this monographic exhibition.

The extensive material collected and explored led the curators of the exhibition to divide Dobrović's oeuvre into three periods: Prague (1919–1934), Dubrovnik (1934–1943), and Belgrade (1945–1967), with boundaries between them remaining open for mutual permeating and the free flow of all influences from one period to another. In this context, the exhibition layout designer, architect Marina Dokmanović, in agreement with the curators of the exhibition, decided to structure this multidisciplinary exhibition within the gallery space in eight sections, as the most purposeful way to present to the visitors for the first time previously unexhibited, comprehensive material gathered from various institutions and brought to this one place to showcase the life and work, and the period to which the architect Nikola Dobrović belonged and contributed as a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, full professor at the University of Belgrade, holder of numerous honorary titles and social and public recognitions.

Through the original archival materials (several hundred signed items) from the legacies of the architect Nikola Dobrović, which are kept in the Museum of Science and Technology and the SASA Archives in Belgrade, and artistic photographs (hundreds of photo-records) of the current state of Nikola Dobrović's realised works, through historical photographs and postcards from museums, archives, and private collections, along with five video materials made for the needs of this exhibition (duration about 5 minutes each), dealing with Dobrović's

<sup>4</sup> The Legacy of Petar Dobrović, the SASA Archives, Historical Collection No 14758.

<sup>5</sup> The Legacy of Petar Dobrović, the SASA Archives, Historical Collection No 14878.

<sup>6</sup> Personal library of Nikola Dobrović, the SASA Library. See about it in: *Ivanka Dobrović's Testament dated June 9, 1995* (the SASA Archives, 14878–90).

oeuvre in Prague, Dubrovnik, and Belgrade, and a precious documentary about the life and work of Nikola Dobrović, entitled *Urban Planner Must Be an Architect* (duration 48'39") produced by the Educational-Scientific Programme of the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) and a 1964 film entitled *Contemporary Architecture of Yugoslavia* (duration 16'15") from the collection of *Filmske Novosti* (a film production company and archive) in Belgrade, the audience gains completely new knowledge about this builder. A special contribution to the exhibition has been made by the seven completed models of Dobrović's buildings, among which the monumental model of Dobrović's General Staff Building in Belgrade in the scale of 1:125 (made by Vladan Jovanović) is the leading one, which does not diminish the exceptional contribution of the students of the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, who made the other six models under the mentorship of Professor Zoran Abadić and Dr Jelena Bogosavljević.<sup>7</sup> The exhibition also presents eight oil paintings by the painter Petar Dobrović, the brother of the architect, from the collections of the Heritage House – the Gallery of Petar Dobrović and the National Museum in Belgrade, where, in addition to Nikola's portrait and Petar's self-portrait, individual and group portraits of personalities which marked the life of the architect Nikola Dobrović are also exhibited. Next to them, there are also paintings of streets (in Pécs and Dubrovnik), chosen not only as testimonies on the places to which he was attached, but also as essential elements of all cities, including those two, while the painting of an old olive tree, a symbol of peace, life, health, learning, and wisdom, is singled out and presented only as a tree, the most important natural aid, according to Dobrović, in the formation of the urban landscape and green spaces in the public discourse of the interwar modernisation of cities. The exhibition also presents the work of the contemporary Serbian sculptor Mrđan Bajić on the subject of the bombing of Dobrović's General Staff Building in Belgrade in 1999, as an important contribution to the exhibition and an incentive to act in the direction of the urgent restoration of this most significant and the only executed work by Dobrović in Belgrade and Serbia.

The exhibition is accompanied by a luxurious 204-page catalogue with numerous black-and-white and colour illustrations, many of which are published for the first time. Along with the edition in Serbian, the catalogue in English has been published as a special edition. In addition to these two, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts is preparing three more publications, which will

<sup>7</sup> The model of the Terazije terrace (1:200) was made by Olivera Sadžaković, Nevena Đuričić, Milica Veljović, and Miša Žegarac; the model of the Hotel Grand on Lopud (1:125) was made by Ana Ljujić, Miodrag Novaković, Tijana Grujčić, and Ljubica Živanović; the model of the Villa Vesna on Lopud (1:50) was made by Vera Vranić and Matea Prokić; the model of the Villa Svid in Zaton near Dubrovnik (1:50) was made by Jovana Đurovski and Tatjana Đuričić; the model of the Villa Mudra in Srebreno near Dubrovnik (1:50) was made by Danica Kostić and Anđela Arandžević; the model of Nikola Dobrović's Summerhouse on Lopud (1:50) was made by Teodor Jovanović, David Volarević, and Jovana Đurovski.





Figure 2. Dragana Lacmanović, Front page of the exhibition catalogue *Nikola Dobrović: Under the Banners of Modernist Movements* (the Gallery of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, 24/05/2022 – 02/10/2022).

be available to the professional circles by the end of the jubilee year 2022: the monograph *Nikola Dobrović: His Life, Work, and Time* in Serbian and English; and a collection of proceedings from the International Scientific Meeting *125<sup>th</sup> Year Since the Birth of the Architect Nikola Dobrović (1897–2022)* organised by the SASA, the Faculty of Architecture and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, which will take place on November 17–18, 2022, at the SASA and the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade.

Around the exhibition, as the central event in marking of the jubilee of Nikola Dobrović, numerous important events with a multitude of participants and activities clustered, taking place in several locations in Belgrade under the auspices of the Association of Architects of Serbia in the 17<sup>th</sup> Belgrade International Week of Architecture (BINA, May 26 – June 7, 2022) and the Academy of Architecture of Serbia, while at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, winter and summer semester 2021/2022 were dedicated to this jubilee, with a series of lectures and activities related to the regular, elective, and postgraduate courses, along with the organisation of accompanying events, such as open workshops, discussions, expert guest lectures, and the preparation of the Student Competition for Conceptual Architectural-Urban Design of the Reconstruction of the Buildings of the Dobrović's General Staff, with an exhibition of competition entries in Knez Mihailova Street in Belgrade in the immediate vicinity of the SASA Gallery (May 27 – June 10, 2022) organised by BINA and the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, etc. The Library of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts has also prepared a chamber exhibition dedicated to the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nikola Dobrović, a significant figure from the history of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts; the materials from the Library collection, along with biographical and other data have been displayed in the new showcases of its reception hall.<sup>8</sup> On the initiative of the President of the Organising Committee for *Marking the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Nikola Dobrović*, academician Milan Lojanica, the International Scientific Meeting *125<sup>th</sup> Year Since the Birth of the Architect Nikola Dobrović (1897–2022)* is to be held in Belgrade on November 17–18, 2022 under the auspices of the SASA, the Faculty of Architecture, and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. The Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), as a national media house, supported the jubilee by producing a documentary about the life and work of Nikola Dobrović, entitled *Urban Planner Must Be an Architect*, viewed through the prism of archival sources, audio and video materials, as well as through testimonies on and interpretations of Dobrović's life, works, and the times to which he belonged, as given by his former students, today's distinguished Serbian architects Aleksandar Stjepanović, Živojin Bata Karapešić, Dragoljub Bakić, and Đorđe Bobić, Dobrović's relative, Vesna Pešić, Serbian sociologist and politician, Ivanka Dobrović's niece, to whom Nikola Dobrović was an uncle, and the curators of the exhibition. The documentary is made by the RTS Educational Scientific Programme team, led by the editor-in-chief Ilija Cerović, the show-editor Mirjana Bjelogrić Nikolov and the director Ivana Stevens.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Степановић Тодоровић, С. & Нинић, М. (2021). *Библиотека Српске академије наука и уметности: 1841–2021*. Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности.

<sup>9</sup> The documentary is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW2TgcPtNm4>

On the one hand, the exhibition is dedicated to the architect Nikola Dobrović and concepts and phenomena, personalities, and works that paved his path, determined his directions, sharpened his creative horizons, and brought him to Belgrade as a life and professional destination. Its second dedication is directed towards the legacies of architects of the Late Modern Era, from which every thorough research of the works of individual builders starts, and then focuses on the study of realised projects and archival, photographic, newspaper, and historiographic materials. By presenting the family legacy of Nikola Dobrović—which contains: technical documentation of executed and unexecuted works (projects, sketches, drawings, competition entries, urban plan designs, etc.) made in various techniques and on various supports, student works, photographs, diplomas, awards, charters, plaques, excerpts from the daily and periodical press, published and unpublished texts, books, scientific articles, travel writings, diaries, technical reports, letters, as well as his personal library that completes the picture of him—the intention has also been to point out, from the perspective of the explored Dobrović's legacy, that legacies of this kind are particularly indispensable sources for historians of modern architecture as well as those responsible for the protection of cultural monuments.

Special attention has been paid to the influence of the older brother, painter Petar Dobrović (1890, Pécs – 1942, Belgrade) on the life and work of the architect Nikola Dobrović, which is further evidenced by the *Excerpt From the Diary of Nikola Dobrović*, preserved in the legacy of Petar Dobrović, with extensive correspondence exchanged between the brothers from 1914 until Petar's sudden death in 1942, and the documentation related to their joint exhibition activities from the middle of the third to the very beginning of the fourth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Petar's influence was exceptionally strong, even decisive, both from the aspect of Nikola's commitment to fine arts and contemporary trends in them, and from the point of view of Petar's persistent aspiration for his younger brother to obtain Yugoslav citizenship and to settle in Belgrade, where Petar himself found haven, living and working there until the end of his life, searching for his place within the framework of the Yugoslav artistic orientation. However, Nikola Dobrović would only settle permanently in Belgrade after the Second World War, and it would become his great inspiration and professional challenge to put his efforts into raising this city at the confluence of two rivers to the level of famous European cities through modern architecture and urban planning.

Architect Nikola Dobrović was a proponent and follower of avant-garde artistic tendencies transferred from the Hungarian, but also from the Prague milieu, the latter having been the centre of modern ideas,<sup>10</sup> where he received

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<sup>10</sup> The idea of pan-Slavism, promoted among the Slavic peoples in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in the period immediately before and after its collapse, greatly contributed to the arrival of a large number of Czechoslovak builders and artists in Serbia.



his education and gained his first independent architectural experiences. What was common to all avant-garde movements, in addition to their interdisciplinarity and their multimedial nature, was their strong engagement to influence the processes of transformation of society and social behavior through radical artistic activity, where art is almost identified with life.<sup>11</sup>

When we talk about the architect Nikola Dobrović then he is, first and foremost, the winner of numerous architectural competitions and the builder of Mediterranean villas in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between the two world wars; while after the Second World War, this man with a strong fighting spirit becomes the chief architect and the first urban planner of the post-war *Greater Belgrade*, a founder of the Urban Planning Institute of the People's Republic of Serbia, the director of the Urban Planning Institute of the Executive Board of the People's Committee of the City of Belgrade, a visionary, and less often a builder of huge edifices with complex functions, a full professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade, a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and so on, but above all an idealist artist, with an honest and strong spirit who believed that urban planning and architecture could be used to fight for a new, fairer, and better society. Exactly as the architect Karapešić, one of his students, wrote: "It should not be overlooked that at the moment when the great virtue of commitment was put to the test, the man at the front stayed where he thought it was necessary. He sacrificed everything he had, and he had his life at his desk, to his duty to the war-torn tribe, the duty to the Slavic peoples (...)"<sup>12</sup>

From the numerous projects, competition entries, urban plans, and ideas of Nikola Dobrović, several buildings in Prague, numerous villas in Dubrovnik, a hotel on Lopud, the Children's Department of the Institute of Physical Therapy and Medical Rehabilitation in Igalo, etc., were built, while in Belgrade, in Serbia, only the complex of buildings today known as Dobrović's General Staff Building was completed. This devastating disproportion between conceptual sketches and realised works reached its crescendo in 1999, when in the NATO bombing of Belgrade, Dobrović's only executed project in this city—an ensemble of two large buildings at the intersection of Nemanjina and Knez Miloša streets

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After the First World War and the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, then Yugoslavia, cross-cultural cooperation between these two newly formed states intensified, primarily through the activities of the Czechoslovak-Yugoslav League, founded in 1920 in Prague; through the exchange of architectural information through two important exhibitions: the *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Artists and Architects* in 1925 and the *Exhibition of Czechoslovak Architecture* in 1928, as well as the *Exhibition of Belgrade Architects* in Prague in 1930. See about it in: Дамљановић, Т. (2004). *Чешко-српске архитеткљонске везе 1918–1941*. Београд: Републички завод за заштиту споменика културе.

<sup>11</sup> Denegri, J. (1994). Avangarda pojam trajanja. *Komunikacije*, 88, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Karapešić, Ž. B. (1967). Za radnim stolom Nikole Dobrovića, *Vidici*, 107, 10–11.

(building A, before 1999, was the Headquarters of General Staff of the Army of Yugoslavia, and building B was at the same time the seat of the Federal Ministry of Defence)—completely collapsed, and its functional role was extinguished.<sup>13</sup>

All the books that Nikola Dobrović wrote, mainly for his students, thematically covering the fields of urban planning and architecture, he dedicated in his mind and in an associative way to the *World Brotherhood of Architects*, as he inscribed on the margins of numerous notebooks, handwritten to the last page and stored in the SASA Archives in Belgrade.<sup>14</sup>

This layered approach of an urban planner and practicing architect was also transferred to the period of his pedagogical work, when he had to introduce students to the most hidden secrets of the craft: how to establish a proper critical disposition in dealing with the offers from the world; how, through constant checks of our practice, to approach its thorough evaluation; how to determine the reasons for certain decisions and spatial results; how to perform the evaluation of architecture at the level of forms and the processes of creation of those forms; and so on. His critical judgments, often very strict, still ring in the ears of his students.

As a kind of substitute for the denied engagement in the field of practical work, Nikola Dobrović was appointed a university professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, where he held courses from 1948 to 1967, first on Urban Planning Studies, and then on the subject of Contemporary Architecture, which he himself introduced. Dobrović spent the last decades of his life designing, but also writing numerous books for teaching purposes at the Faculty of Architecture.<sup>15</sup> Whole generations of students were educated on Dobrović's books and lectures, and today's generations of architecture and urban planning students, as well as all related faculties, use Dobrović's books: *Urban Planning and the Forces That Set It in Motion* (1948); *Urban Planning Through the Centuries 1 – Yugoslavia* (1950); *Urban Planning Through the Centuries – Ancient History* (1952); *Contemporary Architecture 1 – Origin and Genesis* (1952); *Urban Engineering 1A* (1953); *Contemporary Architecture 2 – Proponents* (1955); *Urban Engineering 1B* (1957); *Urban Engineering 2A-2B – Traffic* (1958); *Contemporary Architecture 3 – Followers* (1963); *Contemporary Architecture 4 – Intellectual Tributaries* (1965); posthumously published *Contemporary Architecture 5* (1971); and more.<sup>16</sup>

As a part of his books, Dobrović published his mostly competition works and conceptual sketches, and he did so in order to introduce his students to

<sup>13</sup> Матовић, Д. (субота, 1. мај 1999). Злочиначки пројектили засули спасилачке екипе, *Полиџика*, 13; Павловић, М. (недеља, 9. мај 1999). Још један злочин НАТО агресора у старом центру Београда. Погођена зграда Владе Србије, *Полиџика*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> *Genesis, development, present and future of Dubrovnik*. Handwritten notes, undated. The Legacy of Nikola Dobrović, the SASA Archives, 14878/III–10.

<sup>15</sup> Vukotić Lazar, M. (2002). *Beogradsko razdoblje arhitekta Nikole Dobrovića (1945–1967)*. Beograd: Plato, 159–160.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 245–270.

the secrets of the creative process, the one that did not tolerate routine and compromises, for, as he himself once wrote: “When determining the quality of a national school and of an individual author within it, one should also keep in mind the not-small role of temperament, which stands significantly above all secondary phenomena of a more or less technical nature.”<sup>17</sup>

The great influence he had on his students, and thus on the Union of Students which initiated and organised various activities, is best reflected in the example of the student newsletter *Bulletin of the Club of Young Architects*, launched in 1964 with the intention of enabling members to learn about ‘selected thoughts and problems of contemporary architecture’. In almost every issue of the *Bulletin*, an article by Dobrović was published.<sup>18</sup>

Sensing, as he himself put it, that the *Grim Reaper of Humanity* is getting closer and closer to him, he decided to visit the places he loved and dealt with all his life. In 1966, *NIN*, a weekly news magazine from Belgrade, published his four article-studies about the cities of Venice, Dubrovnik, La Valletta in Malta, and Korčula, in a column entitled *From the Architect’s Travel Notebook*. It was his last attempt to join his spiritual curiosity with the curiosity of students, colleagues, and artists. ‘The desire to think properly in architecture’ is also the message that remains left when the last page of his last book was closed.

Thus, Nikola Dobrović’s books became guardians of the autobiographical and cultural-historical discourse, gaining yet another aspect of importance in the interpretation of his character and work in the context of modern architecture in Serbia.

As an uncompromising fighter for his principles and the high artistic values of architecture and urban planning, insufficiently understood in the environments in which he worked—throughout the Kingdom of Yugoslavia between the two world wars, and throughout the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after the Second World War up until his last breath—Nikola Dobrović combined in his life and architectural destiny the most significant features of European and Serbian history. Exactly as he himself stated at the lecture entitled *Lecture on Nikola Dobrović*: “What is our task on this part of the Earth’s globe? Isn’t it to grind this material, imported with no customs inspection needed, in a domestic mill and that during the grinding process, we add to that material all the ingredients, spices, and flavours of the local soil, local brains and hearts, which will transform it into our product, into a product of our national school? Nikola Dobrović tried something in this sense. The fact that he didn’t achieve better success could be attributed to the stronger force of external factors.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Dobrović, N. (1960). Pokrenutost prostora Bergsonove dinamične sheme – nova likovna sredina. *ČIP*, 100, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Миленковић, Д. (1953). Клуб младих архитеката. *Архитектура*, 9, 37–38.

<sup>19</sup> Dobrović, N. (1971). Predavanje o Nikoli Dobroviću. U: Z. Manević (prir. i ur.), *Savremena arhitektura* 5 (85–88). Beograd: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika SR Srbije.





Figure 3. Nikola Dobrović with a worker at the construction site of the Grand Hotel, Lopud near Dubrovnik, 1936. The Museum of Science and Technology, Belgrade.



Figure 4. The “Dobrović General Staff” complex after the NATO bombing. Photo by Branislav Strugar, postcard from 1999.



Nikola Dobrović passed away at the age of seventy, on January 11, 1967 in Belgrade.

When the exhibition *Architecture of Nikola Dobrović* was opened in the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade (SKC) on April 25, 1978, on the initiative of the Study Group for Contemporary Architecture *Nikola Dobrović* founded at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, and when the organisers sought out his former students, all of them, as the architect Ranko Radović wrote, “were unanimous in asserting that Nikola Dobrović exerted a huge influence on each one of them, and therefore an influence on the architecture of these regions and in these times.”<sup>20</sup>

The same conclusion emerged from the event initiated by Ljiljana Miletić Abramović and Marta Vukotić Lazar almost four decades later—a photo session on April 21, 2017, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade, entitled *To the Professor with Love*. This accompanying manifestation of the 39<sup>th</sup> Salon of Architecture in Belgrade in the form of a performance—a photo shoot for a group portrait of Nikola Dobrović’s students who had attended and taken exams at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade ending with the summer semester of 1966/67—was marked by the unison stance of the participants, that there has not yet appeared such a fighter for the principles of modern architecture and urban planning, nor a person equal to him in terms of the ‘fighting spirit’ within that field, both in Serbia and in former Yugoslavia, a person whose influence was equally strong and indelible, not only in the domains of designing cities and houses, scientific research, professional and pedagogical activity, but in the realm of shaping the general cultural-historical climate of that era as well.<sup>21</sup>

The same unison attitude, accompanied with deep, unchanged emotions regarding their teacher, was expressed through the testimonies and interpretations of his life, work, and the era to which he belonged, by his former students, today’s distinguished Serbian architects: Aleksandar Stjepanović, Živojin Bata Karapešić, Dragoljub Bakić, and Đorđe Bobić in the documentary *Urban Planner Must Be an Architect*, which was realised in the jubilee year of 2022 by the Educational Scientific Programme of the Radio Television of Serbia on the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Nikola Dobrović.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Vukotić Lazar, M. (2002). *Beogradsko razdoblje arhitekta Nikole Dobrovića (1945–1967)*. Beograd: Plato, 140–141; Вукотић Лазар, М. (2018). *Никола Добровић: живоји, дело и доба коме је њријагао*. Београд: Филозофски факултет у Косовској Митровици, 265–269.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> See about it at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW2TgcPtNm4>

*Nikola Dobrović: a biographical timeline*

- 1897 Born on February 12 into a Serbian merchant family in Pécs (the Hungarian County of Baranya, Austro-Hungarian Empire), as the fourth child of Petar and Irena Dobrović. In his hometown of Pécs, he completes elementary school and classical gymnasium.
- 1900 His father Petar Dobrović dies.
- 1913 On a letter from Petar Dobrović Jr. (Nikola's eldest brother) to his mother Irena, the address of the Dobrović family in Pécs is written: 33 Buranya Arpad St, Pécs, Hungary.
- 1914 Stevan and Đorđe, his two brothers, die.
- 1915 Nikola Dobrović enrols in architectural studies at the Royal Joseph Technical University (Királyi József Műszaki Egyetem) in Budapest.
- 1916 Due to the mobilization, he interrupts his studies.
- 1919 He enrols in the College of Architecture and Construction at the Czech Technical University in Prague (Vysoké školy architektury a pozemního stavitelství při Českém vysokém učení technickém v Praze).
- 1921 Petar Dobrović sends a postcard to his brother Nikola at the address: Signor Nikola Dobrović, student of architecture, Praha, Czech Republic, R.Č.S.
- 1923 He graduates from the College of Architecture and Construction at the Czech Technical University in Prague.
- 1923 He works as an architect in the bureau of Bohumil Hübschmann in to 1925 Prague.
- 1925 His mother Irena lives in Novi Sad. She receives mail at the address of the Hotel Sloboda.
- 1925 He comes into the architectural bureau of Dr Antonín Engel in Prague.
- 1925 to 1929 He works in the Dušek–Kozák–Máca architectural bureau in Prague.
- 1929 Having obtained the licence, he receives the title of independent architect. Since then he works as self-employed.
- 1930 His mother Irena receives mail at the address 2 Baranjska St, Novi Sad, Dunavska Banovina (the Danube Banovina, one of the provinces within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia).
- 1933 He is awarded the Order of Saint Sava, 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.
- 1934 He leaves Prague.
- 1934 Until the outbreak of the Second World War, he works as a self-employed architect in Dubrovnik.
- to 1941
- 1938 He obtains the title of licenced engineer.

- 1940 As a mobilized soldier of the old Yugoslav army, he ends up in Vojvodina, where he is hiding in Novi Sad, disappointed.
- 1941 On 4 March, he marries Ivanka Hadži, the daughter of a prominent lawyer from Novi Sad, Kosta Hadži. Very soon after that, he takes refuge on the island of Lopud.
- 1942 His brother, painter Petar Dobrović, dies of a heart attack in the elevator of his building at 35 Kralja Petra Street in Belgrade.
- 1943 Following the fall of Italy to the Allied Forces in the Second World War, he crosses the Adriatic Sea on a small motorboat and arrives in Bari, where he reports to the newly established partisan base, and then goes to Rome. Soon after, he moves with a partisan unit to the island of Vis.
- 1944 At the end of the year, he comes by plane to the liberated territory near Mionica in Serbia. After that, he arrives in Belgrade.
- 1944 After the liberation of Belgrade, he is appointed head of the Architectural Department of the Ministry of Construction of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia, which he would manage until the arrival of trustees Rade Pribičević and Živa Đorđević. Nikola Dobrović begins the reconstruction of the destroyed Belgrade, while there is still war on the Strymian Front. The building where Nikola Dobrović lives is located at 6 Stevana Sremca St in Belgrade. Dobrović's apartment was on the third floor.
- 1945 He is appointed director of the Urban Institute of the Republic of Serbia.
- 1946 He becomes the director of the Urban Planning Institute of the Executive Board of the People's Committee of the City of Belgrade and the Chief Architect of the City.
- 1947 He is granted permission to move into an apartment on the third floor in 6 Stevana Sremca St in Belgrade.
- 1948
- to 1967 He is a full professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade.
- 1948 He is the president of the Association of Engineers and Technicians of Yugoslavia and a councilor of the City of Belgrade.
- 1955 He is the president of the Association of Urban Planners of the People's Republic of Serbia.
- 1957 He is a member of the Urban Planning Council of the City of Belgrade.
- 1959 He becomes an honorary corresponding member of The Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA), London.
- 1961 His mother Irena, who lived with him and Ivanka Dobrović, dies.
- 1961 He is elected an honorary member of the Club of Young Architects of the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, and on December 21, 1961, he

- is elected a corresponding member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- 1962 He receives the October Award of the City of Belgrade for the SSPD East Wing Building in Belgrade.
- 1963 On June 17, he becomes a corresponding member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU) in Zagreb.
- 1963 In September, he receives the Golden Badge of the Yugoslav Association of Urban Planners.
- 1963 He becomes an honorary member of the Association of Architects of Belgrade.
- 1964 He receives the 7<sup>th</sup> of July Award of the Socialist Republic of Serbia for Lifetime Achievement.
- 1964 He becomes a permanent honorary member of the Association of Architects of the Socialist Republic of Serbia.
- 1965 On October 26, he is awarded the Order of Labor with the Red Banner by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.
- 1965 On December 16, he is elected a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- 1966 In May, at the invitation of the Urban Planning Institute of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, at the celebration of the centenary of the creation of the Urban Plan of Belgrade, Nikola Dobrović is present on behalf of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- 1967 Nikola Dobrović passes away on January 11, at the age of seventy. He is buried at the New Cemetery in Belgrade, plot 24, grave 16-IV, alongside his brother, the painter Petar Dobrović, and his mother, Irena Dobrović.
- 1967 The Hungarian Embassy sends a letter to the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts stating that “the Hungarian Academy of Sciences had the intention and desire to elect academician Nikola Dobrović as its member at its regular annual assembly in 1967. As the academician Nikola Dobrović passed away in the meantime, the embassy conveys its condolences on behalf of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and on its own behalf.”
- 1968 (posthumously) the October Award of the City of Belgrade for the urban planning conceptions according to which New Belgrade is built.
- 1971 He is posthumously awarded the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts Charter on the occasion of his election as a full member.
- 1975 On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his work, the Plaque of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade is awarded posthumously to Nikola Dobrović.



- 1979 He is posthumously awarded the Certificate of Appreciation by the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Socialist Republic of Serbia.
- 1988 A decision is made to rename the road 2a-2a, stretching from the road T3-T3 to Tošin Bunar Street in the neighborhood of Bežanijska kosa within the municipality of New Belgrade, to Nikola Dobrović Street.
- 1995 Ivanka Dobrović, wife of Nikola Dobrović, dies.
- 1996 A bust of architect Nikola Dobrović, the work of sculptor Vava Stanković from 1995, is installed in the hall of the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade.

### *Honorary Titles, Public Offices and Social Recognition Awards*

- 1933 Order of Saint Sava, 3<sup>rd</sup> Class, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia
- 1948 President of the Union of Engineers and Technicians of Yugoslavia
- 1948 The Award of the Presidency of the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia for the work on the Urban Regulatory Plan of Greater Belgrade
- 1948 Councilor of the City of Belgrade
- 1955 President of the Association of Urban Planners of the People's Republic of Serbia
- 1957 Member of the Urban Planning Council of the People's Committee of the City of Belgrade
- 1959 Honorary Corresponding Member of The Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA), London
- 1961 Corresponding Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) in Belgrade
- 1961 Honorary Member of the Club of Young Architects of the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade
- 1962 The October Award of the City of Belgrade for the building of the State Secretariat of People's Defence (SSPD)
- 1963 Corresponding Member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts (JAZU) in Zagreb
- 1963 Golden Badge of the Yugoslav Association of Urban Planners
- 1963 Honorary Member of the Association of Architects of Belgrade
- 1964 The 7<sup>th</sup> July Award of the Socialist Republic of Serbia for Lifetime Achievement
- 1964 Permanent Honorary Member of the Association of Architects of the Socialist Republic of Serbia

- 1965 Order of Labor with the Red Banner of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- 1965 Full Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) in Belgrade
- 1968 The October Award of the City of Belgrade for the conceptual and urban plan according to which New Belgrade is built (posthumous)
- 1971 The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) Charter on the occasion of Nikola Dobrović's full membership election (posthumous)
- 1975 Plaque of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade (posthumous)
- 1979 Certificate of Appreciation of the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (IAUS) (posthumous)

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Осврт на изложбу *Никола Добровић:  
од заставама модерних покрета*  
(Галерија Српске академије наука и уметности,  
Београд, 24. 5. 2022 – 2. 10. 2022)<sup>23</sup>

#### Резиме

Српска академија наука и уметности посветила је 2022. годину академику Николи Добровићу (Печуј, 12. 2. 1897 – Београд, 11. 1. 1967) и обележавању јубилеја поводом 125 година од рођења овог истакнутог југословенског и српског архитекте модерног доба.

Изложба „Никола Добровић – под заставама модерних покрета“ аутора проф. др Марте Вукотић Лазар и мр Бојана Ковачевића (отворена у Галерији

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<sup>23</sup> Пројекат прославе јубилеја и пратећих манифестација током трајања изложбе и током целе 2022. године реализован је уз подршку Министарства просвете, науке и технолошког развоја Републике Србије и Министарства културе и информисања Републике Србије.

Српске академије наука и уметности, 24. маја 2022. године, а трајаће до 2. октобра 2022) заузима централно место у Програму обележавања јубилеја.

Прикупљена и обрађена обимна грађа определила је ауторе изложбе да целокупан Добровићев опус поделе у три периода: Прашки (1919–1934), Дубровачки (1934–1943) и Београдски (1945–1967), чије су границе отворене за међусобна прожимања и слободно проистицање свих утицаја из једног периода у други. У том контексту се дизајнерка поставке изложбе, архитекта Марина Докмановић, у договору са ауторима изложбе, определила да ову мултидисциплинарну изложбу презентује у оквиру галеријског простора у осам целина, као најсврхисходнији начин да се посетиоцима први пут стави на увид, досад неизлагани обимни материјал обједињен из разних институција и на једном месту, а који се бави животом и делом, као и периодом коме је припадао архитекта Никола Добровић, редовни члан Српске академије наука и уметности, редовни професор Универзитета у Београду, носилац бројних почасних титула, друштвених и јавних признања итд.

Изложбу прати луксузни каталог, обима 204 стране, са бројним црно-белим и илустрацијама у боји, међу којима је велики број публикован први пут. Поред издања на српском језику, каталог је објављен као посебно издање и на енглеском језику. Издавачка делатност Српске академије наука и уметности припрема још три публикације које ће бити доступне стручној јавности до краја јубиларне 2022. године, и то: монографију *Никола Добровић: животи, дело, време* на српском и на енглеском језику, као и зборник радова на српском језику који ће бити резултат излагања са међународног научног скупа који носи назив *125 година од рођења архитекта Николе Добровића (1897–2022)* у организацији Српске академије наука и уметности, Архитектонског и Филозофског факултета Универзитета у Београду, а који ће бити одржан 17. и 18. новембра 2022. године у просторијама Српске академије наука и уметности и Архитектонског факултета у Београду.

Око изложбе, која је централни догађај, окупили су се бројни, такође важни догађаји са мноштвом учесника и активностима које су се одржавале на више места у Београду. Под окриљем Удружења архитеката Србије и Академије архитектуре Србије одржана је „17. Београдска интернационална недеља архитектуре“ (БИНА, 26. 5. 2022 – 7. 6. 2022), док су на Архитектонском факултету у Београду и зимски и летњи семестар школске 2021/2022. године умногоме били посвећени овом јубилеју кроз низ наставних целина и активности везаних за редовну, изборну и постдипломску наставу, уз организацију пратећих догађаја као што су отворене радионице, разговори, гостујућа експертска предавања, реализација студентског конкурса за идејно архитектонско-урбанистичко решење реконструкције зграда Добровићевог Генералштаба (ДСНО), са изложбом конкурсних решења у Кнез Михаиловој улици у Београду у непосредној близини Галерије Српске академије наука и уметности (27. 5. 2022 – 10. 6. 2022) у реализацији БИНА и Архитектонског факултета у Београду итд. Библиотека Српске академије наука и уметности (БСАНУ) организовала је, такође, у новим витринама пријемног хола, камерну, изложбену поставку од грађе из фонда Библиотеке Српске академије

наука и уметности, уз биографске и друге податке. На иницијативу председника Одбора за припрему и обележавање овог јубилеја, академика архитекте Милана Лојанице, у организацији Српске академије наука и уметности, Архитектонског и Филозофског факултета Универзитета у Београду, одржаће се и међународни научни скуп *125 година од рођења архитекте Николе Добровића (1897–2022)* у Београду, 17. и 18. новембра 2022. године. Радио телевизија Србије (РТС), као национална медијска кућа, дала је подршку овом јубилеју реализацијом документарног филма о животу и раду Николе Добровића, под називом „Урбаниста мора бити архитекта“, кроз призму архивске грађе, аудио и видео материјала, као и кроз сведочења и тумачења Добровићевог живота, дела и доба коме је припадао, његових некадашњих студената, данас угледних српских архитеката: Александра Стјепановића, Живојина Бате Крапеша, Драгољуба Бакића и Ђорђа Бобића, сродника, Весне Пешић, сестричине Иванке Добровић, социолога и политичарке, којој је Никола Добровић био теча, као и аутора изложбе, у продукцији Образовно-научног програма, на челу са главним и одговорним уредником Илијом Церовићем, уредницом емисије Мирјаном Бјелогрић-Николов и редитељком Иваном Стивенс.<sup>24</sup>

Изложба је, са једна стране, посвећена архитекти Николи Добровићу, концептима и феноменима, личностима и делима који су утабали његове путеве, одредили усмерења, изоштрили стваралачке видике и довели га до Београда, његовог животног и професионалног одредишта. Њено друго посвећење усмерено је ка заоставштинама од којих започиње свако темељито истраживање опуса појединих градитеља.

*Кључне речи:* Никола Добровић; архитектура; урбанизам; изложбе; градитељско наслеђе; вредновање и тумачење; Петар Добровић.

<sup>24</sup> Документарни филм доступан је на: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW2TgcPtNm4>

