

Max Bill

Soba 25 – zelo odprta šola

Andrej Hrausky

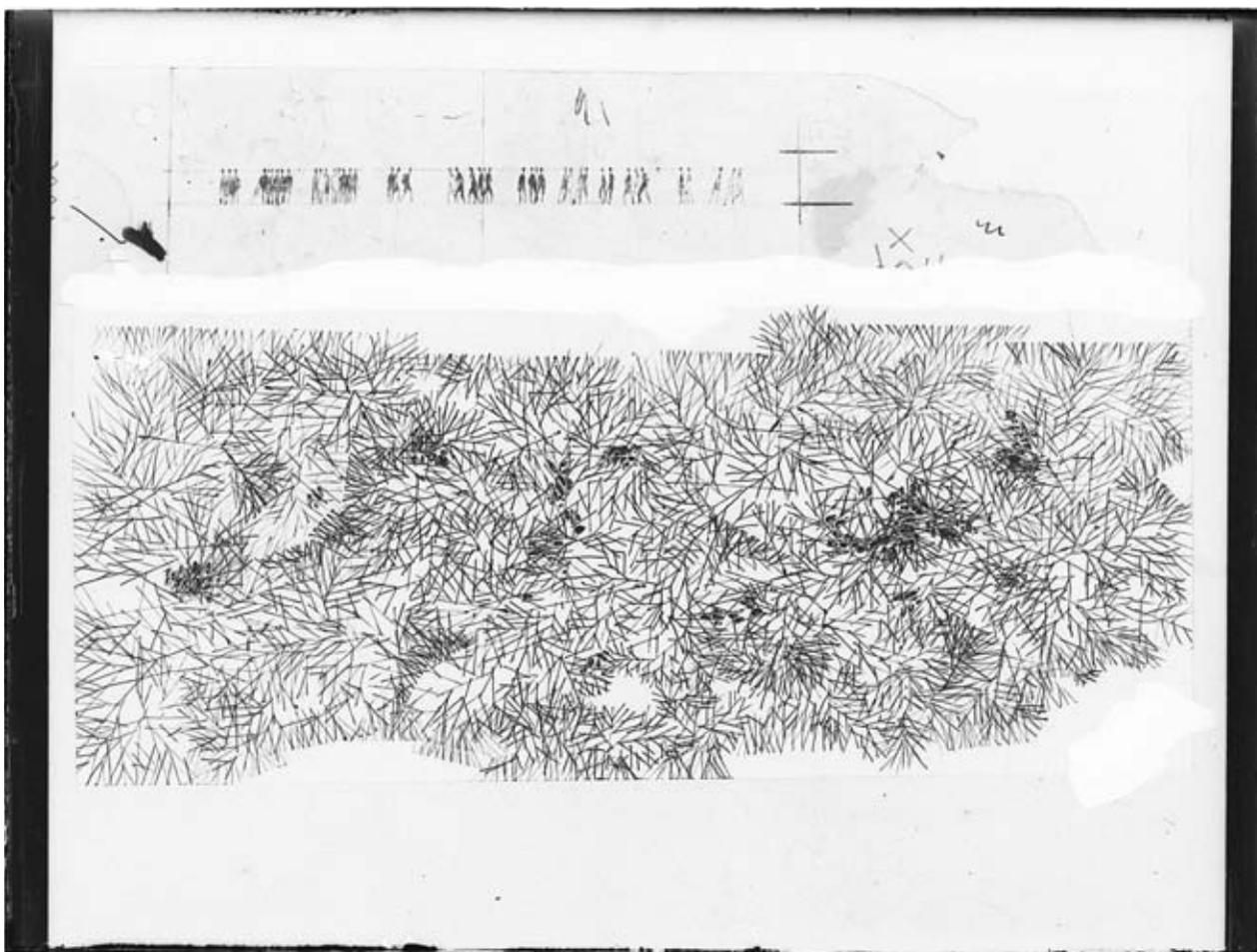
Spomnim se, ko smo prišli na fakulteto za arhitekturo v Ljubljani in smo vstajali še bolj zgodaj kot v gimnaziji, da bi dobili prostor v natrpanih učilnicah fakultete. Nekateri so si prizadevali, da bi sedeli vedno v prvi vrsti, ne da bi bolje videli, ampak, da bi si jih profesorji zapomnili, saj so verjeli, da jim bo to pomagalo pri izpitih. V teh nezavidljivih razmerah smo kmalu opazili nekat-

ere starejše kolege, ki so s svojim videzom in obnašanjem dali vedeti, da so nekaj posebnega. Kot da za njih ne veljajo običajne norme, metode in učni načrt. Mi, mlajši, smo se še mučili z rapidografi (rotringi so ravno prihajali), tistimi srednjeveškimi napravami, ki so v paus papir vrezovale čudovite črte, ob najmanjši nepazljivosti pa so bruhalo luže črnega tuša znamke Pelikan. Tisti, ki so zasedli risalnico št. 25, pa na svojih mizah niso imeli le položnic in risarskega pribora, ampak tudi pisalne stroje. In pozneje, ko so na ljubljansko šolo pričeli prihajati angleški študenti iz AA v Londonu pod vodstvom profesorja Briana Ansona, smo mi mlajši vedeli, da se dogaja nekaj pomembnega. In tudi profesor Ravnikar je tistih nekaj predavanj, ki jih je imel, vedno odpredaval v risalnici št. 25.

Seveda se tako imenovana Soba 25 ni zgodila sama po sebi, ampak je bila odmev tedanjega časa. V začetku sedemdesetih let je tudi v naše kraje, popolnoma v skladu s tradicijo zamudništva, prispel odmev na revolucionarne dogodke leta 1968. Protesti proti vojni v Vietnamu, študentske demonstracije v Parizu, atentat na Martina Luttra Kinga in Roberta Kennedyja, okupacija Češkoslovaške. Leta 1969 je človek stopil na Luno, zgodil se Woodstock in pojavil se je AIDS. Naslednje leto je potekal največji rock koncert vseh časov na Isle of Wight in umrla sta idola Jimi Hendrix in Janis Joplin (drugo leto še Jim Morrison) in tako naprej.

Vsi ti dogodki so se odrazili tudi v dojemanju sveta. Pristanek na Luni je ponudil popolnoma novo perspektivo tega večnega sim-

bola zaljubljenec. Tragične smrti političnih in glasbenih idolov so kazale, da na svetu ni vse tako, kot se je zdelo. Tragika vojn, predvsem v Vietnamu in Kambodži, pa tudi škandal Watergate nekaj kasneje (leta 1972), so v temelju zamajali vero v urejen in pravičen svet. V ZDA so se vrstili protesti proti vojni v Vietnamu, sledili so tudi drugod, posebej množične pa so bile študentske demonstracije maja 1968 v Parizu, ki se jih je udeležilo milijon ljudi. Ko so jih podprli tudi sindikati, je po vsej Franciji stavkalo 10 milijonov ljudi in predsednik De Gaulle se je celo 'umaknil' v Nemčijo. Te demonstracije, ki so skoraj sesule oblast, so bile levičarsko obarvane in so izražale splošno nezaupanje v institucije. Dogodki so odmevali po vsem svetu in julija 1968 so množično demonstrirali tudi študenti v Beogradu. Nasprotovali so ekonomskim reformam in kritizirali 'rdečo buržoazijo' in birokracijo. Le nekaj dni po



Edvard Ravnikar

Room 25 – A Very Open School
Andrej Hrausky

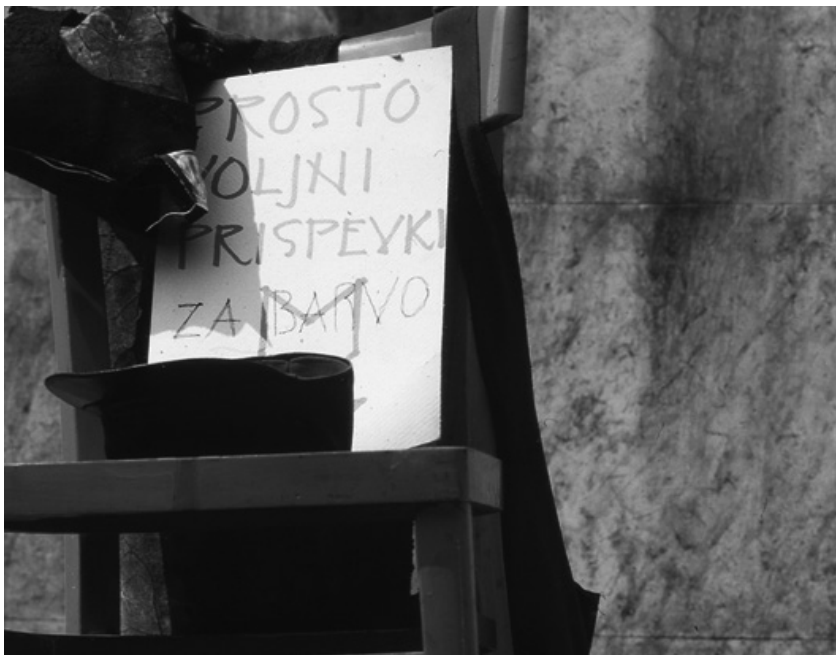
I remember when we arrived at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana and had to get up even earlier, than we were used to in High School, to get a seat in the crowded classroom. Some tried desperately to get a place up front, not to see better, but because they believed that the professors might notice them, which would help them in the exams. In these unenviable conditions we soon no-

ticed some older colleagues, who stood out with their appearance and behaviour, thus letting us know that they are something special. As if the usual norms, methods and curriculum wouldn't apply to them. We, the younger, tortured ourselves with the rapidographs, those medieval devices, which carved beautiful letters into the paus paper and spewed out puddles of Pellikan's black ink at the slightest carelessness. On the tables of those who occupied drawing office No. 25 one could find not only the bills and drawing utensils, but also typewriters. Later, when British students from London's AA, under the guidance of Professor Brian Anson, began arriving, we knew that something important was happening. Even Professor Ravnikar always held those few lectures in drawing room No. 25.

Of course, the so-called Room 25 didn't just appear out of the blue. It was an echo of that time. The delayed echo of the revolutionary events of '68 arrived, in accordance with the tradition of late coming, to our country in the early seventies; protests against the Vietnam War, student protests in Paris, the assassination of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia. In 1969 man walked on the moon, there was Woodstock and AIDS appeared. The next year brought the biggest rock concert of all time on the Isle of Wight, the idols Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin died (Jim Morrison followed the next year) and so on.

All these events were reflected in the perception of the world. The Moon landing offered a whole new perspective on this eternal symbol of lovers. Tragic deaths of

political and musical idols showed that the situation in the world was not quite as it seemed. The tragedy of war, especially those in Vietnam and Cambodia, and the Watergate scandal later on (1972), shook our faith in an orderly and just world. The protests against the war in Vietnam started in the US and were soon followed by protests around the globe. One of the largest was held in Paris '68 where around 1 million people protested. After they got the support from the syndicates, the number rose to 10 million and even president De Gaulle »retreated« to Germany. These protests, which almost caused the government's downfall, were leftist by nature and expressed the general distrust of institutions. The events resonated around the world and in July 1968 the protests were also held in Belgrade. The students objected to the economic reforms and criticized the »red bourgeoisie« and



Barvanje Fabianijeve ograje pred Frančiškansko cerkvijo, 1971

pričetku demonstracij v Beogradu, kjer je policija z vodnimi topovi in pendreki pregnala študente, so bili protesti tudi v študentskem naselju v Ljubljani. Študente je razburila namera uprave doma, da čez poletje izprazni dva študentska bloka za turistične namene.

V jedilnici so priredili zborovanje, na katerem so predstavili svoje zahteve. In te so bile izpolnjene – povečali so sklad za štipendije, študenti so v skupščino neposredno volili dva svoja predstavnika in naslednje leto so dobili svoj medij – Radio Študent, pozneje pa so na njihovo zahtevo sezidali še dva stolpiča s študentskimi sobami. Leta 1970 so študenti zahtevali reformo univerze: enakovredno sodelovanje študentov v univerzitetnih svetih, delovnih komisijah, na volitvah, pravičnejša selekcija, modernizacija učnega procesa

itd. Šele leta 1971 je prišlo do zasedbe Aškerčeve ceste (zaradi hrupa) in zasedbe Filozofske fakultete (zaradi kazenskega pregona Franeta Adama in Milana Jesiha). Z današnje zgodovinske perspektive je osupljivo, kaj vse so študenti dosegli na relativno miren način. Dva nova nastanitvena bloka, svojo radijsko postajo, podvojeni štipendijski sklad in dva neposredno voljena predstavnika v parlament. O čem takem lahko mladi danes le sanjajo. Protesti so se dogajali v času družbenih reform – pravzaprav se ne spomnim, da takrat ne bi vedno živeli v času reform – a te so bile tedaj liberalne. V Sloveniji je bil predsednik vlade perspektivni Stane Kavčič, ki se je zavzemal za večjo avtonomijo, liberalne gospodarske reforme itd. Študenti pa so zahtevali dosledno uveljavitev samoupravljanja tudi na fakultetah. Njihovo stališče je bilo celo bolj levo od uradnega in nehote so podprli

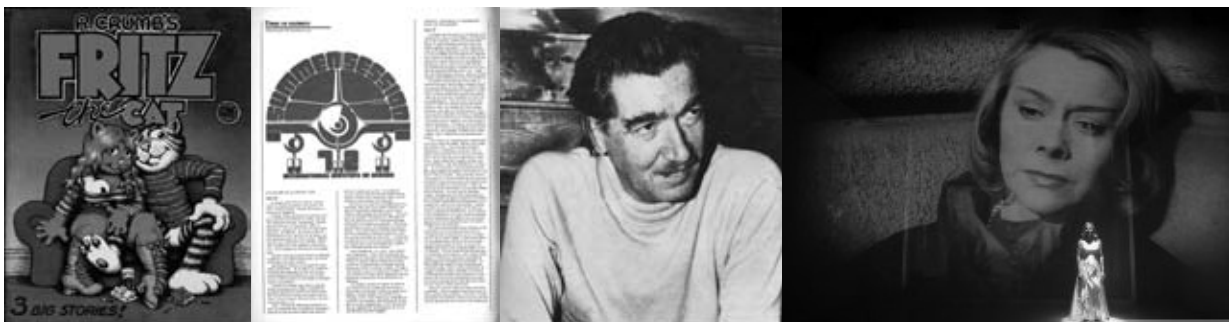
konservativne »stare sile«, ki so državo povrnile v stari okvir.

Ne glede na to, da je Soba 25 možno razumeti le v kontekstu teh vrenj, pa so bili dogodki in akcije drugačne. Predvsem je bila Soba 25 izjema tudi na Fakulteti za arhitekturo. Kot da bi šlo za osamljen eksperiment, nekakšen laboratorij študijske reforme v okviru seminarja profesorja Edvarda Ravnikarja. To daje slutiti že dejstvo, da se Ravnikar ni odrekel tako imenovanim *nebesom*, kjer so vedno posebej izbrani risali njegove načrte v skladu s Plečnikovo tradicijo »Maul halten und weiter dienen«. Ta vajeniški princip, kjer so učenci postopoma, ob delu na konkretnih nalogah, posvečeni v skrivnosti obrti, je Plečnik povzel po Wagnerjevi šoli na Dunaju. Tu je treba mojstra občudovati in

Pizdarije

brezpogojno verjeti v njegovo nezmotljivost. Te izbrance iz *nebes* še danes prepoznamo po pogostih citatih: »Ravnikar je rekel ...«, kar naj bi bil dokaz njihove posvečenosti in vdanosti. V Sobi 25, ki je vzporedno potekala v njegovem seminarju, vsega tega ni bilo – študenti so morali misliti s svojo glavo. Kot da bi profesor želel hkrati primerjati dve popolnoma različni študijski metodi.

Profesor Ravnikar je bil kritičen do metode študija arhitekture, ki so ga po vojni, po zgledu beograjske in zagrebške fakultete (kot je trdil), uveljavili v celotni državi. Študij se mu je zdel preveč akademski in obremenjen z odvečnimi vsebinami, kar je pojasnjeval tudi v svojih člankih. V njih beremo, da je cenil Plečnikov in Vurnikov način poučevanja, kjer so se študenti ukvarjali s konkretnimi



Barvanje Fabianijeve ograje pred Frančiškansko cerkvijo, 1971

bureaucracy. A few days after the protests in Belgrade, where the police used water cannons and truncheons to disperse students, the protests started on the campus in Ljubljana. The students were upset by the administration's intention to clear out two student buildings for tourist purposes during the summer break. A gathering was held in the dining hall, where they presented their demands; and the students' demands were granted. The scholarship fund was increased, students were able to directly elect two of their representatives to the Assembly and in the next year they got their own media – Radio Student. Also, two new buildings with student accommodations were built later on. In 1970, the students demanded a reform of the university: equal participation of students in university councils, working committees, elections, fairer selection, modernization of the learning process, etc. In 1971, the

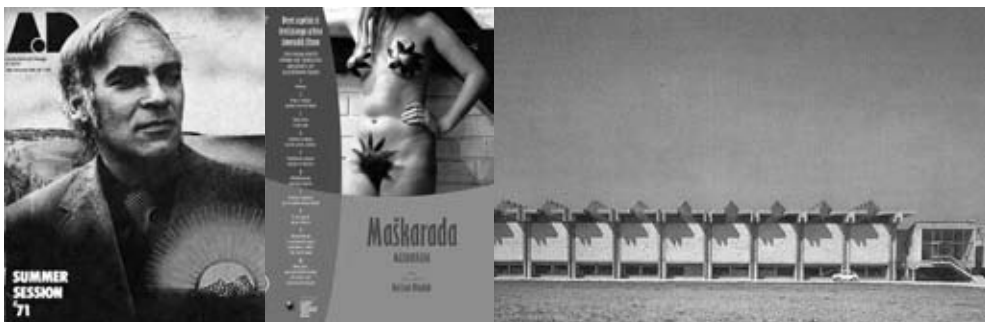
protests escalated with the occupation of the Faculty of Arts (due to the arrest of students Frane Adam and Milan Jesih) and Aškerčeva Street (due to noise). From today's historical perspective, it is amazing what the students were able to achieve in a relatively peaceful manner: two new buildings, their own radio station, doubled scholarship funds and two directly elected representatives in the Assembly. These achievements are something the youth of today can only dream of. Protests took place in times of social reforms – actually I can't remember if there ever was a time without some sort of reform – but these were liberal back then. The Prime Minister in Slovenia, at the time, was the promising Stane Kavčič, who advocated for greater autonomy, liberal economic reforms, etc. The students demanded a stricter implementation of self-management at faculties. Their standpoint

was even more leftist than the official one, and so they inadvertently supported the conservative »old forces«, which rolled the country back into its old framework.

Notwithstanding the fact, that Room 25 can only be interpreted in the light of that turmoil, the events and actions were quite different. Above all, Room 25 was an exception at the Faculty of Architecture. Like some sort of isolated experiment, a laboratory of study reform within Professor Edvard Ravnikar's seminar. This is suggested by the fact that Professor Ravnikar never gave up his heavens, where select ones drew his plans in accordance with Plečnik's tradition of »Maul halten und weiter dienen«. This apprenticeship principle, where students gradually learn by doing specific tasks and are thus

initiated into the secrets of the craft, was adopted by Plečnik from the Wagner's School in Vienna. The master has to be admired and unconditionally believe in his infallibility. These »chosen ones« can still be recognized today when they cite: »Professor Ravnikar said...«, which should be a sign of their initiation and devotion. In Room 25, which took place in his seminar, this was absent – students had to think for themselves. As if the Professor wanted to simultaneously compare two completely different study methods.

Professor Ravnikar was critical towards the methods of study, which were established throughout the country after the war, along the lines of (so he claimed) the Belgrade and Zagreb faculties of architecture. Studies seemed, to him, too academic and laden with extraneous content. He explained his



Prof. Brian Anson iz AA v Ljubljani, 1973

views in many articles. We can see that he appreciated Plečnik's and Vurnik's method of teaching their students, who had to deal with specific tasks. In 1951 he wrote that »they limited themselves to performing small tasks, applied art even, but every study was based on reality, specific needs and possibilities of craftsmanship implementation. They taught not only students, but artisans as well«. In 1957, on the subject of their school: »Few students, close interaction, connection with praxis, firm beliefs about the role of the architect and architecture, thought-out ethics and similar, eventually reminded of things new architectural pedagogy needs the most«. Professor Ravnikar put the College of Design in Ulm, ran by Max Bill in accordance with the tradition of Bauhaus, as an example. He knew this school well, since he visited it in 1955 at the invitation of Max Bill and held a lecture there. He tried to

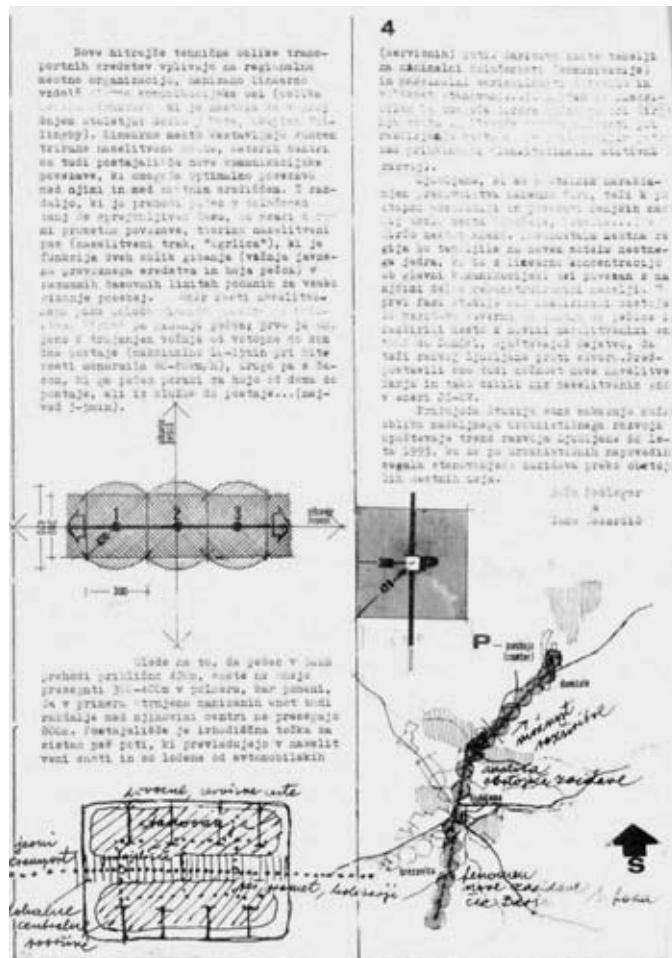
implement some of these ideas in Ljubljana. Opportunity presented itself when the state decided to reform the university studies. Professor Ravnikar became head of the department of architecture and was delighted to perform the task. However, the so-called B Course, which began in the fall semester of 1960, sadly failed because faculty quarrels got in the way. Some in Room 25 tried to revive the B Course, but both approaches were more different than it had first seemed. B Course was meant for students who were focused on accessories, exhibitions and design; some sort of simplified study without urbanism and statics, with an emphasis on colour/shape creativity. Since the B-study was cancelled after only two semesters (Fall 1960 / Fall 1962), of which only the first one was actually carried out, we can remember it primarily for the compositional studies made of paper, which were created in the

basic art course. It was summarized after the introductory studies (Vorkurs), introduced at Bauhaus by Johannes Itten under the influence of the Vienna pedagogue Franz Čížek. Its goal was to awaken the creativity in students.

The starting-points of Room 25 were exactly the opposite. No formal teaching methods or forms, but, according to self-management demands, an almost complete autonomy of students, guided by the Professor almost casually and from the background. More important than the final outcome of each task was its understanding – correct question contains half the answer. Therefore one was able to graduate with just the help of a text or even a slide show. In the period of Room 25 form wasn't the key, like in B Course, but a reflection on the task at hand, which would

define the form eventually. It seems that Professor Ravnikar redefined the concept of teaching architecture in those ten years.

It should be said that Professor Ravnikar understood the importance of theory, critique and international connections. After all, he provided the initiative for the Arhitekt magazine, which came out in the fall of 1951 and published theory and helped establish those first international contacts (Sigfried Giedion, Alfred Roth, Max Bill). The Open Chair was formed in the context of the B program, and lectures were held by Branko Rudolf, Anton Trstenjak and others; the international profession was represented by Erik Berglund from Sweden, who lectured on the theory of colours. Room 25 invited external lecturers as well: Stane Saksida, Mišo Jezernik, Veljko Rus, Zdravko Mlinar, Božidar Debeljak and



Tomačevo, 1972

glavah še dovolj prisotna, da smo se čudili, kako je mogoče, da se tako slavna šola, kot je Architecture Association School of Architecture, naveže stike s Fakulteto za arhitekturo v Ljubljani. A v tistih revolucionarnih letih jih je pritegnil ravno socializem in samoupravljanje. Spomnim se Ansonovih predavanj, kjer smo vsi ležali na tleh, on pa je razlagal o pomenu vključevanja lokalnih prebivalcev v projekte. Sam se je – kot eden vodilnih projektantov British London Council, zadolžen za območje Covent Gardna v Londonu, kjer so investitorji želeli graditi stolpnice – postavil na stran prebivalcev, ki so nasprotovali projektu. Historični Covent Garden je bil rešen, Anson pa je zgubil službo in se je izselil v Francijo. Ko je leta 2009 umrl v 74. letu starosti, je Richard Rogers izjavil, da je šlo za redkega pravega heroja, ki ga je imel priložnost spoznati.

Profesor Ravnikar takrat ni imel ravno veliko predavanj. Mi, ki smo pripadali sicer nekoliko mlajši generaciji, ki je bila deležna še manj predavanj, se radi pošalimo, da se še dobro spomnimo njegovih 'vseh treh' predavanj, ki jih je imel za časa našega študija. V resnici jih je bilo seveda več, a nekatera so bila res rezultat trenutnega navdaha. Nekoč je zjutraj v časopisu prebral, da nameravajo sezidati hotel Bernardin. Takoj je pripravil predavanje in ga opremil z značilnimi diapozitivi, kjer je sheme risal neposredno na prozorno folijo v okvirčku. Opozoril je, da tak hotel zahteva veliko osebja, ki ga na Obali ni. Zato bo projekt pritegnil delovno silo od drugod. Ti bodo potrebovali stanovanja, si ustvarili družine in tako potrebovali še vrtnice in osnovne šole, da o ostali infrastrukturi ne govorimo. Profesorja ni zanimalo, kakšna bo arhitektura novega hotela, ampak raje, kakšen vpliv bo poseg imel na celotno obalo – za razumevanje

Tomo Čakardič, Božo Podlogar: Monorail v Ljubljani; Članek v AB No5, 1972

širšega konteksta. In to je prav tisto, kar je želel, da spoznajo študenti Sobe 25. Ko so demonstrirali študenti na Filozofski fakulteti, so postavili svoje zahteve in pričakovali njihovo izpolnitev. Študenti Sobe 25 so ravnali drugače. Samoiniciativno so sklenili pobarvati ograjo pred Franciškansko cerkvijo. Kraj dogodka je bil dovolj vpadljiv, da je vzbudil širšo pozornost, sama akcija pa dovolj glasna, da je bila razumljena kot protest (barvali so jo z rumeno barvo) in pritegnila celo slavnega miličnika Pavla Čelika. S tem ko so se študenti arhitekture sami lotili propadajoče kulturne dediščine, so opozorili na potrebo po družbeni angažiranosti arhitekta, ki ugotovi pomanjkljivosti in se jih sam loti. In študenti so tako proučevali problem črnih gradenj,

dragih stanovanj, izrabe podstrešij, javnega mestnega prometa, napihljive arhitekture, izrabe opučenih gramoznic in podobno. V članku *Letošnja Soba 25 kot poskus zelo odprte šole za arhitekturo*, ki je bil objavljen v *AB-ju* leta 1972, je profesor Ravnikar navedel nekaj ciljev takšnega pristopa: »Za razliko od psevdoznanstvenega raziskovalnega delovanja, ki je največkrat zagovor ne vedno srečnih političnih odločitev na podlagi površne znanosti o človeku in družbi znanja, ki ji tako radi natikamo etiketo neodvisne resnice, gre torej bolj za v človeku in stvarih fundirano kreacijo, ki naj nadomesti že zelo majavo zmoto, da ta resnica lahko pride le iz »znanstvenega« urbanizma in planiranja.« Zavzel se je za bolj človeški in neposreden pristop do problemov, pa naj je šlo za obravnavanje črnih gradenj, ki bi jih bilo mogoče kultivirati, ali pa za planiranje, ki že zdavnaj ne vidi več pravih problemov. Tak



Naslovnica AA No. 4

others. International connections were conducted with the help of London's AA.

In those days the 'Iron Curtain' was still present in the minds of people, so we were quite surprised and wondered how it was possible that a famous school such as the Architecture Association School of Architecture came into contact with the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana. However, in those revolutionary years they were drawn to socialism and self-management. I can remember Anson's lectures, when we were all lying on the ground while he talked of the importance of involving local people in projects. He – as one of the leading planners of the British London Council in charge of the Covent Garden area in London, where the investors wanted to build skyscrapers – sided with the locals, who opposed the project. The historical Cov-

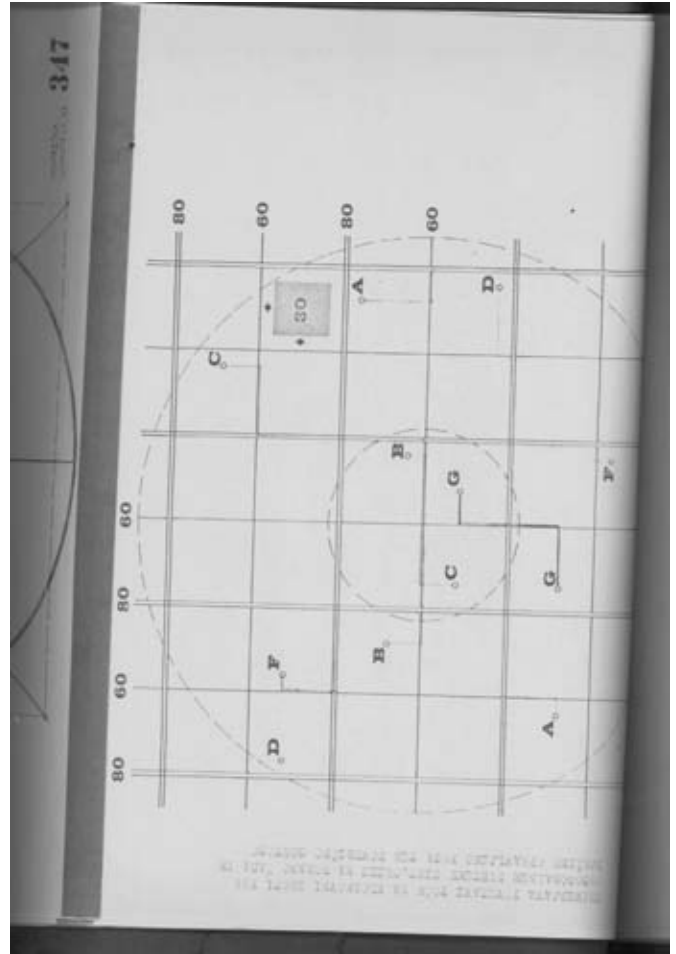
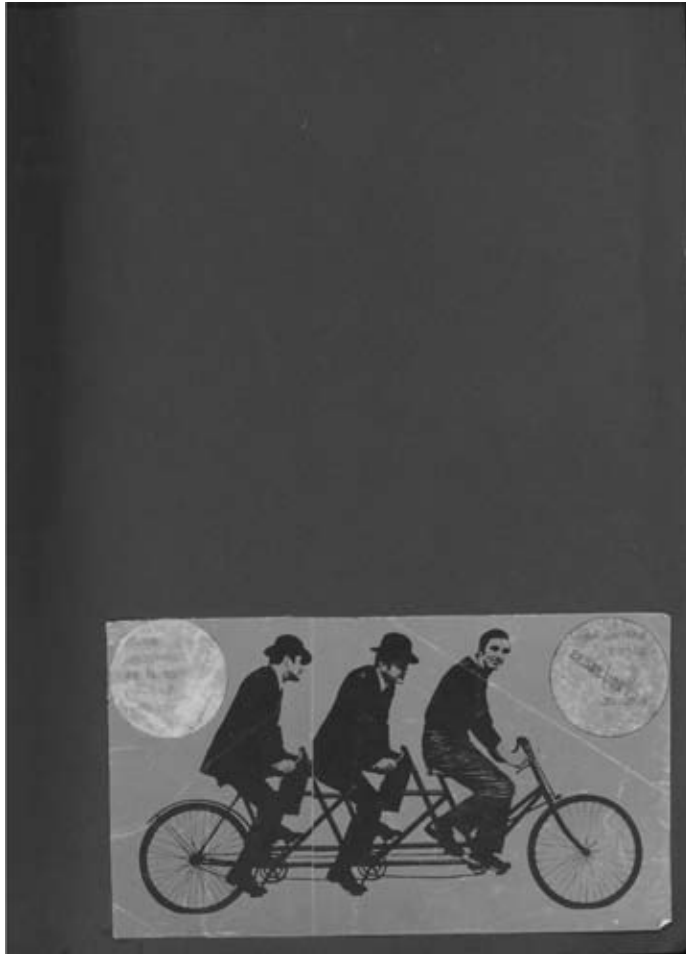
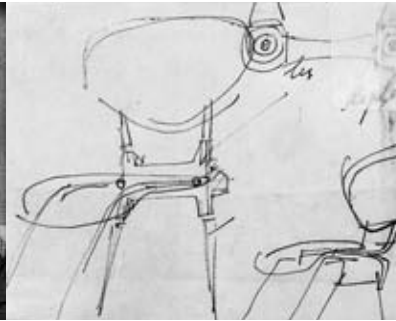
ent Garden was saved, but Anson lost his job and immigrated to France. When he died in 2009, aged 74, Richard Rogers stated that Anson was one of a tiny handful of heroes he had the good fortune to know.

Professor Ravnikar didn't hold a lot of lectures at that time. We, members of a slightly younger generation, were given even less lectures, so we like to joke that we still remember 'all three of them'. There were of course more, but some were merely a result of his momentary inspiration. Once, he read in the morning newspaper that they were planning to build the Hotel Bernardin. He immediately held a lecture with those unmistakable slides, on which he drew schemes directly onto the transparent foil in the frame. He pointed out that such a hotel demands a lot of staff, which is lacking in

the coastal region. Therefore, the project will attract workforce from elsewhere. They will need housing, create families and thus need kindergartens and schools, not to mention the rest of the infrastructure. The Professor wasn't interested in the architecture of the new hotel. He was interested in the impact it would have on the whole coastal region – for the understanding of the broader context. And this is exactly what he wanted the students of Room 25 to realize.

When students demonstrated in the Faculty of Arts, they made their demands and expected their fulfilment. Room 25 students acted differently. On their own initiative they decide to paint the fence in front of the Franciscan church. Location of the event was striking enough to raise attention, the action was loud enough to be perceived as a protest

(they painted it yellow) and they even managed to attract the attention of the famous policeman Pavle Čelik. By setting to work on the tottering cultural heritage themselves, they pointed out the fact that a socially engaged architect is needed, one who is able to see the deficiencies and tackle them. Students have looked at the problem of illegal constructions, expensive apartments, attic use, urban public transport, inflatable architecture, use of abandoned gravel pits etc. In the article This year's Room 25 as an attempt at a very open school of architecture, published in AB (1972), Professor Ravnikar listed some of the goals of such an approach: »Unlike the pseudo-scientific research activity, which often serves as defence of sometime unlucky political decisions based on superficial sciences about man and the society of knowledge, which we so gladly give the label of independent

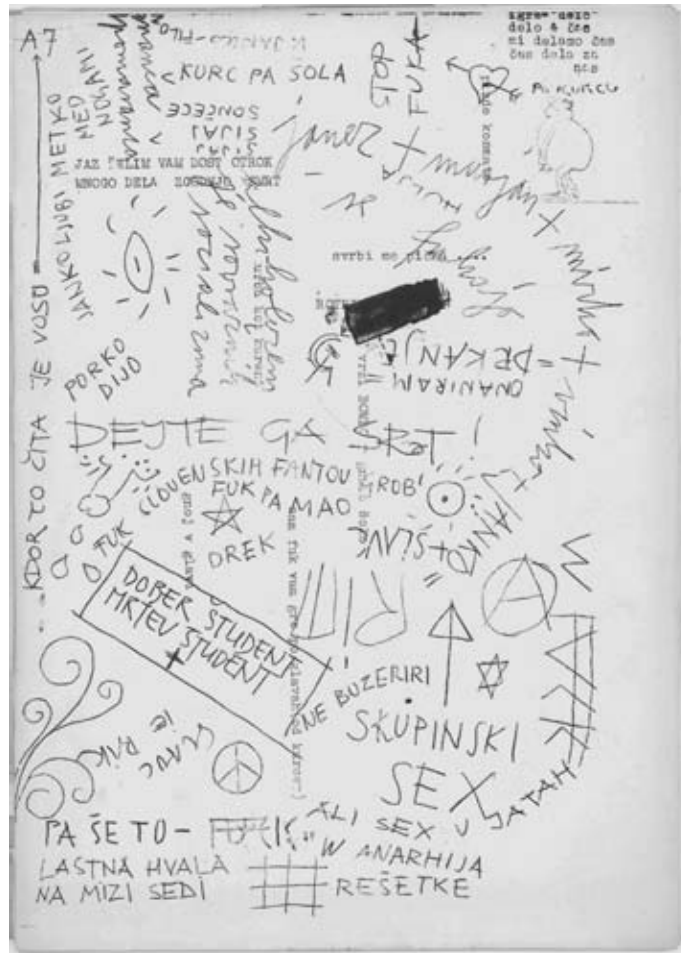
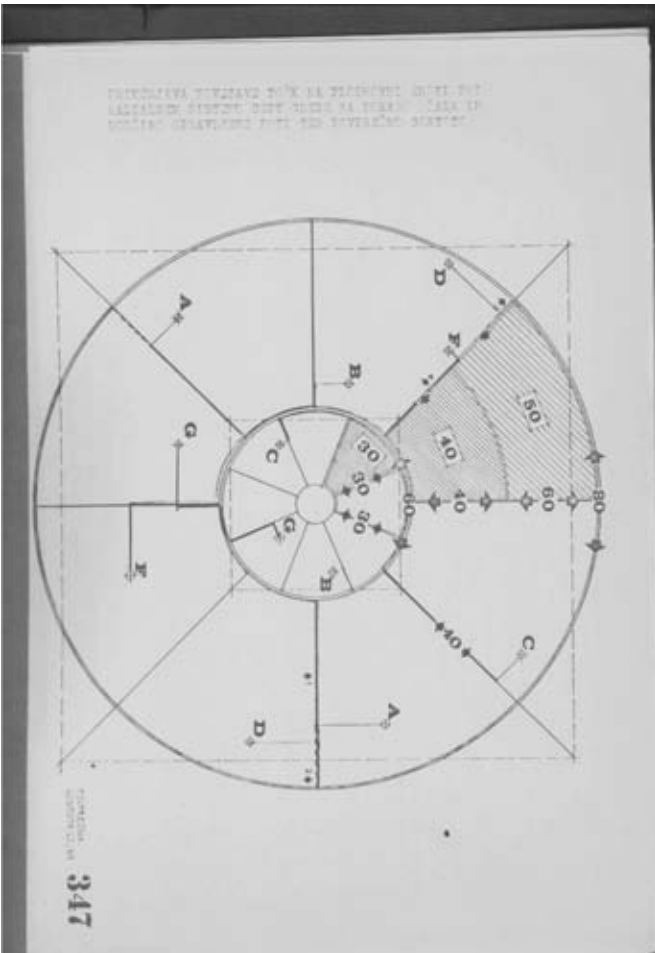


Mladen Treppo, Boris Pleskovič, Jernej Strmecki: Prometna študija Ljubljane, 1972 / 73

pristop nakazuje bolj aktivno vlogo arhitekta od njegove tradicionalne vloge vestnega izdelovalca načrtov za potrebe investitorje.

Družbena angažiranost in razmišljanje o širšem vplivu in pomenu posegov v prostor sta morda glavni pridobitvi eksperimenta z imenom Soba 25. Čeprav kratkotrajna je imela pomemben vpliv na razvoj slovenske arhitekture. Še posebej, če upoštevamo, da je kar nekaj arhitektov Sobe 25 pozneje delovalo na različnih področjih, kar nekaj jih je prevzelo uredništvo AB-ja. V njegovem okviru so nadaljevali z razvojem teorije in kritike. O tem priča tudi naslov pregledne razstave članov AB iz leta 1981 *arhitektura + beseda*, ki je v naslovu poudarjala pomen besede (teorije in kritike), brez katere ni arhitekture. Revolucionarno vrenje sedemde-

setih let je nepričakovano prekinila modna post-moderna arhitektura osemdesetih, ki se je spet vrnila k formi. Tedanja generacija mlajših slovenskih arhitektov se je uspela izogniti ponujenemu baročnemu kiču in se je pri tem oprla na italijansko racionalno arhitekturo in kritični regionalizem. Bi to zmogla brez izkušnje Sobe 25 in poznejših *AB-jevih* teoretskih izhodišč?



Mladen Treppo, Boris Pleskovič, Jernej Strmecki: Prometna študija Ljubljane, 1972 / 73.

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truth, it is actually about the creation founded in things and man, which should replace the shaky fallacy that the truth can only be revealed by 'scientific' urbanism and planning.« He called for a more humane and direct approach to problems, whether they were illegal buildings, which could be cultivated, or planning, which had long since become oblivious to the real problems. Such an approach suggests a more active role for the architect, not the traditional role of a diligent plan maker for the investors.

Social engagement and reflection on the broader impact and meaning of space interventions were perhaps the most important acquisitions of the Room 25 experiment. Although short-lived, it had an important influence on the development of Slovenian architecture. Especially if we take into con-

sideration the fact that quite a few architects from Room 25 later worked in various fields, and some moved on to AB's editorial board. There, they continued with the development of criticism and theory. This was showcased in the comprehensive exhibition of AB members in 1981 called architecture + the word, which stressed the meaning of the word (criticism and theory) in its title, without which there can be no architecture. Revolutionary ferment of the seventies was unexpectedly interrupted by the fashionable post-modern architecture of the eighties, which went back to form. That generation of younger Slovenian architects managed to avoid the Baroque kitsch and leaned on the Italian rational architecture and critical regionalism. Would that have been possible without the experience of Room 25 and, later on, AB's theoretical foundations?