

piranski dnevi včeraj, danes in jutri

intervju z arhitektko Majo Ivanič, novo predsednico organizacijskega odbora Piranskih dnevov arhitekture

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Piranski dnevi arhitekture so mednarodna arhitekturna konferenca, ki se od leta 1983 vsako leto konec novembra odvija v očarljivem gledališču Tartini v Piranu. Konferenca, ki je z leti prerasla regionalne okvire, je dolgo predstavljala enega redkih strokovnih arhitekturnih dogodkov z mednarodnim predznakom pri nas. Na njej so predavali številni ugledni predavatelji in arhitekti iz Evrope in drugih delov sveta. Najbolj znani so Friedrich Achleitner, Boris Podrecca, Heinz Tesar, Luigi Semerani, Gino Valle, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Alvaro Siza Vieira, Peter Zumthor, Enric Miralles, Sverre Fehn, Kenneth Frampton, David Chipperfield in še mnogi drugi. Leta 2008 so Piranski dnevi zaživel na novo, saj jih je po 25ih letih, ko jih je vodil prof. Vojteh Ravnikar, na njegovo pobudo prevzela nova organizacijska ekipa, ki jo vodijo arhitektke Maja Ivanič, Špela Kuhar in Ana Struna Bregar.

Namen konference je pregled sodobnih arhitekturnih trendov ter predstavitev in izmenjava inovativnih arhitekturnih in prostorskih idej. Razstava, ki vsako leto spremlja srečanje, predstavlja nove arhitekturne dosežke iz območja dežel srednje Evrope. Od leta 1989 se za najboljše stvaritve podeljuje tudi Nagrada Piranesi. Pomenljivo ime omenjenega priznanja se navezuje na velikega italijanskega grafika in arhitekta iz osemnajstega stoletja Giovanni Battista Piranesija in domnevno piransko poreklo njegove rodbine.

V poplavi spektakularnih arhitekturnih festivalov v zadnjih letih so piranski dnevi s svojim nostalgичnim flairom, komornostjo, izogibanjem zvezdnitvu in s tem povezano teoretsko in strokovno resnostjo vsekakor dobrodošla posebnost. Letošnja tema Piranskih dnevov je »Novi izivi: premisliti arhitekturo in prostor, premisliti vrednote, etiko in estetiko«.

Ko ste leta 2008 s Špelo Kuhar in Ano Struna Bregar prevzele Piranske dneve, kakšen je bil vaš načrt, nadaljevanje tradicije ali nekaj radikalno novega?

Piranski dnevi arhitekture (PDA) so v svetovnem merilu arhitekturna konferenca z najdaljšim »stažem«. Letos bodo že osemindvajseti po vrsti. In osemindvajset zaporednih let je za takšen dogodek, še zlasti, ker se ne odvija v kakšni svetovni prestolnici in z velikimi finančnimi sponzorji, velik dosežek. Zato je nadaljevanje tradicije nekaj samoumevnega. Še posebej zato, ker se v našem prostoru v zadnjih letih organizira veliko različnih arhitekturnih dogodkov in konferenc – Mesec oblikovanja, Dnevi Orisa, Arhitekturni dnevi ..., ki so po velikosti mnogo večji od nas. Vendar pa imajo Piranski dnevi dolgoteren naskok. In prav ta je njegova prednost.

Ko me je prof. Vojteh Ravnikar pred dvema letoma povabil, da bi prevzela njegovo »predsedniško funkcijo«, se mi je zdelo pomembno, da k sodelovanju poleg ljudi iz Obalnih galerij, ki seveda ostajajo nosilec organizacije

piran days of architecture: looking back and looking forward

interview with architect Maja Ivanič, the new head of the Piran Days of Architecture organising committee

Kristina Dešman and Miha Dešman

Photo: Andraž Kavčič, Peter Krapež

Piran Days of Architecture is an international architecture conference that takes place in late November in the charming Tartini Theatre in Piran, and has done so every year since 1983. Through the years, the conference outgrew its initial regional scope, and was for a long time one of the very few events for architecture professionals in Slovenia that was truly international, featuring numerous renowned lecturers and architects from Europe and other parts of the world. The most famous among them have been Friedrich Achleitner, Boris Podrecca, Heinz Tesar, Luigi Semerani, Gino Valle, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Alvaro Siza Vieira, Peter Zumthor, Enric Miralles, Sverre Fehn, Kenneth Frampton, David Chipperfield, and many more.

In 2008, Piran Days of Architecture was given a new lease of life. Prof. Vojteh Ravnikar, who had been in charge of the conference for 25 years, suggested that a new organisational team should take over. The new team is led by architects Maja Ivanič, Špela Kuhar, and Ana Struna Bregar.

The conference aims to provide a review of contemporary architectural trends and presentations, and serve as a platform for exchanging innovative ideas on architecture and space. Each year, the meeting is accompanied by an exhibition showcasing new architectural achievements in the countries of Central Europe. Since 1989, the best creations are bestowed with the Piranesi Award, named as a reference to the famous 18th century Italian graphic artist and architect Giovanni Battista Piranesi, whose family is supposed to originate from Piran.

With an ever-increasing number of architecture festivals offering mostly star-struck spectacle, Piran Days of Architecture stands above the rest as a serious theoretical and professional event that prides itself on its nostalgic flair and immediacy of atmosphere. The topic of 27th Days of Architecture is "New Challenges: rethinking architecture and space, rethinking values, ethics and aesthetics".

When you were put in charge of Piran Days of Architecture (PDA) in 2008 together with Špela Kuhar and Ana Struna Bregar, what plans did you have for the event - a continuation of the tradition or a radical break with it?

PDA is the architectural conference with the world's longest tradition - this year, we'll have already our 28th annual meeting. To be held for twenty-eight years in a row is a major achievement for such an event, especially since it doesn't take place in any global metropolis, nor does it enjoy any major sponsorship backing. Therefore, continuing the tradition was the obvious choice, particularly since in the past years, there have been many different architectural events and conferences in the area - Month of Design, Days of Oris, Days of Architecture - which are all much bigger in size compared to PDA. Still, PDA has been around for that much longer, and this works to our advantage.

When Professor Vojteh Ravnikar asked me to succeed him as the head two years

dogodka, povabim ljudi, ki poznajo Piranske dneve in razumejo njihovo vlogo in pomen. Ob »prevzemu vajeti« smo s Špelo Kuhar in Ano Struna Bregar najprej analizirale stanje in takoj ugotovile, da imajo PDA poleg tradicije tudi zelo dobro, kompleksno strukturo – predavanja, mednarodno nagrado Piranesi in spremljevalne arhitekturne razstave. Neumno bi bilo tako unikaten koncept, ki dobro »špila«, radikalno spreminjati. Potrebuje le nekoliko prevetritve. Tako smo se odločile konferenco odpreti širše v svet, vabiti morda manj znane, a dobre arhitekto-predavatelje z vseh kontinentov, ob tem pa pokazati, kaj se v arhitekturi dogaja v Alpe Adria regiji, ki je za svet zanimiva prav zato, ker ni tako popularizirana in medijsko izpostavljena.

Piranski dnevi torej ohranjajo svoj šarm intimne, butične in obenem arhitekturno visoko kakovostne konference, ki odkriva bodoče arhitekturne zvezde, in kjer se lahko arhitekti z različnih kontinentov pogovarjajo o arhitekturi za isto mizo.

Kakšno publiko ste imele v mislih? Kako nameravate privabiti novo občinstvo?

PDA sicer že imajo svojo zvesto, večinoma arhitekturno publiko. Vse več je tudi obiskovalcev, ki sicer prihajajo na druge dogodke, ki jih organizirajo Obalne galerije Piran. Vseeno pa se nam zdi pomembno, da konferenco »odpremo« tudi mlajši generaciji – naši bodoči publiki. In sploh je potrebno, da je poslušalstvo več-generacijsko, ker je potem tudi energija na konferenci čisto drugačna. Zato smo se že lani odločile, da dopoldanska in popoldanska predavanja prevetriramo z »ogrevalnimi« študentskimi 15-minutnimi predstavami. Mislim, da je za študente to odlična priložnost, da na mednarodni arhitekturni konferenci predstavijo svoje študijsko delo in hkrati dobijo resne retorične izkušnje, za poslušalce pa možnost vpogleda v delo arhitekturnih šol. Predlani smo zaradi časovnih omejitev k sodelovanju povabile le ljubljansko fakulteto za arhitekturo, lani pa tudi že tržaško. Poleg prevetritve

ago, it was important for me to keep up the close working relationship with Obalne galerije, who still carry the bulk of the organising duties, as well as bring some new people on board, individuals who are familiar with PDA and understand its role and significance. As we were "taking over", Špela Kuhar, Ana Struna Bregar, and myself made an analysis and immediately came to the conclusion that beside its tradition, the well thought-out, complex structure of the event with lectures, exhibitions and the Piranesi award was another thing working in PDA's favour. It would be foolish to make any degree of radical change to such a unique and solid concept; the only thing it needed was a bit of overhauling. We decided to really open the conference to the world, to invite architects-lecturers from every continent who may not be quite as well known, yet are still highly acclaimed, and on the other hand show the state of the affairs in architecture in the Alpe-Adria region, which is an area interesting to the outside world simply because it's not as popularised and publicised.

PDA therefore loses none of its charm of an intimate, connoisseur-oriented conference that's all about architecture of the highest quality, a conference where future star architects are discovered, and where architects from every continent can get together and talk architecture.

What sort of an audience did you have in mind? How do you plan on attracting new audience?

PDA already has its faithful audience, mostly comprised of architects. We are also seeing an increasing number of visitors who have attended other events organised by Obalne galerije Piran. Still we think it's important to open the conference to the younger generation - our future audience. We always strive to have a multi-generational attendees since it infuses the conference with a completely different energy. This is why last year, we made the decision to have "warm-up", 15-minute student presentations before morning and afternoon lectures. I think this is a great opportunity for the students to present their work at an





predavanj, smo bolj profesionalizirale tudi študentsko nagrado Piranesi – zdaj se zanjo potegujejo študenti osmih arhitekturnih fakultet: ljubljanske, mariborske, graške, dunajske, zagrebške, splitske, tržaške in iz Pescara. Ne le, da študente konkurenca spodbuja, tudi sama nagrada je dobila višjo vrednost in postala bolj prepoznavna. Lani še posebej, saj je imela prvič tudi finančno vrednost, ki jo je pokrilo Ministrstvo za okolje in prostor RS. No, ta študentska formula se je glede študentske publike izkazala za uspešno. Seveda pa se ne bomo ustavile na tej »stopnici«.

Kako poteka izbor tém in predavateljev? Kaj hočete pokazati s tem?

Ja, izbor teme in predavateljev je najtežji del, ker sta oba zelo prepletena in odvisna drug od drugega. Najprej poskušamo izbrati naslov konference, ki mora odražati aktualne arhitekturne teme ali problematiko in pritegniti pozornost publike, nato pa glede na temo narediti izbor zanimivih predavateljev. Po možnosti iz različnih koncev sveta, saj se nam zdi pomembno videti, kako na nek problem reagirajo na primer na Kitajskem, v Afriki ali v Braziliji. Tako namreč širimo obzorja in omogočamo miselne preskoke pri reševanju lastnih problemov. Pri izboru predavateljev in teme se torej vračamo od enega k drugemu, spreminjamo, prilagajamo ... Seveda želimo, da predavatelji niso le dobri arhitekti s kakovostnimi projekti, ampak tudi dobri in zanimivi retoriki. Izbor je zato še bolj zapleten. Ob tem pa se dogaja, da so nekateri, ki jih želimo povabiti, že zasedeni, drugi niso zainteresirani, tretji neresno odgovorijo v zadnjem trenutku ... To se nam je predlani, v letu našega premiernega nastopa!, zgodilo s tremi povabljenici, tako da je bil zadnji teden pred konferenco zelo stresen in napet. In seveda so se odgovori na koncu poznale tudi na kakovosti predavanj. Lani pa so nam bile zvezde bolj naklonjene. Ne le, da smo imele srečno roko pri izboru – vsa predavanja so bila z arhitekturnega in retoričnega stališča kakovostna in zanimiva – vsi povabljeni so tudi prišli v Piran. Kolikor vem, se je to zgodilo drugič v zgodovini PDA.

international conference and get some experience in public speaking, while the attendees gain an insight into the work of architectural schools. Two years ago, we only invited the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana due to time constraints, but last year, Trieste was also invited.

Beside overhauling the lectures, we also professionalized the student Piranesi award: now there are students from eight architectural faculties competing for it, namely Ljubljana, Maribor, Graz, Vienna, Zagreb, Split, Trieste, and Pescara. Not only does the competition make the students work harder, the award itself gained more prestige and recognition, especially last year when there was prize money to be earned for the first time, courtesy of the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia. This student formula seems to have proved a success, at least according to the student audience. However, we don't intend to stop here.

How do you choose the topics and the lecturers? What do you want your selection to say?

Choosing the topic and the lecturers is certainly the most difficult part because they are intertwined and very much dependent on each other. First, we try to work out a title for the conference, one that reflects current architectural issues or problems and grabs the attention of the audience. Then we make a selection of lecturers according to the topic. If possible, we try to include people from all over the world, as we feel it's important to see how they react to a problem in China, in Africa, or in Brazil, for example. This is how we expand horizons and allow people to think outside the box so as to solve their own problems in turn. As we're deciding on the topic and the lecturers, we go back and forth between one and the other and make lots of changes and adjustments.

Naturally, we endeavour to have lecturers who aren't just good architects with quality projects but also good and interesting speakers. This makes the selection even more complicated. And on top of all this, you always find that some people



Kako vidite odnos med Piranskimi dnevi in Dnevi Orisa?

Mislím, da se odlično dopolnjujemo, tako vsebinsko, kot časovno. Dnevi Orisa v Zagrebu velikopotezno odprejo jesensko sezono arhitekturnih predavanj s svetovnimi arhitekturnimi zvezdami in skoraj 3.000 obiskovalci, Piranski dnevi pa jih zaključijo v intimnosti piranskega gledališča Tartini, kjer lahko največ tristo obiskovalcev - arhitektov degustira manj znane, a kakovostne in tudi eksotične arhitekturne »okuse«. Za dvig splošne arhitekturne ravni je dobro, da se o arhitekturi čim več piše in govori, tako med arhitekti kot v medijih; da se čim več dogaja; torej, ne, z Orisom nismo konkurenca. Mislím, da imamo dovolj prostora in zainteresirane publike za oba pomembna arhitekturna dogodka naše skupne regije.

Kako ocenjujete uspešnost prvih dveh let v novi organizaciji? Pozitivne in negativne izkušnje?

Piranske dneve je po 25ih letih prepihal svež veter, seveda pa je težko ocenjevati lastno delo, še zlasti po šele dveh letih. Vsekakor nas zelo veseli, da je bil odziv publike obakrat pozitiven. Zlasti lansko leto smo vsi dobili veliko pohval, tako glede organizacije kot vsebine. Res je bilo v Piranu v teh dveh novembrskih dneh na vsakem koraku, med obiskovalci in predavatelji z različnih koncev Evrope oziroma sveta, čutiti nalezljivo pozitivno energijo. Tudi mediji so se odzvali zelo intenzivno in profesionalno, tako v času konference kot po njej. Vse to nam seveda daje elan za naprej.

Negativne izkušnje? ... Nanje smo že pozabile!

V čem je čar in potencial Piranskih dnevov za razvoj slovenske, regionalne in globalne arhitekturne kulture?

Piranski dnevi vsako leto pripeljejo v Piran mednarodno arhitekturno sceno, skozi katero lahko ocenimo naše dejansko arhitekturno stanje in se realno umestimo v svetovni arhitekturni prostor – ugotovimo, kje smo in kam

we wish to invite are already doing something else, others aren't interested, and let's not forget about those who back out at the very last moment. Two years ago - our first year as organisers, mind - we had no fewer than three invitees leave us in the lurch, which made the final week before the conference very intense and stressful. This obviously took its toll on the quality of the lectures, too. Last year though, we had much better fortune. Not only did we have a lucky hand in terms of selection: all the lectures were excellent both from the architectural and presentational standpoint, and all the invitees actually showed up in Piran, too - only the second time in history of PDA, as far as I'm aware.

How do you see the relationship between PDA and Days of Oris?

I think we complement each other really well, both in terms of the content and the timing. Days of Oris in Zagreb are a great introduction to the autumn season of lectures on architecture with world-class star architects and almost 3,000 visitors, while PDA closes the season out in the intimate environment of the Tartini theatre, where no more than 300 people can get the taste of less-known but equally savoury architectural flavours, including some very exotic ones. In order to raise the general architectural awareness, architecture should be discussed and written about as much as possible, both among architects and in the media - the more that goes on, the better. Therefore, we're in no way competing with Oris. I think there is enough room and interested audience to support both of these important events of our common region.

What is your assessment of the first two years under new organisers? What positive and negative experiences were to be had?

We brought a gust of fresh air into PDA after 25 years, but it's always difficult to assess your own work, especially after only two years. We're certainly extremely pleased with the positive feedback that we received from the attendees on both occasions. Especially last year, a lot of positive things were said both about the





gremo oziroma ali smo na »pravi ladji«, ki pluje v pravo smer. Njihov čar in potencial pa je, kot sem že omenila nekje na začetku, v njihovi intimnosti – na majhnem prostoru se v kratkem času zgosti svetovna arhitekturna srenja, ki tako rekoč za isto mizo razpravlja o aktualnih globalnih arhitekturnih, prostorskih, družbenih, socialnih, trajnostnih ... problemih in dognanjih. Takšni »brain-stormingi« vsem odpirajo nove mentalne dimenzije.

Sicer pa je čar samih Piranskih dnevov tudi piranski ambient z morskim horizontom. Ne glede na vse prostorske in arhitekturne pomanjkljivosti mesta naredi novembrski Piran v dežju, soncu ali megli, zlasti na tujce, vedno dober vtis. Zato je nerazumljivo, kako malo se piranski možje zavedajo, kako pomemben mednarodni dogodek gostijo že toliko let in kako malo sta mesto in tudi država to dejstvo obrnila sebi v prid. Ja, arhitekturno kulturo je vsekakor treba nenehno gojiti, in to ne le med arhitekti.

organisation and content. I can certainly say that during these two days in November, there was positive energy felt on every step, spreading among the visitors and the lecturers from all over Europe and the world. The media also reacted very enthusiastically and professionally, both during and after the conference. We feel encouraged to keep doing our best in the future. Negative experiences? We've already forgotten about those.

What is the attraction of PDA and its potential to help develop the Slovene, regional, and global architectural culture?

Every year, PDA brings the international architectural scene to Piran. This helps us evaluate where we stand architecturally in Slovenia, and where we fit in the global architectural space. In other words, we get to know where we are, where we're going and whether we're on the right ship sailing in the right direction.

As to the event's attraction and potential, I'm still betting on its intimacy - in a very small space, you're rubbing shoulders with world architectural heavyweights who sit down at the same table to talk about global issues and breakthroughs regarding architecture, space, society, sustainability, etc. Such brainstorms open new dimensions in everybody's mind.

Apart from that, the attraction of PDA is the ambience of Piran with its sea horizon. Regardless of all the city's spatial and architectural shortcomings, Piran in November always makes a good impression, be it rain, fog, or shine, especially on the foreigners. This makes it all the more difficult to understand the Piran officials, who seem to be oblivious to the international significance of the event they have been hosting for so many years. It's also shocking how little the city, as well as the state, have been able to profit from it. Architecture needs to be constantly nurtured, and not only among architects.

