

MONTENEGRO PAVILION at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia



la Biennale di Venezia

14. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura
Partecipazioni nazionali

TREASURES IN DISGUISE

June 12, 2014

The Montenegro Pavilion at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale opened its exhibition “Treasures in Disguise” to the public on Thursday, June 5. Present at Palazzo Malipiero were Simon Hartmann, Andreas and Ilka Ruby, Dijana Vučinić, Boštjan Vuga, and Nebojša Adžić, the commissioners of the pavilion; Branislav Mićunović, the Montenegrin Minister of Culture; and Branimir Gvozdenović, the Montenegrin Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism.

Curated by a team of architects and critics from Montenegro, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Germany, “Treasures in Disguise” presents four neglected late-modernist structures built in Montenegro between 1960 and 1986: Hotel Fjord, Kayak Club Galeb, Spomen Dom, and Dom Revolucije. Once the beacons of a new society, the buildings are, with one exception, not in use today; all are in dire condition. By putting these buildings back in the limelight and on an international stage, the Montenegro Pavilion hopes to draw attention to the unfortunate condition—and great potential—of these treasures in disguise.

Abandoned Yugoslav communist-era buildings are predominantly scrutinized for their ties to a failed society; “Treasures in Disguise,” on the contrary, brings to the fore their impressive spatial qualities. The four buildings are exhibited in the form of huge, experiential models, combined with atmospheric photographs of the interiors and exteriors of the structures. These tangible representations convey not only the buildings’ impressive interior spaces, but also the deplorable state that they are in today. The models are complemented with short texts, old and new photographs, and architectural drawings, all of which provide additional information to the visitors about the designs, contexts, and histories of these projects.

Branimir Gvozdenović, the Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism, and commissioner Andreas Ruby spoke at the opening of the Montenegro Pavilion. Gvozdenović’s speech stressed the need for a more nuanced interpretation of the past and Yugoslav-era architecture in order to avoid its dismissal as the product of a “wrong time.” Commissioner Andreas Ruby concluded the opening by highlighting architecture’s ability to live through different historical periods; the now-decaying buildings on display, he argued, could develop trajectories as rich and sustainable as those of Hagia Sophia or Diocletian’s Palace, which have, over the centuries, been reappropriated to serve different needs.

The future of these four buildings depends on Montenegrin civil society discovering and acknowledging their potential; “Treasures in Disguise” is thus part of an effort to reassess Yugoslav-era architecture and initiate a public conversation about urban regeneration in Montenegro and abroad. That Montenegro chose to represent itself at the Venice Architecture Biennale with “Treasures in Disguise” signals that it is willing to reconsider these often-ignored Yugoslavian buildings as part of its cultural legacy and future.

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

Exhibition: June 7 to October 31 2014, 10:00-18:00, closed Mondays

Address: Palazzo Malipiero, Ramo Malipiero, San Marco 3079

For more information, please visit: www.treasures-in-disguise.net

PRESS INFORMATION:

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Press images of the exhibition can be download here and can be used free of charge.