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ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

Mourning The Gorgeous Mosaic That Was Sarajevo

BY HERBERT MACHMAMP

ONCE again, little storefront for Art and Architecture in SoHo has lost over big institutions like the Shubert by making a world-class show on a shoestring budget. "World class" here stands for more than high praise. "World class" — Sarajevo: A Wounded City" looks at a major global crisis from an architectural perspective.

Prepared under harrowing wartime conditions by Michael Morris and four other members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Association of Architects, the show documents the destruction of Sarajevo's architectural heritage during the Serbian siege. Its mission is to form the international community about the extent of the damage and to drum up financial support for rebuilding. The show has already appeared in several European museums, including the Pompidou Center in Paris. The presentation at Storefront is thus for the only American stop scheduled.

The main part of the show consists of 40 black-and-white photographs of destroyed or severely damaged buildings, spanning nearly 600 years of architectural history, they range from the early 18th-century Mosque of Ferhadijev to a pair of (centuries) glass offices erected in 1937. A striking mosaic of architectural styles is accompanied by a brief historical sketch of the city, the pictures are divided into four groups, each corresponding to a period in the city's history. This arrangement helps us trace the different cultural strands that are woven into the urban fabric.

The different types of building stand for more than changing taste. They represent a crossroads between East and West, the lingering and mingling of cultural influences from the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. Maps and diagrams present the location of the buildings in the cityscape, and guide the visitor to the damage in each part of town. In effect, the show narrates the creation of Sarajevo through images of its destruction.

Some may have difficulty discerning the human dimension to these images. With people's lives at stake, how can we work up sympathy for ruined buildings? Those who look closely, however, will recognize that what is being attacked here is not only the city walls, but history. The images here are a symbol, the cause for the tearing of the city and building types represents the

Continued on Page C34

Mourning the Gorgeous Mosaic That Was Once Sarajevo

Continued From Page C3

ability of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and Jews to live together in one city. It is this model of heterogeneity that has been pummeled by the artillery shells.

Storefront's cramped quarters somewhat diminish the show's impact. In Paris, before entering the large, darkened gallery where the black-and-white pictures were on view, you passed a screen displaying color slides of the Sarajevo cityscape before the shelling began. The sound of the slide projector aired through the gallery's muted air like an executioner's blade. Then, as you turned to leave the gallery, you saw a projected color video of several demolished landmarks, most hauntingly, perhaps, the National and University Library, a Moslem-style edifice of 1895. The camera scanned slowly over the middle of the library's central, skylighted atrium, as if searching for the soul of the city itself.

At Storefront, the color slides are dimly projected onto a white wall, while the video plays on a small monitor in the corner. And, of course, the small downtown gallery

lacks the Pompidou's civic stature and its capacity to amplify an appeal to conscience. Yet it is hardly able to criticize Storefront for these shortcomings. Thanks to its initiative, New Yorkers have the opportunity to see the show, and the gallery has made the most of its resources. But the show points up New York's need for an adequately equipped, internationally informed showcase for urban exhibitions.

On the other hand, when you consider the savagery of life in Sarajevo, it seems prudent to complain about meager resources in New York. This becomes painfully clear at a related exhibition, now on view in the second floor gallery of the Department of Architecture and Environmental Design at Parsons School of Design in Greenwich Village. The exhibition, "Sarajevo: Dream and Reality," presents 14 projects by exiled architects and professionals from Sarajevo that respond sensitively to the city's destruction. A wall text describes the conditions under which these projects were produced: no gas or electricity; broken computers, photocopy machines and other equipment; paper shortages; classes reduced to 20-minute sessions held in

constantly shifting locations.

The mix of established and aspiring architects drives home a point: the city's architects are guardians not only of history, but of continuity as well. With their present in ruins, the architects' overriding concern is to sustain a link between the past and the future generation of designers who must face the task of rebuilding. The exhibition, sponsored like the Storefront show by the National Institute for Architectural Education, has been installed in a plain wooden setting designed by Michael Morris, the show's curator, and Susanna Striffl.

The student projects are concentrated in the district of Zetra, the portland surrounding Sarajevo's bombed Olympic stadium. The war-ravaged area, near the Sarajevo School of Architecture, must seem like a symbol of dashed hopes for the ideal of world peace signified by the Olympic Games. The students' designs (plans for new recreational facilities and other public uses) convey a heroic determination to keep hope alive.

Two professional architects have focused on designs for the restoration of demolished buildings, along with some plans for new ones. A chilling project by Zoran Dorner depicts what might be called a model dwelling for siege conditions. A set of floor plans traces the transformation of a modern three-bedroom apartment (one of 35,000 units in a complex of burned-out high rises

large) into a grim survival shelter. In place of sofas, dining table and a master bedroom suite, there are rainwater collection barrels, a sandbag protection wall and, jammed through the empty socket of a window, a makeshift chimney attached to a wood-burning stove.

Though occasioned by catastrophe, these two shows are heartening because they highlight a critical role for architects in a changing world. The architects who created these shows are not just designers of new buildings, or conservators of old ones. They are catalysts for cultural exchange. They are makers of places, but they are also actors on the world stage. As the Storefront show demonstrates, Sarajevo is a monument both to cultural difference and to the breakdown of tolerance. The refusal of these architects to surrender to that breakdown transcends their city's fate.

"Architecture — Sarajevo: A Wounded City" remains at the Storefront for Art and Architecture, 37 Kenmare Street, SoHo, through March 15. There is a symposium in conjunction with the show at Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer Street, SoHo, tomorrow from 11:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Tickets \$15 (\$10 for students). Information: (212) 432-5725. "Sarajevo: Dream and Reality" remains at the Parsons School of Design, Department of Architecture and Environmental Design, 25 East 23rd Street, second floor, Greenwich



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Trankwitz, seit '77 Ensemblemitglied, nicht die Luft herausließ, kaum ein Kraftmeier, der dank überraschender Brechungen und Stauchungen keine Fettbrüche davontrug.

NOTIZEN

EHRENZEICHEN Dem österreichischen Komponisten und Mitbegründer des Carinthischen Sommers Gottfried von Einem wurde am Sonntag in Villach das Große Goldene Ehrenzeichen des Landes Kärnten verliehen.

TOO Der Leiter der Bielefelder Kunsthalle, Ulrich Weisner, ist am Wochenende während einer Bergtour in Österreich im Alter von 58 Jahren einem Herzinfarkt erlegen. Der Kunsthistoriker hatte sich vor allem durch seinen Ausstellungszyklus zu Themen Schwerpunkten bei Pablo Picasso, so zu den Todesmotiven, zum Klassizismus und zu Picassos Surrealismus, Ansehen erworben.

Rekonstruktion der Erinnerung: „Warchitecture“ aus Sarajewo

Wien – Eine Möglichkeit, den Krieg psychisch zu überleben, besteht darin, seine Arbeit so gut wie möglich weiterzuführen, die Vergangenheit in Erinnerung zu rufen und zu bewahren. Der Genozid, die Auslöschung von Volksgruppen, ging sehr oft auch Hand in Hand mit der Zerstörung von deren jeweiligen Kulturgütern.

Im Architektur Zentrum Wien will nun die Vereinigung der Architekten aus Bosnien-Herzegowina mit der Ausstellung „Warchitecture“ Urbicide – Sarajewo das große multikulturelle Erbe Sarajewos im Gedächtnis der Welt erhalten und nach Kriegsende wiederherstellen.

Die unter der Patronanz der UNESCO stehende Schau, erstmals vor einem Jahr in Sarajewo zu sehen und nun auf Ausstellungstournee

durch Europa und die USA, dokumentiert die 100 bedeutendsten Bauwerke der Stadt, die in den letzten Jahren von Profifotografen aufgenommen wurden. Makabrerweise muß laufend aktualisiert werden: So stieg die Zahl der „Bomben für 300.000 Personen“ auf mittlerweile 2,6 Mio.

Dossier für Spender

„Wir möchten jetzt schon konkrete Pläne für den Wiederaufbau machen. Nicht wie in Beirut, wo man internationale Gelder dann für ganz andere Projekte verwendete“, erklärt Mithat Cesovic, einer der für die Ausstellung verantwortlichen fünf Architekten, die heuer im März mit einem UNO-Flugzeug die belagerte Heimatstadt verließen. Ein Dossier dokumentiert 45 Bauwerke sowie den Quadratmeterpreis für die Rekon-

struktion. Potentielle Spender wissen deshalb immer ganz konkret, wo ihre Gelder hinfließen werden.

Neben Jerusalem ist Sarajewo die einzige Stadt, in der sich orthodoxe und katholische Kirchen sowie Moscheen und Synagogen innerhalb von nur 400 m² befinden. Warchitecture zeigt Beispiele von der Osmanischen Epoche bis in die Gegenwart. Wien als Ausstellungsort ist für Cesovic besonders wichtig: „Es finden sich in Sarajewo viele Bauwerke aus der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, und auch die Stadtstruktur ist Wien sehr ähnlich.“

Das Postgebäude war eines der ersten Bombenziele – damit die Kommunikation stockt. Warchitecture soll dem entgegenwirken. Stichwort: Architektur der Erinnerung. (dok)

**RATHAUS STADT SARAJEVO
STADT AUSCZEHNUNG FÜR D.I. CESOVIC M. VON
BH PRESIDENT HARIS SILAJDZIC**

