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(CULTIVATION OF CRITICAL PRACTICE THROUGH THE  
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## CRITICAL RESISTANCE OF A HUT – IN SIX POINTS (CULTIVATION OF CRITICAL PRACTICE THROUGH THE MEMORIAL HOUSE DESIGN BY THE ARCHITECT RANKO RADOVIĆ)

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper deals with the importance of critical design practice in order to nurture, cultivate and build architectural culture. The main goal is to analyse the Memorial House in the Sutjeska National Park, designed by the architect Ranko Radović, through the scientific description, using Kenneth Frampton's theoretical text "Towards Critical Regionalism - Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance" as an analytical method. In a broader sense, the paper aims to draw attention to the idea of critical practice in modern circumstances by researching the design methodologies and principles based on tradition. The research result is important for contemporary architectural theory and practice in our region and beyond. It indicates the importance of learning architecture based on knowledge and transferring the knowledge gained through the critical practice of our architectural heritage as one of the possible ways to rethink the architectural profession in contemporary conditions of its evident marginalisation under the force of the capital and universalisation of the built environment.

**Key words:** *critical design practice, Architecture of Resistance, critical regionalism*

### КРИТИЧКО ОДОЛИЈЕВАЊЕ ЈЕДНЕ КОЛИБЕ – У ШЕСТ ТАЧАКА (КУЛТИВИСАЊЕ КРИТИЧКЕ ПРАКСЕ КРОЗ ПРОЈЕКАТ СПОМЕН ДОМА АРХИТЕКТЕ РАНКА РАДОВИЋА)

**Апстракт:** Овај рад бави се питањем важности критичке пројектантске праксе у циљу његовања, култивисања и грађења архитектонске културе. Основни циљ јесте да се кроз научно описивање, користећи као аналитички метод теоријски текст Кенета Фремптона „Ка критичком регионализму – шест тачака ка архитектури отпора“, анализира пројекат Спомен дома у Националном парку Сутјеска, архитекте Ранка Радовића. У ширем смислу рад има за циљ да се истраживањем пројектантских методологија и принципа утемељених на традицији скрене пажња на идеју критичке праксе у савременим околностима.

Резултат истраживања је од значаја за савремену архитектонску теорију и праксу, у нашем региону и шире, јер указује на важност учења архитектуре које је засновано на знању и преношењу знања критичке праксе нашег архитектонског наслеђа, као једну од могућих начина у преиспитивању архитектонске професије у савременим условима њене евидентне маргинализације под силом капитала и универзализације грађене средине.

**Кључне ријечи:** *критичка пројектантска пракса, архитектура отпора, критички регионализам*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to actualise the importance of critical design practice in order to nurture, cultivate and build architectural culture. It is also a detailed study of the most significant design by the architect Ranko Radović, realised in 1971 —the Memorial House in Sutjeska National Park. It is considered here a *discursive practice* [1:26] and is re-examined according to the postmodernist theory of critical regionalism of the famous American architectural critic Kenneth Frampton.

Therefore, the main goal of this paper is to scientifically describe, systematise and explain the critical work of Ranko Radović on the example of his most significant work in the context of the critical regionalism theory, and thus to contribute to the idea of critical practice in contemporary circumstances. In a broader sense, this paper, deals with the problem of research of contemporary design methodologies and principles, which are based on knowledge and knowledge and tradition transfer through epochs, in terms of preserving and actualising critical design practice.

We think it is essential to keep architectural culture vital and alive today when the phenomenon of universalisation in architectural practices have more than ever erased any form of authenticity or what Paul Ricoeur calls “the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind” [2: 314].

The paper consists of two primary segments. The first segment sets the theoretical framework and discusses the meaning of the term “critical regionalism” and the circumstances that conditioned its appearance. The theoretical corpus is based on the texts of the most relevant regional and world authors (theorists, historians and architectural critics) Kenneth Frampton, Michael Hayes, Ljiljana Blagojević, Charles Jencks, and Ranko Radović himself. The critical regionalism framework with specific characteristics, which Kenneth Frampton explained as the concept of an “**Architecture of Resistance**”, was especially analysed.

The second part is conceived as qualitative research of Radović’s architectural achievements and his design approach in accordance with the theoretical framework of critical regionalism. The backbone of the theoretical analysis of the building is Kenneth Frampton’s text “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance” [3]. The conclusion summarises the previous analysis and sets new guidelines for research into critical design practice.

We also believe that the research result is important for contemporary architectural theory and practice in our region and beyond because it indicates an autonomous force of resistance to the universalisation of the space. It is an example of how to nurture critical design vitality in the development of architectural culture.

## 2. CRITICAL-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PAPER

Ranko Radović’s design, critical and theoretical practice is one of the most complex multi-media legacies of the Yugoslav postmodernist culture. Radović develops an authentic discursive practice of “deviation from the canon of high modernism” [1:25] through internationally recognised, active and critical engagement by expanding the field of understanding of the architectural practice to other media, which significantly contributed to the popularisation of architecture, positioning it in a broader cultural sphere. Professor, theorist and architect Ljiljana Blagojević emphasises Radović’s work as crucial in the articulation of the “architectural discourse (...) of postmodernism of the 1980s in (...) the former Yugoslavia” [4: 184]. As a

particular value of that legacy, “the theoretical line of Radović’s work” [4: 183] was set, which included his academic and architectural design work, and at the same time, it overlapped with his active critical engagement in the field of culture and media (Radović created TV shows on architecture, published critiques in newspapers, held public lectures, acted through academic work and design practice) [4: 184]. Emphasising “the right to critical thinking left by Ranko Radović as a responsibility to his intellectual heirs” [4: 184], Blagojević simultaneously encourages us to reveal the heterogeneity of his work and also subtly provokes a critical interpretation and new actualisation of his theoretical thought. All of the above is in the spirit of then (and now) modern tendencies in architectural discourse, presented in the 1960s by an architecture professor and historian, Michael Hayes. In the introduction to the anthological collection of theoretical texts “Architecture Theory since 1968”[5], Hays sets out the principles of architectural culture, emphasising that architectural culture cannot be expected to emerge spontaneously through a theory as a practice of mediation. Nevertheless, it must be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed again. In this spirit, Radović considered it unnecessary to divide architecture into theory and practice. Instead, he saw the permeation and intensive flow of theoretical and practical work in the place of their division.

When we talk about the overall work and significance of Radović, it is necessary to state that Charles Jencks, in his book [6: 50-51] “The New Paradigm in Architecture”, on the map including relevant representatives of postmodernist practice in the second half of the 1950s, and all until the 2000s, sets Radović in the “Romantic revival” in the evolutionary tree. It is also interesting that the main language determinant of this Jencks’ evolutionary tree line is a metaphor as a feature of the architectural narrative, with the most significant protagonists. On one side, there is Le Corbusier with the church in Ronchamp encoded in several visual and implied metaphors (with a roof and nave being just some of them) and Daniel Libeskind with the Jewish Museum in Berlin on the other side of the timeline. Somewhere in between, Jencks sets Radović. He seems to be using the “revival of the romantic” to designate the usage of traditional codes in the architectural language, such as the gable roof of the Memorial House.

However, Ljiljana Blagojević suggests that Ranko Radović’s works should be classified and observed primarily “as a radical critique of modernism” [4: 194], and certainly not as a “revival of romanticism”, as Charles Jencks, the historian and theorist of modernism and postmodernism, designated it. Furthermore, Blagojević characterises the Memorial House design as if “the design anticipates the theoretical elaboration of critical regionalism” [4: 194]. In the period of re-examining the principles of modernism and the coming postmodernism, Radović takes a possible synthesis position, i.e. a synthesis of the accomplishments of modernism and the local architectural heritage. We find this position *in between* both in his textual and visual records, as well as in his realised works.

Professor Ljiljana Blagojević states that the Sutjeska Battle Memorial House was conceived through a conscious re-examination of the “modernist paradigm in relation to the natural environment and cultural-historical context” [4: 194], confirming Radović’s position that the general principles of modern architecture are not disputed, but the way of their application in the reality of special conditions [7]. In this way, Radović emphasises the phenomenon of a specific place, insisting on critical reflection and respect for the contextual reality, taking the position of research freedom in terms of interpreting the context.

Precisely in this complex period of changes within the architectural paradigm of the second half of the twentieth century in a climate of a constant conflict between the global and local, critical

regionalism emerges as a new concept that should reconcile these two corpora of thought and approach.

The most significant credit for spreading the concept of critical regionalism goes mainly to the American theorist, architecture critic and historian Kenneth Frampton, who first presented his vision of critical regionalism in 1983 in his essay “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance” [3].

In this essay, Frampton elaborated on the concept of critical regionalism. Yet, his crucial work to fully understand this concept is “Modern Architecture: A Critical History”, in which he uses the term critical regionalism to describe “peripheral” phenomena as a form of cultural, economic, and political independence in an evidently forthcoming universalised world [2]. In the fifth chapter entitled “Critical regionalism: Modern Architecture and Cultural Identity”, Frampton especially emphasises the fact that the realisation of modern architecture implies the respect for the importance of modern technology achievements and local peculiarities of a particular climate. Thus, Frampton does not link critical regionalism to vernacular architecture but to “**architecture that resists**”, i.e. the one “whose primary goal is to reflect and serve the distinct (localised) units in which it is founded”. According to Frampton, critical regionalism is primarily a strategy for suppressing universal civilisation by indirectly introducing elements rooted in the characteristics of a particular climate [2:21].

At this point, as a basis for his arguments, Frampton refers to a French philosopher Paul Ricoeur and his essay, “Universal Civilisation and National Cultures”. In this essay, Ricoeur interprets the phenomenon of universalisation destroying not only traditional cultures but also what he calls the “creative core of great civilisations and great cultures”. According to him, the forthcoming mass consumer culture weakens and completely breaks ties with the cultural past. In this context, Frampton sees salvation in the idea that architecture must retain social values and preserve the meaning of the past but in accordance with the imperatives of the future. Therefore, regional culture must not be taken as something given and relatively unchangeable but as something that should be thoughtfully cultivated. [8].

It is important to remember that critical regionalism is not yet another style, nor do its protagonists in the architectural language necessarily foster many similarities. Nevertheless, they all foster a critical attitude towards globalist modernisation processes. According to Frampton, critical regionalism is primarily a strategy for suppressing a universal civilisation by indirectly introducing elements rooted in the characteristics of a particular climate. Frampton believes that architects should search for regional variations instead of continuing to design conforming to global uniformity. In this context, Radović himself believed that the “spark of new research” is yet to come shedding light on the global margin practices, such as the architectural practices of the Yugoslav period.

### 3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE MEMORIAL HOUSE DESIGN OF THE ARCHITECT RANKO RADOVIĆ: SIX POINTS OF AN ARCHITECTURE OF RESISTANCE OF A CRITICAL REGIONALISM

The Sutjeska National Park, an area of magnificent nature, surrounded by the mountains of Zelengora, Volujak, Maglić and the Perućica primeval forest, is the oldest national park in the Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was proclaimed a national park in 1962 by the National Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which enacted the Law on Declaring the

Sutjeska area a national park. This region is characterised by traditional settlements, spontaneously formed through generations and according to living conditions, whose morphology organically merges with the rich natural environment. Consequently, structures creating the spatial-structural arrangement of the group form have uniform architectural properties and represent an image of traditional life and the actuality of this region.

Within the National Park, in the Sutjeska River valley, there is a site called Tjentište - an important historical place known for the battle of Sutjeska in the Second World War. In the very centre of Tjentište, there is a memorial complex called the Valley of Heroes, the monument of the academic sculptor Miodrag Živković, and the Memorial House on Sutjeska by Ranko Radović, realised in 1971, which was painted with modern frescoes by the painter Krsto Hegedušić after the realisation. These two monumental works won the first prize in the competition for the Memorial Complex in Sutjeska, in 1964, according to which they were realised. Today, this exceptional natural whole represents an authentic cultural landscape with its architectural tradition and historical monuments.



Figure 1: The Memorial House in Tjentište (left) and the Monument, Sutjeska National Park (source: Marina Radulj)

### 3.1 SIX POINTS OF AN ARCHITECTURE OF RESISTANCE OF A CRITICAL REGIONALISM

In his aforementioned essay, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”, Frampton describes critical regionalism as a concept of “architecture of resistance” because it represents a reaction against universal standards, cultural commodification, and technology worship. In other words, critical regionalism as a concept should encourage the process of integration between tradition and modernity. Therefore, Frampton develops a theoretical framework with specific characteristics that portray critical regionalism, which he explained in the following six points: Point 1: **Culture and civilization**, Point 2: **The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde**, Point 3: **Critical Regionalism and World Culture**, Point 4: **The Resistance of the Place-Form**, Point 5: **Culture Versus Nature: Topography, Context, Climate, Light and Tectonic Form**, Point 6: **The Visual Versus the Tactile** [3:21].

It is important to note that with these six points, Frampton does not intend to give a recipe for designing in the spirit of the region but to provide broader conceptual guidelines for establishing a good practice of critical regionalism. Also, these six points can be considered as a comprehensive starting point for a critical analysis of an architectural work.

The remainder of this chapter will analyse the Memorial House, designed by Ranko Radović in Tjentište, according to Frampton’s six points—as values of the critical regionalism position.

### Point 1: Culture and civilization

“The phenomenon of universalisation”, Ricoeur writes, “while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes a sort of subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures, which might not be irreparable wrong, but also of what I shall call for the time being the creative nucleus of great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, what I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind” [9:47]. By quoting Ricoeur, Frampton in this point draws attention to the space-time context of architecture, where due to ubiquitous land speculation and the accelerated universalisation and production of space, national cultures are neglected, and the “boundaries” of locality and peculiarity are “erased”. In such an environment, architecture also manipulates, in fact, with reduced number of specific elements or through superficial masking (facades). The resistance of critical regionalism here implies a paradoxical situation—the creation of a regional culture based on global culture, which is manifested through the interpretation of some vernacular elements that do not necessarily have to be local (such as the isled basilica shown in Figure 2). So, the example of the Memorial House is an interpretation of the traditional local roofing with details, but also the projection of “minimalism in the spirit of Japanese aesthetics” by using forms proportionally close to pyramids (Radović travelled to and taught in Japan).



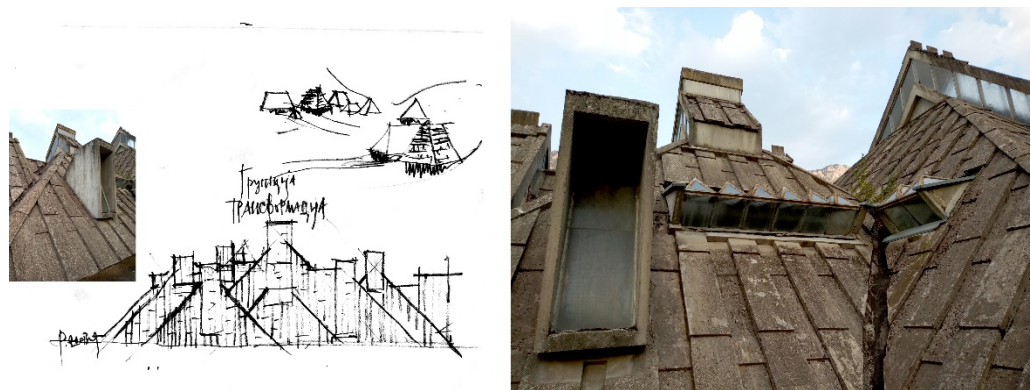
*Figure 2. Left: a detail of the overhang and the wide drain around the Memorial House; proportions of a Japanese temple (source: Marina Radulj) Right: basilical and constructivist interior of the Memorial House (Jen Lukehart retrieved from <https://www.sosbrutalism.org/cms/19405697> on 27 October 2021)*

### Point 2: The Rise and Fall of the Avant-Garde

“The emergence of the avant-garde is inseparable from the modernisation of both society and architecture. Over the past century-and-a-half avant-garde culture has assumed different roles, at times facilitating the process of modernisation and thereby acting, in part, as a progressive, liberative form, at times being virulently opposed to the positivism of bourgeois culture” [3:18].

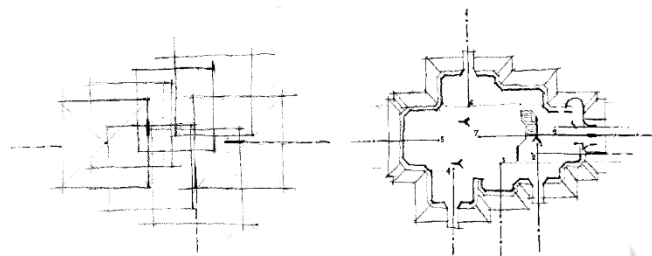
At the beginning of the 20th century with the appearance of progressive avant-garde movements—futurism, purism, neoplasticism and constructivism, and with the triumph of science, medicine and industry, the promise of modernism project was confirmed. However, the popularity of the movement and its placement in the capitalist machine, and thus in politics as well, made it intellectually sluggish. The space production itself became a response to their needs, i.e. manifesting itself in response to commodification or marketing needs, without the

input and reflection of new programmes. This led to Jencks' classification and critique of post-modern architecture that is striving either for pure technology (through the high-tech movement) or pure scenography. In these circumstances, "technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture, it designs a historical totality—a "world") [9: 20].



*Figure 3: A traditional hamlet (above) and sketches of clustered roof transformations (below). A detail of Radović's interpretation of a (traditional) roof, dormers and apertures (right) (source: Marina Radulj)*

The Memorial House and the entire Radović's research and work represent an indisputable value based on local qualities interpreted by modernist processes and postmodernist means. This approach is noticeable in the methodology of transposing local qualities into a completely modern and unique authorial expression. From the spontaneously formed assembly (Figure 3), which acts as a dynamic and compact architectural ensemble, Radović builds a concept manifested in two ways in the solution: through a design language and spatial organisation. In one form, it is primarily perceived in the formation of the oscillating roof volume. In the other form, it is present in the spatial structure of the house built of a cubic element composing one group form by drawing an analogy to the fragmented organic structure of spontaneous clusters of Dinaric houses. This grouping of elements can be further interpreted by a modernist method of modular composition and geometric logic of a spatial plan.



*Slika 4. Geometric analysis of the Memorial House plan—realignment of the axes 7 and 5; fusion of different architectural codes—modernist spatial matrices of simple geometry vs. an isled basilica (source: Marina Radulj)*

The analysis of the Memorial House spatial matrix confirms this method. It is built of simple geometric shapes (squares and rectangles) that translationally realign in two directions. At the same time, the longitudinal (main) axis of the house also "realigns" (Figure 4), doubles in order to achieve spatial opulence. In a three-dimensional sense, the same method was used to



achieve a rich spatial experience, initially by using a simple geometric shape of a gable and hip roof in such a realigned spatial matrix.

Architecture that resists, even if it is practised in marginal places (in terms of popularity), and as a phenomenon on global margins as well, is interpreted here as the only expression of resistance. Therefore, the Memorial House and the entire Radović's research and work represent an indisputable value based on local qualities interpreted by modernist processes and postmodernist means.

### Point 3: Critical Regionalism and World Culture

In this point, Frampton links the idea of resistance to the critical *arriere-garde* (out of date), a place where a critical practice should simultaneously resist “the optimisation of advanced technologies and the ever-present tendency to regress into nostalgic historicism”, i.e. to agree neither to populism nor to sentimental regionalism and decorativism. The process of making this place can be interpreted as creating an architectural theory (according to Michael Hayes) as a practice of double mediation—between the influence of universal civilisation and the indirect usage of specific elements of the locality in which it is built.

In the Memorial House, transposition, or as Frederick Jameson calls it, “transcoding” [10:40], is visible on several levels—the idea of a house and temple in this place intersect in building a new programme of architecture. In the materialisation of the House, the use of advanced technology is visible—raw prefabricated concrete imbrex (the technology and texture typical of late modernism and the so-called brutalism in architecture). At the same time, the roofing patterns with displaced, overlaid tiles are transposed from traditional wood shingle roofs. The displaced tiles here mimic the style of planks on a traditional roof, with accentuated vertical overlays for water drainage, and they perform the same function.

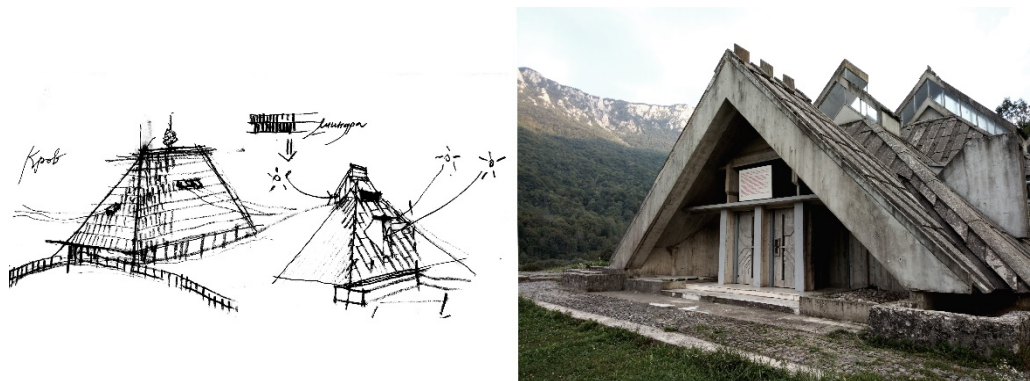


*Figure 5. Brutalist interpretation of roofing patterns—landscape references (left), a detail of tile overlay (in the middle), roof hip details (right) (source: Marina Radulj)*

### Point 4: The Resistance of the Place-Form

Here, architecture is expected to focus on the territory in which it originates, emerges, by establishing borders, and thus relations with it, and not just modernistically appears as a self-sufficient free-standing structure. “Place-form” means resisting location-specific forms created in a specific place rather than space. In fact, resistance here refers to the opposition to continuous flux, the so-called *Megalopolis*.

Professor Ljiljana Blagojević states that the Battle of Sutjeska Memorial House was conceived through a conscious re-examination of the “modernist paradigm in relation to the natural environment and cultural-historical context”, which confirms Radović’s position that the general principles of modern architecture are not disputed, but the way of their application in the reality of special conditions [7]. In this way, Radović emphasises the phenomenon of a specific place, insisting on a critical reflection and respect for the contextual reality, taking the position of research freedom in terms of context interpretation. The Memorial House points to the thoroughly thought-out transpositions of the regional tradition of log cabin architecture from the surrounding area into a completely modern and significant interpretation. Speaking about his design, Radović says: “...there could be no talk of folkloristic formalism ... (but) in my deep conviction we could not avoid that authentic spirit of the climate, inspiration by ethical and material beings of the world of cruelty and purity” [11: 14]. “The morphology of the Memorial House was initially formed as a group of traditional roofs, but in the experimental design process, it was transformed into a completely modern and unique expression. As such, it is in dialogue not only with the traditional forms of localities, but also with the dynamic forms of the mountain massifs of Tjentište” [12: 338]. The form built in this way from the specifics of the place climate is a proof of values from point 4. The obvious connection with postmodern language (according to Jencks) should be noted. In the chapter “Towards Subtle Urbanism” [6: 167-173], Jencks analyses examples such as Radović’s Memorial House, which have their form developed through a multitude of urban codes. In the same way, Radović, in this natural environment, “clusters” roofs of huts that undoubtedly resemble an entire “settlement”, even though it is a single house, i.e. building. Radović breaks the pulsatory form of repeated components through two longitudinal facades on which he illustrates the settlement. He breaks the symmetry with very similar but not identical components, so there is no sense of a free-standing megalith, even though the Memorial House is almost 40 meters long, while a traditional house is about 8.5 m long.



*Figure 6. A sketch of a traditional roof with dormers and apertures—relationship with natural illumination and ventilation (left), an archetypal shape of the Memorial House facade (right) (source: Marina Radulj)*

#### **Point 5: Culture Versus Nature: Topography, Context, Climate, Light and Tectonic Form**

Critical regionalism strives to cultivate a dialectical relationship with the environment and nature, rather than creating abstract spaces, the so-called tabula rasa, either through the terrain topography, some climate elements, light and sunlight, or through the tectonics of the form itself. In this way, the culture of the region is inscribed in the very form of the building. In the case of the Memorial House, the terrain is relatively flat, so there are no levelling changes

in the structure. However, the external form is in connection with the surrounding mountain massifs. The context read in this way is interpreted through a harsh climate, with a lot of wind and snow. Consequently, the building form is transposed into a homage to the drainage of pluvial water(s)—in one complex element—the roof lowered to the ground, with a wide ground-level gutter all around the house.

The attitude towards nature and the local culture of construction is reflected in the orientation of the building along the longitudinal north-south axis (north for the entrance) in order to make maximum use of the natural angle of sunlight incidence through roof lanterns, roof windows and crystal forms. The specificity of the fenestration comes from the interpretation of spikes, crosses or the so-called apertures and dormers—elements of traditional architecture that appear on the ridge and have a pronounced symbolic and decorative meaning—most often associated with the house protection from spells, magical or religious rituals.

Like Laugier's primitive hut, Radović's structural elements such as a pillar, capital, beam, and roof draw maximum attention—these are real structural elements whose function is further emphasised by an expressive design that seems to illustrate the transfer of forces and loads, and the way of resisting gravity. The tectonic forms of these elements surpass the mere materiality of the construction, and through the master's skills, it transforms them into an art form.



*Figure 7. A detail of the roof valley with ground-level gutter—“a homage to the drainage of pluvial water(s)” (left) (source: Marina Radulj); basilica-like interior and illumination (right) (Jen Lukehart) retrieved from <https://www.sosbrutalism.org/cms/19405697> on 27 October 2021)*

### Point 6: The Visual Versus the Tactile

Supporting the dominant sense of sight directs the architectural practice towards a spectacular and scenographic approach, while critical regionalism is returning the focus from the visual to the tactile. This/These value(s) of architecture and space can be experienced only through real experience in the space. Frampton claims that the capacity of our body to experience these qualities by being in a space, moving through it, is a potential strategy to resist the universal technology dominance as well.

From the natural meadow surrounding, Radović slowly, “from the feet up”, introduces concrete thresholds laid in the grass as a tactile sign of access to the building. The entrance to the building is through a heavy, concrete door with a cold steel pipe in place of the handle. The

interior of the building is dominated by raw concrete as a building and finishing material with a polished stone floor, which adds up to the original experience of the “concrete cathedral”. To the touch, it has a cold, rough texture, as do the rocks of the surrounding mountains. The return to the tactile allows a deviation from the scenography, bringing back architects to the construction of the structural poetics, i.e. the creation of tectonic values.



*Figure 8. A detail of the front door with a handle (left) (source: Marina Radulj), basilica-like / dramatic illumination of the interior stone floor (Jen Lukehart) retrieved from <https://www.sosbrutalism.org/cms/19405697> on 27 October 2021), a detail of the access to the Memorial House (source: Marina Radulj)*

#### 4. CRITICAL RESISTANCE OF A HUT

In a contemporary, especially “critical” sense, “critical regionalism” is seen as an approach to designing. By respecting the context, it seeks to avoid making local architecture unfounded in order to give it meaning and a sense of particular place.

The theory here (whether it is about realised designs or texts) is set as a production of a relationship between an architectural work and a wider social or societal context. However, it is set “in such a way as to show that an architectural work has a certain autonomous force, because of which it can be visible that it denies, distorts, suppresses, compensates, or even produces, or reproduces that context itself” [4: 183]. In our case, it is the re-usage of the idea and form of the so-called primitive hut reinterpreted in the spirit of the time in which it is created.

The symbolic sign of a gable roof in the northern hemisphere usually means “home” in the cultural code. Used in the Memorial House in the Sutjeska National Park, this cultural code carries the metaphor of a hut in our country. “A hut is essentially a simple building with a mostly rectangular plan and a gable roof (...) the initial house was usable, functional protection from the climate and animals. However, at the same time, it was a place, a world, a symbol with which a man decorated his spiritual position and controlled space and time. Becoming aware of himself and nature, his strengths and weaknesses, himself as an individual and as a society, he took his house-hut as a means, an instrument of survival, but also a means of symbolisation and self-proof” [13:13]. Further, in the same text, the author, critic and theoretician of architecture, Ranko Radović, comments on the resilience and resistance of the hut through the centuries of architecture as a “prominent sign and metaphor” of the duality of architecture existing and becoming between the technique and art, idea and form, utilitarianism and spirituality, that every (good) architecture carries in that very complexity.

The simplicity of the form itself—from the archetypal form of a gable roof supported by four columns connected by beams—is a prerequisite for resisting in time, changing, decomposing

and reshaping. At the same time, the original symbolism in each interpretation cannot be “hidden”.

In his book “Essay on Architecture” [14], the Jesuit priest Laugier deals with a man’s original need for shelter and, in those intentions, he builds a house – a dwelling for himself, his family, cattle, “that protects him but does not bury him” [14:13]. The illustration by Charles Eisen (Figure 9), accompanying the essay, illustrates a hut made of trees found in the woods, and a female figure as a symbol of Architecture, casually resting in her baroque dress and among the discarded, broken capitals and decorative wreaths. She is pointing her finger to an angelic child (personification of the new) at this simple form as the source from which “all beauties and wonders of architecture arise” [13: 15].



*Slika 9. Engraving by Charles Eisen of a primitive hut, used as the frontispiece to the second edition of Marc-Antoine Laugier’s *Essai sur l’architecture* of 1755. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/fernandogonzalezpiris/docs/essay\\_on\\_architecture\\_laugier](https://issuu.com/fernandogonzalezpiris/docs/essay_on_architecture_laugier) on 29 October 2021*

Radović’s Memorial House design represents, like any theoretical text, the mediation between a man and nature. It carries these dualities and metaphorical meanings (especially in the horizontal and vertical projection—plan and cross-section), and it expands these values—in the exterior, undoubtedly bringing the roof form of primitive hut-houses, and in the interior, building the experience of a cathedral and being in the woods. The sign “roof over your head” is an unambiguous metaphor expressed through the form used in modest construction houses, with modest living needs, and in the harsh locality of the Sutjeska River valley, surrounded by the mountains of Zelengora, Volujak, Maglić and Perućica primaeval forest. The designed experience of a cathedral, on the other hand, achieved through the so-called implied metaphor (Jencks) in the light play of zenithal illumination through numerous lanterns and crystal forms and with sculpturally treated columns, skillfully works on the plan of the unconscious in making a “place”, “world”, a symbol of comprehending the world and the spiritual self in it.

By mixing Radović’s codes, with the heterogeneity inherent in postmodernism, he projects the utilitarian (useful) and spiritual dimension of architecture, transforming the idea of a house –

primitive hut – habitat – apartment – roof, into a spiritual house – pyramid – memorial house – as the “house of all people of one community” [13].

The rootedness in the place and its inventive and hybrid interpretation in the spirit of contemporary culture distinguishes the Memorial House as an architectural work that possesses a certain autonomous force. It also determines Ranko Radović as a sensible architect who finds his primary inspiration in things around him in developing the vitality of architectural culture.

It can be said that this way of creative thinking is another confirmation of the anticipation and modern interpretation of critical regionalism, which according to Jadhav, is found somewhere between neo-historicism and neo-avant-garde. According to him, neo-historicism is based on a strong and complete connection with the past. Neo-avant-garde, on the other hand, is realised as an inventive vision of the past, which should not be based on, but it should derive creative impulse from it [15]. As it can be seen in the example of the Memorial House, both ancient and modern cultures are not the product of one heritage, but a hybrid of several cultures that have intertwined in the past in a particular region. Frampton points out that regional or national cultures must be constituted as local forms of “global culture” manifestation [2].

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to actualise the critical design practice of one of the most important cultural figures of the former Yugoslavia, architect Ranko Radović, through a detailed presentation of his most important design—the Memorial House in the Sutjeska National Park. The applied method in the paper is a detailed analysis according to the theoretical text of Kenneth Frampton. It is shown and proven that the Memorial House has all the features of the so-called critical regionalism, focusing on the values of resistance to the universalisation of the space and architectural forms, i.e. returning to its humanistic essence. The paper emphasises the need to maintain the vitality of architectural culture today more than ever due to the dominance of capital over human needs, due to the emergence of universalisation in architectural practices that have erased any form of authenticity. As a result, the role of architecture, art, and the humanities is completely marginalised in society. There is not enough resistance, resistance to global universalisation processes. There is no autonomy.

It is precisely this place and time (given that histories are written some 50 years after a certain phenomenon) to revitalise discursive practices like Radović’s, from the former Yugoslavia, which have an autonomous force of resistance to the universalisation of the space and which reflect critical design vitality in developing architectural culture.

In this way, among other things, we want to point out the importance of learning architecture based on knowledge and transferring the knowledge gained through the critical practice of our architectural heritage, as one of the possible ways to reconsider the architectural profession in modern conditions of its obvious marginalisation under the force of capital [16].

We conclude the paper with a comment and a new challenge set by Ljiljana Blagojević. She sees Radović’s practice “as a radical critique of modernism”, whose formulation could be linked to a relatively recent discussion between Rem Koolhaas and Charles Jencks, which will direct our further research.

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