

Nuova serie / New series n. 10 - 2023

# ARCHALP

Rivista internazionale di architettura e paesaggio alpino / Revue internationale d'architecture et de paysage dans les Alpes / Internationale Zeitschrift für Alpine Architektur und Landschaft / Revija za alpsko arhitekturo in pokrajino / International journal of alpine architecture and landscape

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## Le altre montagne

Les autres montagnes / Die anderen Berge  
/ Druge gore / The other mountains



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### 3. MEMORĪĀ







# An uphill battle

Dinaric Alps: the other Alps. They still give off that vibe, don't they? The entire region: the other Europe. We will probably never shake off that attribute, so why not embrace it? If the entire Balkan region is the other Europe, then Dinaric Alps are the other, darker, unknown, chaotic Alps? Let's pretend, for the sake of this article, that they are.

A large part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the eponymous mountain – Dinara, lie within this mountain range. Apart from the extreme north up to the Sava River and part of the south that lies in the fertile Neretva River delta, the entire country and the lives of its inhabitants are defined by mountains. The place names and the customs still practiced today, which predate Christianity and Islam, testify of their rich role in the lives of people who live there (for example, the name of Mt. Prenj is related to the Slavic god Perun, Velež is linked to Veles; on the peak of Džamija people offered cheese and performed religious rituals to ensure favourable weather conditions, etc.).

This article will focus on positive architectural practices but will also cite negative ones because it would be irresponsible to present everything as picture-perfect and thus minimize the efforts needed to produce the extraordinary in such a context. This contrast is what makes this architecture valuable. Several typologies will be presented, but the article does not claim to be a comprehensive, detailed overview of the contemporary architecture in Bosnian mountains.

## **Dario Kristić**

Architect, born in 1980 in Sarajevo. Currently lives and works in Zagreb.

## **Keywords**

*Architecture and landscape, vernacular architecture, Dinaric Alps, Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

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## Introduction

The landscape of Bosnian mountains is poetically rich and “written upon” (Seung H-Sang, 2009) Even though heavily modified by centuries of human activities, it still gives off unexplored, half abandoned vibes, especially if one moves away from the most developed urban centres and main roads. Wandering around these mountains there is a strong feeling of *kenopsia*: according to the dictionary of obscure sorrows, “*kenopsia* is the eerie, forlorn atmosphere of a place that’s usually bustling with people but is now abandoned and quiet – a school hallway in the evening, an unlit office on a weekend, vacant fairgrounds – an emotional afterimage that makes it seem not just empty but hyper-empty, where the absence of people is so evident that it glows like a neon sign”. Ancient transhumance paths pass by medieval graveyards and (almost) deserted villages, whose lifestyle is somewhere between the 21st and the 19th century. People used to live in these mountains. There are houses, but most of them are empty. There are wells, but most of them are dried up. There are roads, but very few people travel them. Clouds thicken on the mountaintops at twilight, somewhere in the distance a lone dog barks, the wind slams the doors of a barn and there is a single light on the side of the hill.

Due to the Bosnian war, mountains became almost deserted during and after the conflict, for various reasons. During the war, people from the mountain villages fled to the cities where they were safer from the atrocities, and after the war those who had remained moved to the cities in search for jobs and services such as schools or healthcare, became unavailable in remote communities with the collapse of socialist system. Another result of the war is that we unwittingly discovered the most effective device for preserving nature: the landmine. The fear of landmines slowed down the return to the mountains of both their inhabitants and tourists. That fear persists to this day, even though the most popular areas have been completely safe for decades. But that fear that protected the mountains is fading with each passing day, thus the mountains are slowly becoming construction sites for

various reasons. By its very nature, mountain architecture often exists in areas where extensive plans have not been developed. Outside of ski resorts and protected areas, there are no development plans in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and decisions are made at the discretion of municipality employees. In practice, even when they do exist, regulation plans or any other legislative documents are rarely adhered to or modified to suit the will of the investor. Therefore, the responsibility not to harm nature lies almost entirely on the shoulders of architects and investors. Unfortunately, thanks to the lack of regulation, but also a lack of vision both from the architect’s and the investor’s side, sites that were once prime candidates for the inclusion in national parks are now completely destroyed by unplanned and/or illegal construction.

This article will focus on the positive practices but will also cite negative ones, because it would be irresponsible to present everything as picture-perfect and thus minimize the efforts needed to produce the extraordinary in such a context. This contrast is what makes this architecture valuable. Several typologies will be presented, but article does not pretend to be a comprehensive, detailed overview of the contemporary architecture in Bosnian mountains.

Therefore, the examples in this article are atypical cases, a few and far between, already published in numerous online and printed publications, because there’s not much else to present. However, it would be irresponsible to claim that these are the only or even the best examples. The buildings chosen here are simply the ones this author is most familiar with and find most suitable for the purpose of the article. They are the results of the enormous will and capability of individual architects to at least try to minimize the effects of investor’s urbanism and late-stage capitalism architecture. It is a constant uphill battle that very few have enough willpower and professional knowledge to win.

## A bit of history

Contemporary Bosnian mountain architecture relies heavily on tradition. Thus, a brief introduction

### Opening picture

Mountain Landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Morine, Svatovsko groblje (photo Dario Kristić, 2019).

### Fig. 1

Ad hoc architecture of a hut built form scraps; Crvanj mountain (photo Dario Kristić, 2019).

### Fig. 2

A well protected nature (photo Dario Kristić, 2019).

to the history of architecture in the local mountains is needed to better understand it.

For this article, the history will be divided into three stages. The division is not based on any kind of research or scholarly conclusions; it is here only for practical purposes.

### **1. Pre-Second World War architecture (up to 1945)**

This period of centuries is dominated by mostly vernacular architecture, with few examples of buildings constructed in the Alpine style under the Austrian-Hungarian rule. Vernacular architecture is shaped by climate and landscape, as is mostly anywhere on earth. It consists of individual village dwellings typically made of stone and wood. A simple mountain hut is usually built of rough stone covered with straw on a timber structure. In some cases, only the foundations are made of stone while the rest is made of timber. The house have one or two rooms with a central hearth and very few openings. It sometimes serves

as a shelter for both humans and animals (Kadić, 1967).

At higher altitudes, the huts were a temporary home used by shepherds while livestock was on summer pastures. The typical family would have three such houses, one for dairy products (cheese and sour cream production, etc.), one for sleeping and one for guests (Salihović, 1964). A more complex village types intended for a sedentary lifestyle have a stone base with a timber frame on the first floor and, very rarely, a second floor. The roof was made of wooden planks. A large number of these houses were devastated during the war and replaced by modern construction. There are very few original examples, but numerous ruins dot the mountainous landscape.

### **2. Socialist period (1945-1992)**

The Socialist period is certainly one in which mountain architecture underwent great development. The socialist doctrine of affordable leisure time for workers led to the need to provide affordable winter hospitality infrastructure in the mountains near big cities. Thus, ski resorts were built, mainly near Sarajevo on the mountains of Bjelašnica, Jahorina, Trebević and Igman. These were and still are the areas where most of the construction is taking place.

#### **2.1. Trebević ski lodge**

Juraj Neidhardt, one of the fathers of modern Bosnian architecture, recognized that vernacular Bosnian architecture shared many qualities with modernist ideals. Lack of ornament, clear and simple cubic forms and asymmetrical balance were traits of Bosnian architecture long before the modernist movement championed them. In his architecture, Neidhardt mixed the ideas of modernist movement with more humane and organic practices of traditional Bosnian architecture, developing a unique blend that was far ahead of its time. One of his works in the style of critical regionalism, greatly inspired by vernacular architecture, was a ski lodge on Mt. Trebević, near Sarajevo (Neidhardt, 1957). Although the house was destroyed by a fire just a few years after its construction, it had an enormous influence and, together with other examples of a similar style, defined the entire era of Bosnian architecture. As can be seen, Neidhardt relies heavily on large, roughly hewn stone blocks, like those of mountain huts, on which the timber structure is erected. It is equal parts Le Corbusier and countless unnamed artisans who have built in Bosnia over the past centuries. It is impossible to practice architecture in Bosnia without understanding Neidhardt.



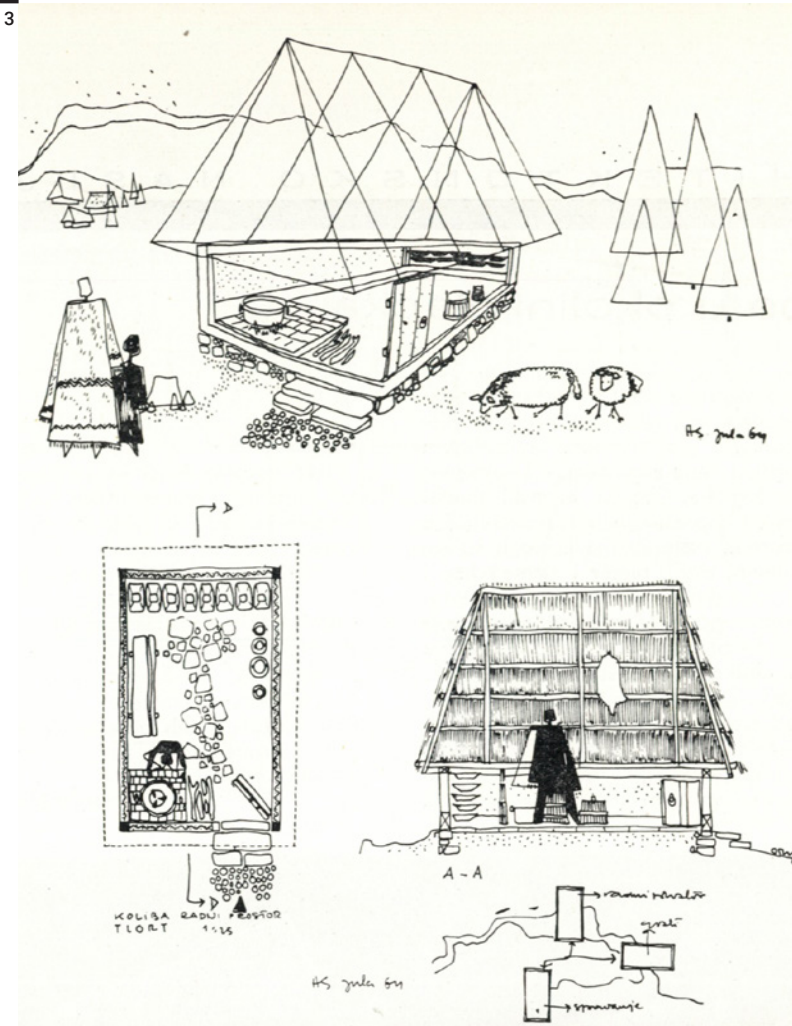
The entire period is defined by state investments in tourist facilities built by prominent architects. Despite the flaws, there is at least some level of planning and, on average, higher quality of architecture than in the later period. The most intensive phase of construction was the preparation for the 1984 Olympic Games in Sarajevo, when large numbers of accommodation and sport facilities were built. Most of the infrastructure that would facilitate post-war construction expansion was built during this period. Large ski centers were erected in Bjelašnica, Vlašić and Igman, existing ones in Jahorina and Trebević were expanded. The designs of these centers, even though heavily modified, became the matrix for further development after the war.

Even in those times, there were voices expressing dissatisfaction with the execution of state-sponsored plans (Arh br 21, Aleksandar Levi, Zoran Doršner). The primary concerns were the scale of the buildings, the lack of regulation and the destruction of nature. What those authors would say

today is difficult to imagine. Nevertheless, the period produced numerous architectural works that rank among the most valuable in Bosnian architecture. Together with the works of Neidhardt, these designs became the foundation of contemporary Bosnian architecture. Every successful building echoes some of the qualities of the works from this period. The most thriving ones extend those ideas and transcend them.

2.2. *Weekend house Mikulić, Bugojno 1979*

Weekend house Mikulić is a project by Bosnia and Herzegovina's greatest living architect, Zlatko Ugljen. It was designed for the powerful politician Branko Mikulić, close to his hometown of Bugojno. Ugljen clearly followed Neidhardt ideas but expanded them to create a timeless architecture. Notice that the stone base, the composition of the sloping roofs and the extension of timber beyond the wall line directly cite the Rakitnica house (or a similar one). Ugljen designed several other houses in similar style, such as Vila Gorica for Presi-



dent Tito and the residence in Tjentište. Weekend house Mikulić and Vila Gorica were completely destroyed by the Croatian forces in the 1990s. The residence in Tjentište is reportedly scheduled for reconstruction, but as of today the details of its state are unclear.

### 2.3. Vučko Hotel

Situated on Mt. Jahorina, the hotel was built for the upcoming 1984 Olympic Games. The aforementioned ideas were mixed with the most avant-garde architectural concepts of the time. Both exteriors and interiors were realized according to the principle of “total design”. The influence of the Šerefuddin’s mosque, for which Ugljen received the Aga Khan prize around the same period, can be seen in the details and the benevolent ghost of Neidhardt still approves of everything. The mural on the fireplace features an illustration from one of his books. Even today, the architecture feels contemporary. In fact, it can be said that we have returned to some of the values that Ugljen recognized back in the 1980s. After the war, the hotel has been entirely reconstructed and expanded without any resemblance to the original.

### 3. Contemporary introduction (1995-present)

Mountain architecture suffered huge losses during the Bosnian War. Larger buildings, sport facilities, hotels and mountain huts were either destroyed during the fighting or thoroughly gutted for scraps during and after the war. Small individual houses and religious objects, some of them prime examples of vernacular mountain architecture, were burned or destroyed by other means in the process of ethnic cleansing. Entire villages were annihilated.

After the war, life slowly began to return to the mountains. First, individual houses were rebuilt, but there was neither vision nor financial resources to reconstruct the most valuable of them properly. Instead, the typical concrete and mortar houses were built just for people to return to their homes as soon as possible. Some extremely valuable buildings and rural ambient were lost in this process.

Ski resorts were the first hotspots for the construction of larger complexes, such as hotels and apartment buildings. The existing high-quality infrastructure and attractive locations for casual winter recreation have been a catalyst for investments, which were shy at first, but has steadily intensified to become a full-fledged real estate boom over the last decade. The process, although not new, is quite bizarre. People make a city uninhabitable, so they escape to the mountains. They start building there

to “experience nature”, thus destroying the very thing they came for. Now, these resorts are locations for speculative investments where the wealthy buy several apartments to rent out, or simply use as bank accounts, to store money. The entire process took place without much planning, mostly at the will of the investors. Some of the existing buildings were quickly replaced, while others still lay in ruins and new ones are being constructed, often side by side. The mountains around Sarajevo, Bjelašnica and Jahorina are experiencing the most intense growth, but similar processes are happening in Vlačić, Risovac, Kupres and other smaller resorts. They have attracted even shadier international investors that started proposing megalomaniacal projects, such as a city of 50,000 people in the middle of Mt. Bjelašnica. An infamous Buroj project fortunately never got off the ground properly, but damaged the site enough to make it permanently scarred. The boom in Mt. Bjelašnica alone resulted in the pollution of the Vrelo Bosne spring, the destruction of the Babin Do valley and blocked the declaration of a national park that would have consisted of Mt. Bjelašnica, Mt. Treskavica and Mt. Visočica. These resorts now look similar to the ultra-popular alpine ski resorts, but more chaotic and of lower quality. Some people use this fact as some kind of justification. This might or might be not a valid argument.

There is another phenomenon, a kind of rural gentrification divided into two types: one near Sarajevo, the other a little further away.

The first type is directly related to the pollution in Sarajevo. The city is notorious for its horrible air quality, especially in winter, due to (corruption and lack of planning) and the peculiar geographic layout that resulted in the temperature inversion phenomenon where in winter cold air sinks to the city while hot air rises. That phenomenon keeps a “lid” on the city’s polluted air preventing its escape, thus the heavy pollution can last for days, weeks and sometimes even months. Because of the physical limitations, the lid is at a height of about 800 meters above the sea level. Thus, while the city chokes in smog, the surrounding mountains of Trebević and Bukovik are bathed in sunlight. These mountains are so close to the city that today it is possible to live there and come to the city for work and shopping, but up until a decade ago they were completely neglected by the local population. Now there is a trend to build above the 800 m line, where luxury housing, tourist facilities and even offices for IT companies are being built. The elites, some of whom are directly responsible for the appalling conditions in the city, now enjoy clean air while the poorer masses drown in pollution.

**Fig. 3**  
Illustration by  
Hamdija Salihović  
ARH br.6 1964.

**Fig. 4**  
Trebević ski lodge,  
Arhitektura Bosne  
i put u suvremeno,  
Juraj Neidhardt  
1949.

**Fig. 5**  
Mikulić house -  
Zlatko Ugljen.

**Fig. 6**  
Hotel Vučko -  
Zlatko Ugljen.



The second type affects remote communities. Previously impoverished rural locations are first visited and popularized by hikers or mountain bikers. In the days of social networks, this is an easy feat. Later, the wealthier of them start buying plots and weekend houses, making the village “hot”. The villagers, previously impoverished farmers, turn to tourism by offering accommodation. Right now, there are many villages where only a couple of years ago the inhabitants could not afford a tractor, and now new residents and visitors park their expensive SUVs in the driveways. The third, logical wave is just now emerging, but is expected to become more intense in the future. Real estate investors move in and start “developing” a location. Every new investment is welcomed by the local community, the site becomes a resort and hikers move to the new, more distant location.

Every single action described here results in a severely degraded natural landscape where mountains are treated as “untapped potential”, something that does not generate profit. The clean air and access to the green spaces are treated not as human rights but as selling points, as commodity that can be discarded once used.

Thus, after this sour introduction, it may become much clearer why producing quality architecture in this kind of environment is so difficult and why, when it happens, the people who manage to do it deserve much higher praise.

### Contemporary architecture, examples

#### *Hotel M Gallery*

Authors: ahA + knAp / Saaha

Location: Tarčin, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Chronology: 2017

Project category: accommodation

Photos: Anida Krečo

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are two kinds of gated communities with Middle Eastern residents. The first kind is refugee camps, with appalling conditions where unfortunate young people often do not have access to basic human needs, such as a bed or heating. The other kind is luxury resorts for investors from the Gulf countries. Often, these two kinds of settlements are separated by just a few hundred meters. Therefore, the word “resort”, especially if situated in this particular area, has a strong connotation for the average Bosnian. This fact will be useful in describing the M Gallery hotel in Tarčin, by studio ahA+knAp, because such connotation do not apply.

It is in fact one of the rare occasions where foreign investment in an area where there was no existing plans or regulations has produced above-average architecture. The area is dotted by so-called “resorts”, gated communities where clients from the Gulf countries enjoy their holidays. The architecture of these communities is often vulgar, pseudo-utopian and the very nature of the settlement is at odds with its surroundings. These are exclu-

**Fig. 7**  
Buroj - a proposed city for 50,000 people. In construction, 2019.



sive access communities nested in the rural landscape, usually bordering local villages but without any communication with them. The architect and the investor, receptive to the architect's ideas and capable of implementing them, succeeded in producing an architecture that is far different from the established typologies for these kind of projects in Bosnia. The hotel stands on a 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> plot of land at the foothills of Mt. Bjelašnica. It is located on a small, forested hill, thus enjoys a wide view of the mountain and the surrounding pastoral landscape. This micro-location was recognized as one of the most important attributes for the development of the project from the very beginning. The hotel is divided in two volumes. The lower volume blends in with the hill, while the upper one hovers over the steep hill, acting as an extension of the forest and enabling a strong relationship between exterior and the interior. The hotel is accessible to general public as well as the surrounding area with the villas. It quickly became one of the most popular facilities in the Sarajevo region and a model for successful development.

*Ski Restaurant Raduša*

Authors: 3LHD

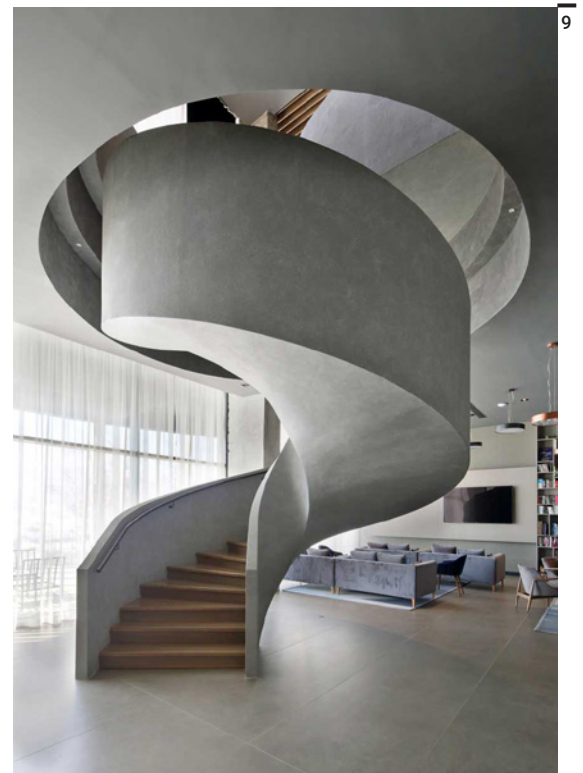
Location: Uskoplje - Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Chronology: 2010-2011

Project category: restaurant

Photos: Studio 3LHD

Moving away from Sarajevo, investments become scarcer and good architecture rarer. The ski restaurant on Mt. Raduša is peculiar because it is one of the rare examples of a foreign studio working



**Figs. 8-9**  
MGallery hotel -  
ahA+knAp (photo  
Anida Krečo, 2018).



in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, on top of that, in a remote area previously unknown for this kind of investments.

Mt. Raduša is one of the least known mountains in Bosnia. The northern and eastern slopes are densely wooded and inaccessible. The western one slopes towards carstic fields while the southern towards the beautiful Lake Rama. The restaurant is located at 1,705 m above sea level in a small ski resort. It depends on how you look at things. Conceptually, the restaurant is in complete harmony with its surroundings but, knowing how rare this kind of architecture is in these kinds of settings, its existence is rather surprising. It is a relatively small building consisting of restaurant, bar, kitchen, and auxiliary spaces, all built in a single volume. The southern entrance terrace allows outdoor après-ski, and the northern offers a splendid view of the surrounding Bosnian mountains and Uskoplje valley. The irregular shape and layout reinterpret the terrain, integrating the building into the landscape. The entire building is constructed from local materials. The steel structure was built directly by the client and the interior is made of locally sourced wood. It is an inviting place built on a human scale.

The mountain managed to escape the rapid development that damaged many others. Today, the restaurant still stands alone in its place, like a sort of sentinel.

**Fig. 10**

Raduša ski restaurant - Studio 3LHD.

*Ostojići mosque*

Authors: Studio Zec

Location: Ostojići, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Chronology: 2006

Project category: mosque

Photos: Sandro Lendler

**Fig. 11**

Ostojići mosque - Studio Zec (photo Sandro Lendler, 2006).

A mosque is the center of the village and often the only public building. It is not only a place of worship, but also a place where most of the public life

of the village takes place. During the war, a great number of mosques were destroyed. Most of the smaller ones were built in the local style, a mixture of Ottoman style and traditional architecture. They were small wooden structures, built to scale with rest of the village, and sometimes only the minaret distinguished them from the rest of the houses. After the war, there was an initial fervor to rebuild mosques. As with the rest of traditional architecture, they were often replaced with crude replicas of more monumental structures, built of concrete and brick. Very seldom did villagers decide to recreate the original mosques, or, as in this case, to build them in the contemporary style.

Džamija in the village of Ostojići is situated on the lower slopes of Mt. Bjelašnica and can be easily mistaken for the authentic vernacular architecture. That is a compliment. The architect, an experienced master-builder, shows a complete understanding of the local context and great mastery in the approach to the construction and the final execution of the building. The mosque draws inspiration from tradition but does not copy it blindly. It blends in with its surroundings as if it has always been there, an almost organic outgrowth of the land.

It is completely made of local materials and with local labor: imagine the entire village lending a hand in the construction.

It shows the architect's respect for the local tradition and knowledge of traditional building techniques. It is an exercise in moderation for both the architects and the villagers-investors. The architect engages in a fruitful dialogue with the local community, collaborates with them, learns from them as much as they learn from him, with the ultimate goal of producing something that is both clearly modern but at the same time familiar and comfortable for the villagers, unaccustomed to the whims of modern architecture. The result is a true building of faith, austere, simple and inviting.

*Mountain bivouac Zoran Šimid*

Authors: Studio Filter

Location: Mountain Visočica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Chronology: 2019

Project category: bivouac

Photos: Dario Kristić

Small bivouac constructed as a community effort by Planinarsko društvo Željezničar.

Mt. Visočica is (subjectively) the most beautiful of the Bosnian mountains. It is located about 50 km from Sarajevo. With access only by a gravel road, thirty years ago it was considered very remote, worthy of an expedition of couple days. Even in 2010, the visits to the mountains were rare. The moun-



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tain is neither the highest nor the largest in terms of surface area, but it possesses a very special, calming atmosphere. On one side it touches the Rakitnica canyon, one of the deepest in Europe, and on the other it descends to the upper course of the Neretva River, full of villages abandoned during the last war, secret beaches and cold green waters full of fish. It is mostly a gentle mountain, with wide open pastures, springs of cold water and clear blue skies. It is dotted with remains of old pastoral huts and medieval tombstones – Stećci. It is reminiscent of the Scotland highlands, or even Mongolia. It would be a logical candidate for a national park, but unfortunately the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not agree. Today, it is no more than one hour's drive from the city.

Because of its remoteness, Visočica have no facilities for hikers, except from one mountain hut situated in a former elementary school. In hope of making the mountain accessible for hikers and trail runners, the members of PD Željezničar organized the construction of a small mountain shelter. The site chosen for the bivouac is Hrljin Greb, below the Parić peak.

The bivouac is perched on the edge of a large ravine called Međeđa that steeply descends towards the Rakitnica canyon. Thanks to this open position,

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the view from the site opens towards the canyon and almost the entire Mt. Bjelašnica on one side, and towards the highest peaks of Visočica (Džamija and Ljeljen) to the other. The design of the shelter is deliberately simple. A steel frame, with an external metal-sheets cladding and an internal wooden one. The steel structure was transported to the site by helicopter and all the work was done on site by a group of volunteers. Architecturally, the bivouac echoes similar designs in Slovenia, especially the Kanin Winter Cabin by Ofis. It was carefully designed to minimize the footprint on the ground but provides the maximum possible space for accommodation. It is shaped to withstand gale-force winds, but also to frame the stunning views from the inside with its two windows. The bivouac remains today a unique non-profit endeavor for the accessibility of the mountain. It became a minor tourist attraction, generating much more visits to the mountain than usual but, as of today, without negative effects.

### Conclusion

Bosnia and Herzegovina right now is a retrograde avant-garde of the world, a post-postmodern world (Islambegović *Beyond Context, Three Architectural Case Studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2022). The negative trends already present in political and economic landscape in Bosnia (and the rest of Yugoslavia) since the 1990s are starting to mani-

fest themselves worldwide. The economic collapse, the supply chain crisis, the political extremes of nationalism married to celebrity culture, defined by the lack of accountability, the constant manufacturing of crisis... all at the same time. It has all been tried and tested here long ago. Though dysfunctional and chaotic, the country is still relatively rich. While no one can claim that people in Bosnia live an easy life, the difference between Bosnia and less developed third world countries to which it is sometimes compared is huge. The main source of dissatisfaction is not the living conditions, but the lack of hope for improvement that permeates the population. This lack of hope is the result of the status quo, of the fact that nothing can be changed, imposed by the international community and exploited by the local politicians. However, the advance of climate changes and the lack of action to counter it, caused this same idea to diffuse all over the world. But, with the important difference that the citizens of Bosnia had the option to emigrate out of the country.

If someone wants to look at the world envisioned by various right-wing political groups, such as Qanon, they need look no further than today's Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the post-transition landscape has led to a laissez-faire economy brought to its extremes to the point of nonsense. There is a cult of collective – the nation – and one of extreme individualism

**Figs. 12-13**  
Bivouac - Studio  
Filter (photo Dario  
Kristić, 2022).

The current mindset is that of extreme “pure function” that sees everything only as a tool for profit. There is a famous quote by an influent local politician used to argue the construction of mini hydroelectric dams, according to which rivers just “lie there” unutilized. There is that constant notion of landscape as “unused potential”. As if, somehow, everything has to be used for making a profit.

This is why, for example, the housing constructed for the market meet only the minimum acceptable. There are no amenities, no green spaces, no playgrounds, no schools. Just parking spaces for cars, commercial spaces for consuming, offices for working and apartments for living. Pure functionality. It completely obliterates the idea of living a life, reducing the human individual to a functional unit in a consumerist system. In these circumstances, architects must navigate a system (or lack of a system) that lacks regulation, corrupts officials, lacks competent workforce and is full of shady, brutal investors. They cope with it in var-

ious ways: some manage to maintain their integrity (ahA+knAp, Studio 3LHD), some build unconventionally (Studio Zec), while others discard the market altogether, dedicating themselves to non-profit architecture (Studio Filter).

To build in these mountains is to use a very delicate palimpsest. What is erased might be proven to be more valuable than what is written upon. The mountains are not machines for making a profit or for shallow adrenaline adventure. The world is getting smaller and more fragile, and the destiny of a consumerist lifestyle is today uncertain at best and already doomed at worst. The mountains are like amplifiers where we can still experience the nature in its pure form, but more intensively. The colors are richer, the sun is closer and the wind blows harder. There is still that connection to the land, to the past, to the lifestyle, to which we cannot and should not blindly return but, just as the best of these buildings, we can draw from to find a healthier relationship with the Earth, with each other and with ourselves. ■