

Journal Review

UDC 728.4

©**Stela B. Tasheva**. Journal Review: Архитектура (Списание „Архитектура“ - от 1954 г. до днес.) [The Journal of “Architecture”, since 1954 to now]. ISSN 0324-12-54 (in Bulgarian).

The Journal of “Architecture” - since 1954 to now

Abstract:

The article presents the journal of “Architecture”, which is the main professional and scientific publication platform focused on architecture (the most widely understood) in Bulgaria. Since 1954, the journal has become a tribune to contemporary architectural theory, history and practice. A major place in the publications for this long period of time occupied the realizations and problems of contemporary Bulgarian designs. For the architectural practice, history and theory of Bulgaria, the contributions of the journal of “Architecture” is invaluable. It contains the archives, the traditions and the schools; a large register of significant authors, perceptions and assessments; and is constantly open to the current, new and future ideas.

Key words: Architectural journal, Bulgarian and world architecture, 20th century, criticism, history of architecture, theory of architecture, architectural education, buildings.

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The journal of “Architecture” is the main professional and scientific publication platform focused on architecture (the most widely understood) in Bulgaria. But the history and the core of this edition are closely linked to the modern history of architecture in Bulgaria and its dynamics of development. It is now believed that the current journal of “Architecture” appeared in 1954, but there was some prehistory.

Here we must mention that generations of Bulgarian architects who finished their education until the middle of the 20th century were all foreign (European) alumni. Thus, even the Bulgarian Engineering and Architectural Society (BIAD) emerged in the newly-liberated Bulgarian state in the year of 1893. A year later, the first professional periodical in the field appeared - the “BIAD Journal”. A monthly format, devoted entirely to architectural themes was published later - only in the period 1927-1937, and was called “Architect”.

The first Bulgarian high school with an architectural profile was established just in 1942, in Sofia. The quality of the education was very high, because of the involvement of charismatic, widely practicing Bulgarian designers. In 1953, an independent Engineering and Construction Institute was assembled from the faculties. At the same time, the scientific researches in the field were assigned to the Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IUPA).

Since 1954, the journal of “Architecture” has become a tribune to contemporary architectural theory, history and practice. A major place in the publications for this long period of time occupied the realizations and problems of contemporary Bulgarian designs. The active interest in the traditional national culture (most widely understood), which reflected on the general orientation of the Bulgarian art, also remained. At the same time, the journal publicized texts on informational and / or critical materials devoted to European projects and authors.

The chosen topics were most often in the following areas:

- Problems of cooperation and block housing construction;
 - Urban and industrial solutions;
 - Architectural competitions in the country and abroad;
 - Representative major projects and buildings;
 - Higher education and architectural training;
 - Architectural heritage;
 - Author’s portraits;
 - Professional discussions;
 - Creativity “from the kitchen” - sketches, concepts, details;
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- Book reviews and more.

A careful look at the contents of the journal for the period from 1954 to now, reveals its “sinusoidal” variables: the orientation to some or other ideological, political and cultural models, styles; the nature of involved researches, the author's approaches, mindsets and worldviews, etc. The main reason of this is the social and the political context of the given period (where architecture was in dependence). But the key factor behind is also the change of several generations of architects (practitioners, historians and theorists), defining the look of the magazine.

After the change of the regime in 1989, the magazine underwent a complex period of reconstructions and rethinking. Since 2000 its financial and institutional conditions have been stabilized and the circulation was increased in the last decade. The high quality and professional character of the content is now preserved, and the graphic design has undergone positive changes.

For the architectural practice, history and theory of Bulgaria, the contributions of the journal of “Architecture” is invaluable. It contains the archives, the traditions and the schools; a large register of significant authors, perceptions and assessments; and is constantly open to the current, new and future ideas. The projects shown in the volumes deserve attention and interest, as they also reveal the achievements of some Bulgarian artists, who stay unknown outside the region, but are remarkable in their work. Today, the journal is also open to publications from abroad.

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Journal Review

Design. Art. Industry, 2018, Issue 5

For Citation

Stela B. Tasheva. Journal Review: Архитектура (Списание „Архитектура“ - от 1954 г. до днес.) [The Journal of “Architecture”, since 1954 to now] ISSN 0324-12-54 (in Bulgarian) *Design. Art. Industry: International Journal of Scientific Research* Editor in chief Dr. N. M. Shabalina. Chelyabinsk: Tekhne Publishing House, 2018, Issue 5, pp. 93–94. (In English)