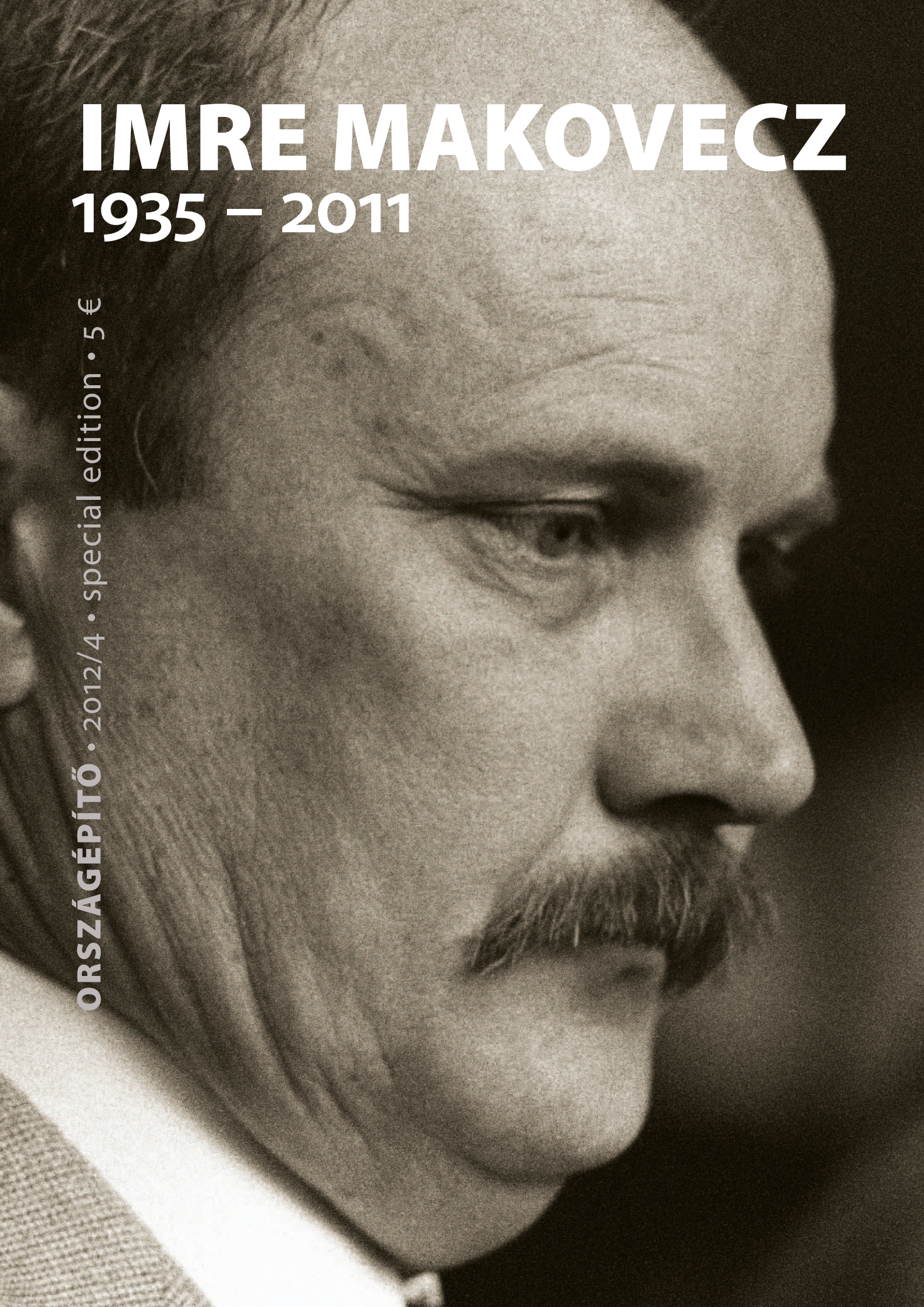


IMRE MAKOVECZ

1935 – 2011

ORSZÁGÉPÍTŐ • 2012/4 • special edition • 5 €





ORSZÁG ÉPÍTŐ

2012/4 • SPECIAL EDITION

KÓS KÁROLY
EGYE SÜLÉS

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The much more voluminous Hungarian edition was divided into five sections.
The start of each section is indicated by the large photographs in this edition.

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LOYALTY

Imre Makovecz entrusted me with the editorship of *Országépítő* journal two years ago. He firmly believed that owing to our world-famous Hungarian architecture, which definitely meets international standards, and due to the efforts devoted to form an associational background for architects of organic architecture, and by the backing of professionals raised in "Vándoriskola", the extramural college for young architects, the journal would reach out as an inspiring source of architectural thinking beyond our borders.

We paid our last respects to him a year ago.

In the words of Ervin Nagy, national chief architect: we are left only with a prismatic image to capture bits of his essence and intellect. Personal accounts recording impressions, experiences by friends and colleagues might evoke and keep his memory alive even for those who could only form his portrait from a greater distance.

Trustees of these honest professional-personal relationships can undertake sharing their personal ideas with a wider audience – either in a form of an interview or a report – in a different pace. We are honoured by having the written account of their remembrance in the present issue of the journal. Our memorial edition published on 27 September 2012 is devoted to the brief reflections of friends and colleagues but includes longer pieces not published yet, or appeared only as transcripts of private discussions on professional-personal matters.

The following texts remain in the frame of common features such as acknowledgement, love or respectful distance, suiting to Imre Makovecz's claim for elegance, hence this jubilee is about loyalty to the high standard values he represented. We are grateful for the authors considering this ambition evident.

Many expectations surrounded the Imre Makovecz memorial edition of *Országépítő* journal published by Kós Károly Association. Readers of previous issues from 2011 know that Imre Makovecz had always been our frequent and active author. In 2012 his name hallmarked a volume which processed most of his enormous oeuvre including a great amount of never-seen sketches. The number of events celebrating his works increased.

When his portrait is drawn by close friends and colleagues in the light of his social and artistic achievements, the image can only be prismatic. Still, further versions of this portrait reside precisely in the fragments. And, among them, initiations resting on his intellectual legacy can be found in the greatest amount.

September 2012, Budapest

Attila Kőszeghy
senior editor

Homage

Judit Osskó

"Let us appreciate the mighty quest to link the heavens and the earth, and the immense effort to retain everything that has been and might be of value."

The above quote comes from the introduction of a volume dedicated to Imre Makovecz and expresses the ultimate *raison d'être* of all his creations: to link the heavens and the earth, whether he was designing a swimming pool, a village community centre or a gym. Whatever the practical function of the building, he always essentially erected a sanctuary, a holy place.

I first came to know Imre Makovecz while working as a journalist. My first encounter with the creative spirit of his architectural art was when I saw the tourist lodges of the camping ground at Visegrád-Mogyoróhegy – wooden shelters with a life of their own, with a likeness to forest elves darting between the trees. These practical little buildings were also sanctuaries in their own right, lending an aura of sacredness to the majestic forest around them.

My perhaps most moving encounter with Makovecz' architecture was the Community Centre at Sárospatak. I was struck with awe after entering the building – I felt as if I had entered a cathedral with a wondrous wooden ceiling. Never before had I seen such breath-taking beauty, such an awe-inspiring treatment of space in contemporary architectural work. I became his unconditional admirer, both of the uniquely gifted architect and of the versatile man, the likes of whom are rarely born. Most people were in-

stinctively aware of the tempestuous love expressed by his work. I once saw him negotiate with a Party secretary, who became a convert to Makovecz's cause in no time. I saw him talk with masons and carpenters as equals. Time and again, I witnessed how he also built a community while constructing a village community centre or a church. Makovecz was a community architect in the truest sense of the word: he was not content to simply erect buildings, but strove to create a community around them.

Everyone who became his ally found himself capable of performing incredible deeds, not least because his structures were erected on a foundation of steadfast creed, trust and love. His students, his colleagues and the architectural communities working on one or another of Makovecz's projects were fully aware of this.

Allow me to quote from one of his writings:

"The genius loci, the geological conditions, the folklore elements, the materials and plants of the environment, the people for whom we are creating the building become the leitmotifs and the internal dynamics of a drama – the drama of construction. ... True thoughts can only be born of despair. As an answer to the challenge of despair. What is born is neither panic, nor slavery, but a drama in which the Heavens and the Earth must meet."

I witnessed the immense success of the Hungarian Pavilion at the 1992 World Exhibition in Seville. I had the occasion to report the construction work on the Seville pavilion, from the

laying of the foundation stone to the building's festive opening, and to document the growing interest in the pavilion and the fascination with the whimsical structure created by the Hungarians. I heard the outpouring of admiration for the skills of the carpenters erecting the building, and the many guesses on how the enormous tree making its way across Europe would be incorporated into the structure. I watched the endless line of visitors in front of the pavilion with its seven graceful spires and the international choir of praise, a tribute to Makovecz's creation. The pavilion in Seville was also a church: its bells rang out the belief in the power of nature and the triumph of creative genius. The Hungarian pavilion truly stood out among the other spiritless and dull high-tech structures.

Many internationally acclaimed architects became fans of Makovecz, amongst them Paolo Porthogesi, who became one of his closest friends and soulmate, whose words I shall quote here. *"It seems to me that contemporary architecture wholly misunderstands the situation and the creative experimentation by Makovecz and others, which have opened up an entirely novel perspective while remaining firmly rooted in tradition. I am convinced that this direction will eventually be understood and will achieve a deserved success. My conviction stems from the observation that contemporary architecture seems to have forgotten about our connection with Nature and with Earth herself. Organic architecture re-forges the harmony with Nature and teaches us how to create a valuable built environment fit for human life almost from scratch."*

Let us set beside each other the church in Paks, the Stephaneum in Piliscsaba and the Catholic church in Csíkszereda, whose congregation is guarded by angels peeking through glass. Let us evoke the small Calvinistic church in Vargyas, preserving the Gothic elements of the medieval church discovered during its construc-

tion, and its altar incorporating an ancient stone inscribed with runes. Makovecz's churches are all embodiments of an architect's fertile and creative imagination.

Last summer, the Vatican prepared for the 60th anniversary of the Pope Benedict XVI's ordainment. Sixty of the world's best-known artists were invited to the ceremony, amongst them Imre Makovecz, whose gift to the Pope was a book of the churches in the Carpathian Basin he had designed. The *Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official paper of the Holy See, had nothing but praise for Makovecz's work: *"His churches are the materialisation of faith, evoking the sacredness of the Holy Communion with expressive symbols that transport the congregation into the very heart of this miraculous event."*

Makovecz also presented his plans for the church in the Upper Krisztina-

város district in Budapest at the exhibition in the Vatican. There have been repeated calls for the construction of this church, regarded as one of the most significant works in his architectural oeuvre, especially because there are few major Makovecz buildings in Budapest. Makovecz himself described his plans for the church as follows:

"The construction of a church was begun during World War 2 in the Upper Krisztinaváros parish, but it was discontinued owing to the war. The plot of land for the church and the semi-finished buildings were confiscated during the Rákosi era, and the structure itself was converted into a discotheque in the late 1970s. We must now design a church from this physical and spiritual torso by building on the already existing foundations."

Nearing the end of my life I am increasingly aware of the forces that are capable of vanquishing the "dragon"; this

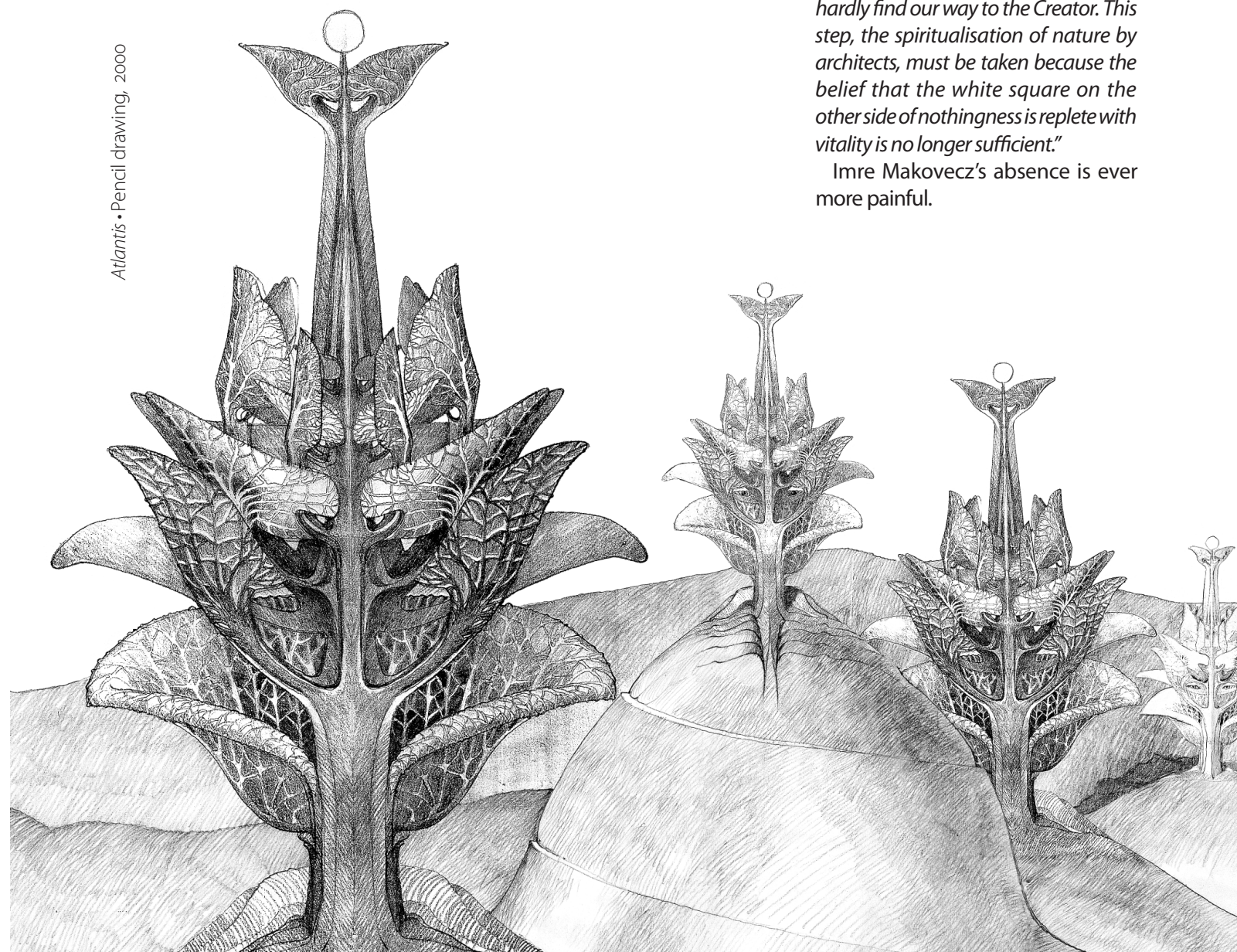
misshapen embodiment of shrewd and selfish disorder, the temptation challenging life's very energies. I feel the importance of elegance, which alone can keep the powers of darkness at bay, and create the essential balance for achieving inner peace, the necessary precondition to creativity and human freedom.

The towers of the building recall live poplars. The nave will be roofed by curved wooden staves and about two-thirds of the nave will have an inward and inverted reflection. The crypt and church will be separated by a glass ceiling."

In the very last paragraph of his writing, Makovecz notes that he is fully aware that *"this writing is unacceptable, poetical, much too effusive and empty from the perspective of a 'pure' and 'post-modern' approach. This I accept. Still, I believe that without the redemption of nature – and, also, of human nature – and without love, we can hardly find our way to the Creator. This step, the spiritualisation of nature by architects, must be taken because the belief that the white square on the other side of nothingness is replete with vitality is no longer sufficient."*

Imre Makovecz's absence is ever more painful.

Atlantis • Pencil drawing, 2000



Makovecz closeups

from 1972 to the recent past

Ágnes Kravár

According to the family saga my motherly grandmother and grandfather met when they returned home to visit the family soon after the Treaty of Trianon. They were standing in the queue for entry permission. My grandmother was going to Borosjenő, a city close to Arad, and my grandfather was on his way to Marosdécse, near Nagyenyed. The line was long and an officer ordered people to pair up. And so my grandfather stepped to my grandmother and asked her politely: would she take him as a partner? This is how rumour has it.

My fatherly grandfather started off from a little village close to Nyitra, Upper Hungary, at the turn of the century. He went to Budapest to make a fortune and soon opened his fashionable tailor's at József Nádor square, a nice workshop with assistants. Famous people went there from the 1920s until it was socialized.

Loosing the the country was my fortune in this sense: had there not been a war, I might not have been born. My parents married hurriedly in 1944. As students of the University of Technology they were taken to Germany but they were allowed to go only as husband and wife.

They were young and told mostly cheerful stories about their university times in Germany. They lived in the outskirts of Dresden. The day after Dresden was bombed, my father had to go to the city still scattered with burning bodies of the dead. He recalled those days even after decades.

The revolution in 1956 was a formative experience to me. I was nine.

During the revolution I was at home only with my sister and mother. My father was on an official trip in Poland and could not get back. When a shot crossed the room where I was combing my doll, the bullet passed right in front of my face and ended up in the wall. I stammered for years, as my mother recalled.

A nine year old can share the enthusiasm for freedom just like anybody else. I remember clearly the happiness of my mother and grandmother when they believed things would really change. My mother was worried about my grandparents who lived separately in Rózsavölgy. We went to see them on foot from Tabán to Budafok. I saw then the bombed Móricz Zsigmond square, the brick slides, the crippled homes. After 4 November at the time of bombings I nestled up to my mother in fright. Only we stayed in our French windowed apartment on the sixth floor: everyone else in the block was down in the refuge. I remember well the days after 4 November when all our hope deserted us, I remember the deep disappointment and the sadness. The living memory of these events has been with me ever since. I remember the whispers after the revoltuion lingering around those who had been imprisoned or had someone in the family who was jailed. They could never get rid of the stigma, or the air of fear mixed with nimbus surrounding them. This made them who they were.

Benefices collected after the revolution—chocolate, coffee, cocoa—arrived to Hungarian families from abroad. We saw Swiss, Dutch stamps on the parcels and they appeared as gifts from heaven in our grey world: they had such a good scent and such a delicate style!

The exchangeable IKKA-vouchers, little parcels brought high spirits to those who could put hands on them. Also the shop offering twist-pullovers and raincoats cheered up a bit the dull atmosphere of our grey and shabby Budapest where people also started to disappear into the background.

These are my secondary school years and we are well into the '60s.

The Beatles, Illés, Metró, Omega bands enriched our teenage years and youth. The Free Europe Radio was aired for me now! — I knew its sizzling voice so well from my childhood because despite being disturbed, my motherly grandfather had always been a devoted listener. I was rushing to the teenager parties after school from week to week just to listen to my favourites. The music came from un-earthly spheres: looking back, I could have easily been grateful for the comrades for limiting access to them. Had they not been prohibited, they surely would have made less effect on us, even though the western youth burst out in screams whenever they had a glimpse of Beatles. I saw them on screen in the 1980's for the very first time, before that we could only enjoy their voices and photographs.

It was in my matured age when I watched a longer documentary about them in the Hungarian television. I was glad and screaming by surprise and I flocked my little family in front of the movie in which our idols were moving!

Technological University, Budapest, 1970: I obtained my degree. I found the lectures of Professor Pogány, Professor Hajnóczy, uncle Vargha Laci, Tamás Meggyesi the most inspiring and memorable experiences besides the designing classes, of course.

My carrier started in the VÁTI (Hungarian Nonprofit Limited Liability Company for Regional Development and Town Planning). There was a bureau dealing with monuments, structural architecture and urban planning led by Tamás Dragonits.

The office was divided into smaller studios and each had a leader. Ours was Tivadar Láng, an erudite, learned man with a colourful personality. We worked on the construction of blocks in Tatabánya, where our ambition for planning could bloom and wither away in the form of parapet designs.

But after, in 1972 I got an autonomous planning commission. The construction works of a 16 classroom elementary school was about to start at that time in Tatabánya-Dózsakert housing estate.

Well, I designed a complex house with ashlar brick, ascending facade, and coffered, suspended ceiling. At that time Károly Jurcsik, Zoltán Farkasdy, György Jánosy, Jenő Szendrői, and, at the Iparterv, László Csaba, György Szrogh, Zoltán Gulyás were the most noted architects. Abroad Alvar Aalto and Finnish architecture, Japanese and Italian architects had our attention. In VÁTI my bosses and also the investor, basically everybody let me realize the house according to my imagination. Each week I had to show my plans to an experienced architect, then two or three other architects were appointed for consultation, and finally the construction of the primary school among the blocks of Dózsakert, Tatabánya could begin. According to my plan, a sports hall and swimming-pool was built on the site as well. (What a great task was this for a young architect!)

When the works began - just like all beginner architects - I was moved by the fact that others take my plans so seriously. On work management days (I always took the train) the closer I got to the site the nervous I was. Jargon words were zigzagging in the management office and I did not understand

the half of it. Problems were solved without me after all, I suppose, but I could sense respect on behalf of the professional partners that, being young and woman, I dared to take full responsibility for the construction.

In 1972 I married my fellow architect, Tibor Tóth. He started his career in Iparterv on the side of the well-known architects: Szendrői, Zoltán Gulyás, Lajos Földes, Rimanóczy, Bőjtő, Janáky. The old Medgyaszai worked also there after private planning offices were closed. He got an assistant designer position and for a humble civil-list pension he was employed as a freelance architect. According to the personnel director at that time he did well, he was creative and independent in his work. My husband found his profile among the papers left behind after the change of regime.

Makovecz arrived to the VÁTI

In 1972 Makovecz had already been an Ybl-awarded architect. He came there as the daredevil of the profession. He marked out from the even greyness of socialism, he had to be dealt with outmost care because he wanted something, maybe harmful for the existence established so far. One might has to stand up for him and in general, the way he ruffles any fathers, unsettles the lukewarm socialist puddle is definitely dangerous.

He worked around the clock, they all did. For an outsider it seemed that they were always working on a project, or were about to submit a diploma plan. Glasses stood on the drawing boards, and they worked hard, in good atmosphere. And this attracted me, they got me. I asked my transfer to the studio of Makovecz, and soon I was sitting in the basement office (used as carpenter workshop by VÁTI) under the villa in Tartsay Vilmos street (former Rózsavölgyi street) among Makovecz, Erzsébet Várlaki, Paula Sharang, Piroksa Zorkóczy.

Meanwhile my very first building, the school was inaugurated. The Ma-

kovecz-studio took part in the celebration and it was a great honour. The opening ceremony was on 24 September 1974, so in four years after obtaining my degree I had my very first house with swimming-pool and sports hall opened. At the ceremony no one identified that young girl with the designer—a great crowd surged forward from corridor to corridor. If I remember well, I was fleeing from them and did not want to be noticed.

The Makovecz studio

Szentendre, Duna bank restaurant, Szolgáltatóház: I drew their sketches, with slightly uncertain hands as I found it difficult to depict lazy but characteristic forms, to use materials according to their natural quality in the detailed sketches.

As opposed to previous raster-based methods, this world was totally different. And we often emptied and refilled our glasses. Everyone smoked, and so the early houses of Makovecz, landmarks of his professional maturing, were seemed to be created lightheartedly.

Imre was cheerful and radiated his stunning power to everyone. Under that terrace we lived in another universe.

Surveying the Őrség is an unforgettable chapter in my early years as an architect. We examined the condition of hundred years old buildings in Őriszentpéter, Szalafő. We knocked in on the door of every shed, every household recording the data about main buildings and extensions, the estate.

The Őrség had not been a fashionable place for long by that time, on the contrary, one could face the tragic damage caused by the village-luddite Kádár policy.

We found elderly people almost everywhere, and rarely young, busy people. Old people layed in old beds, they were hardly visible in the dark rooms. To Makovecz this close-up image was not foreign at all. He spent much time with his grandparents in

Zala but to me, a lady from Buda, it was shocking to see the bleakness of such poverty-stricken places. However, the humour, wisdom, clearmindedness, everyday problems of these old people served with great lessons, too.

We travelled to do the field work in the Őrség on train to Óriszentpéter, and continued on foot, carriage or lorries. We crossed great lands covered with snow, visiting one estate after the other. Besides enthusiasm, bacon and pálinka kept our spirits high.

The snow capped houses in the winter lands were beautiful even in their poor condition, especially when one could see the sun shining through the worn rattan baskets, carriages, barns or the old thatched roofs.

We did not stay for long in the smoky little closet, because the office moved to the VÁTI in Krisztina boulevard where the Makovecz studio got an enormous room.

János Gerle joined us soon, little later Zsolt Kölönte, Judit Gerencsér and Ervin Nagy. Makovecz brought his plans from Szövterv and a circle of customers along with new commissions. Most probably the plan of the restaurant in Pásztó was also among them. He passed it to me saying: let us see what you can do with it.

This is not a success story: the restaurant was built in Pásztó along the road at the foot of Mátra hill. On the master's side I wanted to meet his expectations and design a house in his fashion (this was my basic mistake),

but despite his trust in me I failed to do so. After some years we were about to do some field work and our way led us in the direction of the building. When we passed in front of it someone asked what house was that, who had designed it and Ekler—who was sitting in the car—answered: I do not remember exactly, but as far I remember, it is the work of some woman...

After the birth of my son, Benedek, our ways with Makovecz departed for some time. He was dismissed from VÁTI for making that sensational house in Sárospatak and I was a mother.

On leaving the VÁTI, Makovecz became the main architect with Erzsí Várlaki under the direction of László Madas at Pilis Parkerdőgazdaság. The old studio practically broke up.

I never experienced greater happiness than the birth of my son. We lived in a tiny flat in Attila street: a small kitchen, a bathroom and a long hall was our kingdom. During the afternoon nap of our son I often had to withdraw into the bathroom working on the plans of family houses (one in Máriaremete, several in Tahi and its environs) on the top of the washing machine using a little drawing board.

In this period we attended the Makovecz's private academy and had access to an incredible amount of knowledge. Our sealed off world opened up again, even to modern architecture prohibited at the university, and this was an amazing leap forward. We were hooked on the hardly available copies of western journals of architecture, and for the sake of research we went to the library of MÉSZ before each lecture.

I went back to work soon. As employed state architect I worked on the reconstruction of Széchenyi Palace, but VÁTI found me with a new, and difficult task again. The National Office of Cultural Heritage commissioned me to design a hotel to the abbey founded by Saint Stephen in Pécsvárad. This was the most serious and most difficult task in my life. Planning lasted

from 1981 to 1983 and the building was inaugurated on 15 March 1988.

Károly Kozák, professional archeologist of the Office hated the very fact that a noname architect designs to Pécsvárad but tried to conceal it. In addition, the integrity of the existing baroque economy buildings had to be broken, which is hardly digestible for a born protector of monuments and listed buildings.

I felt the delicate taste of creation for the first time of my life. It is like having a word at the tip of your tongue but not being able to articulate it. You know that the solution resides in you and once you shall get there, and feel when you are there, but you have to work hard till that moment. Until that, although creation allows you to fulfil everyday duties, it never lets you settle, it is with you everytime, everywhere. You sit down time after time, work on it, leave it, work on it again, get absorbed in it and step by step it gains a form. There is no way to spare hard work. If you do not work like this, you shall never make it to completion.

I went to Pécsvárad for years by car, bus and followed the stages of the construction, worried about the position of the panels, crossed my fingers for that the planning board solutions would fit in reality as well.

The interior designers of the construction were Gábor Mezei and Mara Hegyi. They came after Makovecz to VÁTI from Szövterv and worked with incredible professionalism on Imre's every house. They performed similarly in Pécsvárad as well.

I visited the site recently and I can tell, interior designers as well as contractors of the Office in Pécs created a lasting work.

While I was working on Pécsvárad, we built in the roof top part of our existing flat under the Castle. We took upon us the bulk of it, and I excelled in painting and insulating tasks. We created a spacious, well-lit, double storey rooftop apartment with a huge terrace in the roof bending opposite

to the Sashegy in Buda, and we enjoyed it greatly. Not long after we moved in I gave birth to our second son, Márton.

The film about András Balczó was launched about that time. That film with its outspoken nature and truths layed bare, with the words of the former pentathlete idol on devotion, misunderstanding, religion, importance of family and patriotism was a perplexing, moving film. It has always been a riddle to me, like many of other people I suppose, what made Ferenc Kósa, director of the film mentioned above and several other good movies, to sit in the rows of the communist successor party in the Parliament for many decades. Marci has always been the manifestation of pure infancy. As if he heard what Balczó spoke about in the film! We took him home from the hospital and put his Moses basket into the biggest room of the rooftop, where he gave content groans. I am grateful that our children could grow up in spaces we designed.

Marci's birth coincided with the collapse of the communist regime, or its commence. People started to divide thier energies between small enterprises, so called *GMK*-s which appeared as artful dodger ideas of comrades to milk the state cow as much as possible and save whatever productive forces they find—including intellectual capital as well. And, planning it so well, they couldn't keep their thoughts to themselves.

Between 1981 and 1983 I cherished the idea of leaving the VÁTI, the big state planning office and join Imre, Ervin Nagy and the old team again. I visited Imre and Erzsí more times at Pilis Parkerdő. Makovecz was employed for seven years there under László Madas' directorship and put enormous efforts into his activities there. He planned a lot: the tourist centre in Visegrád, sites on Mogyoró-hegy, the Hoffmann hunting lodge, the mortuary in Farkasréti cemetery, the ski-lift engine house in Dobogókő

and many other buildings, all were built in that period. He grounded his later works with great efforts here, when he studied folk motifs, or got engaged with other "simple" space arrangement activities. The result of these studies outlined Makovecz's mature houses by attributing true character, deep philosophy to them which reflected honestly the devoted work the creator invested into them.

When Imre became freelancer again after seven years in Parkerdő he had already been an acknowledged architect. Commissioning him meant not only good architecture but rebellion against the ruling totalitarian power. Imre, not having an office on his own, started to see his clients in public spaces and soon became regular at Angelika café with his growing circle of commissioners. He had a small notebook into which he always put down the appointments with beautiful letters, carefully. I remember that customers gave the door knob to each other, one after the other.

It hesitated a lot on leaving the VÁTI. Finally, I had to make up my mind quickly as Zoli Koppány's plan had to be carried out without delay. Despite him being dead set against it, I turned out to be on the team of MAKONA GMK and had the opportunity to work as second employee of the company on Várlaki's side.

The owners and founding members were Imre Makovecz, Zoltán Koppány and Ervin Nagy.

As we did not have a proper office we often met at Ervin's place but it soon became clear that it is inevitable to have a place somewhere - which was found in Lánchíd (Chain Bridge) street, a pal-sized office with direct entrance from the street.

Gábor Mezei designed it carefully, Imre had a relatively big space and we all had our smaller boxes. Erzsí Várlaki sat in the window, and Ervin Nagy, Zoli Koppány and with changing membership the young architects and me, together again at last.



Tatabánya, Ferenc Laczházy's restaurant, 1980

Besides Imre's projects I also worked on mines. We firmly believed that hard work is always fruitful and so we did not stop on weekends, even.

Young architects gave the door knob and the tables to one after the other, all the members of the later team was in good relationship with him: due to works, editing university journals or simply for the sake of being in his presence. In summers these young professionals and students spent weeks together in the Visegrád camp, realizing their own ideas with the guidance of Imre.

Shopping arcade replacing Budai Színpark, family house for Richter jeweller, community house in Jászapáti: these were my works with Imre, during which we kept encouraging each other that it has to be done now that we invested so much energy into the projects. We were busy with drawing the lines in the spacious rooftop room with my husband, listened to music and enjoyed creative activity. Our children shouted from the bed: make some noise with tracing paper, that is the best lullaby!

By completing the community house in Sárospatak, his projects in Visegrád and Mogyoróhegy, Makovecz made a name for himself, he had to be considered in professional circles and so he became the subject of heated debates. He was famous, even more than the time he had entered VÁTI. And fame turned him into a hero and we, colleagues at close quarters absorbed his energy, while more and more people worked under his hands. It is a quite surprising gossip that he forced his employees to imitate his style which was not at all the case. On the contrary, he warned the designers: do not design Makovecz-house! He really appreciated if an architect tried to keep to his own way.

I was in trouble again when I got a seemingly not too fascinating task from him. A society interested in downtown estate construction and maintaining contacted Imre from

Sopron. They took us to a vast site to emerge housing estates there. Imre knew my engagement to Sopron, I was born there on the one hand, on the other hand it was in the neighbourhood of the Széchenyi Palace which I planned and managed the reconstruction of as member of VÁTI office for monuments.

This new site, this investment was the biggest task of my career and I worked on it for long years, till 1990.

I have not figured out up until now, how did he dare to entrust me with such a grandiose project. He never instructed me, only walked by sometimes adding a few remarks.

The result surprised me a lot, I myself was not aware of my abilities. I expanded my limits and the enormous task helped me to such creative solutions I had never ever thought of or that I can realize them. I am grateful for Imre for showing me this.

While the Sopron project went on, I had other duties. We began to plan more buildings in the centre of Jászapáti. I was drawing Imre Makovecz's house plan together with Ági Kádas. Later I took full responsibility of designing two other housing estates opposite to the community house. The vicarage in Jászapáti was the most memorable unsuccessful project and, at the same time, the most beautiful plan of my life, officially called the Roman Catholic Presbitery.

I managed to destroy it during the construction process!

The artful, avaricious contractor met the coward investor boxed into the corner, the primitive, foolish technical manager and the unexperienced designer. If only one of us had done his job properly, the building would not have turned into its parody. I learned the lesson here: there must be at least one person who takes his duty dead seriously and this might be enough for completing a house.

Throughout the years I learned to respect the work of others, may it be a tinman or any other handyman, and

I learned conscious ways of expressing my honest appreciation towards other people.

The Sopron project was enormous, and so it took a little piece of my life and health, but the happiness I felt during its bit by bit realization, was worth it. I formed the model of the site from Plasticine at home, and I spent my days in constant fever to see the house completed in the way I had imagined.

Gradually I got used to mega-projects, I enjoyed how pieces fell into their places, and sizes rather meant source of motivation. Only my family suffered a bit from mum being an architect. They also remember the times I worked on Sopron or Pécsvárad. I do not really believe in strict rules for bringing up a child, I have my trust rather in the power of the lifestyle model they see, rituals and the overall attitude to life—these are the real formative influences for a child.

Our family life had a unique atmosphere with always working architect-parents, taking their kids to the sites, eating coated meat in various countryside restaurants, having busy summers in Tahi house at Dunakanyar, when mum shouts after the kids (four of them, to the kids of my sister as well) from the planning board that *Niki, leave Marci alone, no, you cannot come in covered in mud, yes, we go cycling.*

There was a period when only the three of us had cars, *Trabants* and *Ladas*: Erzsi Várlaki, Ervin and me. We travelled to the country with Imre often, taking turns depending on the actual project, having important conversations. Later the next generation took over this task. Attila Turi and Tészta, then the architects of the Viator. Seeing them I recall old site visits when there were no highways, I remember people of the socialist council, party secretaries. They were not worse than men of the money world nowadays.

Back then I could easily fit in my daily schedule to be off to Pécsvárad in the morning, then heading towards

Berzence, on the way back I jumped in to see the proceedings of the complex the Makovecz team worked on in Balatonszabadi, and finish with managing my own household.

At the time of the change of regime, thanks to Makovecz and his friends in People's Education Institute, Tamás Varga and Pál Beke, the village community house building movement started to bloom. They crisscrossed in the country and revitalize the empty, bleak, socialist community houses. People started to raise their head, and by their own will began to function as cooperating communities without the pressure of upper forces. One of the greatest houses of Makovecz, the community house in Zalaszentlászló was built then. It played the role of a neat room and living room with a stove, warmth and homeliness. The ruling power was worried about the troubles of possible social processes but it was already late, they had to let things happen. Community houses were built in Jászkisér, Jászapáti, Bak, Csurgó, Berzence, Bagód, Letenye,

Szerencs, later in Lendva, Makó—the list is far from being complete. We worked on the country and did not have commissions in Budapest. We visited Transylvania more times but one could only go as a tourist and if one was put up at relatives. The grade of relation was defined by military authorities.

This was also the period when dance houses thrived—thank to Ferenc Sebő and Béla Halmos. They were our fellow students and played the guitar for the first time for us in the building camps.

More and more people came to the office in Lánchíd street, young architects, college students. It grew small, so we moved to Rumbach Sebestyén street in 7th district, where, in my opinion, our golden age dawned upon us. The office was right in the neighbourhood of the beautiful synagogue designed by Otto Wagner, in the ground floor and gallery of a real Bauhaus building. It was originally planned to be a shop, a great iron framed glass structure separated it from the street. The shallow rooms upstairs witnessed

fantastic life. At least 25 architects, 25 drawing boards, 25 young talents worked in the spacious halls, and in a small room seized approximately 2,5 × 2,5 sat Makovecz. (There was Várlaki, Vili Dobó, Göndör, Ervin, Sala, Tészta, Menyus, Siki, Lackó Vincze, Jani, Szalai, Robogány, Ekler Tibi Heil, Csábi, Tusi, Kravár, Gerencsér, Ági Zsigmond, Tamás Nagy, Attila Kovács mechanic, migrating architects, foreign guest architects, Kelf Treuner from the GDR, and other, external regulars). It was a bohemian world brimming with youth, drive, messianistic ambitions, changing of the regime and Makovecz. Guys watched girls down in the streets and gave voice to their appreciation. There were no groups, no separated offices, we were all architects. One strong bond connected us all: we know we belong here and nowhere else.

The camp in Visegrád, the university, the college was a strong link between the members of the younger generation. They were freshmen at the scratchline of their career. We, Várlaki Gerencsér and Ervin and myself



counted as experienced ones with a professional background.

The association we worked in was renamed as *Makona Kíszövetkezet* and had about 25 architect members. It was founded in 1987 and Imre Makovecz became its president. We made our living from it. Makovecz got the commissions, he was asked to make a plan, he was the engine of village movements as well, together with his friends.

Soon the Lutheran Church contacted him with request for designing churches, and the one in Siófok was the first in the line. Planning the church was an extraordinary chapter in Imre Makovecz and the investor *Marci bácsi's* life. I will never forget those times when he was working on the sketches of that building his little office room. He saw Imre bácsi often. When he finished the plans for the exterior as well as the interior, he came out and started to explain his ideas wholeheartedly. I remember clearly how glad, inspired and enthusiastic he was at that time. We surrounded him and listened to his explanations. And this was the same in case of the church in Paks. It was stunning to compare the drawings on paper with the actual site in reality: the similarity was almost photographic, reflecting spatial relations, proportions and structure.

20-25 people worked under Imre's hands at that time, but the net of his activities covered all Hungary. Csete, Kampis, Bodonyi, Antal Plesz, Pécs, Kaposvár, Északterv, Miskolc-Sárospatak, Pák, all works, sites, friends and professional contacts.

Although Makovecz completed the community house in Sárospatak, he stayed there for a while. His earliest piece was Bodrog shopping centre, followed by the well-noted, highly successful Borostyán restaurant plans which was realized in the rebuilt space of the previous monastery's refectory. (All his works created heated debates in professional circles...) Imre's wife, the textile artist Marianne Szabó, de-

signed wonderful tapestries and cloth both to the restaurant as well as to the community house. The housing estate complex, having shops on the groundfloor grew into a nice centre in the city, a kind of new shopping mall. Imre worked on this project with Csaba Bodonyi and Pista Ferenc. He entrusted us, Ervin Nagy and me to complete the last phase.

Ervin's pharmacy plan was fantastic, daring, suggestive, with special interiors and clear spatial arrangements. However, the outcome could not stand up to the quality of the plan, to what the amazing plan would have deserved.

This was the last building in the heart of the city: the enthusiasm of the investor was dying away, money was short and construction works required constant negotiations and compromises and all this disappointed us. I remember those everlasting field site visits in Patak with Ervin, how tiring they were with the Trabant: we were enthusiastic to go but rather disappointed on the way back home. It was a big thing to change the dullness of socialist architecture!

I think, Ervin decided here to organize the whole process of construction of his self-built houses if he does not want to depend on the investor's mood. This is the core of later *Hattyúház* (Swan-house) stories! Ervin worked towards his goal consciously and organized the team he needed for his future greater volume plans.

Meanwhile, community village houses were being built, even young architects had their own houses, among them the community house in Szerencs, designed by Feri Salamin. Miklós Németh prime minister, the political representative of Szerencs inaugurated the house personally - as a Makovecz-building, naturally. On the way to the ceremony, Imre asked him as prime minister *Miklós kám, what the hell will happen here?* to which he replied in the same manner: *I haven't the foggiest*. Well, I think he knew the

answer well. Moreover, he put all his efforts to create a smooth transition from a bolshevist dictatorship to a capitalist world of money-monopoly.

The socialist forces were still around, we still lived in a single-party system and nobody thought that the real change of regime, democracy is just beyond the corner or that the Russians would really leave.

And we rebelled and celebrated 15 March at the Kun moulds in the great plain of Alföld. We erected huge trees, embedded them into concrete with a day-long exhausting work, and then dressed it up with tricolor ribbons and closed the event with singing the national *Anthem* and went home late night. We went back next years, putting new ribbons on the tree. Something had to be done as 15 March was not a national holiday. Some foolish comrade came up with the idea to merge 15 March, 21 March and 4 April into a holiday-package under the name *revolutionary youth days*. Following the well-tried methods, they would merge everything only to survive 15 March.

My son Bence was there at the tree with the Ekler kids, they kicked the ball with Tibi Szalai, Csabi Varga and Gőndör in the interlude of two concretings.

At the end of the Sopron project, in 1988, Imre honoured me with a trip to Sweden as an exchange architect.

I crossed the East German border after thorough examination and took a ferry to Sweden straight to the office of Erik Asmussen, to Jama, the Swedish centre of the Rudolf Steiner seminar.

At home winter was turning into spring when I finally said goodbye to my family. Bence was 12, Marci 8, but luckily we lived under the same roof with my mother-in-law and she and my husband could cope well with the hard task.

When I arrived to Sweden in April, it was still a chilly winter, nature was dead, no colours only greyness and the houses of Asmussen in the seminar area.

At first I did not like at all the buildings there, I found the whole site baroque, harmfully ugly, primitive.

The colours used for on the buildings were shockingly vivid, but the internal walls spotted and the wooden covers hairy, More time had to pass when I was ready to explore these buildings and their hidden features, witty details, character. Some buildings could not be detached from the ongoing activity inside, and this gave a sense of unity. And from this perspective they were excellent in my eyes.

Getting to know the architects there, especially Erik Asmussen leading architect helped to deepen my admiration and tolerance towards these houses. Well, I was under the spell of the discovery that all these buildings here - beyond being perfect solutions for form, function and technical details - are the same with Asmussen in every way. Those, who knew his amazing, sophisticated, kind, simple, witty and shy but learned and talented personality, understand that these houses reflect him.

Gradually I fell into Jama, our Swedish friends and I have to admit that from a distant perspective I re-evaluated Makovecz's and his followers's style. I am afraid, I have to agree with Asmussen who put it in a rather illuminating way to describe Hungarian organic architecture. The story goes like that: when I arrived, naturally gifts were laid out, among them a carefully compiled book on the works of Hungarian organic architects. Asmussen, Abbi (that was his nickname), looked at them, turning the pages back and forth, then added in his shy manner while pointing to the richly ornamented house saying *Isn't it a bit too much?* and yes, he was right in characterising Hungarian organic architecture in a sentence like that. I found that sometimes l'art-pour-l'art ambition for form governed the houses in Hungarian organic architecture.

However, originality shines through and replace empty ornaments. Asmussen was not criticizing Imre's houses for he also reveals himself in his works as *Abbi* did, like original talents.

And here comes the question as well as the answer: not everybody needs to be a genius: there is room also for those whose strength is enthusiasm, who simply love their profession and somehow related to this style in architecture. Like most of the architects surrounding Imre or Abbi, people like me.

Tenacious work and continuous practice can somewhat balance the differences between a real talent and others but no: walking in and around the built spaces one can tell the talent and the character of the architect.

In the middle of the Swedish exchange program Erzsi Váraki visited me to my greatest pleasure. After her arrival the four of us, Niels, Janarve, Erzsi and me, soon were off to Norway. The journey has lived as a dream-like experience in me. Norwegian landscapes, ancient wooden buildings and temples in the deep forests, fjords, friendly companions, simple but neat houses who welcomed us with honest love—all constituents of the week which made us really close friends with Erzsi. Sitting on the eroded cliffs amidst the great forces of the, up on the Norwegian highlands in silence, the waterfall in the boundless, snow-covered lands which falls into a pit as into the depth of an earthly hell—these are everlasting memories, and the person you share it with will also be a bearer of that mysterious catharsis only you know about.

Feri Salamin was the next to travel to Sweden as an exchange architect, and a real viking visited us in Hungary, Tommy Norrlander. Imre gave him the simplest (!) task ever, he entrusted him with the timbering plans of the tower of the Roman Catholic Church in Paks. Out of the 6B pencil drawn sketches which Imre handed over to him, amidst struggles and swearings, finally the

proper plans and the model itself emerged.

The bohemian atmosphere so characteristic to the office in Rumbach Sebestyén street began to change, the charming disorder started to give way to regularity and order. We had a compulsory meeting every Tuesday where Imre usually blast off at us.

Meanwhile the demonstrations against the destruction of villages in Transylvania were on, and during the following year the entire Ceausescu-regime collapsed. We welcomed these news in boundless optimism and delight. This was also the time of the László Tőkés' fight which contributed to the collapse.

We, the naive, thought that everything would be different; Transylvania would become a home for the Hungarians. But our enthusiasm was torn down immediately when in Marosvásárhely in 1990 an organized attack was performed against Hungarians and András Sütő.

There was a lot to do in the last years of the '90-s, but they were mostly addressed to Makovecz. The number of commissions decreased. And the existence, employment and living of the young colleagues weighted as heavy burden on Imre's shoulders. We knew that things would soon take a turn. Once, when Imre came out of his room waving a small sketch of a family house, we all downcast our eyes. Imre then said: the time shall come, when you will regret this moment. And we did.

A memory so dear to me is related to the visit of an elderly French architect, Claude Decsessionare, who worked with us for a while. We asked him who worked back home now he was staying with us, because we could not imagine that there was nothing to do. He answered most naturally that he was not working for some month because there is no project. We were amazed by that.

We had to be divided into small units, small offices again to ease the



situation for Imre so he could focus on his work again.

It was hard to accept that.

The heated up political climate ripened the situation in years and things went on: projects, learning, exchange architects came from abroad and the Vándoriskola was formed in the fashion of old guilds. In the evening we held orange parties sub rosa, or we listened to Gábor Pap's engaging presentation on the Holy Crown. But we exchanged ideas on philosophical matters, architecture theory and aesthetics, Béla Hamvas, Lajos Fülep, Rudolf Steiner. And accomplished manners, how to behave or greet each other. As preliminary gifts, we started to learn Christmas songs and surprise one another with presents.

Every year we had our almanac consisted of our projects chosen to be part of the compilation in that given year. It stimulated a silent competition between us, we were not indifferent to the fact how our products relate to the work of our colleagues. These were thick volumes and reflected the amount of work we had back then.

Organic architecture was fashionable in those days, crowds turned to Imre and his group with commissions - it was about breaking out from the dull greyness of socialism in terms of average volume investments.

On the Venice Biennale in 1991 the group of organic architects represented Hungary, there was no way to ignore the group's activity any more. It was a great achievement for all of us that we were chosen to represent Hungary on an international stage. On that occasion the very first professional catalogue was published about the group.

Dividing us into smaller units was a painful but necessary step to maintain ourselves. Time proved it right. By the time the first independent Hungarian government was formed after the war with József Antall prime minister in 1990, we had already worked as small limited company. We had to leave our

wonderful place in Rumbach Sebestyén street behind to let the small firms organize themselves. And we packed and moved to Zay street, Óbuda, a worn, many-storey, socialist block monster with suspended walls and, set to work. I do not recall that period happily, although I was on a team with Ervin, Anikó. But the bleakness and depressing atmosphere of that place did not improve our general mood.

The place tried Makovecz as well, but he was preoccupied with the plans of the Hungarian pavilion in Seville and politics, of course. That pavilion made him world-famous and he was soon among the ten best architects in the world. The designing, opening and functioning of the pavilion was in the centre of interest and brought acknowledgement for the designer and the county.

All stages of the construction works had to be managed from Hungary, together with the programmes, and it really required enormous amount of energies to organize the event.

It happened at the time of the prime ministership of József Antall, a deprivation from financial resources and during a non-favourable political climate with taxi blockade... which put everyone to trial, especially Imre.

In Zay street we worked separately and a static studio; Laci Pongor and his circle joined us, too.

Together with Ervin Nagy and Anikó, we formed Kupola Ltd. which existed only for two years with this membership. We could not stay for long in Zay street and moved on to a nice eclectic building in Szilágyi Dezső square which was homely and spacious thus each ltd. could have its separate office.

The square opens onto the Danube on the Buda bank of the river and this makes it one of the most beautiful places in the Budapest. The beautiful brick church of Samu Petz, who was an architect professor of the Technical University, stands in the middle. Few know, that the beauty of the square and the church is imbued with a noble

idea, namely, it gave place to outstanding intellects of Hungary as temporary home or office for some time in their lives.

Dezső Szilágyi politician (1840-1901), minister of justice between '89 and '95, main clerk of a reformed church district, general governor of church district.

Endre Ady held his wedding in that little chapel with Csinszka in 1917. Béla Bartók lived there before moving up to his house in Csévi street. Amrita Sher-Gil, talented Indian-Hungarian paintress who passed away so soon lived also in the same house as Bartók. Imre Makovecz spent a wonderful period of his life with his window facing the chapel and the statue of Samu Petz.

We founded Paralel Ltd. with Anikó Szentes here, in this extraordinary square in 1991. Several other offices operated in the neighbourhood: Makona, Triskell, Kvadrum, Kupola, Axis, Paralel, Pond. They transformed and multiplied.

I met Anikó Szentesi in Makovecz's private master-academy in 1975. He was a year ahead. I met his husband András Erdei there, too, and I knew they have three daughters and work in Szövterv. Makovecz and András Erdei were close friends. They visited Finland together several times and that was Imre's début abroad.

András was a hard-working, devoted and talented architect who was the head of Velem Association and designer of wonderful buildings.

In 1986 we received the woeful news that following a brief sickness at his workplace András died. He was 40. The event paralysed everyone.

Anikó was left alone with three children. I still remember the moment when Anikó stepped into the office in Lánchíd street dressed in black from head to toe and Imre asked her to leave Szövterv and join us as she belonged there. Soon she was among us in Rumbach Sebestyén street office, our drawing boards faced each other.

Paralel is a double-edged word, referring to the way we worked side by side as independent architects and also to the fact that as professionals and mothers, we performed professional duties along with domestic ones. If we had a funny logo, it would surely be compasses crossed with a spoon.

Our office jolted at the beginning, but Imre kept his promise, and handed over some works to us, mainly to Anikó, this is how she got medical centre projects and investments like the Heath Centre in Visegrád, or the expansion of Szent István Hospital. She carried out these projects for long years.

Sopron finds me time to time, I devoted my attention to the plans of László Németh People's Academy based on the model of people's college I got acquainted with by Imre, and I also worked on the reconstruction of Russian military buildings in the borderlands.

This plan has also been delayed due to opposed interest, and the half-built buildings are still standing there, wasting away. All our efforts, dilemmas, drudging above the plans seem ridiculous.

We visited European organic conferences every now and then, to Krakow, for example, where Asmussen and Makovecz exhibition was opened and I saw Abbi and his beautiful wife, Muha, there for the last time.

Asmussen built the main building in Jama, the Kulturhuset, the last enormous building in the line in which there is a theatre, small halls, eurythmy and studios, too. His most stunning house above all is the Vidarklinik, which was constructed with great sensitivity with regard to the needs of sufferers of grave illnesses, giving hope, happiness to patients despite their pains.

Feri Salamin worked in the office in Jama, he witnessed the erection of the Kulturhuset. An exhibition was about to be launched in Stockholm on occasion Asmussen's 80th birthday: he

prepared with great care, however, could not be there, a few days before the opening his heart failed.

He was one of the greatest architects but a rather modest one with passion and devotion in his soul, still, he lacks the attention he would deserve after his death. In Sweden he is acknowledged in a smaller circle. Indeed, his works have to be digested, but if one succeeds, the impressions remain forever.

In our Paralel office in Szilágyi Dezső square the three of us worked together, Anikó, Erzsé Farkas and me. We accepted guests as well, such as Miklós Salamin, Péter Vékony and others.

The institute of migrating architects had been formed previously, since Imre's fame attracted many: Péter Pásztor from Kassa, Kelf Treuner from Dresden, GDR, Dolf Brat from the Netherlands, Melanie Agace from England, Tommy Norrlander from Sweden, Claude Decressionare from France, Grekofski Nathalie from Belgium, Anthony Gall from Australia, Giovanni Sacchi from Milan.

All have stories which could be written. Some among the many: Anthony Gall knows more about Károly Kós and his art than any other Hungarian. Melanie Agace is a real bohemian talent walking on the earth, who took part in the setting construction of The Lord of the Rings movie production, and in autumn she built a barricade in high-heeled shoes around the pit dug for the Hattyúház in order to avoid accidents, and Tommy was scary when he struggled with the massive tower of Paks. He, the robust Viking against the tower in Paks was a heroic battle.

Once we were looking for Natahalie in the forest for a whole day, shouting out our souls and almost giving it up, when she appeared with an unconcerned face.

Péter Pásztor from Kassa organized a trip to Upper Hungary, Czechoslovakia at that time, and there all seemed peaceful, well-known socialist torpor.

Meanwhile Hungary had been in the middle of heated debates and negotiations between the opposition and the ruling party. There: nothing.

The company discussed the future of the Czech in a gloomy mood in the chambers of Szepeskáptalan. The architects there predicted years until things change. Well, in three or four days, the system collapsed, the velvet revolution broke out, then Ceaușescu fell in Romania. We were in ecstatic delight, had we known what fights would lay ahead!

In 1989 the Károly Kós Association was formed, in 1990 the Országépítő journal was published and the Vándoriskola established, giving work to Hungarians and architects in the Carpathian Basin.

Most of the architects from abroad came after the success of the Hungarian organic architects' success on the Venice Biennale in 1991 and the pavilion in Seville in 1992. Imre was well known all around the world, he had several exhibitions, journals published his pieces. Even England addressed him when the chapel of the Windsor Castle burned down. Charles, Prince of Wales, great admirer of Imre, asked him to construct the wooden ceiling of the chapel. Moreover, when he came to Hungary, he paid a visit to Imre's apartment in Villányi street. They had a nice chat and some tea.

But back to Paralel and profession. Hard work was fruitful for I had work to do for more than a decade afterwards. Great works, from own commissioners.

25 Kecské street

In 2002 we moved to our present place, to Kecské street which was designed by Imre. It gives residence to Makona Ltd and Association, and the Hungarian Fine Art Academy, founded by him, too. Paralel Ltd. also gained strength here. It operated as a huge office as we had big works and a need for computer-based administrative background with computers, printers. Col-

leagues joined us at the best time: Zoltán Bán, Mihály Molnár, Géza Benyó.

The investments with the most significant volume did not make it to reality, but were carried out virtually: hotels in Hévíz and Kőszeg.

In 2002 Makovecz was asked to take part in an international project. Benevento city (good winds) is situated in South-Italy, on the same height as Naples, a bit to the East from it in the inner part of the boot. In the war Germans bombed the city centre, however, the sanctuary of the church survived. The noted Italian architect, Paolo Portoghesi, admirer of Makovecz might have dropped in his name at the local council to get him on the invited architect's list. Other star architects took part in the invitation-based project, so the Italian Isola-Gabetti

partners, Ungers from Switzerland, the American Michael Graves. The three of us processed Makovecz's plan: Zoli Bán, Mihály Molnár and me. We visited the site in Benevento twice, to where my son accompanied Imre as an interpreter since he obtained his degree in Italian at the university.

Imre's plan was in the centre of attention in all respect. It is a pity, that the city council used it in his campaign for local authority. It could have been built. Recently I took a look at Google Earth, and found that even today a parking lot occupies the site as in 2002. This is there Metro 4 to use in political campaign.

Anikó also had important commissions; she planned a secondary school in Tamási with Gyuri Patyi and as an extension, a sports hall to the city. The

director of the investment chased our office to court lasting for years, and he lost after all. This trial was life threatening: preparing for the court all the time, carrying its burden, Anikó did better than a man, I bet! She has five grandchildren from her three daughters, but she whips out her sketch paus, compasses, or OTÉK any time if necessary!

It is the same with me as far as work concerned, my last building was constructed in Piliscsaba in 2007, close to the university complex.

My husband, Tibor Tóth is a real engineer of the profession. He is the embodiment of true engineering for me. And the future belongs to our sons, Marci and Géza.

What else could I wish: may life bring success, strength, diligence and brave heart for them.



In his garden he installed carved birds, kings and idols on the back of the log-chairs.

The last plan • the first step

Turi Attila

It is Good Friday. We are walking across the windswept hill, dust swirling around us, the settlement's new houses rising from the ground like so many glittering crystals. Hundreds of hands are at work, we are surrounded by screeching chainsaws and clanking machines. The Master is strolling down what will be the main street. He is walking in a materialised landscape, a vision come true amidst the Bakony hills, his homeland of three decades ago, when he was the regional architect in Csesznek and Bakonyzentkírály. But now, his dream of old materialises in Devecser and Kolontár, the villages struck by the eco-disaster. Time was out of joint, but it can now be set right again, individual ambitions can be soothed and communities can be rebuilt. The topsy-turvy world is set upright, walls will shine in bright hues under dark coloured roofs: in a mirror-world, lightness is brought forth by the earth and heaviness descends from the heavens.

The story that he recounted illuminated the role of the regional architect. He told me about a shed, a fence and an elderly woman living alone, who decided to build a garage so that her children living in the city would visit her more often. She planned a practical flat-roofed garage and an iron fence to replace the traditional peasant buildings. The task of a regional architect, said the Master, was to convince her to retain traditional forms, to create an environment in which the old spirits would feel at home, to pre-

serve the original style and elegance even while reinventing it.

This vision, conceived twenty-five years ago, is now fulfilled in the disaster-struck area. The Master is walking a dusty road, but he can already see the white fences flanking the street, he can hear the children's laughter and the roosters' cry. Amidst the noise of the construction, he can clearly hear the rustle of angel wings, he can perhaps even see the guardian angels hovering above—the two sounds merge into a single clear note, an embodiment of the creative collective will and of the majestic act of creation. Devecser merges with the other reconstructed settlements—Gulács, Tákos, Felsőzsolca and Kolontár—into a single immense home-land construction.

He walks down the road nodding his head, one purposeful step after the other. We follow at a respectful two steps behind, as is our custom. He stops from time to time, checking that everything is as it should be – noting even Tészta's flat-roofed porches – and then asks the single most important question: "Well, my dears, where are you going to build the church?"

We stand there in the suddenly descending silence, unable to utter a single word in our confusion. Any answer would be ridiculous silly—Imre, you know how it is, there's nothing about a church in the government decree, there's nothing about a church in the contract, and surely we don't have to explain to you about the legal framework or the quarrel-mongers

waiting to pounce on any mistake we might make. We know, and he knows too, that this is utter nonsense; we have been made aware of a gap and we catch a glimpse of the reality through the gate he throws wide open, and thus we respond with the single possible answer: Design it for us and we'll build it! Indeed, this is what we need to make our work complete, a centre, which opens onto another dimension. It is early afternoon, Good Friday, the Saviour is being crucified, in a few moments the wheel of time will turn, the world shudders, and a new era begins.

I am sitting on the terrace of the house in Mártély with the plans of the Chapel of Rebirth laid out before us, the Master is nodding, Yes, my dear, something like this, you know what I mean. We are going through the details, and I am trying to convince him to construct a slate roof. He would prefer shingles, but finally agrees to the colder, but more durable material. His mind is clearly elsewhere, wandering across a timeless landscape. We say our goodbyes, he is standing arm in arm with his wife, and he bids me farewell with a kind smile.

The task is clear, as is the path: to build the Chapel of Rebirth, intended for both the community and Nature. Following the initiative of Dr. János Seregi Jr. at the annual conference of foresters held in late 2011, twenty-two Hungarian forestries pledged to build the chapel as a tribute to the unparalleled effort and assistance that enabled the reconstruction of the areas affected by the toxic spill within one year. Their decision was, at the same time, a tribute to Imre Makovecz whom they regarded as the architect of the woods.

Commissioned by Bakonyerdő Zrt. representing the foresters, Veszprém Zrt. began the construction of chapel in early July 2012. Two conditions were stipulated: to use the designs made by Éva Kun, Anna Mako-



Devecser, the Chapel of Rebirth, 2012, detail

vecz and Lajos Csertő, and to employ thirty-six students of the Technical University for three weeks. The university students have already participated in the reconstruction work effected last year. They built the pergola playground, whose plans they had designed as part of their university studies. This year, they decided to build not only what they had already designed, but also to contribute their labour to the erection of the Chapel.

For three weeks, they took their share of carpentry work, slating, timber-cutting, painting and raising an earthen mound.

I am standing in the sweltering heat. All I see are hazy contours amidst the dust swirls, and I see myself when I was young. I see ourselves building the bridge at Visegrád, creating the café reaching out to the Danube at the Vác ford, and the construction of the Seven Chieftains Tower in Alsace.

So many stories, so many destinies are intertwined with the building of the Chapel, as if I were witnessing the same narrative emerging again and again from the rivers of time. And I am happy to report, dear Master, that we have completed the task: we have erected a house to the Good Lord, who has delivered us from the tormenting apprehensions of the night, and we have also built a community in good cheer.



With the tame jackdaw of his younger daughter-in-law, 2009



Ez! (This One!)

Sándor Czégány

While working together on several projects with *Imre bácsi* (Uncle Imre – trans.) we often found one or two sketches of the same plan, and, among them one saying *this one!*

Even today, when we put our heads together and powwow about each other's plans, looking for the best solution, we tend to scribble the master's words:

this one!

Tentative sketches can breed fruitful as well as reprobate ideas. We need to draw all the houses, which are being born or yet to be born, as dwelling places for those desiring home, piety, or recovery. It is not an easy task. Not only because of environmental, economic, legal or social circumstances, but even our own talent, mediocrity and doubting Thomas nature make our daily work even harder.

I am saying mediocrity, but I might have said too much. Our task is to upgrade the present state of the undistinguished (provincial?) Hungarian architecture. In most cases it is not about designing something new or performing architectural virtuosity, but putting a piece to its place in order to assure the proper course of things. We have to improve the immense, formless mass yawning in the scrappy lines and corners of towns and villages, or in the dullness of their unidentifiably cobbled buildings.

In other words, we have to go on with the task Imre bácsi assigned in 1983: *"The most important thing is to pave the way for a 20th Century, authentic Hungarian architecture, (...)*

which helps us to remember, (...) and serves as solid ground upon which our new form of architecture can be established."

We know but little about the nature of this new architecture yet to come; Lechner, Kós, Toroczkai, Medgyaszay, Makovecz stand around the table smiling, fretting, trying to help: invisible though, they are here to raise us at last from below mediocrity to being good, being better. That is why we,

quondam wanderers, work on the reinforcement of Hungarian organic architecture to connect its myriad roots to our history, reinvigorate a mentality treating man-made spaces, natural and social environment together. Our answers are not manifested in forms, but we give many of them in metaphors, discussions, work. Some design traditional, archaic buildings, some like daring forms, others prefer modern designs. Still, the heart of the matter, the trajectory from an idea to the catharsis of building itself is the same. Gradually, we might climb high enough on the curving branches of the world tree to reach the point where it strikes through the canopy of the skies.

A glimpse of the beyond would restore the connection between sacred and profane...



Earthly and heavenly Masters

László Kuli

"A master can never be external, not even if he takes the form of another human being. Words from the mouth of Guru can easily be stuck on the level of discourse, but that is not teaching. It becomes teaching only if its external features can dissolve into the manifestation of the hyper-conscious awareness (András László: *Eternal Light in Man*).

Hungarian architectural higher education has nothing to speak about this capacity of exceeding consciousness. Our gentle students cannot get tips for attaining a so called heavenly support or aims to achieve. I am not being harsh or critical, this is only a statement. Neither positive, nor negative. Like our times. Architecture is only an excuse. Architecture is an artistic excellence and obtainable only from masters, and using a profession as justification, it builds humans, not houses. The apprentice, loosing directions amidst the struggles of intellect, is seeking a master in the heavens and on the earth. I did it, too. First I hoped some help from music, because I thought I speak its language better than the language of architecture. I drew while listening to my favourite pieces and my most acknowledged teachers told me: *plecnikian*. This was how I got acquainted with the art of Jozef Plecnik, but the real struck came when I realized: my favourite album was composed in honour of Jozef Plecnik. I got struck by the lightening of hyperconscious awareness, and Plecnik became my very first heavenly master.

Among my greatly honoured earthly masters, Szabó, Kapy, Sáros, Ekler, Lomnici, Lőrincz, Zsigmond, Turi, Csernyus, Imre Makovecz had a unique place. He embodied the truth that the words of a master are always only the surface, and his real lesson shine through his character. Just like Károly Kós. He said more by his attitude to the world, a single gesture or deep silence than a completed Makovecz-plan, an orchestrated construction or shot documentary, which works usually started with *Imre bácsi* saying: *Sit down, lad! Well, it'd be better if you made a...* and something was on its way...

After the Master passed away, we lamented by candlelight in Kecske street. Then, after the silent withdrawal of the assemblage, I had a word with fellow migrating architects. It was a gloomy conversation and weighing burdens on my shoulders made me say out that I was considering moving abroad in hope of better job prospects. We left in such a mood, and while I was walking in the September sunshine towards my car, throughout the open window a beautiful, clear voice of a young girl reached my ear she was singing the last lines of *Szózat*: "*Áldjon, vagy verjen sors keze, itt élned, halnod kell!*" I knew right away heavenly Master of mine sent the message.

* *Szózat* (Appeal or Summons) is a Hungarian national poem by Mihály Vörösmarty, considered as the second national anthem of Hungary. The quoted line in Watson Kirkconnel's translation: "*let fortune bless or fortune curse, from hence you shall not roam!*"



Budapest, Csipke street, weekend house, 1974

Tokaj, shelter for summer workshop, 1977–1979



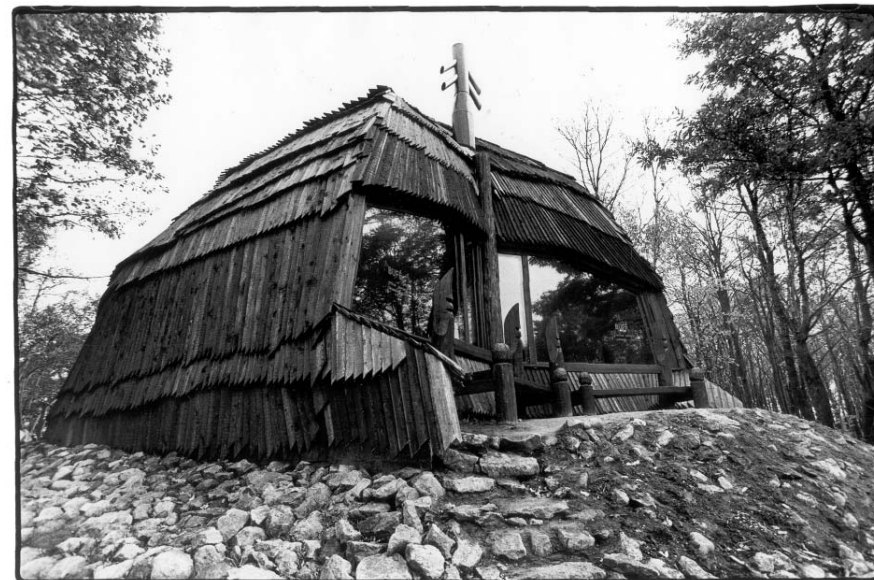
Stories by Makovecz on reading his architecture

Dezső Ekler



Herbert Green: Prairie Chicken House (1961)

Imre Makovecz: Dobogókő, ski-lift engine house (1980)



I shall talk about the shift in Imre Makovecz's art when his interest turned from a formative language towards techniques of composing space. On editorial request I shall interpret his "ruffled houses" covered with rough-hewn timbering in the context of the oeuvre. "Is there any other place in the world where the Goff-student Greene's not-yet-house designs can be found in similar quality? If yes, how close they are to the concept of the Makoveczian, prehistoric house? Can this magic world of pre- and post-architectural live on and be preserved in other designs?"—the editor wonders, then adds: "...the following years 'ruffled-head houses' disappeared... plumage transformed into armour-skin on Makovecz's Catholic Church in Paks". It sounds as if we would talk about literature, drama, approaching the secret

of the artist via character types and or setting. If I understand well, Kőszeghy is interested in Makovecz's intentions: why did he choose these specific moods and conflicts at the end of the '70-s? I am almost sure that the editor himself would hope an answer for these questions from an overall investigation on the development of Makovecz's poetics. The reason why he prefers one material to another, why these disappear and come back again some decades later can be only interpreted from the comprehensive linguistic and poetic aspect. Even if we talk about it differently, we see architecture as a language.

Makovecz is a highly conscious artist. He considered the opportunities of this special language often and systematically. He got acquainted with Wright after '56 through some translations, sources he found in the library of the Technical University. About the mid '60s in his private master academy, a studio for studying contemporary architecture of the 20th century, they discussed the art of the Wright-student Bruce Goff and also Herbert Greene. Hence Makovecz was familiar with the Greene's Prairie Chicken House from 1961. He borrowed his zoological imagery from him, the mineral metaphors from Wright, the vegetal from Gaudi and the anthropomorph elements from Steiner. He used the special technique of a ruffled roof, that is, rough-hewn timbering cover with not horizontally but vertically connected planks previously seen at Greene first at the Tokaj community house in 1977, then in 1980 at the design of the Dobogókő ski-lift engine house. The significance of this extreme cover technique resides in the fact that in these two buildings Makovecz's ars poetica seem to culminate. Makovecz's ars poetica reached maturity in the form of these landmark houses, was synthesised in his artistic endeavour. However, we need to see the stages it went through to get here together with the reforms he made.



Tokaj, community house (1977)



Szekszárd, Sió restaurant (1964)



Above: Birka restaurant, Budapest (1968)
Below: Csákányosi inn, Tatabánya (1968)



The genesis of Makovecz's ars poetica

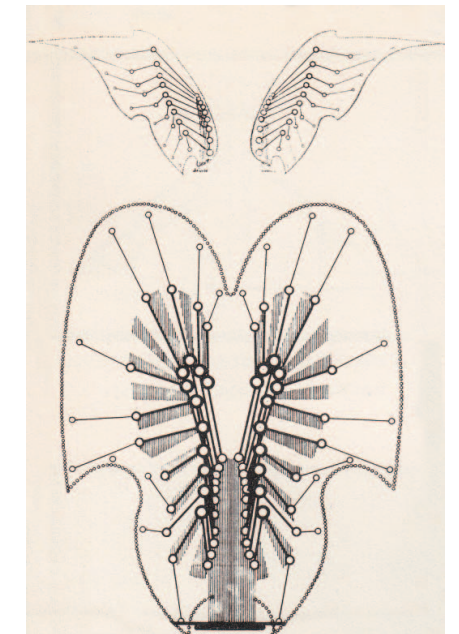
I list the stages of early career artistic development in chronological order as it follows:

- Since the mid '60-s, inspired by the second Goetheanum, early works already suggest the idea of a dynamic spatial arrangement opening on one direction. Cápa and Sió taverns are the manifestations with their dynamic forms and open thatch and tile roof designs.

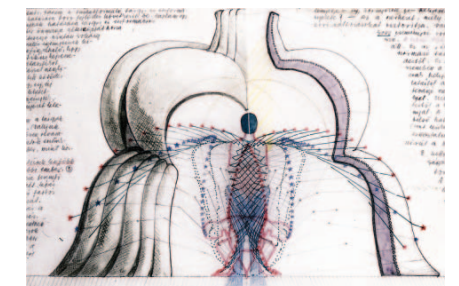
- In the second half of the '60s zoomorphic and anthropomorphic features appear together with the skeletal system-like frames like in the case of Szövosz camp in Szepezd, the inn of Agriculture Expo, Budapest, or Csákányosi inn, Tatabánya (1968).

- These elements find their continuation in forms of skull-like and embracing arms shaped building complexes, then geometrically simplified spaces appear with central designs (Restaurant in Gyulavár, 1969), along with ribs and umbrella-like frame structures pointing towards abstraction.

- This direction is reinforced in *Movement Studies* (1969), *Minimal Space Experiment* (1972), and gradually the concept of the Makoveczian anthropomorph space takes shape, which is first realized in rib-like, magnified structure of the *Funeral Chapel* in Farkasrét Cemetery, Budapest.

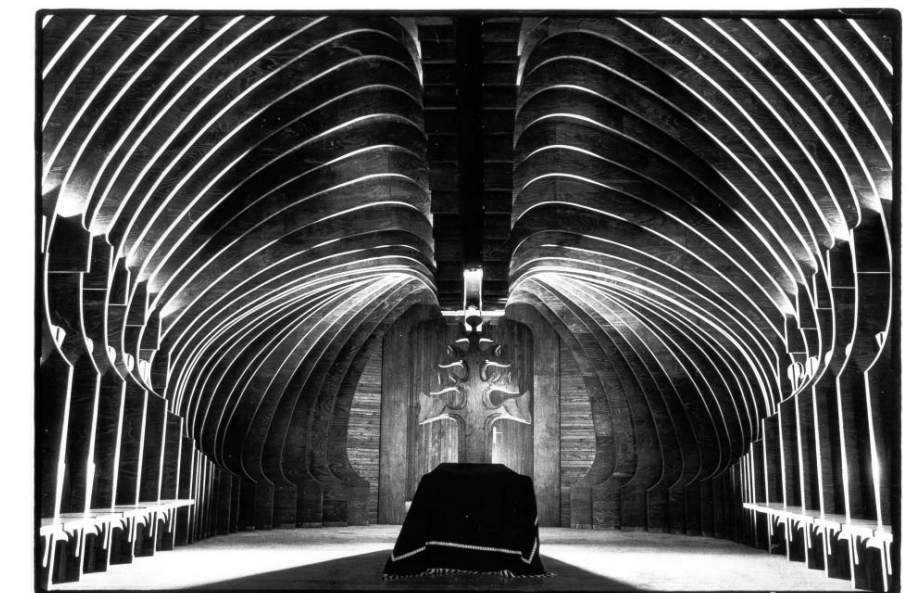


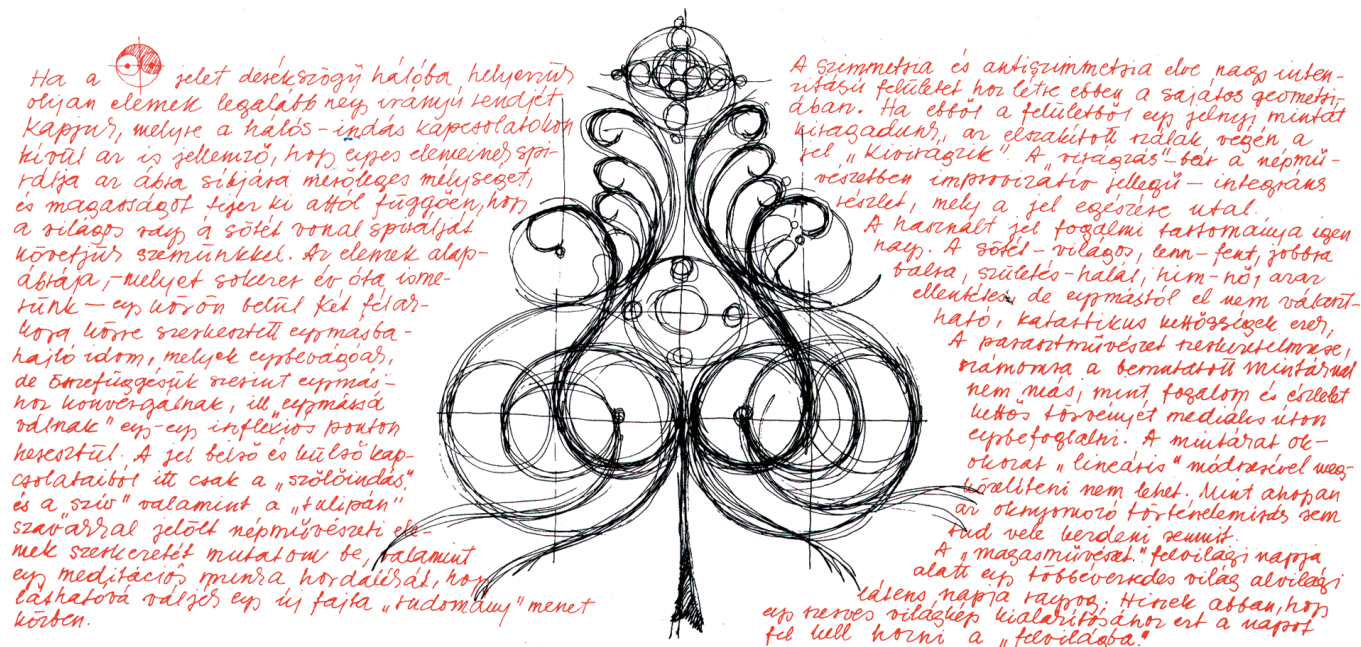
Movement-studies (1968)



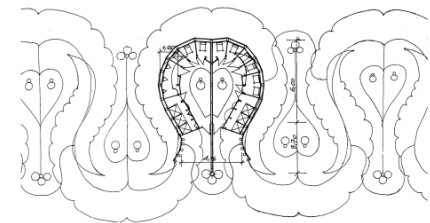
Minimal-space experiment (1972)

Budapest, Farkasrét, funeral chapel (1975)





Study on folk symbolism (1974–78)



Visegrád, cleaning house (1977)



Visegrád, recreation centre (1977)



Budapest, weekend house (1974)

• The synthesis is embodied in the monumental form of the community house in Sárospatak (1974-77).

• *Thorough and conscious studies on folk symbolism* (1974-78) unwillingly leads Makovecz towards the purified form of anthropomorphic space design: he basically magnifies the well-known folk embroidery symbol of the tulip into buildings. The result is the tiny *cleaning house* in Visegrád (1977), forerunner of the Catholic Church in Paks (1987). His key concept of cover design draws upon the idea of expending the geometrical patterns of popular tradition into three-dimensional space.

• Anthropomorph spaces get simplified in the buildings of Camp Inn buildings, Visegrád, 1977, preceded directly by the works at Tokaj and Dobogókő. These wooden houses with horizontal plank-timbering take on Wright's hexagonal ground-plan and yurta-like block formation. Mature works of Makovecz, in which the focus on external cover is balanced by central space designs. (Their predecessor is the weekend house in Csipke Street, 1974, is the first house with hexagonal ground-plan and wooden cover.)

• By 1978, Makovecz coins his real achievement, the concept of anthropomorphic space.

Wooden covering ("granica" covering)

The hexagonal form in Visegrád appears first in the community house, Tokaj (1977) with circular form with a domed structure. This gets first granica covering, that is a rough-hewn timbering with irregular and poetic style in the fashion of Greene of which one must say immediately that it is the magnified version of the thatch roof, shingled roof from Transylvania and Upper Hungary. The process of construction is significant here, too, as woodcarvers in the colony of artists help, and it is built on preliminary sketches to give home for community events. It is an experimental building which has room for improvisation but not for complicated designs.

The simplicity of the Dobogókő ski-lift engine house (1980) is similar. Makovecz took part in the covering process: he told about the story of sitting on the roof ridge, working backwards in riding position - at the end he might have slid down into deep along the wall of the house. This frightening chasm experience stayed on him for long as a "movement experiment" he would recall many times. The ski-lift engine house is the peak of the early Makovecz-oeuvre. It sums up previous

works and suggests the advance of extreme formation technique with the plastic composed on the house shell. It applies the Makoveczian space ideal: a dome opening up in nature of human aura space. He could not have found a more apt roof covering than that of the easy-forming shingled roof made of planks. I shall come back to the question what else directed him to choose this covering material besides Greene's Prairie Chicken house and his urge for experimenting. I would not exclude the option that these houses can be read in the context of a pre-historic house, or pre-architecture, as Kőszeghy suggests, but I think, however, that these two "ruffled houses" from the end of the '70-s are outstanding pieces by a daring experimenter, a language reformer starting off from modern architecture and Steinerism.

Makovecz magnifying metaphors

Let us try to sum up, where he got at that time. In order to be able to follow the development of such a monumental life-work, we have to note the linguistic development on the way culminating in the Dobogókő ski engine-house. What makes this original concept so outstanding that it is brings world fame right away?

Makovecz begins to speak a radically new language and every component of his buildings are imbued with this new poesy. New words, new kinds of sentences, new claims. All the metaphors he uses have extreme force: enormous, embracing arms, skull-like mass, anthropomorphic spaces evoking the human aura and movement designs, trees and skeletons. All are magnified suggesting their significance. As I wrote in my essay in '83: "Makovecz integrates magnified elements into nearly all of his buildings. His framework elements (slant counterforts, chimney pillars, covering) are magnified building constituents, timbering, or huge branches, plants, bones. The tectonics draws upon magnified vegetal organisms." (Dezső Ekler...)

Metaphors, these unexpected transfers in meaning, have distinguished role in everyday speech as well as in architecture. But why do they require magnification? In architecture those patterns can gain new meaning, which had not been present in the toolbar of that style previously, and such, they mostly added to the formulas of architecture from the outside, from other fields. Their volume rarely agrees with that of architecture, consequently they have to be magnified. Hence size-changing metaphors are certain indicators of the formation of new architectural words. One could say that by their unexpected shapes and constellations, these magnifying metaphors make the way for new semantic elements. But they do not refrain from affecting other levels either, they have their influence on architectural syntax and texts. The most significant metaphorical reforms imbue language, as such. They do not only help us to a new linguistic context but have an effect on the entire composition, on the narrative. And so poetic reforms of language are generated not only from metaphorical claims, magnifying instances but woven narratives as well. To understand that we have to go on a detour.

The sense of narrative in architecture

The art of Makovecz proves that the power of language reform resides in the metaphors and the narrative structures of the given language. Narratives are the most essential benefice of culture. The story begins, there comes some complications and, after things settle again, one learns about the morals and the story ends. As we would not be able to cope without narratives in our everyday life nor would we in essays of architecture. Telling tales is a magic gift, which selects, fuses, and rearranges the chaotic instances of life. We rewrite the order of things with narratives just as with metaphors. They are present in almost every articulation of human contact. Narratology is a popular subject of research in the

humanities, language philosophies, historiographies, theories of literature and urbanism. It is not by surprise that it often attracts and mislead architecture critics who tend to interpret the designer's intention by narrativizing it.

In architecture narrative should not be understood as the representation of some story, not even if were the intention of the architect. It rather means the order of spatial arrangement as the creating mind realizes it in space. Telling is arranging, establishing spatial logic. To put it bluntly, it is about whether one, the architect, actually, finds it appropriate or not to render space in some way to communicate something effectively. Let us cast the history of architecture on our mind's screen and imagine the process in which architectural forms evolve and gets narrativized in the thousand years old discourse of architects. These discourses transform with the churches, theatres, museums, schools we build. In parallel with the changing forms of drama, fiction, poetry, music or dance genres. Well, in slow motion, as we prone to cling to the previous ones.

Similarly to a novel, we take our characters on adventures in the houses we build, however, here plot is given by spaces and practices in them (temporal, though). When we set a "narrative" off, basically we enter into a room and go along it until we arrive to some other point: it can be an altar in a church, the bed at home — this is what the building *tells*. Plot, therefore, is the spatial practice we perform whereas the narrative is the logic of the arrangement of spaces. The linguistic event creating this narrative starts with planning and ends with building. Narrative in architecture is the logic of spatial arrangement and the practice performed in it. When For defining narratives of architecture one must be aware of the possibilities such interpretation might offer to understand and sense of the poetics of this language even by the help of contemporary language philosophies.

If one wondered how inappropriate it is to use the term function as architects used to say instead of “composition of spatial practice”, I would agree. Hence the word function, although it refers to use, does not say anything about itself, nor about the possible transformation of the arrangement, furthermore it shows the purpose of the building as if it was completely independent from the composition or form potentials of architecture. As if it were a part of another world and not coming to being by the very act of creation. If we approach architectural spaces as narrative structures it might reveal that creativity can rearrange the spontaneously rendered spaces of chaos into meaningful order with intended purpose. As words not shaped by meaning but gain meaning in speech-events.

Getting back to the idea of spatial practice, one must add that in the plots of architecture narratives characters and situations, like in literature, have the same role, however, here spaces are the main characters and situations are experiences given as we walk along the joined spaces, (like in a drama) spaces themselves react. Their shape, character is altered by lights, colours, materials and, of course, the way they “behave”. It is not surprising that these dramaturgical elements perform their effect in time as in literature, during we use the narrated space.

So, if we want to understand the meaning of forms and structures in the language of great reform architects, it is not enough to examine the magnifying metaphors they use but also the how they use them when they compose architectural structures.

Makovecz's early narratives

As we have seen, the central theme of his early works is on the anthropomorphic space designed around the human aura. Drawing upon studies on anthroposophy, eurythmy inspired motion form experiments and folk art investigations, his architectural narra-

tives revolve around the human being in his existence and capacity for gnosis.

He attributes this plot to the purpose of architectural spaces, his spatial forms are dominated by an existentialist program. His narratives configure only this story, nothing more, and this identify a devoted reformer.

New components of Makovecz's language of space derive from this narrative intention, the program of identity formation, a genuine life, making sense of the world. This highly philosophical program, genealogical and gnostic at the same time, explains that he renders his space always around a centre, reaching up, and its structure and covering follows the movement of a living organism. Dramaturgical elements of space reinforce this. Light always come from the front or above, covering material is skin-like and often furrowed or scaly. Colouring is consequently black and white which highlights modelled forms and calls attention to the metaphorical and magnified nature of the work.

The composition of the houses in Dobogókő and Tokaj helps to understand the radical character of material use woven from space arrangement, dynamic spatial form, the frontal and upper lighting. “Granica” covering of shingled or thatch roofs is there to emphasize the aura magnified by the skin-like surfaces of such house creatures with monochrome colouring. These are radically new techniques in the second half of the '70-s. Rare bird, that a discourse on architecture in the sense of language would come with such radical poesy in its smallest details. We hardly even notice how much it foreshadows from Makovecz's folding-architecture blooming in the '90s on the West. I refer to the concepts of dynamic space management, giant creature—like appearance, huge orifices, organic support walls, fowing covering, and scaly (or rather *pixy* from *pixel*—transl.) surfaces. It is enough to take a glimpse of the terrace of Nagy-villám Tourist House, Visegrád from

1978—on photograph, as it was ruined long ago.

But let us cast out eyes on the future. What could Makovecz do with his inventions? What are the possible uses of this poesy and where are its limits? What are the challenges leading to new inventions? With regard to the architectural narratives of his early art we can talk about poems or short stories, and maybe the community house in Sárospatak could be seen as a novel. The funeral chapel in Farkasrét Cemetery or the ski engine house in Dobogókő are no more than poems. One might have the impression that the anthropomorphic space as form cannot be applied to complex structures. It is not by accident that Makovecz's innovation gradually turned from forms to symbolic solutions of spatial practice.

Narratives in the works after the 1980-s

The '80-s witness significant changes in Makovecz's mentality. From that time on, narratives attract his attention, fiction of telling rather the potency of forms. As if great-scale programs could really not fit his composition principles, he expands the scope of his poetics and apply it to other possible spatial practices. His original concept of anthropomorphic space and tectonics does not change but is deprived of its dominance. Emphasis shifts to comprehensive modes of using space, architectural narratives and symbolic dimensions. Actually, he applies the early program of phenomenology and ontology to a wider issue, that of community identity.

It is present in the ski engine-house in Dobogókő, having the stems of all elements of future plans in its narrative. He articulates his well-known idea on building: “on the boundary of fancy and reality words gather to become house-creatures of a new reality” (Makovecz 85). Studies on folk art result in a new discovery uniting several narratives. He realizes the core of narratives in verbal metaphors preserved in im-

ages of old farmhouses and so he project the narrative of the house-creature onto them, which is then screened on the Makoveczian concept of anthropomorphic space. By that gesture, he redefines the purpose of a profane building, the ski engine-house's warming room. Two narrative elements, past and present, remain in the background, whereas two others are foregrounded and dominate, the fictional and the Makoveczian.

The daring symbolism appears later in the case of Mócsai-cottage, Mogoró-hegy, where two narratives, the past of a farmhouse and the future oriented natural-organic house overlap. All who witnessed its birth remember how unexpected this turn was in Makovecz's art. We understand it and not, and from that on, all was about this double meaning as far as the most important works are concerned. At this house the vision of past and future dominate, the poetics of anthropomorphic space (despite its U-shaped yard) and the narrative of the present (being a landlord apartment and cafeteria) stay in the background. Whether seeing the farmhouse in its integrity as real or symbolic can be decided by the context, more precisely the relation of narratives. Makovecz here reveals the trick to insert two half-houses together and convince us about the genuine presence of the fictional. He makes us see that both the old farmhouse both the wooden cottage built with ‘trees’ are symbolic gestures, and so the building has a doubly double-edged meaning: he builds doubleness twice.

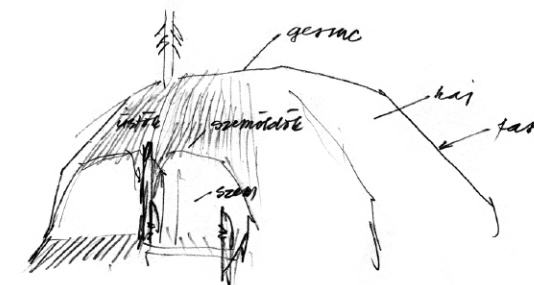
The same method is in work in the case of the house in Rákóczi Street, Sárospatak, 1980. He projects the old cottage's verandah element onto the open corridor of the storey house, naturally in a magnified way. Both the profane and the symbolic uses are present. This multi-storey arched verandah appears in a strange aqueduct-like position on the galleries of the community house in Jászkisér (1982).

He does not create new words by metaphors any more, but by a montage of narratives. Using elements from the past he creates new, surreal texts. He also creates surprising sentence-structures like in the case of the shopping mall with fachwerk in Visegrád, 1982. The same applies to the community house in Zalaszentlászló, 1981. One hesitates, how to understand these houses, should one approach these old and equally modern buildings from the direction of the real or the fictional? Makovecz claims: “...to me the past is as objective as the present. I walk in the past as I walk in a landscape, and I do not succumb to any hypothesis. To dreams yes, maybe.” (Imre Makovecz: Writings 1959-2001. Ed. János Gerle. Budapest: Serdián Ltd, 2002. p. 97)

So Makovecz expands his identity program and uses elements from the past as organizing units. Not by word, and not as words but as narrative units. We could say that these are only symbols, but this would oversimplify the matter. Of course, these elements have symbolic dimension indeed, but by being inserted into reality, their effect is more perplexing. “Remembering is like walking in a real world. Everything present, all that happened together with what could happen. They are equally important.”—writes Makovecz



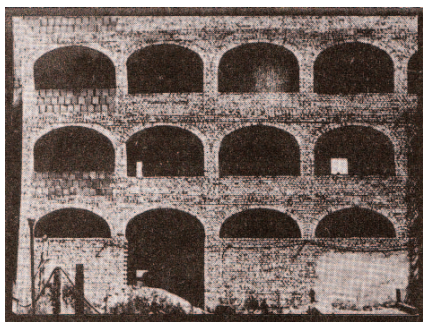
Visegrád, Nagy-villám tourist hostel (1978)



Dobogókő, ski-lift engine house (1980)

Mogoró-hegy, Mócsai-farm (1980)

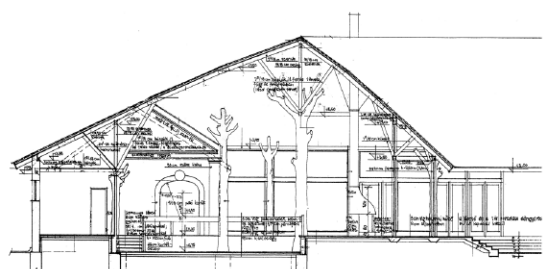




Sárospatak, block of flats, 1. phase (1981)



Visegrád, shops (1982)



Zalaszentlászló, village centre (1981)

Visegrád, Forest Learning Centre (1984)



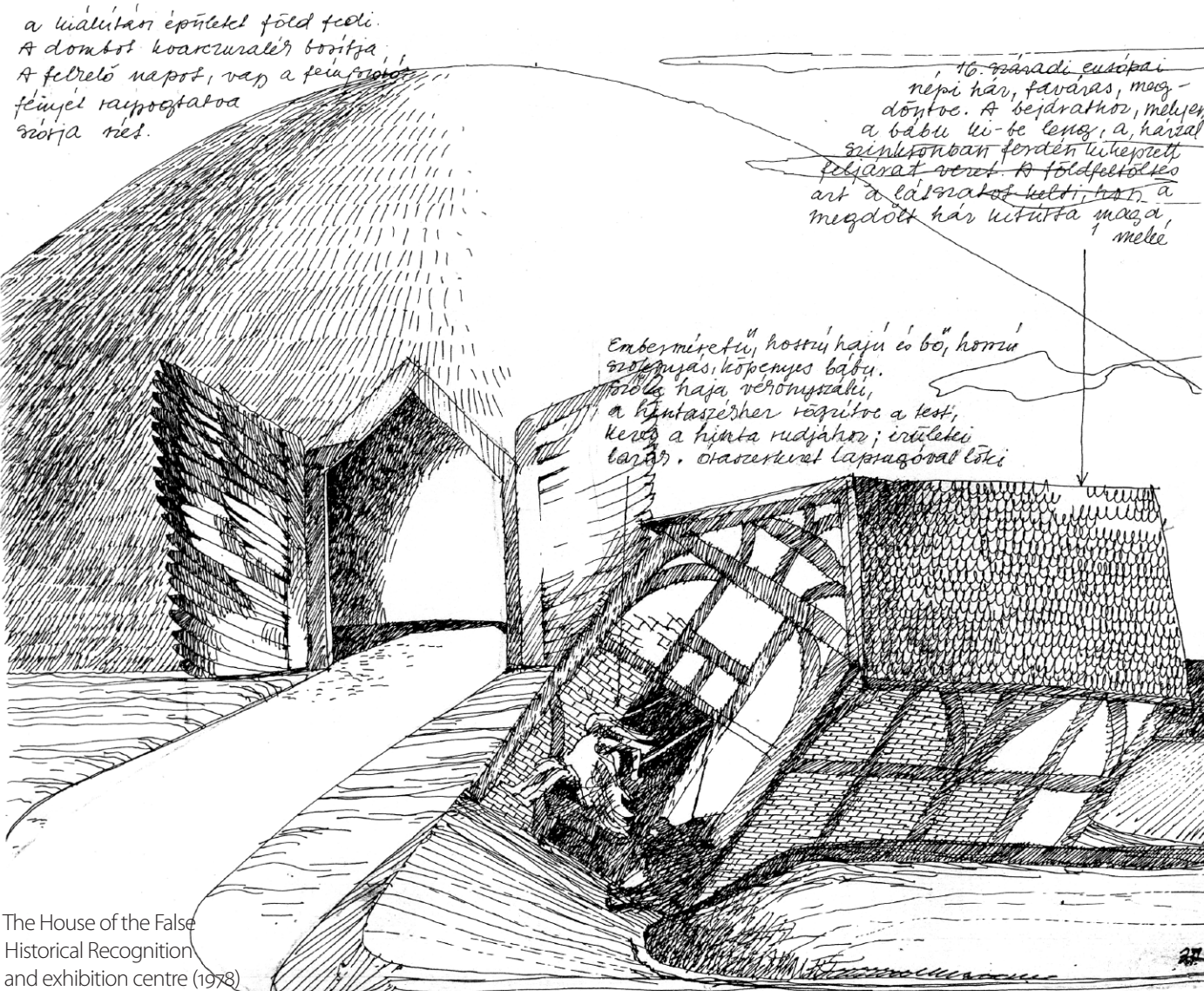
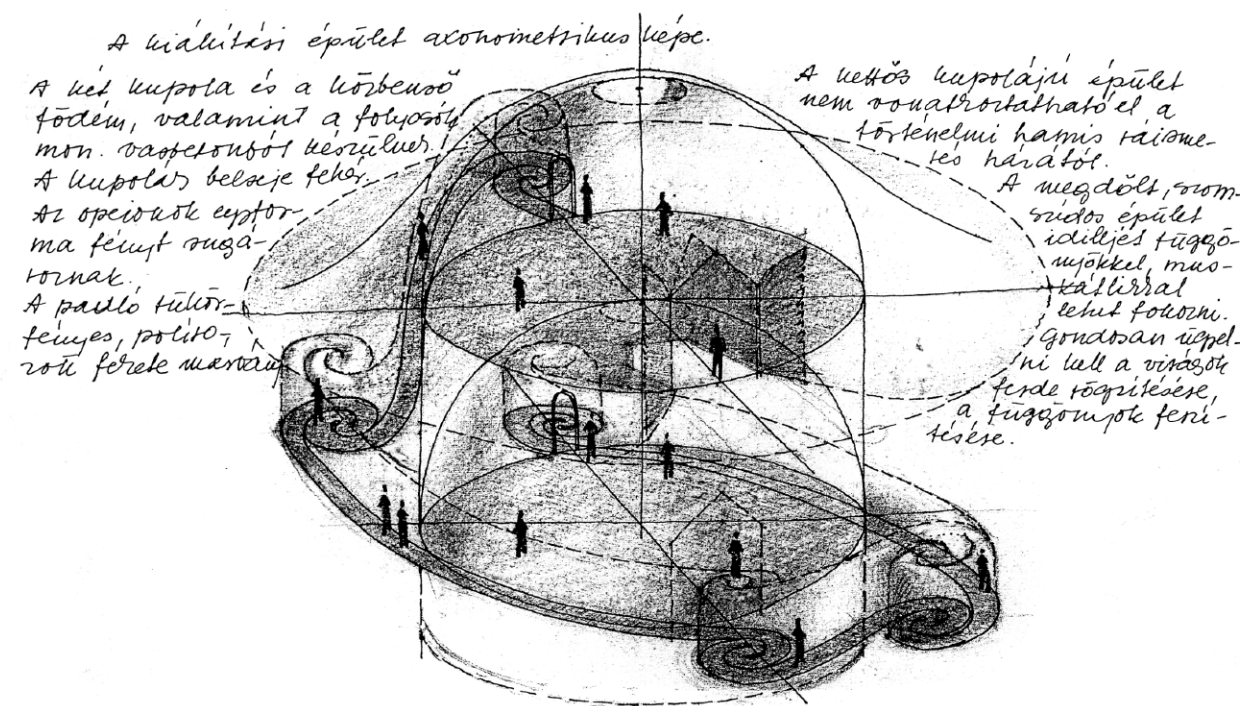
on organic architecture. (Makovecz 121). One must see, that his reformed symbolic language is not the result of the moveable feast of moods and artistic gestures but from his fundamental theme, the same theme of his identity program shaping his early spaces. By representing the past and creating doubled scenes in time and space, he opens the sites of memory. He surveys a context to make us realize our own situation. He provokes and shakes us out of automatism to see who we are, where we are coming from and where we are going to. This has been his program since 1978. The House of False Historical Realization and Exhibition House (1978), a work commissioned by German investors, is a vision about disillusion and perceptual miscomprehension. According to Gerle who interprets it as a conceptual plan "the building is creates a situation in which one's everyday perception and awareness meet situations it cannot deal with automatically" (Makovecz 281).

In 1984 Makovecz screened his works for the audience of the master academy in the building of the architect society. I was sitting behind him and watched the series of vibrating images of creatures-like buildings with embracing arms, ribbed chest, skull, and open eyes. When he arrived to his actual work, the community forest house in Visegrád and the shiny copper dome emerging from the grassy moulds coincided with the bold head of the master on which the light of the projector flashed, I had a strange feeling. On seeing the opeion of the dome and the crown chakra's glory I thought, Gosh, now it is time for the towers. I could not imagine back then how, but now I can. The identity program articulated in all his anthropomorphic spaces is projected into the domed hall of this community house as the spatial narrative of nature and cosmos ("this house tries to raise people's awareness on their relation to nature") will now aim at vertical dimensions in higher spheres of architecture like it was

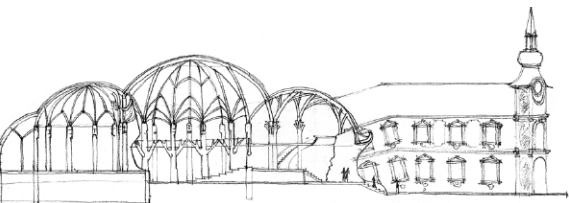
already present in the ars poetic drawing's opeion on minimalist space in 1972.

The hall in Szigetvár summarizes first the new elements in Makovecz's symbolic narrative. Symbolic spaces have double meanings in all respect: real and abstract. The multi-storey verandah in the city yard is open for the community, the towers as gateways of the profane house guide the souls up to divine spheres, and identify the entry as initiation. The triple dome manifests the cosmic order and the next stage of initiation lead the believers to the sanctuary-stage dome, promising transformation. Their weights fall on the column forest underneath. The entire composition is orchestrated from constituents with double meaning, nothing else. "This house is the top of my achievements, containing all the elements I have ever found and some added infant surrealism. The three domes penetrate each other, evoking the first Goetheanum, devour the ruined walls of the side wings evoking ancient cultures, which collide and disappear, and the geometrically simple, but spatially complex space they form operating with strong surreal effects." (Makovecz 135) Almost all elements of the mature Makovecz-architecture are present in this building. To give a full picture, however, we have to mention the sports hall in Visegrád, 1985. This latter one is more dear to me, as it is less demonstrative than the culture palace in Szigetvár and for the reason that it fuses practical and symbolic elements in a more playful and subtle way. The sport hall, evoking Visegrád's past, can be identified as an urban space among the imagery of the surrounding fachwerk houses, however, as a vast clearing as well due to the flowery supportive walls blooming flower-widows.

The community house in Bak (1985) is a unique experiment in the line of symbolic space creation. It is the elder brother of the ski engine house in Dobogókő. Its shape takes after the



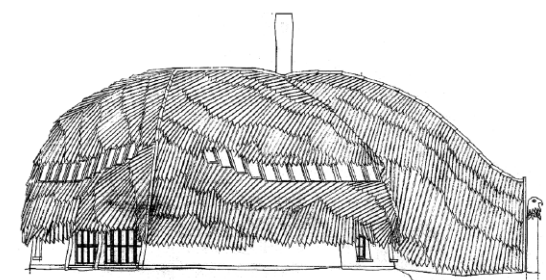
The House of the False Historical Recognition and exhibition centre (1978)



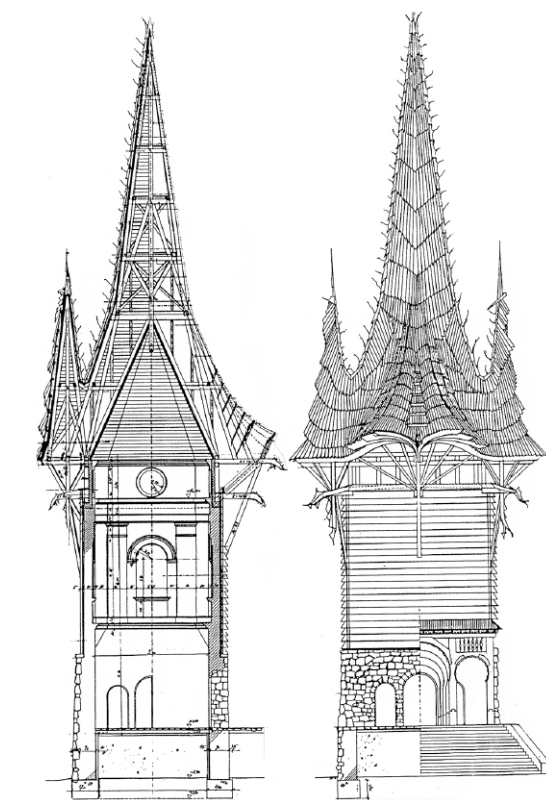
Szigetvár, Vigadó (1985)



Visegrád, gymnasium (1985)



Bak, village centre (1985)



Kakasd, village centre (1986)

idea of anthropomorph space and magnified house-creatures, however the magnified object here is not a former space or house particle but a bird. Like in some other cases, this primary image also gets close to the label of morbidity. In memoriam of a *turul*/bird monument destroyed in 1945 in front of the house, he erects a headless house-bird. The organic effect, the granica covering, like previously, highlights both the shape of the house creature and the modelled metaphor.

From the mid'80-s works recycle the elements from the vocabulary and symbolic narrative of former buildings. The community house in Kakasd with new features and symbolic narrative (1986) can be understood only in the context analysed above. Here the towers have a distinguished role in both meaning configurations. We enter the community house under church towers. Makovecz designs the frontal space with towers and creates spaces in them also projecting old and figurative narratives upon them. The plank-size granica covering on the Székely bell tower resolves an enormously complex problem the narrative. It is the rewriting of ancient Transylvanian towers, signs the symbolic function of the tower and location, shapes a huge creature with (tower)helmet, and radiates the idea of organic space inherent to its structure while, at the same time, inside it receives the imprint of the ruined church in the home of the Székelys of Andrásfalva who settled in. Daring experiment to pile up narratives of space.

The Lutheran church in Siófok (1987) evokes the motif of the early embracing arms of the house-creature in its exterior, has the simplicity of the skull-like shapes in the interior while, as archaic elements, towers grow from the side-wings of the building. After the sketches they degenerate, and the middle tower remains the only motif of composition reform, suitable to a church, though. As a side entrance it has a rather strange location and can

be understood from the perspective of the facial-facade, appearing on a tower for the very first time. It returns in Seville again.

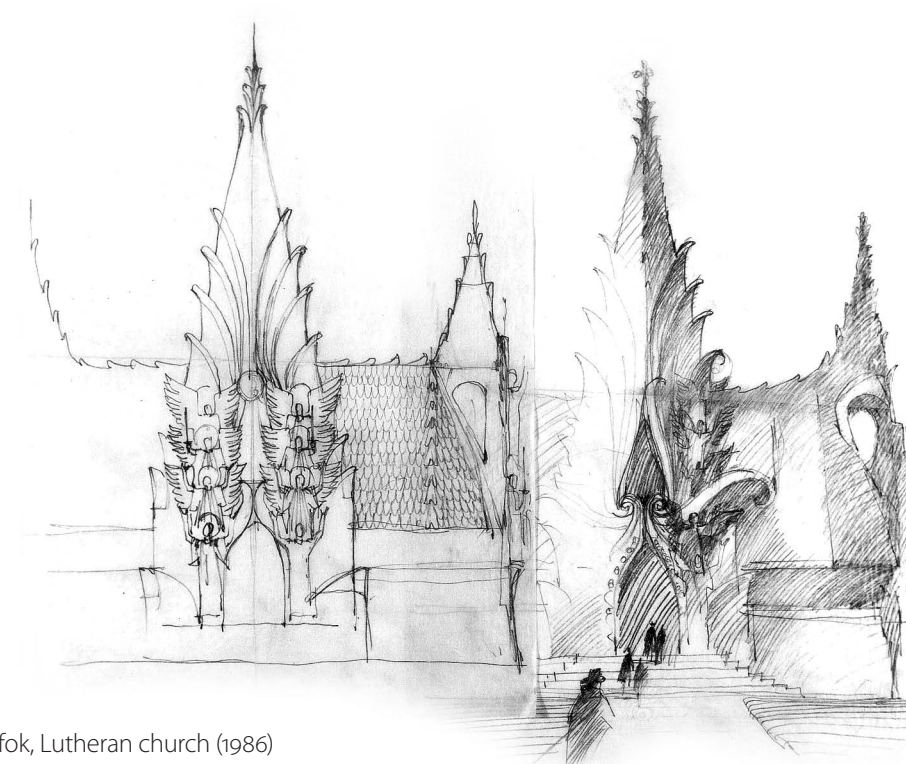
In the initial plans of the teacher training college in Witten-Annen (1987) several symbolic narrative element is fused with elemental force: intersecting domes in Steiner's fashion, the forest pillar, the urban theme of fackwerk, the spectre-shape of the gateway towers, and a previously latent feature the diagonal position of rock blocks which represents geology history, all under the practically diagonal grandstand and middle dome all to symbolize the world's phenomenological nature. The archaic village model in the heart of the plans of the eight-storey hotel in Rákóczi Street, Budapest, has a stunning effect with its inner landscape of genuine chapel, yard, market place and pub. Mixing the symbolic and real spaces shows how seriously Makovecz takes doubled narratives. It is also obvious on the plans of the theatre in Lendva (1991) where experiences of origins are represented in the exterior design composed of towers and in the internal one composed of rewritten versions of a civilized Hungarian village which help to depict the community's relation to space. It can be paired with the swimming-pool in Eger (1993), where the symbolic narrative montage alters the surrounding urban space.

I do not go on with telling Makovecz's tales. Following this track the reader can start to interpret them. It must be clear by now that in the mature works of Makovecz the symbolic forms of space dominate and projected into the profane use they represent the origins of a community. His compositions are conservative to some extent and he often operates with traditional modes in order to provide place for symbolic narratives. The dome compositions and square-grounded corner towers borrowed from Steiner might serve as good examples. Let alone the fact that all the themes of his

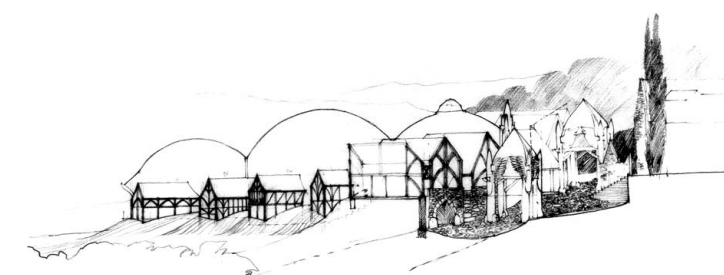
narrations, the gateways, the towers, the houses in the house, the vegetation pillars and domes are traditional patterns. He obviously superimpose narratives from various origins, approaches and projects them from several perspectives playing with back-and foregrounding, while omitted elements alter the image from the hinterland. In relation to that he extend his horizon on many mental levels and spheres of imagination. He suits the elements to the narrative of the houses, constantly rearranging, combining and recycling them. Nonetheless, "...we rarely meet routine ways of re-used elements borrowed from already built houses in the works Makovecz, what we find rather is the recurring motifs of plans that have not been realized yet"—as János Gerle puts it in his description of the auditorium of the Catholic Univeristy in Piliscsaba (Makovecz 279).

On double narratives

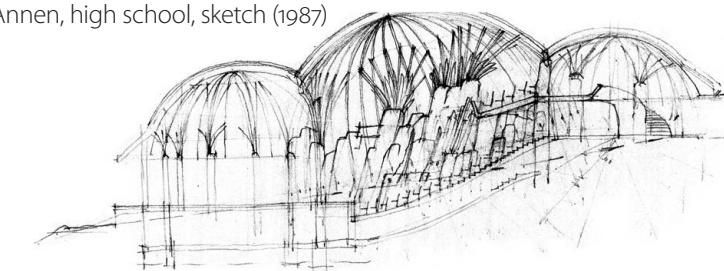
The following issues must be addressed when it comes to symbolic spaces, especially, if Makovecz composes them as a palimpsest text with superimposed metaphors and narratives. In built space superimposed, projected layers intersecting each other, that is such use of space, *are* really in each other even if their presence is only symbolic. To put it simply, one has to go in these spaces—especially in the case better works. We naturally get used to them, one could say, because all narrative layers in architecture even the simplest, most profane use loses its strangeness. Practiced space, while we are using it, is divided into small units and as the words of language, its metaphorical dimension dissolves into the flow of life. This is not true with regard to the symbolic elements which make an effect not only by their newness but also their undividedness. An authentic farmhouse or a rebuilt church tower can impress the spectator much because its paradox nature maintains its



Siófok, Lutheran church (1986)



Witten-Annen, high school, sketch (1987)



Lendva, theater (1991)



double meaning as well, namely, whether it is present or not. And we have not discussed yet the tension raised by metaphorical carry over of meaning, issues of this is a non-church-tower church-tower.

And we have to return to house of false recognitions, Makovecz's early conceptual plan, in Gerle's words: "...arriving to the double of the exhibition room under the exhibition room in the exhibition space from 1978, the spectator loses any sense of navigation. ... experience reaching the threshold of consciousness generates uncertainty which makes him reaching for an inner support instead of accepting the usual routine of perfection. ... The historical setting of the house of false recognition situated in the exhibition building ... calls the attention right at the entrance that building on visions living in us might fool us." (Makovecz 281) The provocative double narrative is the manifestation of a vision he cherished from the beginning as sacred ambition. He refers to the method of doubling as "spiritual objectivity", and describes its effect as surreal. Without deheroizing his endeavours, let us try to interpret them from the profane dimension of language as he himself articulates his ideas in and by the language of architecture.

We could even argue that by the medium of language he is dealing with architecture, trying to interpret its influence by altering it, sometimes by pushing contradictory influences against each other or beyond their boundaries.

For understanding the mechanism of the Makoveczian false recognition, we have to see that double narrative is always present in every plan. Reconstruction any house involves the traces of another previous one or a former spatial design, at least. How could it be different? We write and speak like this. It might be supposed that it always has to do with a certain mental montage, rendered into each other spatially in the case of architec-

ture. We unconsciously experience this in the most profound ways of perception. That is why we have the ability of navigation. But, if we cannot live dwell in these interpenetrating, overlapping spaces then we get lost, uncertain and feel dizzy. It is enough to recall the spatial disorder after waking up at a foreign place in the morning. Two spaces get superimposed upon each other and causes disorder. Makovecz grasps this superimposition of narratives to turn it back to face us as warning disorder. He does the same as good tales, novels, movies where the author makes us get lost in space. In our dreams we usually do not know where we are, it is also an archetypical overlap of spaces. Freudism is about similar superimposed structures projected upon each other, symbolic spaces of the super ego, ego, the unconscious and repression shift and collide, causing mental disorder. Our life revolves around these spaces. About sites of childhood in the house, where we navigate easily, feel at home, about the familiarity when we travel, and, growing old, we would be glad to return to these memory maps floating in.

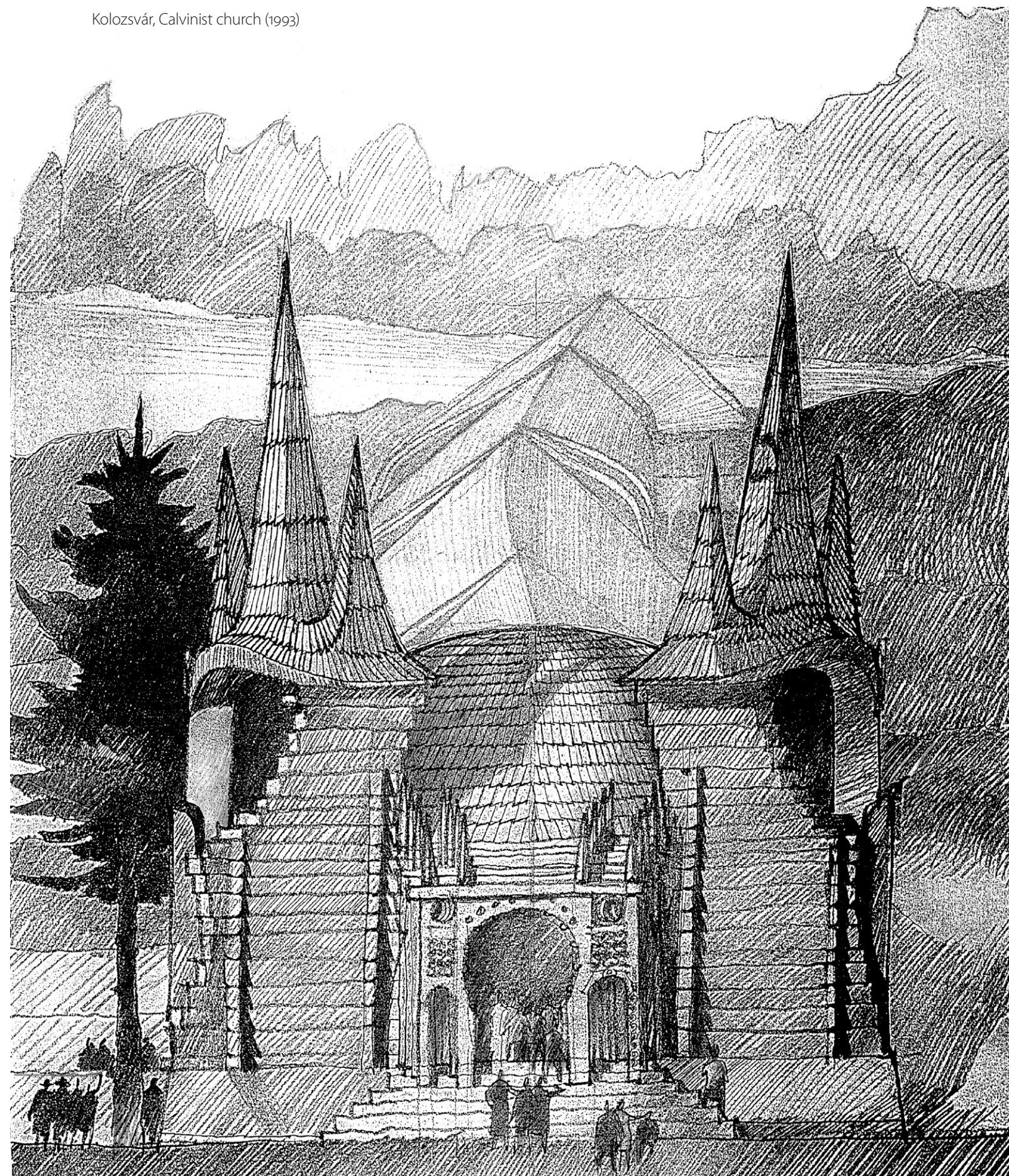
On the sense of using symbolic spaces

More or less every language reformer live with the opportunity of comparing narrative patterns. Taking the works of the seemingly most distant example, Peter Eisenmann, from his earliest serial houses to the magnified thorny shell house in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia. He also constructs his works by projecting symbolic, superimposed spatial configurations. Considering his linguistic experiments, he reduces expressions to diagrams, and applies "weak forms" knowing that he can reach back by them to the origins of language. Although he denies such configurations he operates with would be symbolic with fixed meaning, institutionalised, this happens at all his dynamic panels, all the projected transformations. Guest texts, we could

say referring to Esterházy, but there is much more to that. The matter is the same as in the case of Eisenmann or other grandiose reformers (grafting at Eisenmann, folk architecture words at Makovecz, plant photographs by Blossfeld), that is, the question of structure at defining the logic of order, and at applying archaic patterns in a mimetic structure. Their common feature is that they both experiment with the limits of language. As the narrative structure of the Odyssey is traceable in the narrative plot scapes of the Ulysses, these "weak" "graftings" structure the mimetic representation of the actual storytelling.

We have seen that it was characteristic to symbols that because of their superficial nature and wide range of usage can be interpreted in many ways, depending on whether we are familiar with their contents or not. This form of expressions suits Imre Makovecz fine. Symbolic use of space in its undivided, raw manner always points back to the origins of a community. Symbolic language is the language of creation, therefore it is related to the genesis of language not by chance. There is always a social consensus, contract behind it between those who use it. This makes it a feature of identity. Hence it is understandable that in the works of the mature and late Makovecz the symbolic use of space investigates the order of past lives. The existential programme in its wide sense, the resurrection a shared memory-community and strengthening ambitions organize the narratives of his houses, the composed narratives of space. We should not see this an unusual method. Evoking past dwelling spaces where "...vanished people whisper in the walls, domes cover us with the sky, wall paint folk motifs of scattered peoples turn into spatial forms, ancestors drove out from consciousness gather to raise their voice..." (Makovecz 141) is not at all foreign theme in memory policies including history and other media with purpose

Kolozsvár, Calvinist church (1993)



of altering collective mentality. For it is an appropriate way for structuring and activating mutual experiences, making dead pieces of memory alive again.

Makovecz knows this well from the very beginning, that is why he is in the focus of his attention the towers, the most suitable forms for symbolic uses, and that is why his tales turn from interior spaces towards the arrangement of the externals. The theme of towers is a well comprehensible and grateful theme, even if it is among the most challenging one in concerning the

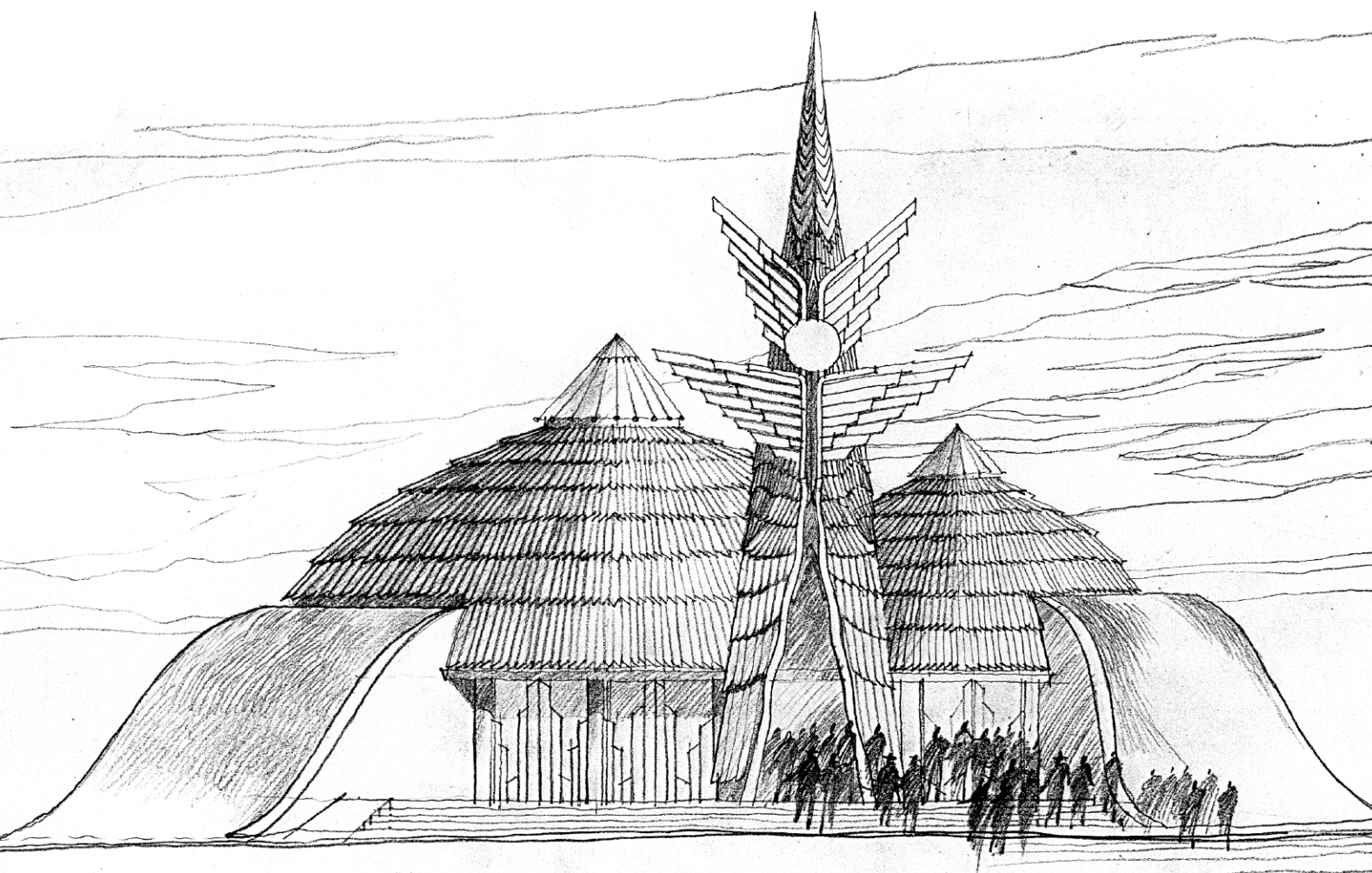
public taste. From the Church in Paks (1987), throughout the Pavilion in Seville (1990) the series of towers is expanding. The art of Makovecz with its symbolic use of space revitalising memory is most alive in the public spaces of areas cut off from Hungary (Bluebeard's Castle, 1993, Reformed Church, Cluj, 1994, Reformed Church, Vargyas, 1996, Funeral Chapel Sepsiszentgyörgy, 1997).

Tower formation would require more detailed analysis, as they integrate the richness of the entire Makoveczian

vocabulary. The same would apply to the history of metamorphosis of vegetal pillars, which, woven together with the story of the towers finally culminates in the history of the Atlantis creatures and bring together all threads of Makovecz's narrative. Now, the story on granica covering is about to come to an end here.

Many thanks to János Gerle for his useful advices.

Sepsiszentgyörgy, funeral chapel (1997)



Visegrád, camping, open-air eating place, 1977



Makovecz and me

Endre Szűcs

I was browsing on the Internet when a photo popped up on my computer.

It showed the Master and me sitting on some stairs. It happened not so long ago, at the opening of Attila Turi's exhibition, where I arrived in the last minute.

– Come, old buddy, sit by me! – called out the Master. Indeed, I seem old. In any event, I am one of the oldest in the bunch, second only to Bodonyi.

A cigarette lighter clicks and we are slowly enveloped in billowing smoke. I penetrate it with my voice.

– Put that damn thing out and start drinking!

– You can go to hell – he reacts and then we just keep on sitting together, in silent agreement.

I stare at the picture and meditate on the nature of our relationship. Am I worthy enough to share this picture of intimate friendship with the world; to present myself as one of his good buddies when there are so many others who did much more to deserve this honour?

Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to work so closely and be in such good terms with him as did Menyus, Sáros, Tészta, Zsiga and the others, but his personal charm and gifted ability was always inspiring and made all the difference in moments of crisis.

My way to becoming an architect was not easy. Deep in my heart I always wanted to be a stage director at a puppet theatre or work in some similar position in humanities. I am a bit ashamed to say, but I even wanted to become a journalist for a while as I greatly envied the storytelling talent of one of my friends from high school.

Anyway, it was not to be: my father was an engineer who just could not consent to such a flighty choice of a career.

– Son, you must be twice as intelligent and diligent as the others, or else you will never be admitted to university. You should never forget that intellectuals are not welcome there. You are going to work in the smeltery, brooding about fate in scorching heat, ladling molten iron into a crucible.

How truly right he was. I should have been prominent instead of merely great. My father was an engineer of metallurgy; a profession in shortage at the time, making everybody involved in it a friend to my father to a certain extent. I could have walked into the Technical University of Miskolc, eyes closed and hands tied behind my back, if only I had wanted. Maybe if it had been Selmezbánya, I would have given it a second thought, but as it was, I was adamant to walk my own path. This is how I ended up at the Faculty of Architecture, as a half-way solution between my father's wish and my own calling.

I loathed studying at the Technical University.

I never ceased to long for the stimulating, humane environment of the arts division of my old high school in Buda where I was instructed in life according to the secular priests of the former *Rákócziánium* who may have left their order, but never forgot how to radiate with faith, compassion and patriotism.

I did not agree with my tutors who were mostly ruthless climbers subservient to Moscow or defected KISZ

secretaries. It was obvious to me even then that this was no quality education. Not only that the method of teaching was questionable, but the content was also less than professional. Bauhaus was too rigid, too angular and soulless for my taste.

Back then, I harboured similar feelings towards the arts as a renitent boy who has just grown out of puberty does towards his family: always bickering with his father, but gets along just fine with his grandfather who takes him fishing and picking mushrooms and teaches him how to inoculate trees. I was most intrigued by Art Nouveau and historicism, although these were not yet fully accepted into the establishment. I revered the Goncourt brothers who confessed in their diary that ancient Greek and Roman art was beautiful, and so was Classicism much later, but ancient Eastern art, including Japanese, Chinese and Muslim art, are most sophisticated as these are most successful in sublimating dreams and fantasy.

These were my worries when Imre Makovecz turned up at our workshop, balding and moustached, likeable, but strict. Under his guidance, I was able to open new kind of windows onto reality. Our own windows had always been ready to welcome the light, but I needed a hand to open the sashes wide; to invite the warmth and beauty of our ancient culture in. Soon I was completely mesmerized by the richness of ornaments from the era of the Hungarian Conquest, by the uncanny variety of our musical heritage and by this music manifesting itself in architecture. This is how I got to admire Károly Kós, Toroczka, Medgyaszay and many others. Had I not met the Master then, I would have surely dropped out. I did not because I received the reassurance I needed. I was reassured that there is tremendous value in the ideas I brought with me from my childhood in Vas county, the old houses with downward inclining front planes leaving the lower part of

the gable free, the verandas; the Transylvanian harrowhouses, wooden towers, fortified churches, the cosy small-town eclecticism, the Art Nouveau fronts in Pest, Kecskemét or Nagyvárád. A clear path opened in front of me and it did not lead to Bauhaus. Naturally, I have learnt how to appreciate Bauhaus and what to think of its place in the great triptych of dear old Frici Pogány (age, location, man), although I still like to question the spontaneity of the second factor.

Later on, we went on our separate ways. Upon graduating, I got lost in my own ideological and formal complexities and turned to conserving the past through monuments.

The year was 1968. Our glorious army marched into Slovakia. Our future seemed quite bleak and many have chosen to emigrate. However, those who had the chance to know Makovecz, even in the slightest, could not follow suit. To best describe what I was going through at that time, I like to borrow what János Orosz said: if not in space, we can emigrate in time as well.

I continued to keep an eye on Makovecz's activity even while I was working in planning monuments. Twelve years ago, when I joined the Károly Kós Association, our relation-

ship thawed up again. It was a great incentive to continue my line of work that he liked what I was doing; he liked it that I was still trying to do things my way, somewhat contrary to the mainstream. I am still considered sort of a daredevil by the rigid big-timers at the Monument Inspectorate whose dogmatic ideology is imbued with the provisions of the International Restoration Charter. Well, most students of Makovecz chose to walk this path; I wonder if it is a mere coincidence.

Sometimes I was taken for a lunatic for using an archaic style on the turn of the 21st century. Makovecz helped me get through this as well, telling me to do whatever and however I felt best because I was on the right track. "Your houses are sitting in the landscape as if they had always been a part of it," he told me. "These houses are like non others before, but old houses could very well have been exactly like these." Every honest artist doubts himself from time to time. Such words of confirmation always strengthen my faith to keep on working for a couple more years.

Some time ago, Duna TV channel broadcasted a series of reports about my houses in the Balaton Uplands. One of the questions I was supposed to answer concerned the reason be-

hind the disappearance of such a large chunk of our beautiful countryside architecture.

I told them one of my memories from Bavaria. Walking around a small village, I noticed a smartly painted house decorated with little clouds, boasting an inscription with large, conspicuous letters proudly proclaiming that "This house has been inhabited by the Schmidt family for 200 years." Well, this is what they have in plus.

Maybe I should have been thought as early as in the nursery school that being born in Csepreg is a personal value, which is second only to coming from Vas county, which is in turn part of being proud of having been born Hungarian. Or feeling ourselves Hungarian. One of my reporters told me that he heard almost exactly the same words from Mr Makovecz. Well, I may have read these words in one of his writings, or may have heard from his mouth, but this is not the point. The point is that without him as my mentor and without Károly Kós as the great role model, I would not have given such importance to this amazing truth.

I can still see that photo I mentioned at the beginning; I can see it with my mind's eye. I see us sitting on the steps of the celestial planning office. He is smoking and I am sipping my wine.



Research University in spirit of Imre Makovecz heritage

György Szegő

The intellectual heritage of Imre Makovecz must be realized in the 21st century. The last century starting in 1914 left Hungary in blood, sweat and tears of the inner and outer peripheries. The Master did not want to accept this and established a free university, sent his students on their way towards the country they shall build on the principles of intellectual independence and the regions beyond the borders towards cultural autonomy. It was a direction which proved to be a successful one for the Swiss historical independent institutions for more than a hundred years. The 50 year old autonomy of South Tirol can serve as a good example in the Carpathian Basin. In the present political and economic condition our intellectual independence can be achieved by effective free universities. There is an essential need for financially well-supported research universities and research centres which reach beyond the boundaries and ready to challenge social taboos: the support of the peripheries can happen by attributing a new role to architecture and urbanism. The powerless centre can gain energy from here. The Swiss example mentioned below might highlight the process. The Swiss social debate states: their mythical centres of freedom brimming with energy can be found in the peripheries.

Our intellectual elite with Makovecz and his circle in the '60-s made an at-

tempt to achieve independence for art and architecture. The centre on power back then brushed off that initiation. "...Hungarian classic avant-garde could have continued without western influence if ... the architecture of motion studies had been successfully connected to Rudolf Lábán's modern dance notation and Zoltán Kodály's visualized music based on gestures as Rudolf Steiner's anthropology with eurythmy. However, the beginning gave even more to the Hungarian organic architecture. These 'signs' became hierophanies in the rebirth/renaissance of the sanctity of anthropomorph space"—I wrote a year ago into the obituary entitled "*The Testament of Imre Makovecz*" (1). This genre is rather retrospective but a testament is a warning to the successors which guides them in the future..." His position labelled as 'tolerated' in the artistic (not the political) sense of the word helped him to keep 'his energetic, young spirit' both as a creator and a public figure—claims the movement organized by the circle around Lechner, the Technical University Youth, students of Kós and Jánoszy. Furthermore, "he could stay even younger than the youth around him" as he was able to add to their findings the novum of the 20th century cultural history. (...) In his pieces and teaching he always thought in the context of 'wholeness', that is, he was always ready to open

towards higher spheres of intellect in order to 'heal the wounds of the world with his social architecture' (2) à la Josef Beuys' social plasticity." I would like to take this idea as a point of departure when I consider possible acts in the future. The construction of community houses in the villages started off from here in the '70-s and '80-s. Imre Makovecz (in parallel with folk music and folk dance movements) elevated the folk architectural traditions stigmatized as primitive, but anachronistic at least from passivity and grounded the building of these houses on the region's self-sufficiency. The Master realized the social force residing in the building sources of the investors 'beyond the border' and applied his dramaturgy all over the lands of the historical country. Naturally, this process culminated much slower than non-governmental institutions in its service: the free school of Kós Károly Association, the Wandering School, and for those who had been educated there, the movement of main architects. This was a real success to record on the 10th jubilee of Kós Károly Association to Miklós Kampis, László Zsigmond, László Sáros, Attila Ertsey of János Gerle (3).

Attila Ertsey in the published jubilee volume described the stages of opening a Free University: the activity of the Free Educational Forum of the Károly Kós Association, and the further education offered by the cooperation in regional development between the Department of Economy at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at Péter Pázmány Catholic University of that time. He wanted to free the future institution from all governmental, monopolistic roles and economic dependence. The character, new structure, law of the cultural institution together with a transformed taxation system which ensures independent financial status is still set as a norm to achieve. But is it efficient enough?

In my opinion, we arrived at a turning point: in the last 15 years, the join

of Hungary and the succession states of Trianon to the EU, the present European moral and economic crisis requires middle-distance goals to maintain the education initiated by Imre Makovecz and Pál Beke. But to achieve that, architecture must facilitate a paradigm shift in which a new configuration of relations can thrive - with the masses, a close circle of professionals and the prominent players of the economy.

Today this change in attitude towards issues of regional development and the role of architecture can be realized in the frame of state financed education. Namely: the BME (Technical University of Budapest)—as one of the pointed research universities—should design an architectural education on the interdisciplinary principles of a so called *meta-science*, reaching beyond the scope of politics, humanities, or the present axioms of nuclear physics. With a powerful and confident performance it shall try to change the course of humanity rushing into an ecological catastrophe, food-supply crisis—it shall try to avoid this, at least here. The Technological University at such a rank could operate subsidiary laboratories (research departments and studio laboratories) in the centres such as the Science Universities of Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged or Pécs maintaining closer connections with higher education institutions 'beyond the border'.

As an example, I offer the recent research of the ETH Studio Basel and the social debate it generated. I draw upon an excellent article (4) by Domokos Wettstein, expanding the scope towards a possible interpretation of the situation in the Carpathian Basin.

Professors of the ETH Studio, R. Diener, J. Herzog, P. de Meuron and M. Meili analyse future challenges of their country and contemporary architecture. They attribute key role to identity formation of the suburban, peripheral residences and regions. Out of the architects/scientists listed above,

Meili claims that Swiss autonomy questioned in the process of urban development originated from the Swiss identity. Hence, it is a necessarily concomitant feature of progress. According to Gion A. Caminada on the contrary: he sees dependence and the loss of sovereignty in the violent process of urbanism. In the background the multilayered (residential community, canton and state confederacy), neutral Swiss autonomy based on "strategic resistance" is in growing contradiction with the more and more influential global trends. The Basel-Genf region has been strengthening the London-Paris-Hamburg-Munich-Milan pentagon and pulls several other Swiss areas to the periphery. Disputing the rightness of this process Wettstein's study evokes Karl Popper's famous essay entitled "Freedom and Democracy" (5): We know but little about the settlement history of the French, Austrian, Swiss Alps (...) However, it might be useful to ponder on the fact that these people who lived on farming, withdrew into the forlorn, inaccessible dales (...) Most probably these people went into the mountains because they preferred the life in the wilderness to the threat and tyranny of their neighbours. They chose freedom. (...) They learned that one must fight for freedom even though the chances for success are small." (See: the role of Transylvania in maintaining the autonomy of Hungary, protection of religious freedom under the Ottoman occupation). Karl Popper's analysis can be applied to the historical Hungary's annals as well as to our present condition. Whereas in the Swiss debate Mittelland with the archaic middle cantons (Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden) and Bern lost significance, in our case the Carpathians cut off by Trianon form the "*mytical centre*" (terminus technicus in the Swiss debate).

The provocative question in Switzerland is the following: "the mythical centre today is no more than fallow

land?" The pragmatic answer is disputed, whether they have the right to maintain the traditional image of Switzerland by artificial means. Herzog and his circle created a "garage laboratory" years ago, in 1999, which carried out independent researches. Because, according to them, students get lost in impersonal university structures, where education is too project-oriented and there is no room for discussion, consultation, studying more complex problem relations. But after five years, in 2003 the ETH Studio Basel functioned with university background. The parallel is obvious with the Wandering School of Károly Kós Association, even though opinions do not overlap. Personality seems to be unavoidable in the debate: Herzog and his group of global star architects—perhaps motivated by some self-critical attitude—embarked on the studying the periphery and urbanism. (They had not been aware of the education experiment of the KKE, ad so they refer to Dutch predecessors and ecological researches of MVRDV).

In my reading Studio Basel draws the conclusion that in the process of urban merging no local subcentres should remain, the sustaining "Alpin fallow lands" (the label is consciously provocative) have no perspective. They even claim these lands "should be given back to nature." This provocative intention bred seminal dialogue in the Swiss media but apart from the reply of Gion A. Caminada (professor of ETH, Zürich), there has not been any other scientific reaction. He reinforced by publishing his manifesto, "Nine Theses for Strengthening the Periphery" and by organizing an exhibition and conference in Meran, South Tirol (formerly Austrian now Italian region—see again Transylvania, Upper Hungary or the Vajdaság) all three years before the economic world crisis in which Switzerland do not seem to play the looser party at all). Domokos Wettstein quotes Gion A. Caminada's opinion on the power of

the periphery: "Landscape and culture are important constituents of tourism. Culture means to cultivate, to complete what nature had begun. But culture means otherness as well, and so global norms are the greatest enemies of nature..." The text enumerates several examples based on Caminada's principles. At last the author includes praxis as well: "We would not know much about the struggle for survival in the village unless, besides the construction regulation and agricultural considerations, the buildings were realized as representative art-works to transmit the preliminary ideas." (see: the achievements of Imre Makovecz and the architects of Kós Károly Association). Wettstein emphasizes: "Caminada had important role that the characteristic timbering in Graubünden could be rethought and applied aptly in the new matrix of challenges." (Á. Moravánszky analyses similar Swiss problems in his essay "Tér darabok/ V. Bearth és A. Deplazes építészetéről, the old-new Magyar Építőművészet, Utóirat, 2011/3; and I reflect on the Hungarian context in my essay Seadance in Csíkszentjehova—based on Domokos Szilágyi's study: *Hogyan*

írjunk verset (How to write Poems), old-new Magyar Építőművészet, 2007/1.). Both publications remained without echo even in organic architecture circles, nonetheless, the latter one evoked that Santiago Calatrava mentioned as a positive example in the article, started off from Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy/eruthmythy. The issue must be discussed and we are short of time: put scientific questions first and let the media discuss it afterwards.

To sum up

Makovecz's testament: the most intense continuation. Integrating the free educational concept of Pál Beke, and the educational model of the Kós Károly Association concentrating organic architecture is a serious task of national architect education, and can't be put off any more. There should be studio laboratories close to the peripheries, crossing the boundaries in the name of higher education and one research university—the Technological University of Budapest is my proposal. We have to see: Budapest has also been the target of a promising modernisation process, however, by now it obviously diverted from that.

But still, it is the "mythical centre" of the last 150 years of Hungarian education and research, the intellectual basis of outstanding scientific results. (See: Dreamers of Dreams exhibition, 20011, or the planned Rubik-centre). It is not a rival to the "mythical centre of the mountains" which should also be improved. Together, and not as peripheries, they can become the intellectual centre of the future. This cooperation should be based on an educational ground in which practicing architects complete their profile by teaching with a sharp focus on research. A holistic future research: comprehensive disciplines. Handling real problems of the peripheries might ease the tension between the free university and the project-oriented state education.

In the socialist era it was the task of the opposition to fight for the autonomy of education. Today these initiations need to be applied to state education. Imre Makovecz did the first step by establishing the Hungarian Academy for Art. This academy provides an alternative to academism. Rigid structures can be mobilized by this new spirit of education.

Notes:

- 1 Szegő Gy.: „Makovecz Imre testamentuma” („Makovecz Imre's Testament”) (old-new Magyar Építőművészet, 2011/5)
- 2 Shorter version of the obituary published in Új Művészet under the title „A gyógyító építész” („The Healing Architect”) („Új Művészet”, 2011/10.)
- 3 Tíz éves a Kós Károly Egyesülés (Kós Károly Alapítvány, 1999) chapters KKA Előttörténet, Szabadiskolák, Konferenciák, Szabad Oktatási Fórum, Vándoriskola and Országépítő
- 4 Wettstein Domokos: „Eltérő pozíciókból / Urbanizáció és autonómia ellentmondásai Svájcban Az ETH Studio Basel és Gion A. Caminada vitája alapján” (rég-új Magyar Építőművészet, 2012/3 „Utóirat”) („From different aspects/ Contradictions of Urbanisation and Autonomy in Switzerland - Based on the Debate of ETH Studio Basel and Gion A. Caminada")
5. Karl Popper: „Szabadság és demokrácia” („Freedom and Democracy”) (in: Nagyvilág, XLIII. 9-10. 1998.)

I'm sitting on the veranda of the wine-press house

János Jánosi

I am sitting on the veranda of the wine-press house with my back against the old oven. River Danube flows there at the end of the garden. Amidst the stubborn heat-wave it has been falling, revealing small pebble-islands in the riverbed. Times of drought.

I see images: memories flow in, a vision of an arched house in Madách square from a Christmas postcard, angel wings appear in the cross-hatches of the asphalt: *to János Jánosi, the cross-hatching prodigy (I have just failed at my descriptive geometry exam), wishing you Merry Christmas and awakening for the new year: Imre Makovecz.*

I am drinking chilled spritzer while the buzz of bees fills the motionless afternoon heat. Bees always know the way, they always find a way.

Narrow staircase leads upstairs, into the Advent afternoon, where about 30 young architects are working. Imre's door opens silently, he places the old cassette-recorder and suddenly throaty voice of Csango children emanates everywhere: they sing "Rejoice, on we go to Bethlehem..."

Pencils stops, Imre is sitting next to the recorder, we are staring at him... Angels arrive on the wings of the song and by the last note, we all know, what's the buzz. He starts talking about Christmas times, old times, and we learn the song by heart, line by line, trying to figure out the sense of the thousand-year old chant through the haze of the heavy Csango accent dis-

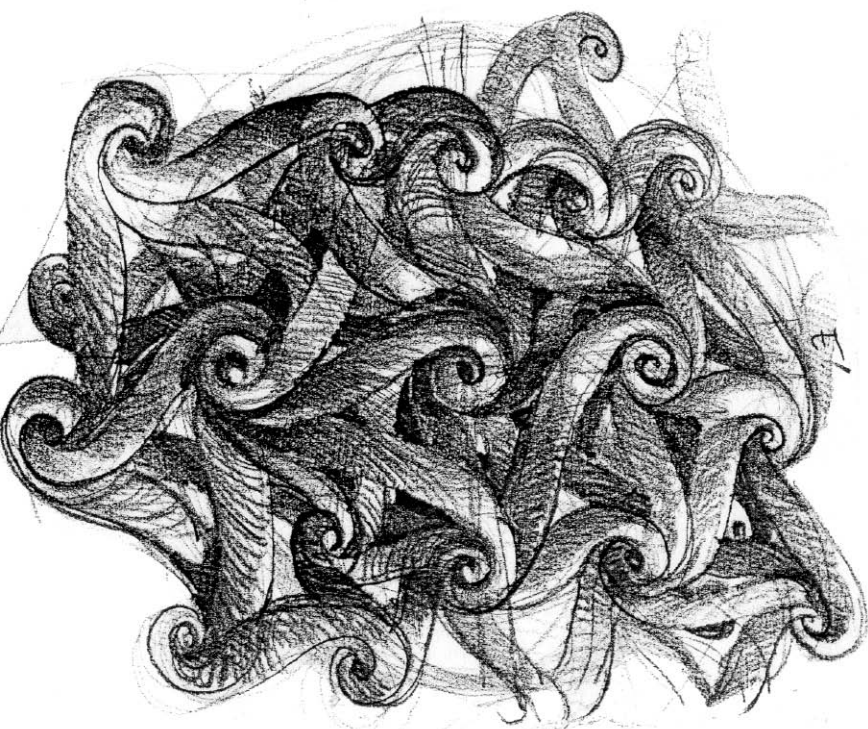
torted by the rasping voice of the recorder. There has always been Christmas in the Makona ever since.

In the shade of the cobbled gateway Imre addresses me from the door of his office: So, how about the Betlehemes (Nativity play) this year? – Well... this year... we might rather skip it... the others might not be interested that much... last year only some of them showed up... – Well, it is quite out of question! If only the two of us perform it, there will be Betlehemezés, for sure, understood? I think I did..., I might have woken up, too...

River Danube flows at the back of the garden. Always different: in colour, in reflections, or in what drifts upon its waves; and I am sitting on the veranda of the wine-press house, watching the water. It is always the same water, may it ebb or flood, River Danube.

Now it ebbs, the draught is great, everything and everybody is thirsting, the air does not move, it might be the lull that foreruns the storm, the river is shallow, but I have been watching it for quite a long time and so I know it never dries, harvest rains are coming to feed it again and it will flow again, stormily or calmly under the changing skies.

I am sitting on the veranda of the wine-press house, back against the old oven, and images appear in my mind's eye, memories of the Danube and the garden, which, I know, are future reminiscences, too.



Facts about an extraordinarily talented Somebody who was called Imre Makovecz

Máté Hidvégi

At the millennium, Atlantis-drawings (1) by Imre Makovecz were exhibited at Venice Biennale. Later János Gerle rendered these pieces under the title *Venice drawings* in Imre Makovecz's oeuvre (2). One of these drawings, a monochrome (grey) montage with Xerox technique, sized 60x70 cm – with a graphite-written caption running in the middle – in 2004 appeared by the (collective) title *Atlantis 2000-2003* (3) on the Makovecz exhibition at Ernst Museum; in Duna Palace it was displayed by the title *Venice Biennale 2000* at the *Imre Makovecz - Concept and Vision* exhibition in 2011 (4). Reproductions (5) of this monochrome, greyish-green version of the drawing without the graphite-caption is known as well. However, we have no information on reproductions of this captioned version: only on a photograph (6) of the piece published in an article.

Below the vertically chiral-symmetric and strangely astonishing work, as part of it, run Makovecz's handwritten lines, saying:

Our imagination about the prehistoric man is not compiled by the distorted remains of the forever changing concept about the ape man, but composed by the vision of Prometheus the fire-bringer, the tremor of narcissistic reflection, the tree of knowledge, the loss of immortality, oblivion, sweat of the younger brother of man thrown into this world, the tragedy of creation, the murdered Abel in heavens, the procession of woods, exploded physiognomies, the look of speechless animals, the secret messages of plants.

The golden age of the prehistoric man is there in the noble fruit trees, in the grain, in the patient cows and loyal dogs; all are there in one image, to-

gether with the ancestors of collective conscious, like seceding shadows of forefathers emerging behind our figure.

May the idea of Atlantis be freed from shapeless daemons. May Saint Michael guide us onto the glorious, forgotten peak of sunken Atlantis. Let us follow the Son of God, and if we know, if we have enough faith, hope and vitality for love, let us pray for Saint Michael: »Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil; may God rebuke him, we humbly pray and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls«. And let us we, free people envisage golden age and deprive the world of false faith and its mechanic force.

Imre Makovecz

Magyarországon a
munkák a ténylegesen a
pályázók és az őseiknek a
szellemi örökségét, a
szellemi örökségét
szellemi
szellemi örökségét
A szellemi örökségét

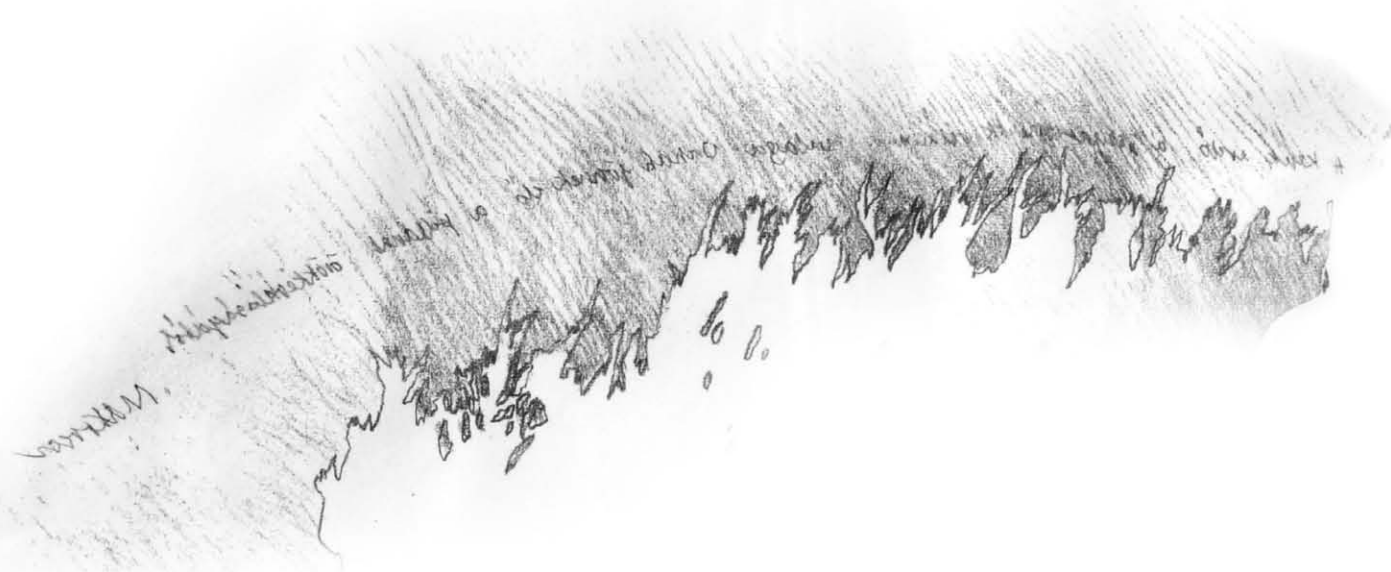
In the foreground of the picture there is a montage from Karl Blossfeldt's (1865-1932) photos displaying sprouts, buds photographed with outmost care—organic constructs in a literal sense. At the top of the middle erection—which might have served as a model for the 4 m high Atlantis Tower exhibited in 2000 at Giardini, Venice—above the perspectival vanishing point stands a winged figure. Its head is a six-radius, glorious disc with right axis rotation: so the winged figure is an archangel, for spheres are main attribute to archangels (7). But at the same time, the radius-disc is also a Sun symbol, hence a Christ-symbol (8). In Christian iconography Michael and Gabriel get Christ-symbols among the archangels. Gabriel is usually represented with Virgin Mary (9), Michael

as an exorcist, because he is the one to cast fallen angels into the deep. It is ichnographically justified that the winged figure at the top of the erection can be identified as Saint Michael archangel. On the sides, the two vegetal formations are anthropomorphic: they have eyes, face and their silence talks from world we do not have any knowledge of. At the background of the composition we see a deep forest which does not expand behind the vanishing point, the pillars of the tower, because that area is filled by a structure with a terrifying gaze allied to dark forces (10) growing from underneath the ground.

The artwork is Gnostic (like all the Venice drawings). Interpretation is beyond our scope now. However, we point out that we kept to the typo-

graphical design of Makovecz's when he emphasized Michael archangel's name by using bold type in the extract quoted above. To double the effect, he highlighted this element by adding a different colour to it, and placing it into the exact middle of the work. Michael the Archangel is the central character of the image, and this might be the clue to future interpretations. Furthermore, we claim that this Gnostic picture had exorcist intention.

Some years after the millennium the author of present lines asked Imre Makovecz to write something on the image. He asked whether he could write in mirror-writing and normal writing simultaneously. The caption above the trees, following the line of their canopy was born in front of my very eyes: Imre Makovecz took a pro-



pling pencil, one into each hand, put them symmetrically on both sides of the geometrical midline, then, taking a deep breath he completed the text without a break. The passage, referring to the ambivalent nature of folklore figures (11) characteristic in Transylvanian, especially in the Ghymes region, is the following: “*The round forest is the world of Lady Fairs. They appear from the eternal moment. Makovecz.*”

We have no idea (we did not ask him) how these words came to him when we he was asked to write something on the graphic laid out on the immense table of his study in Kecse street. Maybe they were evoked by the round forest represented in the image. While formulating present ideas, we came across another piece which might provide a different answer to this question. Once he put down a short note in his journal entitled *The Archetype* (12), where he even articulates his artistic credo as well (I take architecture seriously. Architecture is a stylistic exercise for me, not a servant subjected to global economic trends longing for power...but...a means to cherish the divine nature in

human soul), he says: we consider the national spirit archangelic. Could it be that this unconscious association (archangel-national spirit-forest) bred this caption?

So far we know about the existence of two other documents with mirror writing on them (13). (In addition, we encourage those who have access to other similar memories or artworks to make them public!)

Angel-mirror (14), known from Makovecz-monographs was made in the mid’70s is a triptych-like, symmetrical text with Neo-Platonist ideas. The Master wrote it with left and write hand simultaneously, moreover, in the way that the reflected version the word *angel* and all words derived from it take the shape of *man*.

The Angel (Man) looks into the mirror / his own image stares back / although his task is to / see through. / He knows, the silver / we have become sometime / secret and reason of his Angelic (Human) visage. / For us it is hope / to see clearly by light / but how could reflect / the mirror / not revealing / just once / the face of angels (men) / but ours.

The other document we are familiar with is (15), a mirrored dedication. *We*

are having wonderful time in Tel Aviv with Miklós Ábeles, time stands still, and we are just talking and talking as if we lived forever. Imre Makovecz, 14 March 1997.

Although mirror-writing is not listed among rare skills, culture history knows only about a small number of people who could perform it besides normal writing (16). (E.g.: Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519; Matteo Zaccolini 1574-1630; Lewis Carroll 1832-1898; Frank James Allen 1854-1943; Béla Kondor 1931-1972)

Studies about Leonardo’s mirror-writing fill libraries. His ability to synchronicity was also noted (17): rumour has it that while he was performing mirror-writing with one hand, was drawing with the other. Among the extraordinary people who have ever lived, Leonardo da Vinci and Imre Makovecz were able to do it.

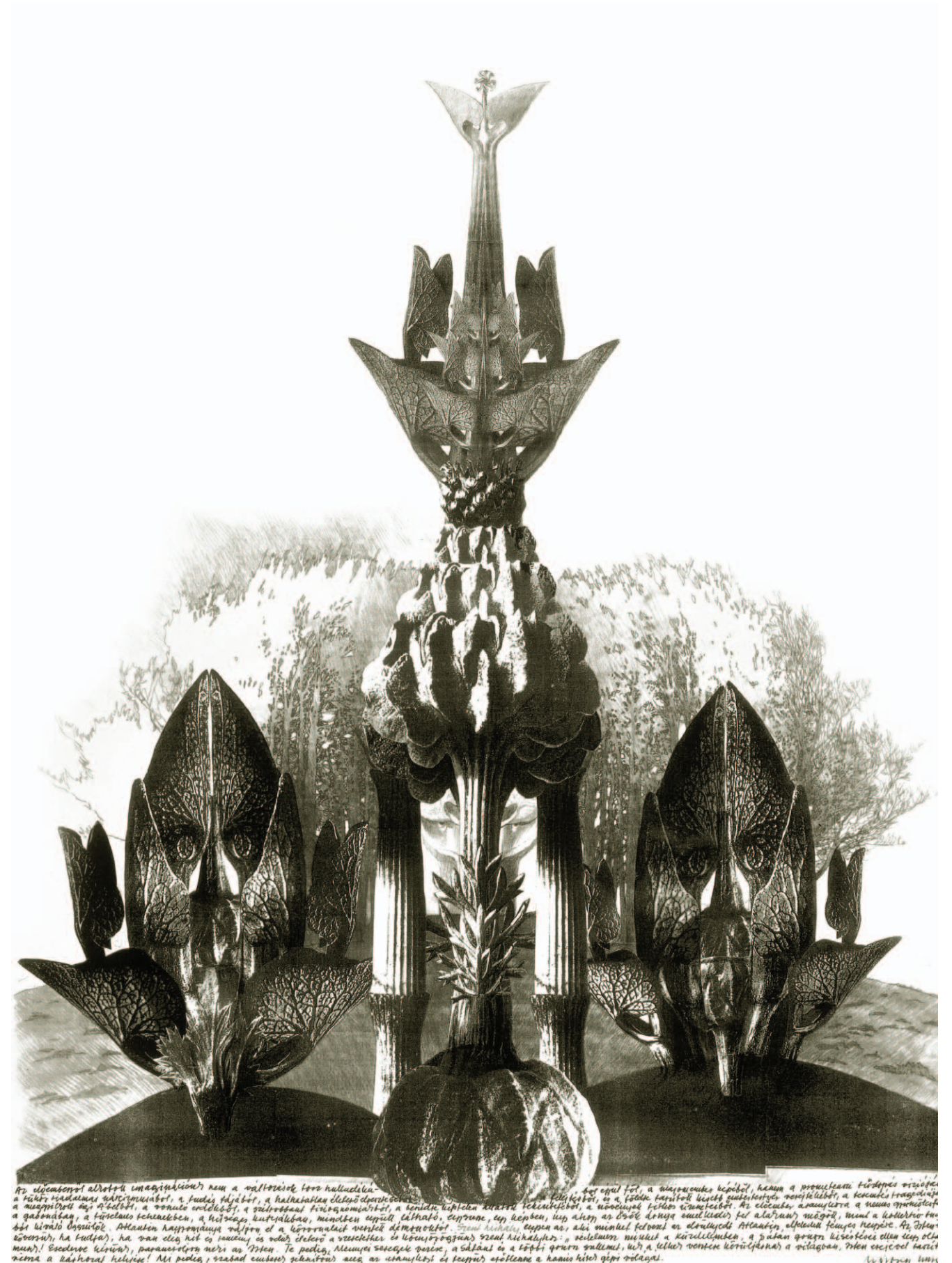
Most probably for both artists - besides having a physiological, neurological basis – mirror-writing was a serious intellectual devotion. Let us invoke their deep attachment to symmetry and Platonism which can be the link between these two great intellects (18).

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- Off the record comment by Zsuzsanna Erdélyi.
- Makovecz I.: Az archetípus. In: *Makovecz Imre – Írások 1989-2009*. Serdián, Budapest, 2009. p. 102-105.
- Imre Makovecz – often amazed a public audience – performed mirror-writing, or synchronic normal and mirror-writing. No data about their location. (Off the record comment by János Gerle)
- Ld. pl.: Gerle J. (ed.): *Makovecz Imre műhelye. Tervek, épületek, írások, interjúk*. Mundus

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- The email including the document was delivered by Benjamin Makovecz.
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- Symmetry, mirror, reflection, the philosophy/theology of “seeing through the glass, darkly” can be key concepts for the understanding of the Makovecz-oeuvre. See for example the composition of the Hungarian pavilion in Seville: the tree-root-glass slab composition is demonstrably the manifestation of the idea, likewise the inspiring force beyond the whole life-work.



Ata emblea totkintu
in domul ei, agam
mai, agam a no noi

masa

Totul, un a fost
mai mult, mai
mai, mai, mai, mai

mai, mai, mai
mai, mai, mai
mai, mai, mai

mai, mai, mai
mai, mai, mai

mai, mai, mai
mai, mai, mai
mai, mai, mai

Ata Anupal tulupe de
Omaga, kepe ucece
bar ar a dolea, hon
adlison.

Tudaja, hon a fost
mi letuins valaha
Anupalrepeineh oha es titha
Neruin, semeiun
hon feunbea casu
de lipan nehetie
virma a tuthor
z hon ne mutatna
rege cyne
anupalok aral
hanem a micuget.

The Carpathian Basin is my homeland. Whether I like it or not. in memoriam Imre Makovecz

István Kálmán

We talk about civil rights all day long, but hardly about the individual, about his fate, or character. We deprive the nation of these human concepts.

Imre Makovecz

My last personal meeting with Imre was early summer, in Hunyadi restaurant. He was about to leave by that time, one could sense that. We conversed in the mood of shiny sadness. Before we left, he said as if to himself: "I do not know what will happen to me after I am dead, all I know is that I got 75 years to do what I can, and for that I am most grateful." When we were shaking hands, he broke into his well-known smile radiating tolerance, understanding and love. His last sentence lives as a question in me. What was Imre's mission? He himself said several times that the task of an architect is to connect Earth and Sky, not in general, ideologically, but through particular manifestations, houses.

Imre Makovecz was not only a world-famous architect, but an active participant of the artistic, literary, political and public spheres as well, who as founder of communities was a role model for his contemporaries and future generations to come. His artistic endeavour and influence is so enormous that it is almost impossible

to provide a comprehensive image of it.

Thus, I would like to highlight only one aspect, which I consider definitely as mission in the sense that we all bring along our missions from pre-existence. Talking to him, I had always had that feeling that he came from the West, from Irish-Celtic traditions, perhaps. The spirit of Asia was foreign to him. His fate led him to Eastern-Central-Europe, to the Carpathian Basin where first the Wilson-doctrine then the "socialist experiment" corrupted.

A mission dawned on him here.

He said in an interview made on the occasion of the church inauguration ceremony at Csíkszereda: *"We have a task here, in the Carpathian Basin: as opposed to the partial, narrow-minded tribal consciousness our ambitions shall be universality, independence in action and creating a free world."*

What is this task, then?

The heart of the Carpathian Basin is the crown lands of Saint Stephen, which as a vertical force at her formation balanced between the powers of Eastern, Byzantine, and Western, Roman influence. Throughout centuries, the country was a shield protecting the West from Eastern storms. The

desolated land was then populated by Slavonic and German immigrants. For centuries, various peoples gathered here, who giving up their national character, lived on among the Hungarians. Therefore here we cannot talk about nationalities in the same sense as in the case of the Western or Southern peoples. Since the end of the 19th century peoples of the Carpathian Basin lived together in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and it would be mistaken to call that a nation state. It was the force of a shared, Central-European culture holding these peoples together: leaving concepts of race and nationalism behind and enforce the human as such.

Imre Makovecz was born in 1935, in the interval of the two world wars in which most of Europe was destroyed. For young man, growing under the supervision of the Socialist Regime it was great trial to find the way to a European Middle, coinciding with Human Middle. He needed clear mind and strong will to do that. And his thinking was free of all intellectualism or ideologies. He could always articulate what he experienced. But he would have not been able to develop that ability – as he himself declared – without Rudolf Steiner's concept of anthroposophy. For him anthroposophy was the way of experiencing reality which was not at all easy to comprehend. He trained his will in fights against power, which power did everything to keep him out of sight by not giving the opportunity to design public buildings. Actually, this helped him to accomplish a task about which he said in Csíkszereda: *"We have a task here, in the Carpathian Basin..."*

In Transylvania, in Upper Hungary* in the Banat his churches, buildings were built in the greatest cooperation, by the alliance of people. He understood their sufferings, trials and had Károly Kós, István Medgyaszay and others at his side – as Imre said – *"they*

did not abandon the idea that Hungarians have chosen suffering as it is related to redemption". His concept of being a Hungarian always meant "nationalities in the Hungarian heart".

"In me what happened and might have happened sum the present" – he writes somewhere. It could have happened that under the changing Habsburg Empire nations had lived in confederacy, free to express and develop their own unique cultures, but this was temporally put back by the "hinterland" in power. However, this realistic idea lives together with the real course of events.

For Imre the spirit of the Carpathian Basin was reality and as such, meant not the past but the future. He could turn "might-have-happens" into reality in his deeds, human relations, art.

"I live as the guest of a Great Master on the earth. Power wants people to give up on this vision, and that everyone has to account for his own life. One comes in high spirits here to cooperate with other people; to overcome mutual struggles and to proceed. A nation cannot just be swept away for the power of God operates in it."

Now from the heavenly spheres Imre Makovecz intellect and spirit

seeks our soul for finding this truth in our souls which he considered his earthly mission. Whether the hearts of those he worked with on bridging two worlds apart are true or false. We, who are still closely related to him in our fate, must listen to his words, and feel that although he crossed the threshold of death, he lives on in our souls, wants to take part in our lives, giving strength for the mutual work still has to be done.

Anthroposophy-oriented culture, to which Imre was loyal all through his life, provides a means for not losing contact with him.



* Upper Hungary is now Slovakia (transl.)



Makovecz

Attila Ertsey

Personal remembrance is important in as much as it is a means to invoke the deceased. However, what really matters is to keep the spirit of the Master awake. Hence, in what follows, I am not talking about him, but what we got from him.

The fate of the world coincides with the fate of Europe, and Europe's fate is closely related to Central-Europe's. Nowadays humanity lives in the European cultural era and it up to the Europeans to fulfil the role this duty assigned for them. However, the course of this task has been diverted.

By the end of the 20th century the materialist culture passed beyond its zenith, tradition was no longer something to lean on and people realized the end of an era and the necessity of creating a new one.

The turn of the century witnessed artistic revolution which gave birth to anthroposophy, art nouveau and this

was also the period of Károly Kós and his contemporaries.

Intellectual and artistic movements were not enough to transform the world, and so Central Europe missed a turn.

It was World War I which set an end to this cultural flourish and beheaded these promising processes when Central Europe was knocked down to the ground. Budding concepts had to give way to three devastating ideologies: bolshevism, Nazism, and Anglo-Americanism. All three vindicated the right for planning the future.

Germany was deprived of its original role and duty, which does not coincide with treading on the path of a materialistic, economical-technical development, but to pass on the advancement of the intellectual heritage of Goethe, Schiller and Herder and by becoming a cultural center of contemporary Europe, our contemporary

world, by providing an institutionalised framework of free intellectual life. Nevertheless, Germany failed to play its part since, instead of keeping to its inherent role, it voted for the Anglo-Saxon model and embarked on military and economic expansion. When it matured into a rival, the same Anglo-Saxon powers elbowed it into the corner.

Hungary, as part of the Monarchy, former member of Central Powers, was split up into national states, and so was deprived of its cohesive function in the Carpathian Basin, therefore could not organize the life of peoples in the region, or become model of a reformed social organism based on the social triad.

The future of Germany, Central Europe and the Carpathian Basin is still the most pressing problem of all. What happens here is tangled up tightly with the wider context. Due to the debt trap, the region is now in subject of economic dependence, modern slavery breeds new forms. Nonetheless, a clear vision of our historical task can be the first step towards regain this independence.

None of us had such a brave heart as Imre Makovecz did. Back in the '80s, when from time to time we gathered in the studio of Ágnes Kádas, which was close to the Astoria, to study anthroposophy under the supervision of

István Kálmán, Imre Makovecz joined us. Once he made the remark: "I would have you know, we do what we do to bring bolshevism to its end" (this is not a word for word transcript of his words, those could well be found in the intercept files of Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security). We exchanged worried glances as if one of us would have said something impolite. For we all hated the Kádár-era, but—strange it may sound—we never believed that its end would be so close.

But Imre always dared to speak out all the latent desires we cherished in our rabbit hearts. He was an intellectual father for many of us, because he represented such a clear vision of masculine principium what our own fathers failed to embody. He made us see what makes a man, a woman, how to reach that primordial androgyny in our souls from which we all come from and constantly heading towards. And, he taught us what love is.

His outspoken remarks often gave us shudders, wondering: would his words bring trouble? Once he asked a young German bluntly, how he felt looking at the photos of the bombed Hamburg. He could confuse him with a single question, who—like all Germans—being deprived of his identity, remorse-laden, can but refer to the essential question concerning his own intellectual existence.

Makovecz bridged the broken intellect of the World War I Europe with the present and the future as well which he often referred to as a "mythic future".

Who shall ask the question today: what is the task, what is the mystery of Central Europe? For being able to articulate such a question, being aware of its latent existence under the even canopy of suppressing forces, we must render our thanks to Imre Makovecz. Would we fail to pass on this intellectuality, no one would do it for us.

Imre Makovecz died in Christ and overcame death. He is still talking to us, day after day. Can we lend an ear?

It is a big question, whether Viktor Orbán recognized who Imre Makovecz really was. The Prime Minister is a talented, charismatic politician and Imre Makovecz was right to say of him: one in a hundred years. However, his deeds are rather contradictory and he often acts instinctively without thorough understanding. Spontaneous decisions might hull occasionally but they do often lack solid ground. Imre Makovecz was there for Viktor Orbán but he did not take the advantage of his presence. He respected the old man, but he did not seem to undertake what his contemporary, Putin could: to recognize the most authentic figure of the Russian national spirit, Solzhen-

itsyn and take him by his side. From now on, it is Putin's responsibility to decide: fail or succeed in passing on his master's heritage. Imre Makovecz did not call upon us to be the henchmen of Viktor Orbán. What he saw was the potential in him. Imre's words point far beyond any charismatic leader's individual deeds or failures. His vision was about a *second Hungary* which hardly left the burden of the Russian yoke behind, right away became the plotting board of a new social experiment. We have to wake up and embark on creating our "second Hungary" which shall thrive even on the ruins of the anti-intellectual, spiritless word order in our present times. For our Master did it in the bolshevist era: he formed communities and was in accord with the ones who accepted him. The question, whether Viktor Orbán, or we, Makovecz acolytes use or misuse the opportunities fallen in our hands, is a burning one.

Our independence is in our hands and by now, we know all about failure. How devoting is to put down even these lines; for how long will we put non-forcing issues off?

Our only driving-force is no else than our blessed Master's sincere look upon us.

Visegrád, Mogyoróhegy (*Hazelnut-hill*) restaurant, 1980



A story from Csenger

Miklós Farkas

*How to go on, Károly Kós Association?
Why am I the member
of the Association?*

In order to draw the answer I must go back to the beginning. For me it means the late 1980-s.

We are in Csenger having a conversation with uncombed, bearded but extremely brilliant young architects and their leader, Imre Makovecz. We are trying to visualize the future institutional buildings in the town center. Two years pass by and we are off to start the construction. The services building is built; the school and the community centre, a kitchen with a dining room, the sports hall, house of health, then the townhall. Makovecz and his students, Menyus, Tészta, Siki, Göndör, Tibi Heil, Laci Vince and the others regularly come to see us. We cope with all the problems emerging during the construction. We are in our early twenties. Today—due to the public procurement law and lack of capital—there 's no chance to build such big houses.

We all are glad to see the phenomena (the constructed houses) that was born from the thought-fertilised material. Then all of a sudden the impetus is over. Makovecz comes to see us less and less, Menyus is the one out of the guys who rarely comes to Csenger. I feel emptiness around me, I can realize just now how big energy they gave me. I'm reading Steiner's writings, *The Szabad Gondolat* and the *Országépítő*, but I'm missing the personal contact, the productive conversations, the atmosphere full of energy. Then came the chance to become member of the Association.

For me it is a high day to gather with you and it was an adventure to meet Imre. Each and every time I gain energy by you.

Once it happened that Makovecz held a training on organic architecture for architects from our county. I attended it too. Imre recognized me and when he started talking about the works in Csenger, he called me out: *"Come on, my son, continue, you know it better than me..."*

My first thought was *"Imre, no, it is completely impossible"*, than the second: *"Don't be scared, be happy that Makovecz called you and gave you a chance."* As he educated and rose us up providing opportunities.

I related a few experiences lived during the construction. I talked about how houses grow up from mud. Not that much about laying the foundations or bond, not even about timbering technics, but how we learnt to think during the process of building houses, how we became creative personalities having experienced success and failure. I also talked about the capacity of a team which became a union, that's why I'm a member of it.

What do you wish to do for the goals of the union?

Every good thing created by human is born twice, first the thought comes, than it becomes real from the material in the physical world. The two things don't exist without each other and let's not change the order. So to say *"the theory stays sterile without practice, but practice is completely useless in the lack of theory"*.

That's why I try to put the thoughts born on the bases of Steiner's philoso-

phy, which is overtaken by the perception, observation with all our senses into practice.

Anytime I have the chance I receive a wanderer and I give him an implementation task.

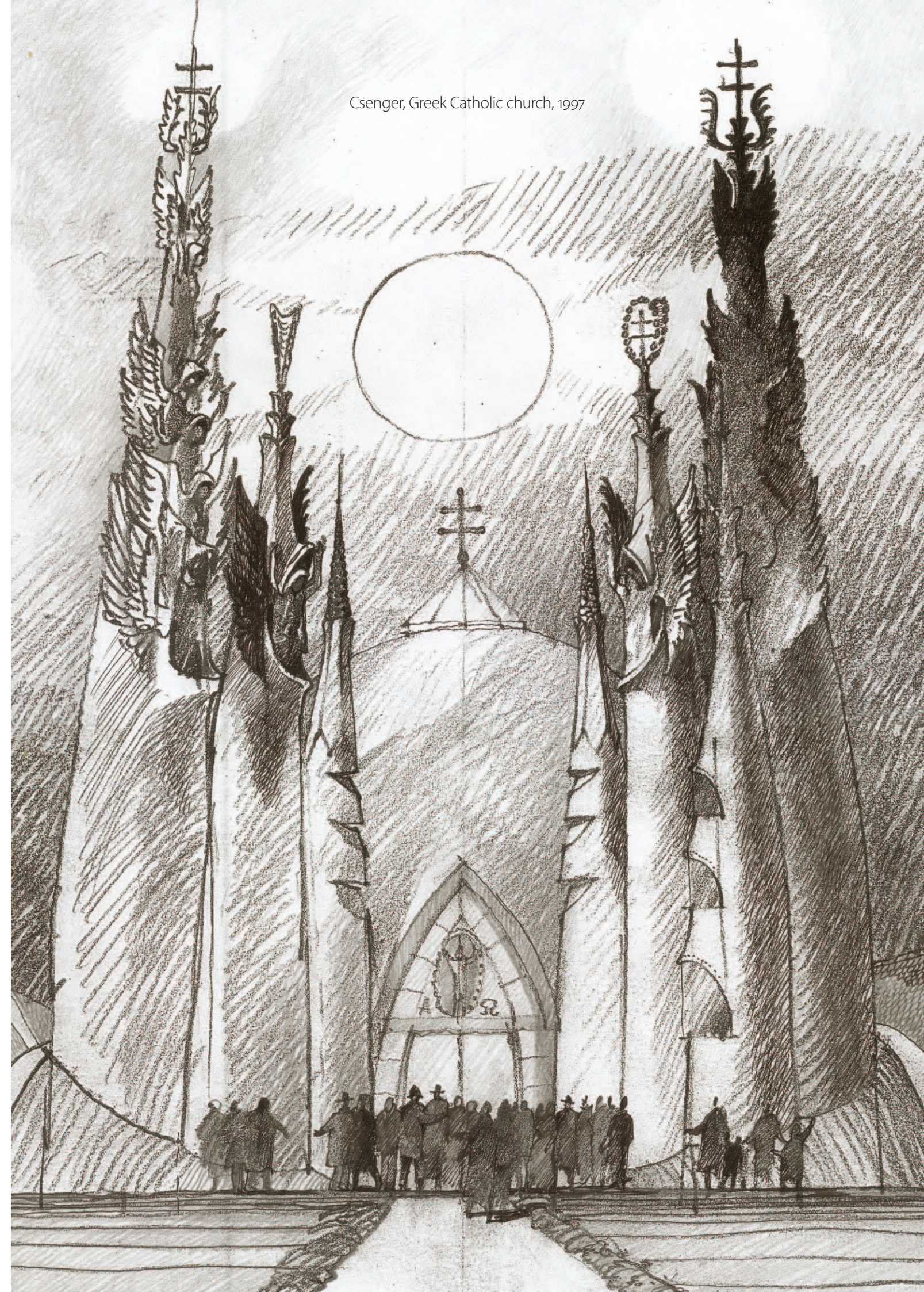
Only who treads the muddy mother Earth too and think together with the working craftsmen building the house can design a good house later. Since a good house is born indeed, it comes to earth with the power of thought, not just building material piled up. It needs cement, bricks and wood, also the power of the machines and the money to purchase them, but all these are only means, the thought is most important.

Money is the lowest level of motivation. People desire for more, they want to create, to be glad, to prove, to be free, to experience success. What makes a being human? The fact that he or she can work? I don't think so... a horse or a donkey works too. What then? The self-awareness, I am aware of my own existence, I am aware of my duties, my rights, my responsibility. A good house comes into being only in case when all the participants of the construction think this way.

We can only make artistic thoughts happen, if we are aware of the laws of nature, as we need to build of mud, stone, wood and all kinds of mineral derivatives onwards too. To do that one needs to know nature, one must walk in forests, waters and hills.

In Csenger on the bank of Szamos river we have created a boathouse with a camping and cooking place. Every member of the Association is welcome here, in case they want to recreate with the power of nature. The river and the forest located in the drainage area charm the visitors with its varied outfit and different scents according to the seasons. Some of the wanderers have already gained a bit of experience of it. Rowing, hiking and biking by day, singing and chatting around the bonfire even about Steiner's philosophy.

Csenger, Greek Catholic church, 1997



Imre Makovecz

Paolo Portoghesi

By the end of the 80s, international culture discovered a territory long remained unknown; one that gave back hope to those who considered the advent of postmodernism from an anthropological perspective and expected that the reconquering of the dimension of the sacred would gain momentum in the halo of this centrifugal movement.

Hungarian architects played an important role in rekindling this hope. In their isolation, they created a current that was highly autonomous with respect to the international discourse, but in tune with the attempts to reconnect modernism with history.

Most talented and active among the architects representing this new organicism is Imre Makovecz. Born in Budapest in 1935, he is the author of a large number of works characterized by an original and creative use of wooden structures.

"I believe – wrote Makovecz in 1985 – that the original intention of our architecture was to establish a connection between heaven and earth that explains and expresses the condition of man in order to create something magical, a theory based on the study of movement of the human body."

His interpretation of the minimum space is a capsule in the shape of a bell or rather a flower turned upside down, composed of two hinged parts joined like a conch shell, a metaphor of the human condition poised between the temporal and the eternal, between the ephemeral and the transcendent. For Makovecz, architecture is the expression of a realm that combines, on

the one hand, the topicality of everything that is going on and has already occurred with the quality of legendary, and on the other hand, the legendary domain of the eternal return with the myriad of possibilities of what could have been, but was not to be.

The first complete expression of this fascinating vision about the role of architecture occurred in 1975, with the construction of a mortuary chapel inside an existing building. The space is shaped by a series of wooden ribs that simulate the interior of a rib cage and at the same time give the impression of organized vegetable matter. Originally standing at the foot of a sculpture representing the primordial entity of Norse mythology, the tree of life, the mortuary mound closes off this perspective.

Between 1974 and 1982, Makovecz created the cultural center of Sárospatak, boldly combining the plasticity of concrete with the linearity of wooden structures.

These interior spaces merge two traditions: Art Nouveau (particularly Guimard, but also Károly Kós, whom Makovecz remembers as his master) and rural architecture. However, the success of his captivating oeuvre caused an infinite amount of trouble to him. The cultural establishment of Hungarian architecture rejected this current because it left plenty of space for freedom of expression and would not submit to the directives of the authoritarian regime.

After striving for a long time to bring it to fruition, Makovecz was forced to bear the exclusion from his design



office. Moreover, the permission to practice his profession was also withdrawn. Only his relationships made during the construction of the center saved him from being condemned to inactivity and gave him the chance to return to design, with the condition, however, to do so only within the boundaries of the Pilis nature reserve.

This was an opportunity for the architect to bond even deeper with nature and the local culture. A series of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic wooden buildings document this period, inspired by ancient decorative motifs and Hungarian embroidery.

In 1984, the political climate thawed up and Makovecz was allowed to set up a project planning group of his own, the Makona Group. Slowly expanding its influence and contributing to the organic trend that was on track to galvanize the best exponents of architectural culture in the forthcoming years, the group received significant international attention at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 1989.

The return to the market economy made it possible to the architect to accept the requests of private customers. He went on to build them houses of great spatial appeal that often reflected on the theme of the tree, imagined in its natural surroundings, with asymmetrical branching. The two interpenetrated, planimetric Steinerian circumferences appear in many of his works, including certain homes in the community center of Szigetvár (1985), marking a renewed interest in conventional morphologies reinterpreted through the cult of lightness and transparency.

In the last years of the eighties, Makovecz created the Lutheran church in Siófok (1986–1990) and the Catholic church in Paks (1987–1990), two masterpieces that paved the way for him to be assigned as the architect of the Hungarian pavilion at the Exhibition of Seville in 1992. Anthropomorphism dominates the external image of the church in Siófok, the facade of which

is built around the image of two eyes gazing upon two outstretched wings – a metaphor of the Almighty, but also showcasing the concept according to which the building is a living being that has a soul and a gaze. Another remarkable element is the large roof covered with wooden tiles, hiding the nave, a large careened vault extending transversely to the monumental entrance. The imagination and figurative power of Makovecz culminate in the contemporary Catholic church in Paks, certainly one of the few churches built in the 20th century that are significant with respect to the whole history of architecture. Its tricuspidate bell tower, serving as a barrier to the outside world with its dark bulk, emphatically carves out the sacred space from the profane.

One must wade deep into the thick and gloomy body of this sacred space to step into the church, crossing below a triple blazing arc: once at the entrance to the tower, then at its exit and finally, at the entrance to the church where it appears on both sides, lodged between two helical walls that support the two figures of angels in the center. The foundation of the nave, completely covered with shingles, is raised to stress the importance of the connection between the building and the ground.

The plant, a decorative motif derived from the traditional Hungarian repertoire of Celtic origins (two “S” shapes, mirrored side by side), gives shape to a single nave that doubles with an extraordinary expressive force at the point where the light pours in from the two transparent domes, flooding the space above the altar and the figure of Christ standing between the two angels with wings spread wide. During the Exposition of Seville, the Hungarian pavilion was among the most visited sites. Makovecz attempted to interpret the brief history of his people, perpetually caught between East and West and frequently frustrated by having to protect their

independent identity from the influence of foreign occupation.

The apparently banal image of the tree, to which the architect entrusted the maximum symbolic value, reappears inserted into one of the two naves into which the pavilion was split, clearly visible not only for its extensive foliage, but also for the root system, located beneath a floor to stress the point that life goes on partly in the light and partly in the darkness and too often do we blindly pretend that life can do without darkness.

In the first decade of the 21st Century, Makovecz continued his creative work along a consistent pattern, even if the influence of his vision had diminished, to stand his ground in a time when a trend of wild individualism and autoreferentiality was in emergence all across Europe in the works of the most celebrated architects.

There will be some who will compare the oeuvre of Makovecz and his associates to the flash of a meteor, doomed to swift disappearance burnt out by its own intensity. You can invite these people to reflect upon the harmony between this architecture and the new paradigm of science that has recently found its central reference in the ecological frame of thought. In spite of its technical choices and its intentional “regionality”, Hungarian organic architecture speaks a language without borders and deals with universal problems, such as the relationship between man and land, the dimension of the sacred or the relationship between individual and community; problems that are going to rise to an undeniable centrality because the fate of mankind depends on how we manage to solve them.

In a time of cataclysmal upheavals and monstrous creations by celebrated architects that seem to promote nothing else but conflicts, destruction and masochistic hedonism, the rib cages of Makovecz remind us of the stomach of the whale from where Jonah was catapulted into resurrection.

The One who lives forever in the present

Jacques Gillet

The internal space of a chapel in the Farkasréti cemetery in Budapest—this is the first insightful vision of a journey into the depths of existence. This is how I first heard the name of Imre Makovecz.

Tucked away in a remote corner of Eastern Europe, long forgotten, oppressed by invasive forces, the dignity of the human condition lived on in the intense expression of a unique imagination.

This name, Imre Makovecz, will always remind me of the freedom of creation and the forces behind it. He is my own personal Bruce Goff whom I love for creating perfection while expressing his deepest nature.

1985, Paris, rue Bonaparte. I am among the guests invited to the reception of Imre Makovecz. I arrive in the first-floor foyer moments before the exhibition is inaugurated. Imre and his Hungarian friends are busy with arranging the setting. János Káldi plays the role of the host, invent-

ing small captions to the photos: sculptor and architect, my students, the famous organic architect, Sullivan Wright, Bruce Goff, Herb Greene and so on. Imre is keen on showing us the ski mansion of Dobogókő, deliberately comparing it to the house built in Oklahoma by Herb Greene. I pass him the text of my speech I read out at the opening event of a seminar and am pleased to be told the day after that he liked it a lot.

An exhibition is about to be opened in the School of Arts on November 14, 1985, celebrated with a comprehensive dossier entitled Imre Makovecz: The Metaphor and the Organic Plan, prepared in cooperation by J. Boulet, D. Guibert and J. Káldi. Previously that week, the Paris-Villemin School of Architecture organized a seminar with Imre Makovecz and other guest artists from France and other countries and advertised it in the June/July 1985 issue of *Technique et Architecture*. The captions to the pictures of Imre Makovecz

were also published in this issue, translated by János Káldi and Dezső Ekler. The works of György Csete, Gábor Mezei, András Erdei, László Péterfy, János Gerle and Attila Kovács were also featured in it.

Naturally, that issue also serves as a source for this very text. I have here two short quotes, one from its beginning and one from its end.

Some Hungarian words for certain elements of architecture recall human body parts: 'szemöldök' (brow), 'homlokzat' (forehead). I am fascinated by the way Makovecz thinks about these elements and about architecture in general. „When (...) I imagine a home that I have never seen before, I call upon these expressions to help me build it in my imagination. Suddenly, a strange creature appears to me, part after part: a forehead, a backbone, waiting for me with wings spread wide. I take shelter under its brows and transpire into its innards, into the enveloping fire.” I want to do nothing else but rejoice when I hear such warm words. I've come to celebrate Imre Makovecz!

Finally, the words of Saint-Exupéry seem to have been addressed to Imre Makovecz, at the time when he dug out the small brooch at Tápé and the idea of the cultural centre of Sárospatak took hold of his imagination:

„You passed in front of his work (...) and, lo, you weren't the same any more, even if a hundred thousand years have passed between his action and your passing.”



Makovecz

Edwin Heathcote

Visitors to the Hungarian pavilion at the 1992 Seville Expo came in from the searing heat to a cavernous, dark space with a great curving roof like a cathedral. At its centre was a tree, brought from the Hungarian plains, stripped bare and set into a glass floor so that its roots, which stretched as far and wide as its branches, were made visible. It was the work of Hungarian architect Imre Makovecz, who has died aged 75. He was one of the most remarkable and deeply political architects of the twentieth century. Commissioned in 1990, after the collapse of the Communist regime, his Expo pavilion became a symbol of Hungary's newfound freedom. Makovecz, the son of a laboratory technician, was born in Budapest in 1935. While at the technical university, he took part in the failed revolution of 1956 and was jailed. Once freed, he defied the communist regime at every opportunity. It consistently attempted to marginalise him, though rarely to much effect. He began his career in the state architecture offices—the only ones available in the 1960s—designing public buildings. He made a name for himself with a series of expressive, sculptural structures including the Bodrog department store (1969) and myriad inventive restaurants. Each was an attempt to counter the prevailing trend for system-building and pre-fabrication that Hungary had been “encouraged” to import from the Soviet Union—an architecture of mass production. Makovecz vehemently opposed the idea of a universal design solution, believing that for designs to have a

meaning they must be related to the landscape and to folk memory.

In 1975 he designed a small cemetery chapel in Budapest which elicits gasps from those seeing it for the first time. The interior is in the shape of a beast's belly – perhaps a hint of Jonah in the Whale – defined by curving wooden ribs descending to an undulating spine above a funeral bier. Between each rib is carved an anthropomorphic seat, complete with head and arms, as if the chapel were populated by ghostly figures. “Our buildings evoke an ancient, often dark atmosphere,” he said, “the murmuring of long dead being seen can be heard from the walls.” By now, the authorities, suspicious of his nationalism and his use of architecture as a form of political rebellion, could stand no more. In 1977 he was, literally, exiled to the forests. Sent to design a campsite in the hills, it was thought he could do no harm there. He could. Away from the eyes of authority, Makovecz started developing a language blending folk-motifs with an organic architecture. This was derived partly from his hero, the Austrian philosopher and designer Rudolf Steiner, partly from Frank Lloyd Wright and partly from his own imagination. Mundane structures—toilet blocks, picnic shelters—were turned into essays in sculptural symbolism, evoking the shapes of eagles, buffaloes, and the yurts of the Magyars who came to Hungary a millennium ago. He also attracted a group of young acolytes training them, in secret sessions, to build with their own hands and to understand a suppressed Hun-

garian culture. This school will survive him. He started accepting commissions from villages for new municipal buildings which would give a sense of local identity as against state-sponsored blocks. Using trees as columns and undulating roofs of tile and timber, he worked to re-engage with civic life through folk culture and memory.

His church at Paks is one of the most striking and moving of the last century. Clad like a dragon in scale-like slates, with an overtly sexual entrance and a tripartite spire capped with the symbols of sun, moon and crucifix, it seems half pagan, half Christian, a building steeped in symbolism. By the time the church was completed in 1990, communism had collapsed. Makovecz was acclaimed as a national hero. Yet he came to believe that the destruction caused by communism was echoed by the globalising steamroller of the consumer society. He turned his attention to the multi-nationals and the corruption of politics by money. Yet his work needed the focus of opposition. His more recent buildings, whilst striking, lacked the revolutionary impact of earlier works. Always willing to take on rural projects for little or no money, his practice folded last year, as he railed against clients who wouldn't pay even his modest bills. Unlike many of his successful contemporaries Makovecz was uninterested in becoming a global superstar: he was always too wedded to the Hungarian landscape and language. His sculptural, symbolic style made him simultaneously an international inspiration and an untranslatable phenomenon. Poetic, charismatic, endlessly generous and indomitable,

He was a uniquely Hungarian figure and a truly great man. He is survived by his wife, Marianne, and their three children.

(An architect appalled at communism and consumerism alike. October 1, 2011 Financial Times)

Greetings from Finland

Markku Komonen

I first met Imre Makovecz in 1980. I had just begun working as the director of the Exhibition Department in the Museum of Finnish Architecture. My task was to organise exhibitions presenting the achievements of Finnish architects in various countries and to host interesting exhibitions from abroad in Finland.

Reima Pietilä told me to remember Imre Makovecz's name if I ever visited Hungary. I eventually travelled to Budapest and arranged a meeting with him and some of his colleagues. I was given photos and illustrations of his architectural work, which I showed Juhani Pallasmaa, the museum's director, and we decided to invite Makovecz and his fellow architects to organise an exhibition of their work in Finland. The exhibition was called "Symbols and traditions – New directions in Hungarian architecture".

This exhibition paved the way for their international acclaim. I wrote articles for *Suomen Arkkitehtilehti*, the Finnish architectural review, and for *Byggekunst*, a Norwegian journal.

The buildings designed by Makovecz and his fellow architects represented an unusual, exciting phenomenon in the postmodern Americanised world. This Hungarian school with its regional hues could be likened to the architectural movement that had appeared in Ticino in Switzerland and in Porto in Portugal.

We followed these movements and trends with growing interest, and we invited a group from Ticino and Alvaro Siza from Porto to Finland well before they became household names

in the world of architecture. I came to know Imre Makovecz and his family quite well. When Anna Makovecz came to Helsinki to study art, her mother Marianne wrote me a long, poignant letter. Imre's letter was more to the point, asking me to help his daughter while she was in Finland. Anna studied at the Free Art School and she also lectured there after graduation. She had mastered Finnish perfectly. I had been a student at the same school because I felt that I had received too little education in art in the architectural school I attended. Later, I acted as Chairman of the Board of the Free Art School.

Pál, Anna's brother, too came to Helsinki to study at the Sibelius Academy, where he met the pianist Reeta, whom he became his wife. He too learnt Finnish.

We spent the summer with our respective families on the Sarlópuszta horse farm, which was paradise itself to my daughter, also called Anna, who was enamoured of horses at the time.

We flew Hungarian kites with Imre, real beauties created from a gossamer, silk-like material, their spine made from thin aluminium tubes, the wings held by curved, flexible stiffeners. The two long sides of our triangular kites flapped in the wind like butterfly wings. I was presented with two kites, one blue, the other yellow. They took to the northern winds of Finland too. Our last holiday together was spent by Tisza, in the cottage owned by the Makovecz family.

Imre has achieved international acclaim since I first met him.

He was real patriotic romantic and an architect in the truest sense of the word, not simply an illustrator as so many modern architects are. He reached to the very roots of folk tradition, to the myths and the symbols, just like Eliel Saarinen, Lars Sonck and others in Finland, and like Károly Kós in Hungary before him. In this, he resembled the musicians, artists and poets of both Finland and Hungary who drew their inspiration from their homeland's folk traditions.

I remember how he once drew me a picture of a traditional Hungarian peasant house and its finer details. As he explained to me, each part of the house corresponded to one part of the human body. I have often used this drawing in my lectures when explaining the primordial anthropomorphic nature of architecture.

I visited Imre's grave last year, when the wreaths were still fresh. I think of him as a good friend and as one of my masters, even though we drew quite different sorts of houses.

We did not have a common language, but our children's knowledge of Finnish and Marianne's superb English solved this problem.

When I think of Imre, I see him as a romantic, patriotic idealist, and various other thoughts inevitably occur to me.

In the early 1990s, he brought me a small piece of the barbed wire that had separated Eastern and Western Europe. I still have that piece of wire enclosed in a small gift box – to me, it embodies a moment in time when hopes and expectations ran high.

Today, Hungary's policy in this new Europe never ceases to amaze me.

I have always been fascinated by regional and national identity, by ancestral roots, myths and symbols. Even more intriguing is the search for the common, timeless elements shared by different peoples and cultures.

It is to my great regret that Imre and I can no longer share our thoughts on these interesting issues.



Makó, pavilion, 2012

Makovecz's international relations

János Gerle

Imre Makovecz is the only known and acknowledged Hungarian architect whose fame abroad has been a lasting one in professional circles. Even though he was not at all interested in boosting his image—he only cared about work. There are many reasons why he did not become a star architect in the '80s and '90 when all celebrated architects started soar and his works also were in the focus of interest. On the one hand, even today, it is impossible cross the economic-cultural boundary, and lacking the support of powerful international investors, construction companies and the media related to them the chances for a brake through are low. Makovecz's most significant works (international and domestic ones) remained unfinished although they could have been carried out by the help of some alternative architectural movement. It was too tempting to misinterpret him from abroad. When we tried to put across at David Chipperfield, the main curator, to honour Imre Makovecz's oeuvre with a life achievement award at the opening of Venice Biennale, we received the off-the-record information from the curator's close quarters that due to the difference in taste and mental attitude our initiation is hopeless, and his office in the official reply stated that the issue is not actual.

I appreciate the this year's awarded architect, Alvaro Siza, however, it is a fact that being already a Pritzker-awarded creator won the UIA Gond Medal following last year in addition to the countless other prizes he has

already had—like in the case of any other international star. When the idea of recommending Imre Makovecz for an international award came up, national authorities prevented the documents from proper submission in terms of deadline and expertise. The most decisive and least comprehensible reason is that Imre Makovecz consciously created and consistently followed an architectural style which in the '80-'90-s—although with an emphasis on its exotic nature—suited the mainstream, but journal, propaganda and star architecture—along with the misuse of some principle even Makovecz had shared—has taken a radical turn, and so however well deserved it would be, the life achievement award is indeed not actual today.

After his death the Imre Makovecz Charitable Organization aims at surveying and compiling his works as he never documented them. Such tasks fell to colleagues to do according to and besides their own professional duties, ambitions and actual necessities. During the last five years he had a secretary working on his side, who kept his correspondence, official documents and schedule in neat order. Before that it had been a third part-time job for some people, who would come once or twice a week to the office, but staying away from the professional context. Thus, Makovecz did not have an edited file of drawings, photographs and many of his works are inaccessible, to put it subtly.

Since his first domestic exhibition in Hajdúszoboszló, 1976, but mainly after

his first international one in Helsinki, 1981, there has always been a Makovecz-exhibition on. To collect the necessary materials, to design and manage and caption these pieces just as organizing its delivery to and back the location fell also on the shoulders of available colleagues, which meant limited excellence but self-sufficient finance. Some tableaux with historic significance from the earliest exhibitions either disappeared or got ruined. Taking after Imre Makovecz's method, that is, drawing on the photocopy of a plan's previous version then adding something, creating a montage from it and photocopying it again, these exhibition materials went through the same processes to assemble and drift from one display and language to another. Each new exhibition required great effort which then toured across the most important exhibition sites such as Germany, Poland, Scotland, England etc. to end up in the collection.

The task to give an account on Imre Makovecz's external relations is really hard to grasp and cannot be complete. Personal and professional relations mix, we are short of documents, and Makovecz, as far as I know, got rid of his previous notebook each and every new year. His international relationships were limited by the fact that he did not speak foreign languages, although he could cope well with English. He embarked on acquisitioning a second language more times but he might have been withheld by the fact that for him Hungarian was the language of expression and so could have only been satisfied if he had been able to perform in a foreign language as stylishly as in his native language. So he always had an interpreter by his side when he gave a talk, first András Erdei, later János Gerle, sometimes his wife, Marianne Szabó or local Hungarians whose performance was always unreliable. He usually came to turns with the quality of the work of others but as for himself, he was a maximalist.

Compared to his contemporaries, Makovecz was highly cultured which source has remained a mysterious even today. As he said, at the university he had access to some non-public Hungarian translations (F. L. Wright, Rudolf Steiner) with special permissions, and had the opportunity to study the international journal's photos which got into public collections at the end of the '50s. And he could easily navigate among these materials, comprehend them and pass on what he learned to his students at the master academy. (The workshop-like master academy in 1969-70 dealt with Cordier's article dedicated to the interpretation of intellectual relations in 20th century architecture entitled *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (1968).

During his first visit to Finland (1969-70), András Erdei met Arvi Ilonen who supported him in many ways later. In 1977, on his next round trip with Anikó Szentesi, he talked a lot about György Csete and Imre Makovecz whom he knew well personally by then. Later he took some photographs with himself on his three months scholarship and met Juhani Pallasmaa, director of Finnish Museum of Architecture, Ilonen, Matti Mäkinen and Reima Pietilä. He visited Stockholm as well and according to his notes, on returning home he talked about a possible future exhibition to Makovecz. The number of such journal entries increased in the next year and the material of the first exhibition (Makovecz; Csete and Co.; Tibor Jankovics; Péter Olta; István Kistelegdy; Jenő Dulánszky; András Erdei; Attila Kovács; Gábor Mezei). Since February 1980 Markku Komonen joined the work and became the curator of the exhibition and friends with Makovecz and his family. Imre Makovecz was present at the opening ceremony.

The most of the display material was produced by András Erdei who mounted the photos on fibreboard. Brief journal entries from the succeeding two years give evidence of the

strengthening bonds with Pietilä, the Swedish exhibition plans, Mäkinen's presentation in Budapest, Komonen and the Lampels' visits from Stockholm.

The Helsinki exhibition went on to the Alto Museum, Jyväskylä, Stockholm, and by the help of Jenő Molnár, Imre Makovecz's Austrian help for many years, to Graz and Innsbruck. Soon after the Finnish exhibition and publications Jonathan Glancey English architecture journalist came to Budapest. Makovecz wrote about him in the foreword of *Architecture and Philosophy* in 2005 (Axel Menges, Stuttgart): *Glancey visited Eastern-Europe for the very time, came by train and arrived in Keleti Railway Station, where he was exposed to gypsies and Arabs trying to speak him into money exchange. He called in fright and so my wife Marianne went to fetch him by her Renault 4, but even after he they got home safe and sound, he was obviously terrified by the course of things here. Jonathan, this interesting, young man with sparkling eyes and floating hair thought that I am a national hero rebelling against communism and do everything I do for the sake of protest and in reaction to my social environment. Maybe due to his limited knowledge or information or the complex net woven from prejudices about Eastern regions made him believe that he is talking to a strange shamanistic protester, and he could not be persuaded to put that idea aside. He published essays on my works several times, full of misunderstandings (the last one was his obituary on Makovecz) but I recall this relationship as a nice, a positive one, for this was the channel through which Eastern Europe and a curious Western intelligentsia could communicate, even though due to fundamental differences comprehending the specific cultural context was not always easy. Dennis Sharp also shared such misconceptions, who regarded my work as a fully individual quest for going against communism propagating communal structures.*

The following years journalists with Hungarian origins or living abroad visited Hungary frequently, they were happy to have something correspond: Juliana Bálint (the Netherlands), Peter Meleghy, Christoph Bürkle, Zoltan Magyar (Germany), John Macsai, Susan Szenasy (USA). Éva and Miklós Lampel (Sweden), János Káldi (France), Anne-Marie Eifert (Germany), Klára Alföldi (Austria), and through his wife Anthony Tischhauser (Switzerland, England) and Edwin Heathcote (England) did even more to familiarize their admired master's name with the world. They organized exhibitions, performances and wrote articles, books.

According to András Erdei's notes in the early '80s Scandinavian interest was the strongest, but unfortunately, we know little about Swedish and Norwegian visitors, exhibition plans, continuous phone calls, or guest student groups. In 1984 Erdei held presentations in Oslo and Trondheim. Imre Makovecz travelled extensively in that period, especially compared to the amount he was ready to make in later years. As years passed he lost interest in travelling, it was more and more difficult to induce him to get on a plane. So he lived with the opportunity of sending someone on his behalf and give a talk instead of him quite often, sometimes causing serious disappointment. András Erdei, Dezső Eklér, Lőrinc Csernyus, János Gerle and others travelled as delegates while he was happily absorbed in work. András Erdei died suddenly in 1986 (Imre Makovecz kept his plaster portrait in the office in his memoriam).

Prince Charles paid several visits to Hungary in relation to the projects he supported. Architecture was his priority back then, especially those alternative movements which leant on tradition, regionalism, cultural context, sustainability and were mostly excluded by the English architect society. The Hungarian pavilion in Seville made a deep impression on him to which he gave voice in his letter of

appreciation. Breaking with the rules of usual protocol, Prince Charles was Makovecz's dinner guest during his next stay in Hungary. *The meeting was arranged previously with both parties.* The personal relationship led to professional connections and important events. The Wanderer School of Kós Károly Association and the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture signed a cooperation agreement and in 1993 and 1994 English students took part in a training camp similar to the one in Visegrád. Under the guidance of Ferenc Salamin, Tibor Bata, Árpád Álmódsi and Zolt Tusnády they built up their own pavilion.

Makovecz was invited to submit a project plan for the reconstruction work of the Windsor Castle's interior which had burnt down. As a result of negotiations with the Prince's advisors, Makovecz was invited to an exhibition in London to design the exhibition site, a temporary pavilion. On his site visits he got acquainted with Sir John Soane's house museum. The spaces seen there made a great impression on him and so he integrated some illusionary elements into the pavilion as well. Makovecz had been interested in spaces altering consciousness for long decades which is a common feature between the pavilion in Seville and the London-plan. The rest of the pavilion evoked the Sloanean spirit in Makovecz's style. The material on display became secondary behind the spatial experience and optical illusions. After the closing of exhibition, further plans were about taking the pavilion to the Prince's estate on the border of England and Wales, to demonstrate the inherent duality of a border state, expressing the paradox of the geopolitically unique location where two spatial experiences meet (this was an integral part of the Seville pavilion as well).

The political climate was changing around Charles and he withdrew from domestic architecture affairs, so bonds got loose, the exhibition did not come

under roof at the end. In 1992 and 1995 there were two important exhibition series in Scotland and England and Makovecz was appointed as honorary member first, in 1993 of the Scottish then, in 1998, of the English society of architects. Prince Charles paid a visit again to Hungary in 2001 and the British ambassador gave reception in his honour to which distinguished members of different professions were invited to have the opportunity of meeting the Prince. Imre Makovecz was among the invited architects and he was—most likely—prepared to ask about the breaking off relations without any explanation and about the Prince's unavailability. The architects' turn was towards the end of the reception. But soon after Mihály Ráday stood out to offer his book to the Prince and exchange some words, the organizers were leading Charles out of the room, so he did not even see Makovecz. It was sort of relief for him to some extent. He received the invitation to the RIBA farewell party but he did not take part. The English relations were maintained by the work of the Prince's advisors, first and foremost Brian Hanson, Charles Knevitt, director of the Institute and Dennis Sharp.

Anthony Tischauer's attention was called up by his Hungarian mother-in-law. As chief editor of *Archithese* (Zurich) he was so fascinated by the images and information he received that he contacted Makovecz right away and announced to write a book on his art. The book (*Bewegte Form - Movable Form*, with Prince Charles's foreword) was published in 2001. It is the product of a 16 year long work (it some years to find a publisher). Hungarian involvement reduced financial problems and the problem was finally solved. Tischauer visited Budapest often, went to see the buildings, took photographs of them, and sat in Makovecz's office to get answers for his questions. By the time the book was launched, Tischauer got tired of the work, waiting plunged him into serious existential

problems and so he moved: first to South-Africa, then to England where now he deals with lighting technology. Roughly about the same time as Tischauer, the Norwegian Britt Kroepelin art historian also got in touch with Makovecz. Initially he was interested in Erik Asmusen's works, but then he found it more compelling—maybe taking Asmusen's advice—to compare it with Makovecz's architecture as he got to know it in Järna. He did all the sites available in the '80s (I took photographs to him, but however hard I tried, I never received the copy of those by now irreplaceable pictures), he wrote his thesis at the University of Bergen, held lectures, then disappeared without a trace, leaving his work incomplete.

From the early '90s Francois Burkhart art journalist, editor, formerly director of the Pompidou Centre's collection of architecture, chief editor of *DOMUS* at that time, came to see Makovecz more and more often. He found Makovecz's works outstanding among contemporary crosscurrents in architecture and published several articles, gave lectures on it. After the millennium he still came gladly and frequently to Hungary, he kept his friendship with Imre Makovecz, but expressed his concerns on the trend losing its force and dynamism.

Paolo Portoghesi, main curator of the Venice Biennale for many years, architect, university professor kept his faith in Hungarian organic architecture. He wrote it down and talked about it more times that the nucleus of the most important impulse for architecture resides in the activity of this movement. The improvement of Italian connections during the last years is due to him and partly to Makovecz's enthusiastic supporters in Italy, Olga Hainess and Maya Nagy.

By Edwin Heathcote's books, including his Makovecz-monograph (*The Wings of the Soul*) English relations started to rise again. Alex Váci organized an exhibition on contemporary



With Frank O'Gehry in Budapest

Hungarian architecture at the RIBA and initiated the farewell party in March 2012 filling completely the main lecture hall and, among the audience, with English admirers of Makovecz.

In 2006 as a guest of MÉSZ (Hungarian Society of Architects) Frank O'Gehry visited Hungary. He announced in advance he would like to meet Makovecz, but it was carefully omitted from his official schedule. There was no other way, he escaped, got into a taxi and went to Kecske Street looking for Makovecz. He was there, came out, they embraced and then Gehry got back to the car and returned to his prescribed programme.

I summer 2011, Gianfranco Ravasi cardinal, Minister of Education organized an exhibition from works of 60 prominent Christian artist in the room named after Pope Paul VI, designed by Pier Luigi Nervi on the occasion of the 60th jubilee of Pope Benedict XVI. The aim of the exhibition was to highlight the future directions in the rela-

tionship between the Church and contemporary art. Imre Makovecz was among the eight invited architects together with Oscar Niemeyer, Renzo Piano, Zaha Hadid, Paolo Portoghesi, David Chipperfield, Mario Botta and Santiago Calatrava. The Pope received the artists and a book from Makovecz entitled *Temples*, edited and published by his daughter, Anna Makovecz and Miklós Serdián. His displayed work was the panel on the church in Upper-Kisbuda. This list of invited artist shows that Imre Makovecz made a well-deserved place for himself in the first league of the prominent architects and belongs there only thanks to his extraordinary intellect.

In my data collection I made an attempt to provide information about as many international event or relation as possible and as briefly as possible. Most of them (including titles of articles, exact bibliography data) can be found in the Makovecz-volumes compiled by me (1996. Mundus, 2002

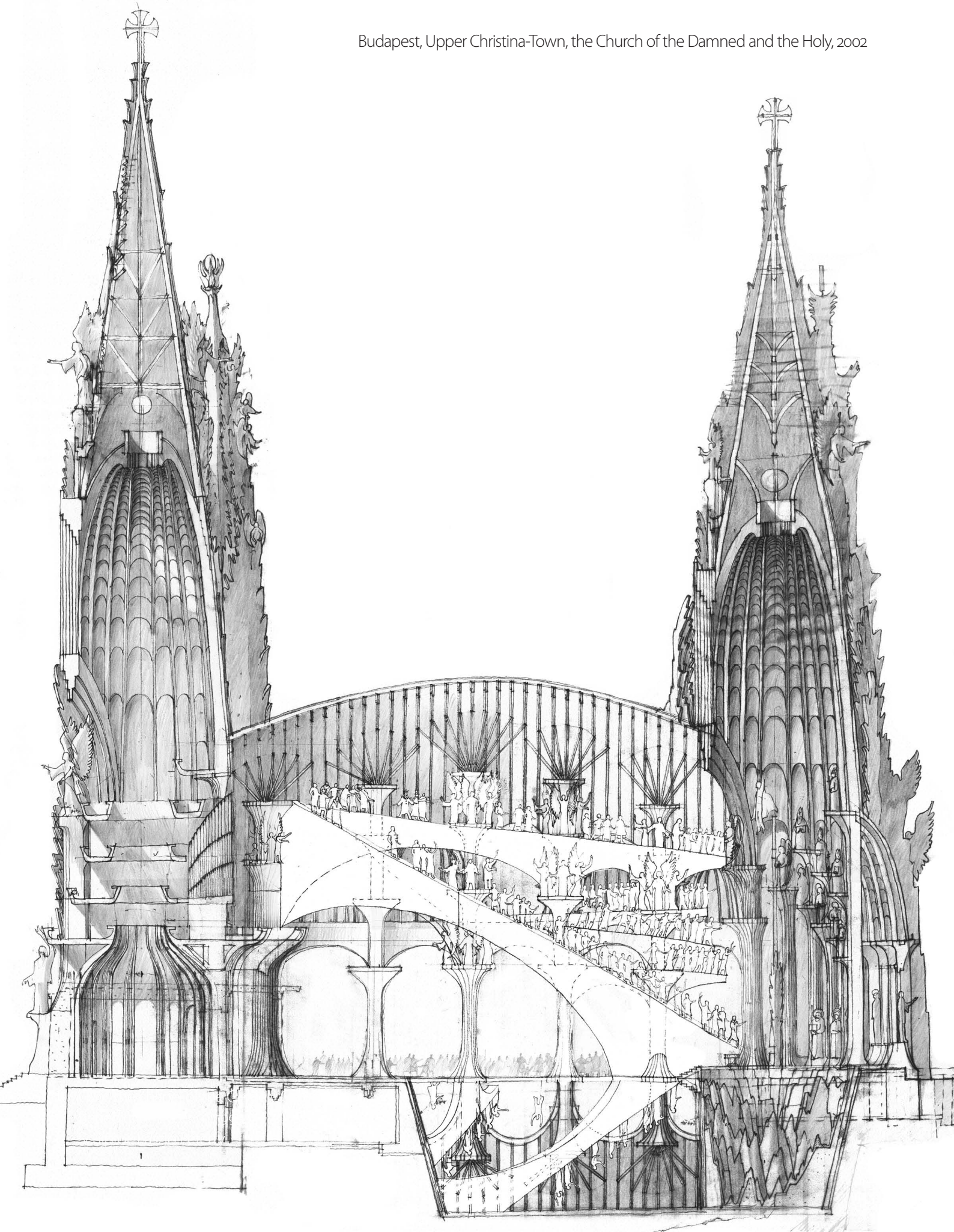
epl). Unfortunately, later editions refrained from including data on exact years, location, sources or other details. I do attach notes to names mentioned above—exhibition organizers, authors or participants—those who are interested can easily access the required data on the internet.

Abbreviations in journal titles: *AA* L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, *AR* The Architectural Review, *AD* Architectural Design, *A+U* Architecture+Urbanism, *DBZ* Deutsche Bauzeitschrift, *FAZ* Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung; *AA* The Architectural Association, *AIA* American Institute of Architects, *BDA* Bund Deutscher Architekten, *IFMA* International Forum Man and Architecture, *KKE* Kós Károly Egyesülés, *RIAS* Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, *RIBA* Royal Institute of British Architects

For the present collection I received considerable help from Anikó Szentesi, Olga Hainess, Judit Osskó, Judit Kövendi and Maya Nagy.

Farkasrét, funeral chapel, 1975





The Road

Tibor Jakab

Hey, Doc!

When I was a young boy and my grandfather walked me down the straight main street of Bugyi village, everything was clear, nice and arranged. On Sundays we used to go to temple, only the two of us. Before leaving, he would read out from his Bible which he had got from his own grandfather. He was a Calvinist and Calvinists are honest readers of the Bible! I know, Doc, your father became general practitioner in the village later and you also grew up in Bugyi. But at the time when I walked with my grandfather there were no cars on the road to disturb us. There were no cars at all in the village! When one passed every now and then, we, the children, started to chase it only to breathe in some petrol vapour. So we could walk peacefully. The road was clear and straight. The houses were also neat and nice. Can you imagine, Doc, how elegant was the house of a farmer back then? Spacious and homely, giving place for man and animal, food and crops. By Sunday everybody swept out his yard and the street in front of the house. People washed, got dressed and went to church like we did. Even the guard was wearing his special uniform. Can you imagine, Doc, how a guard looked like in his uniform, with shiny belt, boots, ironed coat and feathered hat? Well, like a commander at least. He surely had respect, and used it if he had to keep the order. He only had to show up, look around and all the bullies shut up at once. They all know what trouble they would get into otherwise... So, my grandfather

walked along the street proudly with his grandson. And I straightened my back on his side. And, when we got to the Catholic church which was closer to us, he sent me off by these words: *on you go, you papist...* And he went on to join the Calvinists... Can you imagine, Doc, what an elegant world was it back then?

Hey, Doc!

There are still some great geniuses among the Hungarians. Bartók, Kodály, Lechner or Károly Kós, for instance. One should do things in their fashion. Did you know that after the war when Transylvania was separated Károly Kós travelled back home by the train which was the last one to depart? Yes, you hear well, back to Transylvania! A reversed way, done by many at that time. So he did not go to Europe, to Switzerland, for example in a comfortable coach heading for fortune and career where his talent and popularity could take him easily. No, he decided to go on his own way, back to East, back to uncertainty in the last crowded coach. The road led him to the right direction, home, to his people. There he did not weep but started to work. He established a National College, taught, wrote and planned; future and houses. What houses! Hey, Doc! Those are fairy palaces, upon my word! All of them are alive, because good houses are full of life. And it is good to live a house which is really alive. This is what makes a good house: if the house is good, then it is good to live in it. As simple as that. I got many awards, professional and other ones. I am doctor honoris causa of several institutes.

I am happy about it, it is a great honour. Nonetheless, I am tested by each and every new plan of mine. And I am the most content if those who live in the house love their home I designed. And, so to say, it is good to cast an eye on Károly bácsi's houses and good to feel home in them. Do you believe if I say fairies live there, too? No-no, I haven't gone mad, that's the truth! For houses can have other residents beside men. Hey, Doc, I thought that tales about haunted houses are foolish. Then we visited Scotland with my wife. Those eldritch castles may really have ghosts. But it is quite natural there. It is part of reality. It would be even stranger not having ghosts around. I heard them also. I heard them. But it is like that only in Scotland. Here it is inapt. If I happen to start hearing the ghosts, you can lock me up and begin to treat me, because then I am in big trouble... So, do you have an idea, what inner strength was needed for this budding prodigy architect to make this trip back to the Roman world, back to Transylvania, to his people?

Pure, certain, unselfish love, strength was needed! As simple as that.

Hey, Doc!

Did you know that when we were listening to the lectures of the young Rudolf Steiner we gathered *sub rosa* to listen to his pieces? There was for example a society led by the author Sándor Török. I listened to his lectures on anthroposophy in a crowded flat, peeping from below the piano as there was no room anywhere else. Or there was another one, a doctor I loved the most, Lajos Enyingi Göllner. Against all prohibitions of that world, he practiced anthroposophy-based medicine and was the leader of the Hungarian anthroposophists. Then I was acquainted with the sketches and photos of Steiner's work of genial, the Goethenum. The building was simply alive. Revitalizing old traditions in new forms: it lived. It was so outstanding, and had such a striking effect that it irritated some in power and had to go,

had to be demolished. They did not let it influence any longer. And do you know what houses stand in Arlesheim, in the neighbourhood of the burnt down Goetheanum? Well, the “followers” simply copied what Steiner so intuitively sensed, understood and created when he brought living forms of the past back in order to dream them into the present. His personality, his talent and genius loci imbued the building.

For each designer has a hard way to take: getting to know the world as much as his own soul. And, if he fails to do so, then all his plans and buildings will be spirit- and lifeless replicas without the slightest tinge of character, one after the other. Same ones, boring ones made only for the sake of money. Hence the environment of the old Goetheanum is also like a nursery garden after cropping.

Hey, Doc!

You know, we arrived in a rather strange world. This one is not that simple, straight and arranged as the previous one used to be. It is not a problem. One should not avoid the coming influences, but has to be able to tell real from fake. They road one takes is what really matters. Whether I buy puffed-up bread and eat it for half a day or a real, freshly baked one lasting for a week. Whether I buy food made of untraceable components or I buy food from local farmers selling their own products. It is up to me. And I could go on with other examples, for it is not only about eating habits, but about love and about television, too. Do I want to do concentrate on what I am doing or sit as a dumb couch-potato in front of the TV? If one does not realize that what the so called

mass media actually means is a logically rendered conglomeration of fake information which takes me further and further away from the atmosphere of the real world – so, if I do not realize this process then I do not deserve a single word, then I am a fool just the way I am. That is all!

If I think that virtual reality and virtual conversations can replace personal, face to face discussions, if I take for granted all I see and hear on television, radio or read in the papers, or that the representation of Hungary I see there coincides with reality, then I will take whatever rubbish I hear. Computer technology has great advantages, as it broadcasts tremendous amount of information. But it has false value if referred to reality. If I receive an impression, I must be aware of the context: where and how did I get it and in what circumstances? I must see all the components making up that specific information. If I access information via internet, it is different. I comprehend close to nothing of the complexity of the information if I attain it from virtual reality. For the simple reason that I do not have sensual experience about those facts and they do not make it to my brain. However, in its own invisible, intangible way information gained in reality brings along its hinterland which adds weight and dramaturgical merit to actual happenings and events.

Hey, Doc!

Tell me, how long am I going to live? I’m asking because doctors always waffle about, not saying anything.

Imre, the thing is, that we, doctors waffle about because often we ourselves do not know the answer for the question.

Then leave adumbration!

All right. Imre, according to the rules of medicine you have already outlived the time which we regard as average in the case of an illness like yours, but of course, there is no such thing as average, so...

Stop!

So, Imre, your remaining time is somehow in your and in the almighty God’s hands.

At last! I see... You know, I have always been and will always be the man of Saint Michael. I like clear things. I understand them, feel their rightness definitely and I am ready to bend to my task. It is the same with illness as well. And with death... I want to live until I can be together with my family with sound mind and soul, to let them keep me like this in their memory. And also, I would like to work while I am alive. You know, I like elegance. As for elegance, I think, even death will not do us part. Can I ask this favour from Saint Michael?

Dear Imre!

Thank you for sharing with me all this and more. Thank you for having your sincere look on me. A year ago you passed away to the world of angels, a world which you had already started to show us with your life, houses, ways.

We who stay here also seek our own Way to ourselves and to heaven. Ways vary, but our goal is common. You completed your unique, outstanding way, and, when one accomplishes such a thing, God smiles, as you would say.

By now you already know that for His smile it was worth coming to this world.



