

Marjeta Černe & Bor Ivačič
NEPRIKRITA KAMUFLAŽA
 UNCONCEALED CAMOUFLAGE

PRENOVA HALE 10 V TRGOVSKEM SREDIŠČU BTC CITY
 / RENEWAL OF HALL 10 IN THE BTC CITY SHOPPING
 CENTRE, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIJA / SLOVENIA, 2002

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 fotografija / photo by **Miran Kambič**

Koolhaasov znameniti traktat *Generic city* vsebuje cel kup postulatov, ki jih zlahka pripišemo ljubljanskemu fenomenu BTC City. Nakupovalno središče, ki se je, vsaj z urbanističnega stališča, bolj kot ne spontano razvilo na mestu 250.000 m² skladiščnih površin za distribucijo blaga, ki je v Jugoslavijo prihajalo iz zahodne Evrope, je verjetno najbolj generičen del Slovenije in eden paradnih konjev slovenskega tranzicijskega gospodarstva. Če malo špekuliramo, Koolhaasov *Generic city* je videti kot pomanjkljivo sestavljeno tehnično poročilo k projektu BTC City. Kljub temu pa bi vanj zlahka zapisali še nekaj dodatnih "psalmov"; v enem od njih bi – na primer – lahko opisali generično mesto kot korporacijo, ki kotira na borzi, zanjo pa se pulijo borzni posredniki po vseh svetovnih denarnih







središčih. Ravno to je namreč počel BTC City kmalu po svoji reinkarnaciji iz samoupravljalnega središča za distribucijo dobrin iz zahodnega raja. Uspešno je prodajal svoje delnice v Londonu in vse bolj rasel, rasel ... tako da danes s trgovskim programom napolnjuje že skoraj polovico nekdanjih skladišč.

Na vzorcu pravilno razporejenih podolgovatih skladiščnih hal, ki so v začetku devetdesetih ostale prazne, ter dostavnih koridorjev, ki so bili v prečni smeri asfaltirani, v vzdolžni pa so vanje segali kraki železniške proge, bi bilo v tistem trenutku mogoče narediti karkoli, ne le trgovin. Pravzaprav je karkoli mogoče narediti tudi zdaj. Vse te ogromne površine so v lasti enega podjetja in tu ne veljajo nebodijihtraba urbanistične omejitve, tako kot v preostalem delu Ljubljane.

Uprava BTC-ja se je takrat odločila, da iz praznih skladišč naredi nakupovalno središče. Ravno v istem času je Koolhaas pisal tele stavke: "Edina dejavnost je nakupovanje. Toda zakaj nakupovanja ne bi jemali kot nekaj začasnega, provizoričnega, kar čaka na boljše čase. To je zgolj naša krivda – nismo se domislili ničesar boljšega, kar bi lahko počeli. Če bi bili isti prostori prenapolnjeni z drugimi programi – knjižnicami, kopaljšči, univerzami – bi bilo to imenitno – njihova veličina bi nas plašila."¹ Tako torej Rem.

Many of the postulates found in the famous treatise *Generic city* by Koolhaas may be used to annotate the Ljubljana phenomenon of the BTC City. This shopping centre, which has developed more or less spontaneously (from a town planning standpoint) covering 250,000 m² of warehouses used for the distribution of products that used to arrive in Yugoslavia from Western Europe, is probably the most generic part of Slovenia and one of the most flamboyant showcases of the Slovenian transitional economy. If we speculate a little, the *Generic City* appears to be an incomplete technical report in relation to the project of BTC City. Still, we could easily add a few more "psalms" - in one of them, for example, we could describe a generic

city as a corporation, its stocks being high and the brokers in financial centres all over the world fighting for them. This pattern was set in motion by BTC City soon after its reincarnation from self-governing distribution centre for the redistribution of goods from the western heaven. They successfully sold shares on the London stock exchange and they developed so much so that today the owners have filled up almost the half of former warehouses with shopping outlets.

On a pattern of regularly placed elongated warehouse halls, which became empty at the beginning of the nineties, and delivery corridors asphalted in a transverse direction, the railway reaching it along the longitudinal direction, it could have been used then for any other purpose and not only for shops. In fact, even now anything could be put there. All that enormous area is the property of one company, and heaven forbid that town planning restrictions should run here the way they do in other parts of Ljubljana.

The BTC management decided to transform the empty warehouses into a shopping centre. At the same time Koolhaas was writing the following sentences: "The only activity is shopping. But, why do we not conceive of shopping as something temporary, provisional, in expectation of better times. However, this is just our fault – we cannot think of anything better to start up. If the same buildings were totally filled by other programmes – libraries, swimming pools, universities – it would be perfect – their size would frighten us!". Thus says Rem.

Through the prism of his theory, which is flavoured with a certain epic cynicism, one could also discuss the work of

Skozi prizmo njegove, z nekakšnim epskim cinizmom začinjene teorije si je mogoče ogledati tudi delo Marjete Černe in Bora Ivačiča, ki sta južni zaključek nekdanje skladiščne *Hale 10* v tem nakupovalnem središču predelala v dve prodajalni. Že sosedstvo prodajaln, ki gostita dva popolnoma različna programa, je povsem generično. Na eni strani trgovina z izdelki za otroke in dojenčke, na drugi pa trgovina z avtodeli, pnevmatikami in avtokozmetiko. Prva čist, mehak, dišeč in nežno obarvan prostor, druga pa robustna, zamazana z olji in z vonjem po sintetičnih preparatih. Vendar v kontekstu generičnega seveda takšna nasprotja sploh niso tako nenavadna.

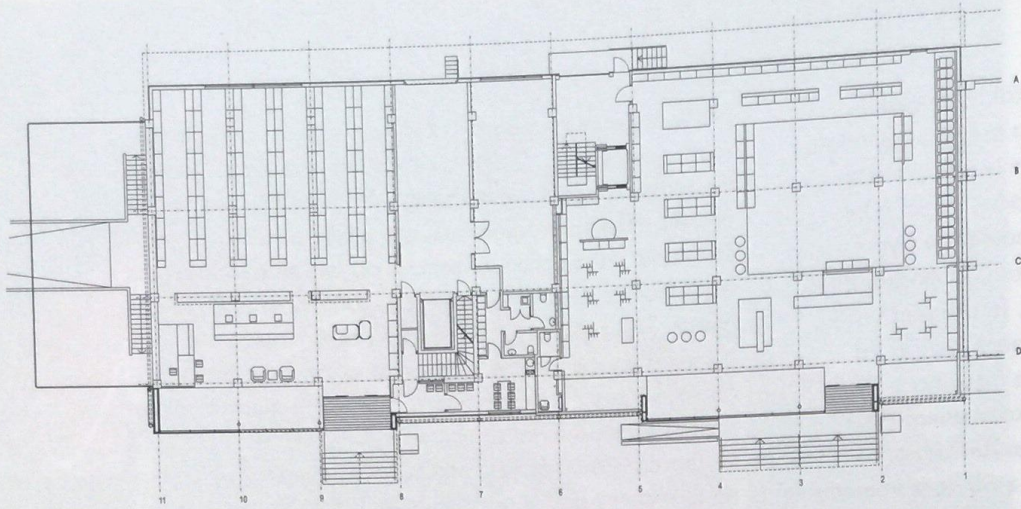
Arhitektka sta načrtovala v okolju, ki pravzaprav ni zmožno trajne in dokončne materialne podobe. BTC je v nekaj letih, odkar so ga začeli naseljevati trgovci in prodajalci zabave, postal edina mestna četrt v Sloveniji, ki je sposobna sama izredno hitro generirati spremembe, ki jo vlečejo naprej od projekta do projekta. BTC vre od sprememb in novosti. Organizacija skladiščnih blokov na mreži ter njihova preprosta konstrukcijska zasnova dopuščata praktično kakršnokoli preureditev in preureditve se seveda tudi ne prestopajo. Za nakupovalno središče je značilno, da stvari v njem ne trajajo dolgo. Hiter zaslužek z majhnimi izdatki, izdelki z omejenim rokom trajanja, ki jih v trenutku, ko gremo mimo blagajne, v trgovini nadomestijo z novimi kolekcijami. Ta kratkotrajnost, povezana z neprestano vznemirjenim in pozornim kapitalom, ki stalno išče nove, boljše lokacije, iz poslovnih sfer pronica tudi v fizični prostor.

Po drugi strani pa vesoljna podjetnost kliče po nekakšni solidnosti, ki bi strankam zbuja zaupanje in občutek varnosti. To trdnost predstavlja solidna struktura nekdanjega blagovnotransportnega

Marjeta Černe and Boro Ivačič who converted the former south part of Hall 10 of this centre into two shops. Even the surroundings of these shops, which are used for two entirely different programmes, are totally generic. A shop for babies' and children's items is on one side, and on the other there is a store for spare car parts, tyres and car cosmetics. The first is a tender, clean, fragrant and softly coloured space and the other is robust and dirty from oil and stinking synthetic materials. Still, in the generic context such contrasts are not so uncommon.

The architects' project was for a surrounding which has no permanent and final materialistic form. Since the shop owners and the entertainment sellers started to occupy BTC it has become the only city district in Slovenia capable of quickly generating changes, changes that are pushing BTC forward from project to project. BTC is literally boiling with changes and novelties. A grid organization of warehouse blocks, their simple structure enables this kind of remodeling, and remodellings are taking place all the time. It is specific to shopping centres that nothing lasts for ever. This is a world of fluid money and small expenditures, for fleeting products, which are immediately replaced by new collections as soon as they reach the cashier. This short lastingness, which is connected to restless and attentive capital always in search of new and better locations, emerges from the business spheres into the physical space.





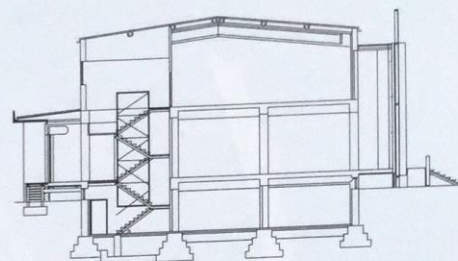
floris / plan



središča, organizirana na ravno tako solidni ortogonalni mreži, ki predstavlja enostavno infrastrukturo, s katero je moč obvladati prostor ter kupca in je pripravna za pospeševanje prodaje. Stavbni bloki nekdanjih skladišč ostajajo. Spreminjajo se le vsebina, ki jih napolnjuje, in oglasna sporočila, s katerimi privabljajo kupce.

Hala 10 je tipičen primer podolgovatega betonskega skladiščnega bloka z značilnim prečnim prerezemom, ki vsebuje na nivo dostavne rampe privzdignjeno pritličje in široko nadstrešnico. Slab meter dvignjeno pritličje ni ravno navdušujoče dejstvo za trgovce, saj je tako visoko od tal nemogoče napraviti pametno izložbo, obenem pa je treba urediti dodatne komunikacije za funkcionalno ovirane osebe. V BTC-ju so večino skladišč zato preuredili od znotraj navzven, in na zunaj hale le prenovili. *Hala 10* je preurejena v obratnem, za ta prostor nenavadnem načinu, s klasičnim nasprotjem med sprednjo in zadnjo fasado, zunanjim neposrednim vhomom v trgovini in dvema velikima izložbenima oknoma, ki projicirata prodajne artikle na asfaltni bulvar nakupovalnega predmestja. Iz izložb široko molijo stopnice, po katerih ničkolikokrat razrezani predmestni asfalt zleze skoraj v trgovino, ta pa tako bolj postane del ulice.

To kontroverznost začasnosti in želje po izkazovanju solidne varnosti sta Marjeta Černe in Bor Ivačič uspela udejaniti v platnem fasadnem ovoju, ki ne predstavlja nekakšnih cesarjevih novih oblačil, temveč nekaj, kar prav nič ne skriva tega, kar je v rasnici: pisana rdeča cerada, ki je kot filmska kulisa, napeta pred starim skladiščem, ki sta ga naselili trgovini Gama in Ariel. Ta scenografija je dosledno izpeljana tako, da prekrije le sprednje dele fasade, katerih naloga je zapeljati potrošnika. Fasada je napeta na novo kovinsko ogrodje, ki ji poravnani z robom nekdanje nakladalne rampe uspe prekriti vse bistvene attribute nekdanje skladiščne hale: rampo, nadstrešek in industrijska okna v nadstropju, ki še vedno rabijo svojemu namenu v 2,5-metrski cezuri med staro fasado in novo



prerez / cross section

The entire entrepreneurial spirit is, however, in search of a certain solidity to prompt customer trust and a feeling of security. This stability is guaranteed by the solid structure of the former product transportation centre; organized on an orthogonal grid and with simple infrastructure, it guarantees that the whole space and all the customers can easily be coped with, which helps to push sales up. The building blocks of the former warehouses remain. Only the contents that fill them change, as do the customer-pulling commercials.

Hall 10 is a typical example of the elongated BTC warehouse block, of a characteristic cross-section with the ground floor level raised to the level of the delivery ramp and a deep canopy. A ground floor raised one metre does not please the shop owners since shop windows cannot be attractive if they are so high above the ground. At the same time additional communications for the handicapped have to be added. Therefore the great majority of warehouses in BTC were adapted from the inside towards the exterior, the exterior of the warehouses being only renovated. Hall 10 has been adapted in a different way, using an unusual method for this kind of building in the sense of the traditional contrast of the front and back facades, with direct exterior entrance into the shop and two large shop windows which exhibit the products to the asphalt boulevard of this shopping suburb. There are wide staircases in front of the shop windows, pulling the suburban boulevard into the shop and making the shop a part of the street.

Marjeta Černe and Bor Ivačič successfully achieved this contrast of temporariness and the wish to demonstrate solidity with a canvas facade membrane. It is not only a new dressing but it is something which is not used as a cover-up for the truth: red canvas, like a piece of a movie set stretched in front of the old warehouse used by the Gama and Ariel shops. This scene setting is consistently carried out by covering up only the front part of the façade, its task being to seduce the customer. The facade is stretched to a new metal frame, which is in line with the edge of the former loading ramp. It successfully covers up all the essential attributes of the former warehouse hall: the loading ramp, canopy and the first floor industrial windows although they are still being used for their main purpose, in the

kuliso. Skladiščnega bloka sta se arhitekta v začetku načrtovanja sicer lotila v kompletu in objekt obravnavala kot celoto. Vendar njun koncept kamufliranja na krajšem segmentu fasade deluje celo bolje, saj je tisto bistveno pojmovanje problema oblačenja skladišča v novo, vsečno trgovsko fasado v tem primeru bolj očitno, kot bi bilo na popolnoma prenovljenem objektu. Projekt bi uspel tudi s polovico fasade, ki jo vidimo danes (kakor je nekaj časa celo kazalo).

Načelo kamufliranja, s katerim sta se Marjeta Černe in Bor Ivačič lotila BTC-ja, ponuja avtohton estetski odgovor na efemernost, ki vlada v mestu poceni nakupov in hitre zabave. V njunem delu priča, da sta ena redkih številnih arhitektov, ki so delali v tem okolju in ga tudi razumeli. *Hala 10* je prenovljena na način, ki se pravzaprav v tem okolju edini zdi logičen. Tudi vzorec, ki oponaša svetlobni zapis drvečih avtomobilskih luči na fotografski celuloid, je oblikovala Katja Gaspari prebrala v pričujočem suburbanem okolju.

Če smo že začeli, pa še končajmo v *Generičnem mestu*, kjer Koolhaas zapiše: "Arhitektura generičnega mesta je po definiciji lepa. Gradijo jo neverjetno hitro, v še bolj neverjetnem tempu pa jo načrtujejo, tako da pride na vsako uresničeno zgradbo – čeprav to ni čisto pravi izraz – okrog 27 opuščenih različic. Obstaja okrog 10.000 arhitekturnih birojev, o katerih nihče še nikoli ni ničesar slišal, vsi pa kar prekipevajo od novih zamisli. Arhitekti, ki delajo v njih, so verjetno skromnejši kot njihovi dobro znani kolegi, povezuje pa jih skupna zavest, da je z arhitekturo nekaj narobe in da jo lahko spremenijo samo njihova prizadevanja."²

Vse to seveda še kako drži tudi v primeru tega projekta.

2.5 m space between the old facade and the new stage-set.

When they started to work on the project it involved the entire warehouse block, and they treated the building as a whole. However, their concept of camouflage used on the smaller segment of the facade looks even better because it shows the basic understanding of the problem of dressing the warehouse in a new, attractive shopping facade, here more evident than it would be if the building were totally renovated. This project would be successful if only half of the facade were completed, as we can see it today (it seemed to be the solution for some time).

The principle of camouflage used by Marjeta Černe and Bor Ivačič in the project for BTC offers an autonomous aesthetic response to the ephemerality inherent in a place for cut-price shopping and quick entertainment. Their work demonstrates that they are among the few of the numerous architects who have worked in these surroundings to have understood the problem. Hall 10 has been renovated in the only logical way for these surroundings. The facade cover-up with pattern which imitates recorded fast passing car-lights on a celluloid film is designed by Katja Gaspari.

As we started with the *Generic city*, so we can conclude with it. Koolhaas writes: "The architecture of the generic city by its definition is beautiful. It is being built fast, it is being planned in an even faster rhythm, so that for every single built building – although it is not the proper expression – there are 27 abandoned variants. There are approximately 10,000 architectural offices that have not been heard about, and they are all boiling with new ideas. Architects employed there are probably more modest than their better-known colleagues, yet they are connected with the same awareness that there is something wrong with architecture, and that it can be changed only by their efforts."²

All this, very much so, is valid in the case of this project.

1 Rem Koolhaas: *Generic City*. Odstavek 10.2, S, M, L, XL, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 1995.

2 *Ibid.*, 11.3.

1 Rem Koolhaas: *Generic city*, section 10.2, S, M, L, XL, 010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 1995.

2 Rem Koolhaas: *Generic City*, 11.3

