



**7TH  
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CONFERENCE ON  
PLACES AND  
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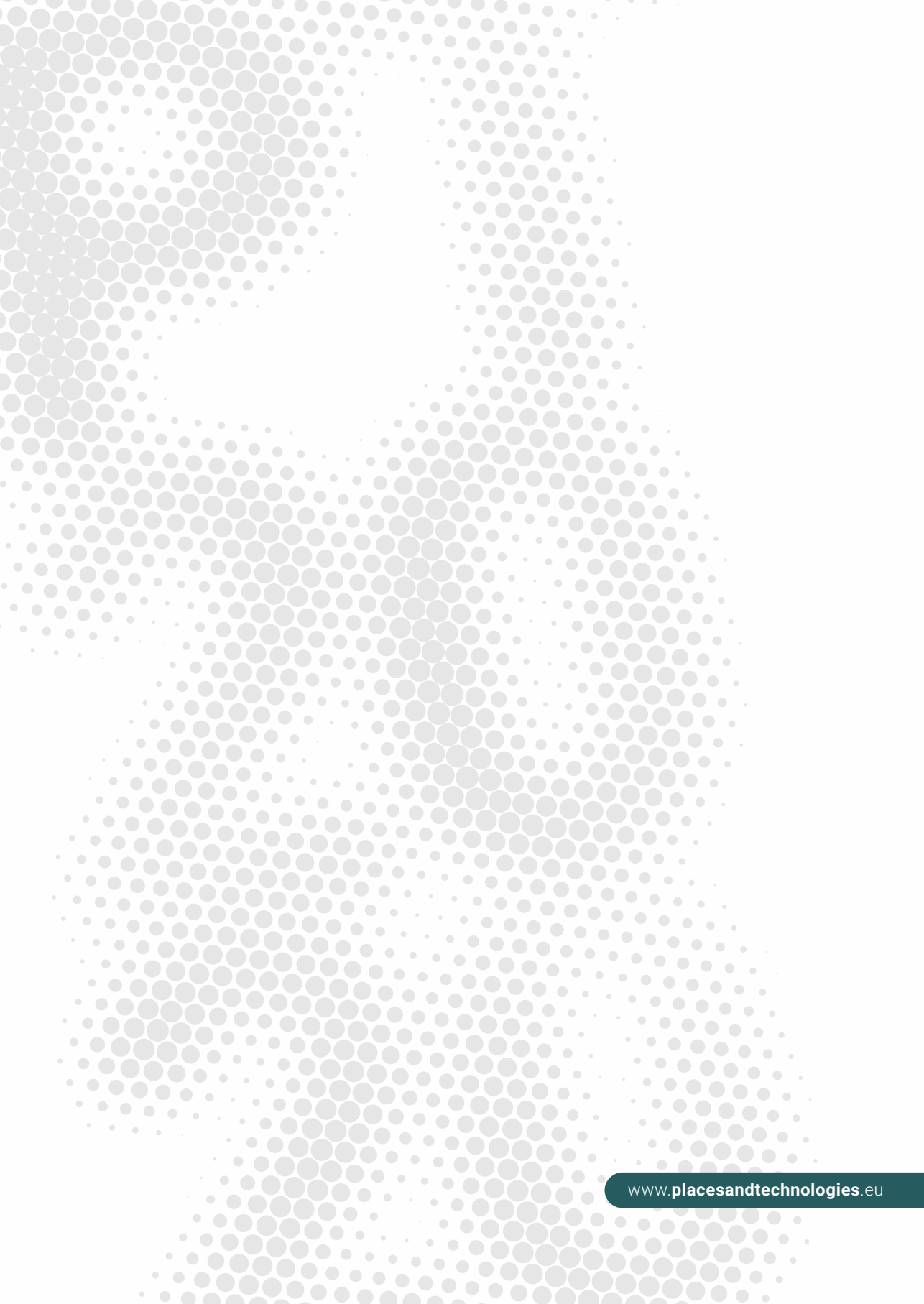
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**Proceedings**

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Aleksandra Krstić-Furundžić  
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Milena Vukmirović**



# KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGIES TO ACT RESPONSIVELY IN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

**PLACES AND  
TECHNOLOGIES**  
2020

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Conference on Places and Technologies**  
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## WORD OF THE CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

### **— Aleksandra Djukić**

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This Proceedings from the 7th International Conference Places and Technologies: Keeping up with Technology to act Responsively with Urban Environment, which was held in Belgrade in October 2020, contributes to the discussion about the future of society and places and the role of technology in it and discussions with respect to strategy for responsive quality environment. More than 70 papers from 18 countries were presented during the conference. The organizers of the conference were: University of Belgrade (Faculty of Architecture) and Professional Association Urban Laboratory (UrbanLab). The aim of the conference was raising the questions about the future of our cities and environment, understanding from the critical aspect, the importance and role of technology in designing creative ideas to improve places. The stated general objectives point to the necessity of a multidisciplinary approach to this matter and comes under the framework of different disciplines: engineering and technical sciences, humanities and social sciences that share the same visions and goals. However, new urban and building concepts have been created mostly relying on ICT. Furthermore, the main focuses of the articles are related to what extent the technologies could provide responsive development of built environment. In contemporary progressive practice, urban environments have been designed to act responsively to climate change, energy efficiency, protection of heritage, identity, and the main goal of successful urban development is to provide responsive urban plans and urban designs supported with new technologies as the most powerful tools for their implementations.

The Proceedings is organized into the five parts: responsive urban and territorial planning, responsive urban design, responsive architecture, responsive heritage protection and responsive technologies in architecture.

The part with the papers debating about responsive urban and territorial planning is dealing with: shrinking cities; the position of towns in digital construction technology environment; public transport; potential of maker movement on sustainable development; the impact of economic factor on transforming the urban form; segregated neighbourhoods and their integration attempts; physical planning information system; relationship between changes in technological cultures and spatial development of cities; improvement of life quality using nature based solutions and design of cultural trails.

The part dedicated to responsive urban design is dealing with: re-invented water-related spaces in the built environment; urban form evaluation; shared spaces; the sustainable construction of the old communities; spaces that stimulate innovation and creativity and provide a sense of community; pedestrian mobility and visual integration; street co-design; inspiration and cultivation of ideas in urban design; identity and resilience of open public spaces; security aspects of urban planning and design; an urban design technique regarding active aging in outdoor spaces; the challenges of dockless cycling; the use of digital technologies in creating the places of collective memory; transitioning the public space; the restorative effects of multi-sensory open space design and urban living labs for sensitive city.

The part about responsive architecture has the collection of the papers arguing about: regionalism and low-tech in contemporary vernacular architecture; temporary accommodation facility for asylum seekers; BIM based project and digital building model management; rethinking a public institutes of assistance and charity; cultural, methodological and economic aspects of the laboratory; dwelling with the water; architectural analysis of therapeutic canter for drug addicts; human comfort in artificial place; collective housing as new identity in rural areas the architecture-machine origins and frameworks of machinic line of thinking in architecture and challenges of designing remote communities.

The fourth part, responsive heritage protection is dealing with: digital design techniques to assist in the composition of traditional urban buildings; visualization of architectural heritage; systemic approaches in revitalization of old city heritage site; future development of former fortress; a responsible approach model for regeneration of spatial identity; heritage perceptions; preserving the material authenticity; sustainability and resilience in rural areas and revitalisation of the industrial heritage along waterfront.

The fifth part, responsive technologies in architecture is dedicated to: application of veneer based panels in exoskeleton architecture; raising climate resilience in buildings; digital planning, construction submission and approval processes; integration of architectural and structural aspects through the design process; indoor environmental quality; models for contemporary exploitation of balneological potential; nearly zero energy building co2 emissions; open BIM for citizen engagement in sustainable renovation projects; new technologies of construction on Serbian waters; evolution of technologies for construction of apartment buildings; origin of citizens and impact on city; conventional vs prefabricated buildings; computational method to assess the impact of urban climate on the buildings' energy performance simulations and algorithm-based BIM model analysis methodology at urban level.

The significance of this conference lies in the pressing need for the integration of smart technologies and contemporary urban concepts which provide sustainable city development. Different problems in the domains of urban design and planning, architectural design, building technologies, urban sociology, ICT, transport and traffic studies, resilience of place, climate change, adaptive reuse, cities and health, landscape architecture, identity, heritage etc. are presented and discussed in more than 70 conference papers made by professors, researchers and PhD students from all over Europe and the world.

We are committed to our initial goal to improve the level of scientific status of Serbia and the region. Places and Technologies conference become traditional international event gathering researchers all around the world and has provided an opportunity for them to advance their positions in the academic hierarchy, to build their research networks and to develop new scientific projects. Presentation and the quality of the papers that are results of new studies, debates and research strengthen our ambition to keep the importance of our conference among many European ones.

# CONTENT

## /// COMMITTEES

- 11 SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
- 12 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
- 10 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

## /// KEYNOTES

- 13 THE NEXT GENERATION OF SMART CITIZENS: EXPERIENCES AND INSPIRATION FROM THE +CITYXCHANGE PROJECT  
\_ **Alenka Temeljotov-Salaj** \_ **Bradley Loewen**
- 23 DESIGN-DRIVEN RESEARCH ON PHOTOVOLTAIC TECHNOLOGIES – SYSTEM PERFORMANCE AND SOLAR INTEGRATION IN BUILDINGS, MOBILITY AND OUR ENVIRONMENT  
\_ **Angèle Reinders**
- 24 MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS: TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON CONDOMINIUM LIVING  
\_ **Dr Nir Mualam**
- 25 SPACE AND TECHNIQUE  
\_ **Dražen Juračić** \_ **Jelena Skorup**

## /// RESPONSIVE URBAN DESIGN [URB]

- 28 RE-INVENTED WATER-RELATED SPACES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
\_ **Gábor Heckenast** \_ **Marcel Ferencz Habil** \_ **András Tibor Kertész**
- 35 MASS HOUSING ESTATES IN CSEPEL, BUDAPEST: URBAN FORM EVALUATION IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABILITY  
\_ **Hlib Antypenko** \_ **Melinda Benko**
- 43 SHARED SPACE IS HUMAN TECHNOLOGY  
\_ **Pieter de Haan**
- 49 THE SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OLD COMMUNITY IN BEIJING NO.72 OF TIANQIAO AS AN EXAMPLE  
\_ **Xue Kang** \_ **Yufang Zhou** \_ **Gabriella Medvegy**
- 57 SPACES THAT STIMULATE INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY AND PROVIDE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND PLACE – THREE CASE STUDIES FROM ZAGREB  
\_ **Bojan Baletić** \_ **Kristina Careva** \_ **Morana Pap**
- 64 INFLUENCE OF VISUAL INTEGRATION AND PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY ON EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC SPACE  
\_ **Stefan Škorić** \_ **Aleksandra Milinković** \_ **Dijana Brkljač** \_ **Milena Krklješ**

- 72 THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUNGSTERS' RESPONSIBLE ACTION IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT: AN EXPERIENCE OF STREET CO-DESIGN  
\_ Lucia Martincigh \_ Marina Di Guida
- 80 THE CULTIVATION OF IDEAS  
\_ Aleksandra Djukić \_ Admir Islamčević \_ Dubravko Aleksić
- 87 SECURITY ASPECTS OF URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN: "THE EUROPEAN MODEL"  
\_ Milos Tomić \_ Jovana Dinic \_ Elena Priorova
- 95 THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN SHAPING RESILIENT OPEN PUBLIC SPACES SURROUNDING SMALL URBAN STREAMS  
\_ Aleksandra Djukić \_ Višnja Sretović Brković
- 104 AN URBAN DESIGN TECHNIQUE REGARDING ACTIVE AGING IN OUTDOOR SPACES  
\_ Fernando Brandão Alves \_ Lara Mendes \_ António Brandão Alves
- 112 SAFE COMMUNITIES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN  
\_ Giovanni Sergi
- 119 THE CHALLENGES OF DOCKLESS CYCLING IN THE CITIES OF SE EUROPE: THE EXAMPLE OF BANJALUKA  
\_ Mladen Milaković \_ Aleksandra Stupar
- 131 SKOPJE PUBLIC SPACES EVALUATED: ANALYSIS AND TYPOLOGIES  
\_ Divna Penchikj \_ Jasmina Siljanoska \_ Dana Jovanovska
- 139 THE PLACES OF (NON)REMEMBRANCE - THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN CREATING THE PLACES OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY  
\_ Milja Mladenović
- 145 TRANSITIONING THE PUBLIC SPACE - THE CASE OF BELGRADE SHOPPING MALL  
\_ Marija Cvetković \_ Ivan Simić \_ Aleksandar Grujić
- 155 THE RESTORATIVE EFFECTS OF MULTI-SENSORY OPEN SPACE DESIGN – THE EXAMPLE OF JAPANESE GARDENS  
\_ Eva Vanista Lazarevic \_ Tena Lazarevic \_ Jelena Maric
- 165 URBAN LIVING LABS FOR SENSITIVE CITY CULTURAL HERITAGE REGENERATION  
\_ Jasmina Siljanoska
- 173 OBSERVING THE CITY'S USERS BEHAVIOURS: PRODUCTION OF A SOCIAL CYCLE LEADING TO A SPACE OF COMMUNICATION; CASE OF SIDI-BOUSAID  
\_ Ons Ben Dhaou \_ Norbert Vasváry-Nádor

### //// RESPONSIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN ARCHITECTURE [TECH]

- 180 APPLICATION OF VENEER BASED PANELS IN EXOSKELETON ARCHITECTURE  
\_ Neda Sokolović \_ Ana Kontić \_ Andrej Josifovski
- 188 RESEARCH ON ENERGY SAVING PERFORMANCE AND PROMOTION STRATEGY OF WATER PURIFICATION PLANT IN NORTH CHINA –  
– CASE OF WATER SUPPLY SUPPORTING PROJECT IN SHENYANG  
\_ He Jin \_ Bálint Bachmann
- 196 RAISING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN BUILDINGS ON THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST – MERGING PASSIVE AND ACTIVE NATURAL VENTILATIVE COOLING TECHNIQUES  
\_ Nikola Pesic \_ Adrian Muros Alcojor \_ Jaime Roset Calzada



- 208 DIGITAL PLANNING, CONSTRUCTION SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL PROCESSES IN AUSTRIA  
 \_ Kurt Battisti \_ Markus Dörrn \_ Christoph Eichler \_ Jacqueline Scherret \_ Torsten Ullrich
- 215 INTEGRATION OF ARCHITECTURAL AND STRUCTURAL ASPECTS THROUGH THE DESIGN PROCESS: INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTIAL BUILDING  
 \_ Dimitar Papasterevski \_ Toni Arangjelovski
- 223 SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT BY MEANS OF GREEN WALLS  
 \_ Budimir Sudimac \_ Aleksandra Ugrinović \_ Radojko Obradović
- 232 IN-SITU MEASURING INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY IN PUBLIC KINDERGARTEN IN SLOVENIA. A CASE STUDY  
 \_ Vesna Lovec \_ Miroslav Premrov \_ Vesna Žegarac Leskovar
- 241 MODELS FOR CONTEMPORARY EXPLOITATION OF BALNEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL IN VOJVODINA  
 \_ Nataša Čuković Ignjatović \_ Dušan Ignjatović
- 248 NEARLY ZERO ENERGY BUILDING CO2 EMISSIONS  
 \_ Marin Binički \_ Zoran Veršić \_ Iva Muraj
- 255 OPEN BIM FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE RENOVATION PROJECTS  
 \_ Coline Senior
- 263 NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF CONSTRUCTION ON SERBIAN WATERS  
 \_ Tijana Jacovic Maksimovic \_ Aleksandra Krstić-Furundžić
- 270 EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGIES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS – A TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE  
 \_ Ivana Brkanić Mihić \_ Matej Mihić \_ Zvonko Sigmund
- 279 ORIGIN OF CITIZENS AND IMPACT ON CITY  
 \_ Nikola Z. Furundžić \_ Dijana P. Furundžić \_ Aleksandra Krstić-Furundžić
- 289 CONVENTIONAL VS PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS: PURSUING THE GOAL OF SUSTAINABILITY  
 \_ Katerina Tsikaloudaki \_ Theodore Theodosiou \_ Stella Tsoka \_ Panagiotis Chastas
- 297 ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPUTATIONAL METHOD TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF URBAN CLIMATE ON THE BUILDINGS' ENERGY PERFORMANCE SIMULATIONS  
 \_ Stella Tsoka \_ Katerina Tsikaloudaki \_ Konstantia Tolika
- 305 ALGORITHM-BASED BIM MODEL ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY AT URBAN LEVEL  
 \_ Olivér Rák \_ Ágnes Borsos \_ Péter Iványi

### //// **RESPONSIVE HERITAGE PROTECTION [HER]**

- 314 DIGITAL DESIGN TECHNIQUES TO ASSIST IN THE COMPOSITION OF TRADITIONAL URBAN BUILDINGS  
 \_ James Dougherty
- 322 SYSTEMIC APPROACHES IN REVITALIZATION OF SEMARANG OLD CITY HERITAGE SITE: FROM NEGLECTED AREA TO TOURISM DESTINATION  
 \_ Bintang Noor Prabowo \_ Alenka Temeljotov Salaj
- 330 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER PULA NAVAL FORTRESS  
 \_ Lea Petrović Krajnik \_ Ivan Mlinar \_ Damir Krajnik

- 336 THE "ART FORTRESS" AS A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH MODEL  
FOR REGENERATION OF SKOPJE'S SPATIAL IDENTITY  
\_ Meri Batakoja \_ Jovan Ivanovski \_ Goran Mickovski
- 345 HERITAGE PERCEPTIONS: AN APPROACH FOR THE REVITALIZATION  
OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCES AND THE FRENCH CHECKBOARD IMAGE  
\_ Barbara Hiba \_ Molnár Tamás
- 353 PRESERVING THE MATERIAL AUTHENTICITY:  
A METHOD OF PRESERVING THE TRUTH  
\_ Jovana Tošić
- 363 LOST AND FOUND: A QUEST FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
AND RESILIENCE IN RURAL AREAS  
\_ Nataša Ćuković Ignjatović \_ Dušan Ignjatović \_ Nikola Miletić
- 370 REVITALISING THE OLD INDUSTRIAL MOVE ALONG DANUBE WATERFRONT  
\_ Milena Vukmirovic \_ Marko Nikolic

### //// RESPONSIVE ARCHITECTURE [ARCH]

- 382 ENHANCING EAGLE PASS – PIEDRAS NEGRAS INTERNATIONAL  
BRIDGE DESIGN TO FUNCTION AS A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION  
FACILITY FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS  
\_ Chang Lu \_ Ons Ben Dhaou \_ Shaha Mazen Maiteh \_ Tianyu Zhao
- 390 BIM BASED PROJECT AND DIGITAL BUILDING MODEL  
MANAGEMENT: APPLICATIONS AND EMERGING STANDARDS  
\_ Igor Svetel \_ Nenad Ivanišević \_ Dušan Isailović
- 397 A PROJECT OF LABORATORY CIRCO IN ROME: RETHINKING A PUBLIC  
INSTITUTES OF ASSISTANCE AND CHARITY (IPAB) IN ROME  
\_ Francesco Careri \_ Fabrizio Finucci \_ Chiara Luchetti \_ Alberto Marzo  
\_ Sara Monaco \_ Serena Olcuire \_ Enrico Perini \_ Maria Rocco
- 405 FROM RECEPTION TO HOSPITALITY: CULTURAL, METHODOLOGICAL  
AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE LABORATORY CIRCO IN ROME  
\_ Francesco Careri \_ Fabrizio Finucci \_ Chiara Luchetti \_ Alberto Marzo  
\_ Sara Monaco \_ Serena Olcuire \_ Enrico Perini \_ Maria Rocco
- 413 DWELLING WITH THE WATER  
\_ Michele Montemurro
- 421 ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF THERAPEUTIC CANTERS FOR DRUG ADDICTS  
\_ Sadoud Nesma \_ Erzsébet Szeréna Zoltán
- 428 HUMAN COMFORT IN ARTIFICIAL PLACE  
\_ Ramos Gonzalez, Nicolas \_ Medvegy Gabriella \_ Borsos Ágnes  
\_ Zoltán Erzsébet Szeréna \_ Gazdag Gábor \_ Noori Pooya
- 436 VAPOURABLE SUBLIME: AQUATECTURE  
EXPERIMENT AND PROJECT REVIEW  
\_ Miloš Stojković
- 444 COLLECTIVE HOUSING AS NEW IDENTITY IN RURAL AREAS  
\_ Miloš Arandjelović \_ Aleksandar Videnović
- 450 ARCHITECTURE-INSTRUMENT: THE ARCHITECTURE-MACHINE ORIGINS  
AND FRAMEWORKS OF MACHINIC LINE OF THINKING IN ARCHITECTURE  
\_ Dragana Ćirić

- 467 CHALLENGES OF DESIGNING REMOTE COMMUNITIES  
IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA: OKOLASSI EXAMPLE  
\_ Dejan Vasović \_ Ruža Okrajnov Bajić \_ Darko Pavičević \_ Goran Gogov

**//// RESPONSIVE TERRITORIAL PLANNING [PLAN]**

- 476 ARE SHRINKING CITIES A COMPLETELY NEW PHENOMENON  
IN POST-SOCIALIST SPACE? URBAN SHRINKAGE IN EASTERN  
EUROPE BEFORE AND DURING SOCIALISM  
\_ Branislav Antonić \_ Aleksandra Djukić
- 485 THE POSITION OF TOWNS IN DIGITAL  
CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY ENVIRONMENT  
\_ Velimir Stojanović
- 494 TRIP GENERATION AND TOUR DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC  
TRANSPORT TRIPS IN THE CITY OF SLAVONSKI BROD  
\_ Ljupko Šimunović \_ Julijan Jurak \_ Božo Radulović \_ Matija Sikirić
- 501 POTENTIAL OF MAKER MOVEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT OF REMOTE CROATIAN ISLANDS  
\_ Rene Lisac \_ Morana Pap \_ Roberto Vdović
- 508 THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC FACTOR ON TRANSFORMING  
THE URBAN FORM OF ERBIL IN KURDISTAN REGION-IRAQ  
\_ Rebaz Khoshnaw
- 515 SEGREGATED NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THEIR INTEGRATION  
ATTEMPTS: PARTICIPATORY SLUM-UPGRADING IN THE MAKING  
\_ Tímea Csaba
- 523 PHYSICAL PLANNING INFORMATION SYSTEM OF CROATIA: OVERVIEW  
OF THE CONTENTS AND CURRENT STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT  
\_ Sunčana Habrun
- 530 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGICAL  
CULTURES AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES  
\_ Dmitrii Klimov \_ Sofija Feofanova
- 536 IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE QUALITY USING NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS -  
CASE STUDY SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH-EASTERN SERBIA  
\_ Milica Igić \_ Petar Mitković \_ Milena Dinić Branković \_ Jelena Đekić  
\_ Ivana Bogdanović Protić \_ Milica Ljubenić \_ Mihailo Mitković
- 547 DESIGN OF CULTURAL TRAILS - AS A RESULT OF  
BELGRADE'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONCEPT  
\_ Suzana Gavrilović \_ Nevena Vasiljević \_ Boris Radić \_ Dejan Skočajić \_ Nevenka Galečić

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## APPLICATION OF VENEER BASED PANELS IN EXOSKELETON ARCHITECTURE

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### ABSTRACT

The development of new materials and technologies is one of the greatest initiator of new architectural thought. Development within the long-standing continuous improvement of wood as material was induced by technological development and new market demands. Good mechanical and physical properties of wood and its easy accessibility, initiated further development and improvement of products based on this material. The aims of this improvement are more rational wood application and improvement of its physical and mechanical properties in regard to monolithic wood. In particular significant are wood-based products made from veneer layers, plywood and laminated veneer lumber (LVL). These materials stand out from other wood-based panel materials due to their mechanical and aesthetic performance. Previous application of veneer-based panels as a structural element in architecture has been implied as secondary or tertiary structural elements which transfer the load to supporting structural members, or to stiffen wooden structures. Recognition a good mechanical property of the material and its advantages as a small self-weight encouraged examining the possibilities of using wood-based panel products as the primary structural support element in exoskeleton structures, i.e. using building envelope as object structure. Application plywood and LVL is research study, so in this paper authors will analyze the possibilities of using these products as an exoskeleton supporting element, through case studies of realized experimental structures. Through research realised structures will be analysed, with a focus on shell structures. They will be evaluated through recognition of its advantages and disadvantages, especially those are directly conditioned by the structural characteristics of the material. Analyses of structures will be done according following criteria: structure design, spatial stability, span constraints, possibilities of loads the structure can support and connections between elements. In order to encourage use of veneer-based panels as load-bearing element in the exoskeleton structure, the paper will set guidelines for further research in this area and will recommend possibilities to improve mechanical characteristics of material. Rationalization of the use of wood-based panels in folded structures will highlight in paper. Forming exoskeleton structure from this material contributes rational use of the structure and raw wood materials saving.

**KEYWORDS** \_ *veneer panels, plywood, exoskeleton, structural elements, building envelope as construction*

## INTRODUCTION

Wood as a natural material has remained throughout history as one of the most commonly used materials in construction, primarily because of its easy availability, but also due to its excellent physical and mechanical properties. Technological development and new market requirements have led to development of many wood-based products from wood as a basic material, as a result of the main advantages of wood raw materials such as more rational use and better physical and mechanical properties than monolithic wood. In architecture, products based on veneer layers, plywood and laminated veneer lumber (LVL) are of special importance, and they stand out additionally due to their mechanical and aesthetic performance.

Plywood and LVL materials are wood-based products obtained by veneer layers glued together. The way of their formation contributed to the improvement of certain constructive properties in relation to monolithic wood, primarily due to the decreasing material limitations as a result of its anisotropy. By distributing the errors through the panel and eliminating them in production, they reduced the variability in material properties, that is, they equalized the mechanical properties of the product in the longitudinal and transverse direction.

The application of veneer-based panels in architecture today is most often in conventional ways, and can be non-constructive - in the form of roof, floor and wall coverings, and constructive - for making diaphragms and shear walls, beam elements or filling elements of complex beam systems. Wood-based panel materials are most often secondary or tertiary structural elements, which serve to accept loads and transfer them to load-bearing structural elements, or to increase the stability of wooden structures.

The weight of element itself and its mechanical properties have encouraged researches in the direction of application of wood-based panel products as a supporting element of the structure- spatial structures. This type of application can be named unconventional method of application, where wood-based panel forms the entire exoskeletal structure, thus becoming the primary supporting element in spatial structures - primarily shell and fold structures. The formation of such structures from wood-based panels contributes to material savings and rational use of construction. For the purpose of this research, in the world, only a few architectural structures have been formed in which veneer and / or LVL panels represent the only structural element and thus form both the structure and the envelope of the building. Due to the dimensional limitations of the panels, the objects formed in the structural system of the shell are made from interconnected smaller flat segments of panels formed of veneer.

Within this research, possible ways of applying veneer - based panels as bearing exoskeletal structures will be defined. The paper will point out the potentials of the application of veneer - based panels in architecture, the analysis of the spatial structures realized so far, but also the problems and limitations of this material. The result of the research is the definition of guidelines and recommendations for the possibility of improving veneer-based panels, with the aim of their wider application in design practice.

## PLYWOOD AND LAMINATED VENEER LUMBER (LVL)

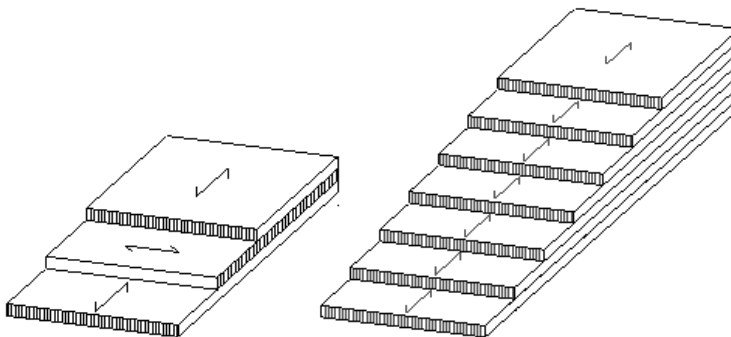
As above-mentioned, veneer-based products that are most often used for construction purposes today are panels formed from layers of veneer - plywood and laminated veneer lumber (LVL). These products are created by gluing layers of veneer together with adhesives. The advantage of products created in this way is the possibility of creating high-strength elements, theoretically without dimensional limitation. The increasing use of these composite products in the construction industry is a consequence of the reduction in the volume of the trunk (logs) and the need to form materials of greater length.

Veneer panels (plywood) are panels made of at least three veneer sheets glued together, whose wood grains are usually placed in a mutual orientation at an angle of 90 degrees (Николић, 2004).

They are formed in standard thicknesses of 6.35–28 mm (Stalnaker, 1997), and for their formation veneers of 2-6 mm thickness are used (Walker, 1993), glued together with adhesive. They can be three-layer boards (triplex), or multi-layer boards (multiplex), with the most common number of layers 5, 7, 9 (Николић, 2004). In order to reduce the anisotropy of the veneer board, the veneers are placed in layers oriented at an angle of 90 ° to the first adjacent layer. This orientation reduces the anisotropy of wood as a material, affects the reduction of swelling, and achieves a more uniform behaviour of the board in two directions due to changes in humidity (Irlle & Barbu, 2010). Cross-layering prevents the movement and deformation of individual layers in-plane, the longitudinal orientation of the grains of one sheet of veneer prevents tangential changes to its adjoining sheet. The constant orientation of the veneer layers results in approximately equal stiffness and dimensional stability of the board in both its directions - longitudinal and transverse, and thus the mechanical properties, primarily compressive and tensile strength and stiffness of the board are about the same in both its directions.

Compared to monolithic wood panels, the basic and most important advantage of veneer panels is that the physical and mechanical characteristics of the panel in the longitudinal and transverse direction are quite equal, reducing the possibility of splitting the panel, and enabling the production of larger panels (Youngquist, 2002). In addition to the above-mentioned, the cross-linking of veneer layers in the construction of veneer sheets increases the stability of the board through its layers, i.e., reduces the possibility of splitting veneer sheets, which from the aspect of forming connections between veneer board elements become suitable for mechanical joints - nails, screws, etc. Precisely because of the good mechanical properties in both directions, the application of veneer-based panels can be reflected in constructions with spatial load transfer.

Laminated veneer lumber (LVL) is a wood-based composite product formed of at least three interconnected veneer sheets with a parallel orientation of the grains in the longitudinal direction. Laminated veneer lumber can contain up to 20% of veneer layers whose grains are transversely oriented. Veneers 2.5 mm, 3.2 mm, 3.5 mm thick are used for its production (Šorn, 2006). Laminated veneer, unlike veneer board, is composed of layers of veneer oriented with parallel grains. When forming laminated veneer, as with veneer sheets, the direction of the grains of the outer sheets of veneer (veneer faces) is oriented in the direction of the longer side of the composite product. In this way, its maximum strength in the direction of the span is achieved. The mechanical properties of LVL reinforced with only parallel grains orientation are very often compared with the mechanical properties of monolithic or glued laminated wood, while the mechanical properties of LVL with the existence of strain-oriented grains are compared with the mechanical properties of veneer panels. Laminated veneer is widely used in linear structural elements, where the load is transmitted in one direction, and can also be applied in spatial structures, but taking into account the way the element is loaded in the structure and its position in the entire system.



\_ Figure 1. Construction of three-layer veneer sheet and construction of laminated veneer lumber. Author's illustration.



## EXOSKELETON STRUCTURES IN ARCHITECTURE

It is mentioned that elements made of veneer-based materials can have a constructive role, as elements that accept and transmit loads in the structure, which are the most common diaphragms, shear walls, beams or part of beams of complex cross section, but also non-constructive, in the form of roof, floor or wall coverings. All of the above can be considered conventional ways of applying veneer-based panels. There are other ways of applying veneer-based panels, which we can freely say are unconventional ways of application, and that is primarily in the form of the supporting outer membrane of spatial structures - exoskeletons. The exoskeleton (Greek: έξω - éxō - outside, beyond) is the name for the outer, supporting structure outside the body, and within which the organism is located and which actually forms its supporting structure. The term exoskeleton enters the processes of biomimicry of nature in many sciences and disciplines such as medicine, but also in the branches of technology, especially in robotics and architecture. An exoskeleton in architecture can be defined as an external structure that also becomes the supporting structure of an object, and its role is not only the role of a static and constructive element, but it becomes a structural envelope that can solve complex sets of problems by integrating different building systems (Scuderi, 2015). The exoskeleton is actually the envelope of an object whose role is constructive, it is a membrane that can divide the outer and inner space of an object, it becomes a thermal envelope, controls its energy performance, but also aesthetic values forming the geometry of the object, its shape and expression. The exoskeleton in its primary meaning, using only the external structure of the object, without integration with the internal structure - the endoskeleton is used in only a few structural systems, and these are primarily systems of spatial surface structures - shells and folds. The shell is characterized by the optimal ratio of the mechanical strength of the material since it was formed and its own weight. This is of crucial importance and can provide a significant advantage in the choice of wood-based materials for the formation of exoskeletal architectural structures.

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## SHELL STRUCTURES AS EXOSKELETON

Shells are spatial thin-walled curved structures with three-dimensional load transfer, usually large spans, surface-loaded, which are in the membrane state of stress. In wooden spatial structures, shells are formed as polygonal spatial structures composed of panels, interconnected. For their realization, wood-based materials are used - veneer-based panels (veneer and LVL panels) or CLT. Polygonal shells are constructions whose shaping follows the shape of a shell, single or double-curved, positive and / or negative Gaussian curves, but it is composed of flat segments interconnected in a system that forms a single spatial structure. This type of shell provides great opportunities for geometric experimentation and free-form design.



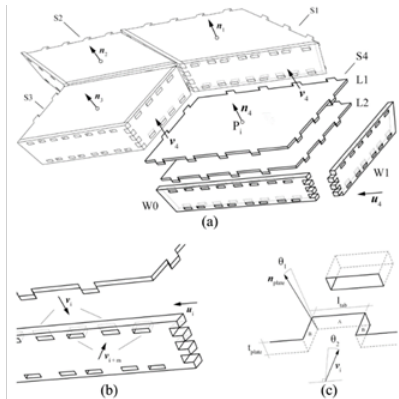
\_ Figure 2: ICD/ITKE Research Pavilion 2011. Taken from <https://visuall.net/2012/05/22/icditke-research-pavilion-2011/>, accessed 25.09.2020.

So far, this type shells have been realized only as experimental research facilities, and the pioneers of their development are the research teams of the University of Stuttgart. The objects of polygonal shells that were realized within the research are:

\_ Table 1: Realized objects of polygonal shells based on veneer

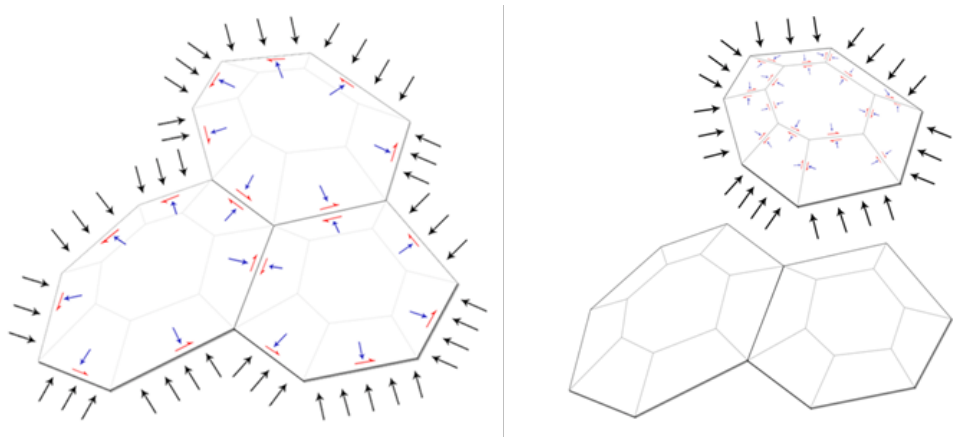
Year	Location	Project Name	Team	Material	Structure Span
2011	Stuttgart, Germany	ICD   ITKE Research Pavilion 2011	University of Stuttgart - ICD/ITKE	Veneer based panels – birch (6.5mm)	
2014	Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany	Landesgartenschau Exhibition Hall	University of Stuttgart - ICD/ITKE/IIGS	Veneer based panels – beech (50mm)	10m
2019	Heilbronn, Germany	BUGA WOOD PAVILION	University of Stuttgart - ICD/ITKE	Veneer based panels	25x35m
2019	Sidney, Australia	HexBox Canopy	University of Sydney - „Code to Production“ and DTC group	LVL	~4.5m

In the exoskeleton structures of the above - mentioned objects, formed as polygonal shells, common constructive principles based on the principles of trivalent polyhedral segments are observed (Krieg, et al., 2015; La Magna, Waimer, & Knippers, 2016; Bechert, Groenewolt, Krieg, Menges, & Knippers, 2018). This constructive principle implies a topological rule of shaping and forming a polygonal shell by always joining three surface elements in one point (Fig. 3). The structure is formed so that the three plates always meet at one point, stabilizing each other and forming a spatially stable system.



\_ Figure 3. Cell hierarchy and load distribution between elements in a trivalent-polyhedral system. La Magna, Riccardo, Frédéric Waimer, and Jan Knippers. „Nature-inspired generation scheme for shell structures.“ Proceedings of the International Symposium of the IASS-APCS Symposium 2012: From Spatial Structures to Space Structures. (Seoul: IASS, 2012.).

The design and construction of polygonal shell segments is possible in two ways. The first method involves the formation of a shell of segments (cells) composed of several parts forming a segment of box or variant cross-section (Fig. 4). Another way is to form a shell from segments of monolithic cross-section, where one element is a solid veneer-based panel, without substructure elements. Polygonal shells are usually composed of segments (cells) - consisting of a plate (surface plane layer) and a substructure positioned along the edges of the plate (Fig. 4). The most common are segments of hexagonal shape, which also belongs to the group of trivalent polyhedral networks, in which the other two plates meet at one point of the polygonal plate (Fig. 3). The hexagonal matrix has the possibility of adjustment and shaping in parts of the shell with positive or negative Gaussian curves (Li & Knippers, 2015).



\_ Figure 4. Structural system of a single segment of a shell composed of several parts, forming a segment of box cross-section. Robeller, Christopher, Mina Konaković, Mira Dedijer, Mark Pauly, and Yves Weinand. „Double-layered timber plate shell“, International Journal of Space Structures 32 (3-4), (2017): 160–175.

The construction and behaviour of individual segments - slabs in the structures of polygonal shells can be compared with the behaviour of a diaphragm or slab in the construction of folds. Common to all the mentioned elements is that axial forces in-plane appear as the dominant load in the con-

struction. Each plate in the construction must work according to the principle of the diaphragm, i.e., accept the forces acting in-plane, i.e., the slabs must not be constructed in such a way as to accept torsion or moments in order to achieve the stability of the structure. The connections between the plates are formed as linear joint connections, through which the transmission of exclusively axial and shear forces is enabled.

The slab in the structure accepts the load acting outside the plane of the slab, the forces are further distributed by forces in the plane of the slab, and by shear are transmitted to the substructure or to the adjacent slab if the shell is formed of slabs in one layer, without substructure. The plate accepts external forces over its entire surface, but their distribution occurs along the edges of the plate, not only through axial forces but also by shear forces in the plane of the plate. The distribution of forces can occur in any direction, depending on the geometry of the shell and the way the connections between the elements are formed.

Precisely due to the distribution of forces in several directions and directions, the most suitable for such constructions is the use of materials that have similar mechanical properties in all directions, and the most commonly used material is veneer panel. Due to its low self-weight and good mechanical characteristics in two directions, the veneer panel is suitable for the formation of exoskeletal structures according to the principle of polygonal shells. Also, its advantage is low self-weight in relation to other wood-based materials, which enables the formation of light structures, low self-weight, where the weight of the material itself does not represent a large constant load on the structure. The small static height (thickness) of the veneer panel can lead to the appearance of protrusions in the plane of the panel when exposed to axial pressure forces. Also, the small thickness of the veneer panel causes small spans of the shell construction, the impossibility of forming a connection. To avoid this, the shell is formed polygonally, in segments, where each segment has its own substructure that reduces the span of the panel itself. Another way to form a shell is in the form of full panels of great thickness, as a massive section of greater static height. The system of receiving and transferring loads on the entire structure does not differ in these two cases.

Pavilions with the segments formed only from veneer-based panels, without substructure, require a large thickness of the panel, i.e., the static height of the element is achieved by increasing the thickness of the panel, which is much larger than usual. The large thickness of the panel in this case is necessary due to the formation of connections between the elements, because in panels with substructure connections between elements are formed at the level of the substructure, while in this case connections are formed directly between two panels. Also, the large thickness of the panels is conditioned by the lateral bending of the panel in-plane at large spans of one element, when the panel is loaded with axial forces. The advantage of such constructions is the possibility of forming a connection between the panels in-plane. The disadvantage of the construction is its more difficult assembly due to the way the elements are connected and their more difficult access. The biggest drawback is the high consumption of materials, and thus the increase in the self weight of the structure, which leads to a large load on the structure under its self weight, which results in a reduction in the span of the exoskeletal structure. Also, the problem in certain elements and positions of these constructions occurs with elements loaded with large shear stresses or large axial forces, which very often the veneer panel cannot support.

Panels based on laminated veneer lumber are not often present in the spatial structures of shells, precisely because of their good mechanical properties expressed in one direction. Since the shells are spatial structures with three-dimensional load transfer, LVL boards are not a good solution in this case, especially for double-curved shells. One realized example of shells using LVL is the construction of a single curved shell, where the load transfer is dominant in only one direction.

## CONCLUSION

Veneer panels have proven to be an extremely good material in the design and implementation of exoskeleton spatial structures. In addition to good geometry in such structures, a good choice of

materials for their realization is also important. Veneer panels are a natural, environmentally friendly wood-based material with exceptional mechanical properties. Also, their production reduces the consumption of wood raw materials compared to solid wood panels. Different spatial structures can be formed by their application. Their behavior in spatial structures is very good, especially important is their low self-weight. However, there are material limitations in the field of span and load capacity. In order to make their application more widespread in the realization of exoskeleton spatial structures, further research is proposed in order to improve certain mechanical characteristics of veneer panels. Reinforcement of the material would enable the retention of the principle of forming the structure with panels of small thickness, which would enable the achievement of even larger spans of the structure, by retaining light constructions, with low self weight. The advantage of reinforced wood-based panels is the possibility of using soft wood, with poorer mechanical characteristics for their production. This would contribute to the saving of wood resources and nature conservation.

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