

# Tkanje grada

## Weaving the City

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Gonçalo Byrne



¶ Gonçalo Byrne is one of Portugal's most respected architects. His work, which already spans five decades, has always been characterised by simultaneous attention to the urban dimension and to the actual architectonic formalization of the projects. The urban element in Byrne's work has a geographical connotation, a vast reading of the territory; the architectonic element is related to the *language* of the buildings, which is more effective in a particular circumstance. Byrne thus manages to combine perennial and ephemeral values, achieving a high degree of consistency and some universal balance. ¶ According to a certain tradition of Portuguese architecture, the pre-existing and the

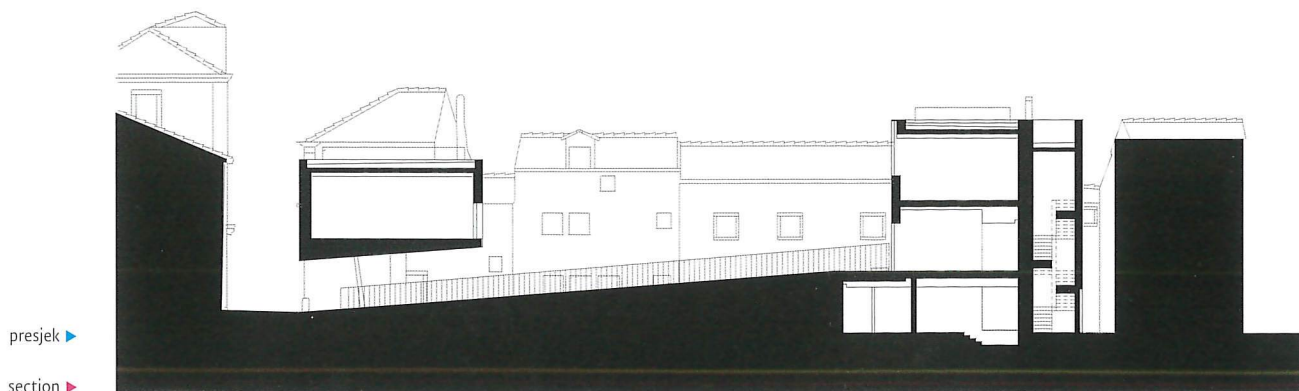


¶ Gonçalo Byrne jedan je od najuglednijih portugalskih arhitekata. Njegov rad, koji traje već pet desetljeća, uvijek se odlikovao istovremenim usmjeravanjem prema urbanoj dimenziji i stvarnoj arhitektonskoj formalizaciji projekata. Urbano u Byrneovom radu ima zemljopisnu konotaciju, opsežno čitanje teritorija; arhitektonsko se odnosi na jezik zgrada koji je učinkovitiji u određenim okolnostima. Byrne tako uspijeva kombinirati trajne i efemerne vrijednosti, postižući visok stupanj dosljednosti i sveobuhvatnu ravnotežu. ¶ Prema stanovitoj tradiciji portugalske arhitekture, već postojeće i moderno, arhaično i novo, mogu biti u dijalogu bez teoretske kontradikcije. Byrne pripada ovoj inkluzivnoj

modern, the archaic and the new, can engage in a dialogue without theoretical contradiction. Byrne belongs to this inclusive tradition – one that is nevertheless much focused on the *discipline* of architecture. After he has participated in social housing programmes such as Casal das Figueiras (Setúbal), within SAAL (Ambulatory Service of Local Support), and has designed the mythical *Pink Panther* (Chelas, Lisbon), Byrne still remains an architect who shows social concern. In his own delicate manner, Byrne places the resident, the user, and the sociability that architecture can produce in a central position. ¶ That does not mean, however, that he is insensible to the fluctuations of taste and to the more purely



formal, or stylistic, aspects of architecture, and, as it happens many times in the best architecture, there is an evident tension between the formal choices and the requirements of the programme or the characteristics of the place. In fact, we can see his work as an exercise in erudite architecture in contrast to the tension of a small opportunity, an aspect which is, moreover, a distinctive feature of the best Portuguese architecture. ¶ It is not, evidently, technological or artistic architecture, if we understand that architects are neither technologists nor artists. Aiming towards the validation of the architectural discipline, Byrne's discourse integrates geography, on a horizontal plane; archaeology, on a vertical plane; and history, in the attentive consideration of times past. ¶ This solid cultural project uses modern architecture as the default way of building, engaging in a dialogue with suggestions of *skin* architecture, eccentric geometries, accumulation of cantilevered volumes, concepts which are inherent to contemporary architecture. ¶ We can talk about a *high mainstream*, since Byrne's architecture is never radically authorial or rhetorically subversive, but largely escapes the undifferentiated and bureaucratic use of the modern made by corporations. ¶ The Eça de Queiroz Building Square, in Leiria, is an additional piece in Byrne's coherent, discrete, yet celebrated career. It consists of a renewal operation in the city's historical centre aiming to create a leisure, cultural programme, and a public space. With the exception of Lisbon and Porto – which are now dominated by tourism, involving other kinds of problems – historical centres in Portugal are in a state of ruin and abandonment, which has been aggravated by the recent economic and financial crisis. ¶ As one can see in Leiria, there are residual spaces, ruins, *holes*, which have great renewal potential. Byrne's project occupies one of these *holes* and makes use of the architect's wisdom to

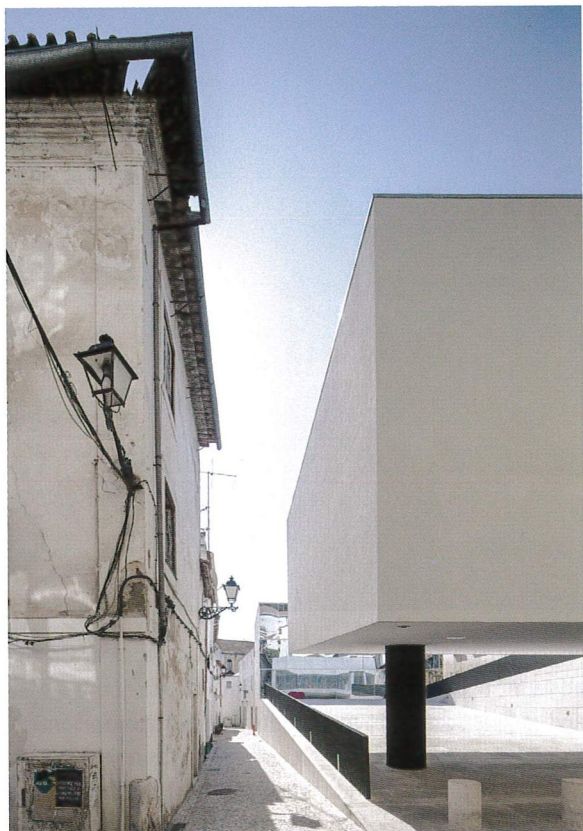


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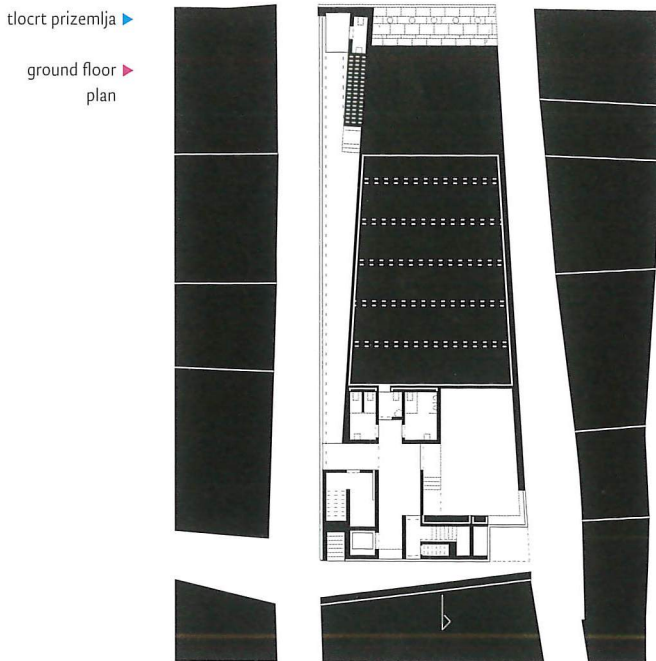
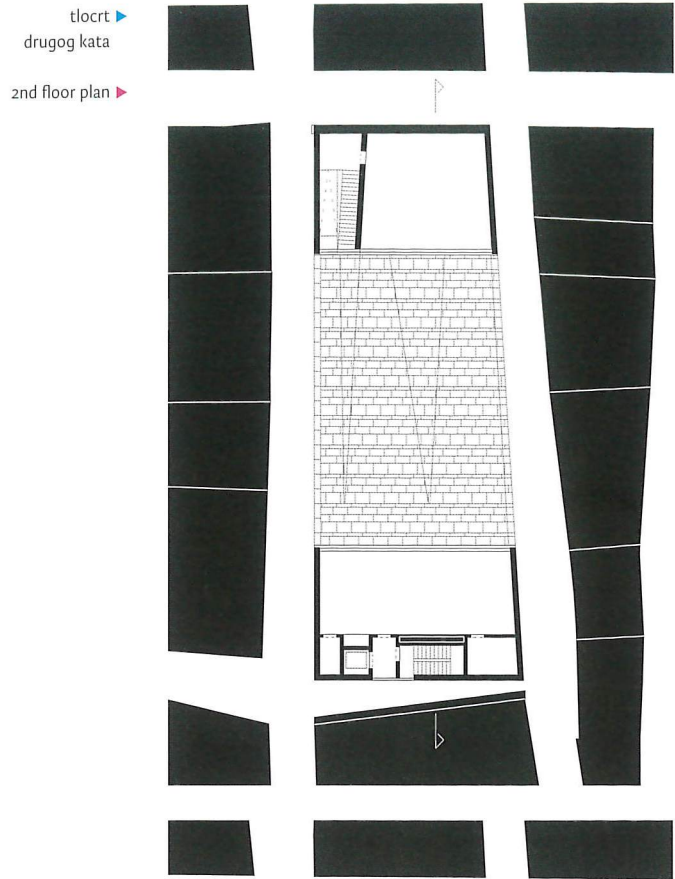
Byrne uspjeva kombinirati trajne i efemerne vrijednosti, postižući visok stupanj dosljednosti i sveobuhvatnu ravnotežu

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tradicipiji koja je, međutim, veoma usmjerena prema *disciplini* arhitekture. Nakon što je sudjelovao u socijalnim stambenim programima kao što su Casal das Figueiras (Setúbal), u okviru SAAL-a (Ambulantna usluga lokalne podrške) te projektirao mitskog *Pink Panthera* (Chelas, Lisabon), Byrne je i dalje socijalno osjetljiv arhitekt. Byrne na svoj delikatan način stavlja stanovnika, korisnika i društvenost, koju arhitektura može proizvesti, u središnji položaj. ❖ To ne znači, međutim, da je neosjetljiv na fluktuacije ukusa i više čisto formalne ili stilističke aspekte arhitekture. I, kao što se to često događa u najboljoj arhitekturi, postoji očita napetost između formalnih izbora i zahtjeva programa ili karakteristika mjesta. Njegov rad zapravo možemo vidjeti kao vježbu u eruditskoj

reinvent uses and enlarge spaces as the beginning of the desired regeneration. ❖ By placing two volumes in the lot's extremities, Byrne creates an intermediate space which is an unconventional square. The programme of the volumes – exhibition area, theatre activity, bar, cafeteria – articulated with the creation of a public space – constitutes an operation of intense *massaging* of the heart of the city. Several age and social groups are needed; day and night are part of the project; the open follows the concealed. ❖ The mirrored surface of the cafeteria volume fulfils the role of expanding space, a magic reflection of the landscape and of the town's Castle. The old identity is replicated in the modern identity through a playful, effective, popular feature. The



apparent simplicity of the project – two volumes on the edge, an intermediate and sloped square – conceals a wise and complex game of accesses, height adjustments, contextual relations, physical connection between the programmes. ¶ Even though the operation does not tear the city's *fabric* – on the contrary, it connects it, providing a renewed solidity – Byrne's project introduces the complexity of small cuts and surprises. Very narrow spaces are recreated and then enlarged, which is accentuated by the disconcerting view in the mirror plane. ¶ A new logic is superimposed onto the medieval city, a logic which accepts the city but which also cleans and reorients it, creating new punctuations. The loose pillar, the ramps, the *plastic* volumes, the mirrored glass pane are all part of modern genealogy embraced by the medieval city. In the aerial photographs we can see this operation as a hopeful and vital bypass, in a dormant and old, but nonetheless beautiful body. ¶ In that sense, this is a profoundly European project: an attempt to regenerate an old body, with a demographic decline, spectral from the point of view of the residential and professional activities. It is also European in



arhitekturi naspram napetosti male intervencije, aspekt koji je k tomu osebujan znak najbolje portugalske arhitekture. ¶ To očigledno nije tehnološka ili umjetnička arhitektura, već se radi o razumijevanju da arhitekti nisu ni tehnolozi ni umjetnici. Stremeći valjanosti arhitektonske discipline, Byrneov diskurs integrira zemljopis u horizontalnoj ravnini, arheologiju u vertikalnoj ravnini i povijest u pažljivom razmatranju prošlih vremena. ¶ Ovaj čvrsti kulturalistički projekt koristi modernu arhitekturu kao zadani način gradnje, vodeći dijalog sa sugestijama arhitekture *plašta*, ekscentričnim geometrijama, akumulacijom konzolnih volumena, konceptima koji su svojstveni suvremenoj arhitekturi. ¶ Možemo govoriti o visokom *mainstreamu*, budući da Byrneova arhitektura nikada nije radikalno autorska niti retorički subverzivna, u velikoj mjeri izbjegava nediferencirano i birokratsko korištenje modernoga na način kako ga koriste korporacije. ¶ Zgrada-trg Eça de Queiroz u Leiriji je daljnje djelo u koherentnoj, diskretnoj, a ipak hvaljenoj Byrneovoj karijeri. Sastoji se od operacije obnove u povijesnoj gradskoj jezgri s ciljem da se stvori program za slobodno vrijeme i kulturu te javni

the use of the heroic architectonic tradition of the 1920s and 1930s, of the revision of the 1950s and the 1960s, and of the visual temptations of the 1990s and the 2010s. ¶ Throughout Byrne's career, the intervention in buildings of high heritage value has been recurrent. Here, however, he deals with a different kind of heritage: a common city, somewhat torn apart and sad. Gonçalo Byrne, however, operates in this context with the same conviction as if he were handling a palace. The city is grateful to him.

Zgrada i trg **Eça de Queirós Building and Square, Leiria, Portugal** | autor **author** Gonçalo Byrne | arhitektonski ured **architectural office** Gonçalo Byrne Arquitectos  
projektni tim **project team** Alexandre Berardo, Susana Ventura, Carla Lima Vieira, Luis Gomes, Patrícia Caldera, Rodrigo Germano, Inês Nunes, Joana Sarmento, Miguel Pacheco, Patrícia Caldera, Rita Freitas, Telmo Cruz,  
João Pedro Bicho, Monica Mendonça, Ricardo Felix, Roberto Sampaio | investitor **client** Câmara Municipal de Leiria | izgrađena površina **built up area** 585 m<sup>2</sup> | projekt **project** 2003  
realizacija **completed** 2012 | cijena **costs** 780.000,00 € | glavni izvođač **prime constructor** Comporto S.A.

prostor. S izuzetkom Lisabona i Porta, u kojima sada dominira turizam koji uključuje i druge vrste problema, povijesni centri u Portugalu u stanju su propadanja i napuštanja što je dodatno pogoršano recentnom gospodarskom i financijskom krizom. ¶ Kao što se može vidjeti, u Leiriji postoje preostala mjesta, ruševine, *rupe* koje imaju veliki potencijal za obnovu. Byrneov projekt zauzima jednu od tih *rupa* i omogućuje korištenje mudrosti arhitekta za ponovno osmišljavanje korištenja kao i za proširenje prostora kao početak željene regeneracije. ¶ Postavljanjem dvaju volumena na krajeve parcele, Byrne stvara međuprostor koji postaje nekonvencionalan trg. Program volumena – izložbeni prostor, kazališna aktivnost, bar, kafić – u artikulaciji sa stvaranjem javnog prostora predstavlja operaciju intenzivne *masaže* srca grada. Pozvane su razne dobne i društvene skupine; dan i noć su dio projekta; otvoreno slijedi skriveno. ¶ Reflektirajuća površina volumena kafića ispunjava svrhu širenja prostora kroz čaroban odraz krajolika i gradskog dvorca. Stari identitet repliciran je u modernom identitetu razigranim, učinkovitim, popularnim oblikovanjem. Prividna jednostavnost projekta – dva volumena na rubu, povezujući nagnuti trg – skrivaju mudru i složenu igru prilaza, prilagodba visine, kontekstualnih odnosa, fizičke veze između programa. ¶ Iako operacija ne prekida tkivo grada – naprotiv, ona ga povezuje pružajući obnovljenu čvrstoću – Byrneov projekt uvodi složenost malih rezova i iznenađenja. Vrlo uski prostori rekreirani su, a zatim povećani, što je naglašeno uznemirujućim pogledom u zrcalnoj ravni. ¶ Srednjovjekovnome gradu superponirana je nova logika, logika koja prihvaća grad, ali koja ga također čisti i reorijentira, stvarajući novu interpunkciju. Slobodni stup, rampe, *plastični* volumeni, zrcalna staklena ploha dio su moderne genealogije koju je srednjovjekovni grad prihvatio. U zračnim fotografijama možemo vidjeti ovu operaciju kao vitalnu i obećavajuću premosnicu na uspavanom i starom, ali ipak lijepom tijelu. ¶ U tom smislu to je duboko europski projekt: pokušaj da se regenerira staro tijelo, s demografskim opadanjem, zapušteno sa stanovišta stambenih i profesionalnih aktivnosti. Europski je također i u korištenju herojske arhitektonske tradicije 1920-ih i 1930-ih, revizije 1950-ih i 1960-ih, te vizualnih iskušenja 1990-ih i 2010-ih. ¶ Byrne je tijekom karijere periodično radio intervencije na zgradama visoke baštinske vrijednosti. Ovdje se on, međutim, bavi drugom vrstom baštine: običnim gradom, pomalo rastrganim i tužnim. Gonçalo Byrne, međutim, djeluje u ovom kontekstu s istim uvjerenjem kao da se radi o palači. Grad mu je zahvalan.



