

Taiwan Tower by Dorin Ștefan

Essay

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Recently, a fast news has flashed on the socialization networks in Romania: Dorin Ștefan won the prestigious international architecture competition: The Taiwan Tower in Taichung, Taiwan, with a project both futuristic and credible. The Tower suggested by Mr. Prof. Dr. Arh. Dorin Ștefan's team, updates the themes of architecture and traditional culture in Taiwan, but it also undermines them in a wholly innovating perspective, which becomes emblematic for Taichung, Taiwan's third largest city, a city that it will also surmount. Professor Dorin Ștefan's work is also a revisiting of the kinetic tradition of the european and russian avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century, to which the architect made a technological and visual upgrade through the presence of the zeppelins which will be coursing on the tower's vertical, addressing to the town and also decorating it.

The chief of the design team, prof. dr. arh. Dorin Ștefan, was born on July 25, 1950 at Zărnești, near Brașov and is a professor at The 'Ion Mincu' University of Architecture in Bucharest, where he counts among the most honored people and once again, from now on, among the most admired workshop professors. Dorin Ștefan is also a citadel man, a transparent and strong public person, no matter whether he is (frequently) invited by the local media, or in his more technical but much more weighty upon the city capacity as a member of the Technical Commission of Urban Planning in Bucharest. He designed some very appreciated national pavilions at different international exhibitions, especially in Asia (South Korea, Japan).

The author of numberless projects which changed the urban figure of Romania's capital (Opera Center, BCR Ghencea, other bank center and important firms, among which some very nonconformist McDonald's shops), Dorin Ștefan had a very noticeable start before 1989, through his remarked participation at the Sofia Biennial Architecture, and through the acclaimed and still interesting - Slatina Community Center for Juvenile. His discourse



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was against the standstill of the late-communist age, and his adopted project – Braşov Community Center for Juvenile – has remained unfinished, though rewritten several times.

Dorin Ştefan has remained an experimentalist, a to date man and professional, connected to the latest trends and changes in his profession. These trends are, not rarely, generated by himself. As against the changes, Dorin Ştefan is reactive, but more important, active: an environment in constant state of ebullition, which challenges permanently. Every work signed by the author and his design team has an abstract focus, no matter how commercial the work might be. The architect is always looking for something new, he excites it, he enframes it through his works. He sometimes does this in writing, other times he instigates his partners or his workshop students. Therefore, he has devoted fans, who overwhelmingly go beyond the critics number, simply because, apart from his professional, civic, and academic achievements, Dorin Ştefan still remains a very friendly and close person.

Even if, his colleagues and other fellow creature from the place of the living, contemporary and romanian culture already knew all these, the fact that this contest was won by Dorin Ştefan has an extra quality. Besides the author's figure, already consecrated both in our country and abroad, his native country gains a portion of an extra exposure. In a time when cynicism and the solution of individual escape have the precedence, as a rule, by living the native country and going to spaces of elusory oportunity, the bound in time success of Mr. Dorin Ştefan proves that one can carry it off well from home, from his own cultural environment, from his profession interior. More precisely said, from its top, as, by any standard, Dorin Ştefan is a top architect in the world.

Dorin Ştefan's hope, confessed after finding out the winning of this contest, is that the breach he made could bring about a chain reaction, in order for the Romanian architects to get out in the world, similar to that of the cinema zone in the last few years. An exit from childhood, provincialism and the self-pity culture, which autosabotages our every long term edification effort. Professor Dorin Ştefan's territorial optimism can be contagious. The qualities that made him admired and, from now on, famous in the world side by side with professionists from his craft, must be promoted in architectural education, in international contests practice, in the Romanian architects' public discourse.



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