

WE DESIGN BUILDINGS WITH LOVE FOR FUNCTIONALISM

FOUR WOMEN, FOUR ARCHITECTS. WHEN THEY CREATE, THEY ARE FULL OF ZEAL AND ENTHUSIASM AND GO ON FULL BLAST WITH EVERY SINGLE PROJECT. THEY DESIGN BUILDINGS WITH A TOUCH OF FUNCTIONALISM, MODERN CITY BUILDINGS, APARTMENT HOUSES, AND ALSO RESTORE HERITAGE AND PROTECTED STRUCTURES.

The principal architect of the Bratislava-based Modulor studio and the one who gave us the interview is Ing. arch. Gabriela Fukatschová, a member of the Czech and Slovak Chambers of Architects.

There are three more women in your studio, what is it like working in such a team?

It's great. We are a team and I am the one responsible for the project. I know what my colleagues can bring into and take on within the project. Naturally, I do supervise, I have to be demanding, because every single work leaving our studio must be in line with our style and philosophy. And my colleagues want to hear my feedback, so I believe our setting works really well.

What do you offer at the Modulor studio, what makes you different and exceptional?

We design all our works functionally and for people. There's no need to play great artists. Each project will be finally inhabited by a human being – our client, the client is who we design for. It must be practical, not too expensive, and sustainable. Sustainability is still important. Buildings are set in a specific environment and we should only burden it to the necessary extent. Instead of building memorials, we should rather set out on the road of functionality. Even the name of our studio – MODULOR says that everything is based on the criteria of a human being and a human body. This is the starting point for us. People must feel good in our buildings, buildings must be harmonic and functional.

Who is your client?

We've been lucky recently to have had clients who fully trusted us and gave us a free hand. Client is a human and every human is different. They have different views, visions and settings. Our cooperation is always based on agreement with the client, explanations and the intersection of these factors. Nevertheless, every single project is a great challenge for us, whether we design a new structure, work on a completion or go for a restoration project.

Recently, your Black and White Villa project in Košice has been awarded in the prestigious architectural contest Big SEE Architecture Award 2021. The story of this house started eight years ago.

When we have some free time, we also work on and design catalogue house projects. This is how we came up with a home design we used to “play” with from time to time, continued designing and finally published as an atrium house project on flat land under the title *Black and White House*. A client from Košice called us then and said he liked the project, but he had a slope plot. So, everything was different and it was a huge challenge for us. We changed the atrium house to a villa on a slope project. We kept the title and the client loved the reworked design. He even added a finishing touch and also had the interior designed using the black-and-white colour scheme.

How did the project get registered for the contest?

We regularly receive offers to register projects in contests. We had never done it before, but this time we decided to give it a try. We had fresh professional pictures made by Monika Labas. Shortly, we received information that our project attracted the jury's attention and that we were short-listed in one of the categories. And when they finally told us that we had won, we as well as the house

owner were really, really happy.

You have been professionals for many years now, so didn't you expect such a result at least somewhere deep within you?

This is a prestigious international contest, and I admit that I didn't even dream of winning, so the joy was enormous. It seems maybe they better understand our work abroad. We stand out quite a bit, and it is the minimalism, sharp edges, strictness and black-and-white combinations that make us different.

You also operate in the Czech Republic and are currently working on a very interesting project there.

Yes, it's been the fourth year now of our work on a restoration project for Bystřice nad Úhlavou Castle near the city of Pilsen. It's a baroque castle with a renaissance palace, but it is difficult to list it under one specific building style now because there have been several reconstructions. A private investor bought the remains of the castle that had been previously used as a military hospital and a retirement home, which didn't do it any good. We were hired to reconstruct the entire premises. It's an amazing work giving us a lot of pleasure. Even though it is a heritage structure, which is subject to a very strict restoration rules, the communication with the Czech heritage officers has been very positive, they even accept more modern ideas for the visual side and technologies. *Is it possible to combine functionalism, minimalism and heritage restoration?* Perfectly. You work on one project for some time, uncover roof beams dating back to 1765, then you have a client who wants to have a two-storey house in the shape of a minimalist cube; the more is it joyful for you to work on absolutely different projects.