"…the city as a part of nature and concrete as a kind of earth."[1]
Japanese Architecture Meets 1960s–1980s Romanian Modernism

Ioana C. Popovici

PhD student, associate tutor, School of Architecture, Design and Environment, University of Plymouth
ioana.popovici@plymouth.ac.uk

KEYWORDS: Japanese architecture; Romanian architecture; modernism; metabolism; post-modernism; lyrical functionalism.

Common Ground

In May 1985, Kisho Kurokawa alighted in Bucharest for the opening of his eponymous exhibition of architecture and design. Comparable only to Kenzo Tange in terms of media representation and professional appeal, Kurokawa's visit was the pinnacle of nearly 15 years of constantly rising fascination with Japanese architecture. Published in *Arhitectura*[2] somewhat regularly since 1972, the projects, completed works and excerpts from the theoretical writings of prominent Japanese architects - Kenzo Tange, Arata Isozaki, Kisho Kurokawa - had enthralled the Romanian professional audience.

Here was an architectural culture of undeniable *otherness,* but an otherness perceived as *kindred* in spirit and desiderata. This alien discourse was incontrovertibly modern, though based on a reinvention of the traditional vernacular which conferred it an aura of cultural specificity. It deployed advanced technology to drive urban planning and architecture to unprecedented feats of conception and construction - cities on the sea, arboreal towns for millions of dwellers - yet worked metabolically, and prized symbolism and humanity above all else.

It was, in a word, *inspirational*.

From the 1960s onwards, the gradual relaxation of censorship and filtering of the in-bound stream of cultural information through specialist media had kept Romanian architecture abreast of the latest developments in international architecture discourse. Starting with Le Corbusier's startlingly symbolic volte-face in terms of aesthetics (Ronchamp chapel, 1955), *Arhitectura*'s portrayal of modern architectural thought cast into practice coalesced into an image of plurivalence: Aldo van Eyck's Amsterdam orphanage (1960), Moshe Safdie's intricate prefabricated housing complex in Montréal (Habitat 67 - 1967), Alvar Aalto's serene, glacial tectonics (Finlandia Hall, 1967-1971), and Louis Kahn's Bangladesh National Parliament House (1961-1972) are but a few examples of the buildings and projects extensively reviewed and analysed over the years. Modern architecture had broken out of the shell of purist rationality and functionalism. Centrifugal discursive directions like Structuralism, Brutalism and an affinity for the local and regional contextualisation of modernism[3] polarized debate among Romanian professionals at a time when the unprecedented scale and urgency of constructive efforts geared towards industrializing and urbanising the country (in a functionalist key) kept alternative modes of modern expression on the fringes of architectural praxis.

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1 Kisho Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis*, (London: Academy Editions, 1994), 178.

2 Romania's sole specialist publication between 1950 and 1989.

3 Ideas tending towards what Kenneth Frampton would coin, in 1983, as Critical Regionalism.

My contention is that, in addition to re-imaginings of modern discourse originating from the field's Western epicentre, whose manifest reflections onto local practice have previously made the object of research, the echoes of Japanese modernity rippled through the period's professional mentality in quietly pervasive and subtly inspiring ways on the dual basis of a *similar cultural disposition towards tradition*, and fairly *analogous agendas for the development of a modern built environment.*

The following study traces the dissemination of Japanese architectural discourse in the context of Romanian modernism, focusing on lyrical functionalism (late 1960s and early 1970s), and the post-modern aesthetics of the 1980s, leaning on three theoretical sources pivotal for understanding of the relationship between Japanese and Romanian architecture over this period: Kisho Kurokawa's *Philosophy of Symbiosis*,[4] condensing key texts written between 1960 and 1991; Mircea Lupu's *National Schools of Architecture*,[5] published in 1977; and *Arhitectura* magazine, whose vital mediation (through a Romanian perspective) of Japanese architecture, enabled the distribution of these new discursive directions and their germination in practice.

Recently, modernism has undergone re-consideration from a number of critical, single or multi-discipline, geographically-localized perspectives challenging the prevalent, reductive understanding of the discourse as a monolithic, authoritarian, cultural-boundary-effacing paradigm. By investigating the interferences between two architecture cultures for which, in the 1960s and 1970s, tradition represented a catalyst towards the next stage in the discourse of modernity, I aim to contribute to the growing body of research into the diversity of modernist undercurrents. The two cases of post-1960 Romanian architecture analysed below qualify as instances of Maiken Umbach and Bernd Hüppauf's concept of *vernacular modernism*, which "expressed, in the various historical, intellectual and political constellations examined, a mode of dialogical engagement with the natural and human environment and provided a sense of orientation in time and space." [6]

From the variety of cultural contexts underpinning the different takes on (or subversions of) modernism presented in *Arhitectura*, Japan provided a stimulating, yet *non-competitively dissimilar* architectural approach. The two strains of discourse met on a common ground made *firmer* by geographical, cultural and, in terms of technological progress, chronological distance. Both countries had undergone rapid, all-encompassing post-war restructuring, from political regime to economy and societal stratification. Fast-paced industrialisation and the development of modern infrastructure networks had pushed the limits of engineering and architectural innovation, as well as revolutionized production. But most importantly, the preservation-*cum*-modern-reimagining of tradition fuelled Japanese and Romanian cultural production with the same urgency.

The quest for a *redefined local identity* strong enough not only to contextualise the time's prevalent, Western-centric discourse of "modernisation", but to also engage it in dialogue on equal footing, seemed as vital to each country's professional milieu as devising economically viable and technically feasible solutions to, for instance, housing problems. Rather than hinder, this paradoxical combination of dissimilarities and congruities increased local receptivity to a Japanese architecture which, although geographically far-removed, seemed *relatable*. Hailing from outside the Western sphere of dominant architectural paradigms, it could serve as a guide towards national identity (re-)construction and affirmation through architecture, but without substituting itself for the Western model against which "marginal" architectural cultures assessed their production, often to negative effect. On the fringes of Western architecture's sphere of influence, however, local discourses could engage in cultural exchanges – including "apprenticeship" – without immediate, competitive comparison. Given enough time to proliferate – as Japanese architecture has demonstrated – these peripheral reconsiderations were instrumental in opening up the centripetal framework of dominant (Western) architectural thought towards the inclusion of fundamentally different systems of value.

4   Kisho Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis* (London: Academy Editions, 1994).

5   Mircea Lupu, *Școli Naționale de Arhitectură* [National Schools of Architecture] (Bucharest: Ed. Tehnică, 1977).

6   Maiken Umbach and Bernd Hüppauf, eds., *Vernacular Modernism. Heimat, Globalization and the Built Environment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 11.

Pulled from one of the seminal works in Japanese architectural thought, the title quote condenses two main conceptual paths through which Japanese architecture, disseminated through *Arhitectura*, influenced local architectural production. *The city as a part of nature* refers to a new approach to urban design, developed by the Metabolist movement. Despite limited practical application in Romania, urban development projects subsequent to the diffusion of the Metabolist message in professional media show an inclination to blend, overlay, and even erase classical boundaries between natural and anthropic logic in a manner unlike Western-sourced negotiations of the same. *Concrete as a kind of earth* references archaic construction techniques – clay, adobe – the poetry-imbued, symbolic signature of traditional space-making. Kenzo Tange's stern lyricism and bare concrete structural modulation was instrumental, as a model, in the Romanian vernacularisation of international modernism, linking contemporary function and scale with the expressivity and sense of belonging afforded by folk architecture.

Kindred Otherness

Theoretical texts from the 1970s on Romanian architecture (stand-alone studies, articles in *Arhitectura*) highlight the "openness towards the theory and practice of architecture, especially world-wide urbanism", but make no mention of the origin and extent of the international influences leading to the formulation of "original concepts".[7] Without explicit signposting, tracing hitherto obscure patterns of alien theoretical influences requires an analytical comparison basis balancing key points of cultural congruence *and* divergence underpinning architecture and its modern configuration.

To unpack the "relatability" of Japanese architecture for the Romanian professional milieu, I propose the concept of *kindred otherness*: a non-exhaustive system of cultural coordinates selected according to prevalence in the Romanian discourse of modern architecture. To minimise the bias inherent to external cultural observations, I have relied on the seminal philosophical writings of Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. Theorist Mircea Lupu, whose texts provided critical perspective even at a time of mostly non-committal, descriptive accounts of practice under communism, lends a narrative voice to Romanian architecture. Finally, the dispersal of ideas sourced from the Japanese context, mediated by *Arhitectura,* will be tracked by analysing articles on the innovation and specificity of Japanese architecture, theoretical texts by Romanian authors sharing a similar preoccupation with a tradition-based, "vernacularized" modernism, and projects in which Japanese design influences are manifest.

Kindred otherness serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it accounts for the affinity and receptivity of Romanian architecture to theoretical stimuli from an alien discourse with similar core tenets and a common goal: rewriting modernism in a culturally-specific key. Secondly, it unpacks the reasons for which parallel strains of thought developed to address said goal took, in Romanian and Japanese architecture, divergent paths, and varied in effectiveness. As a set of cultural coordinates, *kindred otherness* leans on the main theoretical points discussed in Romanian architecture theory during the period under investigation as pivotal for the creation of a modern, tradition-based national architecture. Moreover, it reflects the period's unflagging belief in the cohesive, culturally-unique existence of a singularly-defined "national spirit", and the possibility to derive a "national" architecture from its characteristics. The key texts referenced throughout the analysis are formulated from this perspective. My investigation does not discuss its contemporary validity, but reflects on how such thinking mediated the diffusion of Japanese influences in Romania, encouraging local architecture praxis towards vernacular modernism

Shaping the understanding of the world, religion-dependent spirituality underpins the creation of what authors referenced below deemed a historically-consistent, specific spatiality reflected in traditional architecture. Japan's development under syncretic Shintoist (*multiplicity* of form and *ubiquity* of sacred essence, engendering a sense of *interrelatedness)* and Buddhist (secular/transcendental *connectedness,* the *relativity of material existence* outside the mind*)* beliefs generated

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7 Lupu, *Școli Naționale de Arhitectură*, 148.

a mentality of *impermanence.* Strongly affecting cultural production rather than the hyper-stable social structures, Japanese spirituality anchors awareness to the immediacy of the moment, embracing *immanent, constant change.*

In Romania, the spatial coding undergirded by Orthodox religious thought and practice is one of *permanence*, *finality*, *stark limits*, and *mediated unity* with the transcendental. Unlike the reincarnation cycle, a single earthly life places particular emphasis on the *material form durability* of places/rituals of worship. If the Ise Grand Shrine, reconstructed by master craftsmen every twenty years, nevertheless preserves, for the Japanese, "not even the style as such in all its details but… some intangible essence"[8] spanning more than a millennium, traditional Romanian architecture makes a bid for immortality in built object form – an artefactual culture of *attachment* to edifices as monuments consecrated into *perpetuity*. Thus, Japanese and Romanian culture occupy opposite ends of the "relevance of form and materiality" spectrum.

Both cultures claim profound, but significantly different connections with nature. Japan's forested mountains are sacred. Nature sits on the intangible side of an uncrossable limit - spiritual support and source of beauty, for "looking at from afar".[9] The natural is clearly delineated from man-made space: in cities, 'borrowed landscapes' recall nature through miniaturized version of the real, untouchable natural environment. Beyond nature's cyclicity, observation affords glimpses into and acceptance of metabolic processes: slow decay,[10] sudden destruction (typhoon, earthquake, and tsunami), rapid re-growth. Traditional architecture is not only *flexible* in terms of addition and subtraction of quasi-typified structural and spatial units, but also designed with *impermanence* in mind, facilitating post-catastrophe reconstruction.

Unlike the industrial-driven exploitation of nature prevalent in the West, Romanian architecture "respects the landscape, but does so variedly, with intelligence and full awareness", in turns using, challenging or submitting to it.[11] A discerning, minimal-change intervention marks both circumscription of the natural into anthropized space, and insertion of the man-made into predominantly natural scenery. Taking on material form (buildings, enclosures), this collaborative relationship with nature tips the balance towards human agency: with the willingness and power to alter, comes the urge for the *durability/resilience* of the man-made.

 Juxtaposing the natural and anthropic environments calls attention to spatial order and the limits between. "Japanese architectural space characteristically knows no beginning, middle, and end"[12]: it is additive, rhizomatic, limitless. Similar to a birdcage,[13] its flexible structural modulation and the fragility of non-structural enclosures further highlights the irrelevance *of physical limits*, enabling a wide range of spatial responses to a non-hierarchy-breeding "usefulness of purpose."[14] Answering functional needs *non-hierarchically*, outside the centre-periphery paradigm, it structures interior and urban space through a logic of infinitely-expandable cellular agglutination. Moreover, Kurokawa notes that Japanese architecture is governed by functional ambiguity, and mutual inclusion of city-house, individual-society, and whole-details.[15]

Radial-concentric or branching along commercial routes, traditional anthropized Romanian space is dilutedly hierarchized. Functional subordination negotiates the transition between private and public spaces via well-delineated, physical boundaries: wall, fence, and gate. Except for a few spaces intended for functional multiplicity and ease of transition (the porch), space is structured

8   Kenzo Tange and Noboru Kawazoe, *Ise: Prototype of Japanese Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 202.

9   Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis*, 176.

10 Chūji Kawashima, *Japan's Folk Architecture. Traditional Thatched Farmhouses* (New York: Kodansha International, 1986), 13.

11 Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură*, 160.

12 Drexler, *The Architecture of Japan*, 55.

13 Ibid., 68.

14 Jiro Harada, *The Lesson of Japanese Architecture* (London: The Studio Ltd., 1936), 9.

15 Kisho Kurokawa, "Convorbire cu Kisho Kurokawa" [Conversation with Kisho Kurokawa], *Arhitectura* 5 (1985): 52-54.

by the logical branching out and coming together of functions designed for a handful of traditional ways of life. This sometimes branching, occasionally self-intersecting functional logic stemming from the linear and circular patterns of the quotidian breeds a space of finite routes and concentricity.

Aesthetic sensibility is a complex, plural phenomenon. Despite the acceptance of aesthetics commonly held during the studied period (political-border dependent, stemming from 'national specificity'), key texts published in *Arhitectura* highlight several points of congruence, facilitating the understanding of Japanese design concepts. Architects from both countries predominantly focused on the *aformal* characteristics of their respective cultural sensibilities:[16] *lyricism*, rather than narrativity;[17] *tension and subdued drama*, enacted through ambivalences, ambiguities, contrasts; a constant *shifting between*, and sometimes combination of, *metaphoricity* and *realism*.

Kurokawa's modern recovery of traditional aesthetics was *hanasuki*: a heterogeneous symbiosis of splendour-simplicity, boldness-reserve, darkness-light, monochrome-polychrome, disparate states of mind and soul.[18] Traditional Romanian architecture also inhabits this continuum of aesthetic expression between minimalist *reserve* and *exuberance* of form, decoration and chromatic preference.[19] Alifanti used design schemes based on contrast to inform contemporary architectural creation, suggesting the new through socially and regionally familiar intransigencies.[20] For Dorin Ştefan, ambiguity and unresolved, though balanced tension between heterogeneous elements contending and merging towards the creation of cultural nuances, should inform a modern Romanian design agenda.[21] Artefacts of the commonplace, spaces and places shaped by ordinary use – the "robust, unprepossessing, and above all functional" charm of minka farmhouses,[22] or the intuitive, well-proportioned geometry of a Romanian peasant's abode[23] - are equally valued in both aesthetic systems.

During the studied period, an unassailable belief in a monolithic, culturally-unique 'national identity' animated the political and academic discourse in Romania and Japan, with significant effects on the theory and practice of modern architecture, which it rerouted through *tradition*. In Japan, scholarship devoted to local cultural uniqueness, Nihonjinron, had been steadily accruing since the 18th century.[24] For Harada, the economy and standardized construction of folk architecture indicate an *inherent modernity*[25] predating Western modernism.

Romania's claim to cultural individuality was equally far-reaching. The work of philosopher Lucian Blaga became a cornerstone of architectural thought. If an unconscious spatial horizon (stylistic matrix) specific to the Romanian people generated a conceptually cohesive, though formally varied cultural production,[26] decrypting it could provide a sound basis for modern national architecture. During Ceauşescu's bid for a Romanian autarky,[27] this theory was

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16 Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis,* 238-39.

17 Ibid., 211. Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură*, 153.

18 Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis*, 110-13.

19 The tea-room and Kinkakuji, and the Castranova 'bordei' and Voroneţ monastery demonstrate the range of Japanese and, respectively, Romanian aesthetic sensibility.

20 Mircea Alifanti, "Baia Mare, sediul politico-administrativ al judeţului Maramureş" [Baia Mare, political-administrative headquarters of Maramureş county], *Arhitectura* 6 (1972): 19-30.

21 Dorin Ştefan, „Lungul drum al ambiguităţii spre arhitectură" [The long route of ambiguity towards architecture], *Arhitectura* 1(1982): 68-72.

22 Kawashima, *Japan's Folk Architecture*, 12.

23 Grigore Ionescu, *Arhitectura pe Teritoriul României de-a Lungul Veacurilor* [Architecture in Romania Throughout the Ages], (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1981), 82.

24 Chris Bugress, "Maintaining Identities. Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalizing Japan", Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies, 2004, http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/Burgess.html, accessed 1 July 2014.

25 Harada, *The Lesson of Japanese Architecture*, 11-12.

26 Lucian Blaga, *Triologia Culturii* [The Trilogy of Culture] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011).

27 Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceauşescu's Romania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 116-23.

exacerbated into radical traditionalism.[28] Country-wide cultural policies touted the originality and the pre-eminence of Romanian artistic discourses over their Western equivalents. Architecture was under pressure to develop a current, 'national' discourse, based on the *in-nuce* modern traits of folk architecture. "Architecture was... a factor of vital importance in the constant struggle to preserve and strengthen the national spirit,"[29] wrote Lupu, for whom functionalism – the adequate shaping of built space to needs/means of construction – was one fundamental feature of age-old Romanian architecture.[30]

Translating Alien Discourse. Influences and Exchanges.

Discursive exchanges often debut with observation from afar, followed by the construction of a set of presuppositions filtered through the observer's own cultural lens. *Otherness*, in the context of this study, primarily relates to culturally-localized facets of the discourse of modern architecture, engaged in by professional communities with fairly similar socio-economic and political standing in their respective countries – despite a considerable difference in political regime. But the relative lack of disparity in social standing and agency does not exempt these observations from replacing the multiple, contested, fuzzy-edged narratives of the *other* with an internally-constructed, clearly delimited and unitary coherence specific to the (elite) observer.[31] Nevertheless, these unintentional misreadings constructed before conversing with the alien other afford relevant clues to the puzzle of yet undocumented cross-cultural influences.

At first, Romanian readings of Japanese architecture were dichotomist and contradictory. Throughout the 1960s, books and specialist publications from abroad (*Japan Architect, Architectural Review, L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, etc.) had amassed in the libraries of the Ion Mincu University, of the Union of Romanian Architects, as well as in private collections. Even so, this material could only be disseminated across the language barrier through thematic reviews published in *Arhitectura*, which the editorial board compiled as a mirror to international architecture discussion. Given the enormity of the task at hand and the low number of dedicated enthusiasts, the selection, translations and analyses inevitable bore the stamp of each researcher's particular area of interest.

Cezar Lăzărescu's travel notes fixate on the alien exoticism of the "fairy-tale world" of traditional Japanese culture, and only obliquely allude to a modern architecture parsed through a Western chronology and frame of reference.[32] Despite being a major figure of Romanian modernism, Lăzărescu's attitude to Japanese culture (exoticized) and architecture (viewed as watered-down mimicry of the Western original) suggest a generational threshold in perception: a Western-centric, somewhat dismissive view of the potential of emergent Japanese architecture (held by the older generation), versus the openness of younger university staff, students and practitioners to this upcoming phenomenon. Some of Lăzărescu's projects, like Perla Restaurant, situated at a negligible chronological distance from similar Japanese works (Tange's Hiroshima Peace Centre) indicate conceptually similar attempts to locally contextualise international modernism.

Gradually, the image of Japanese architecture presented by *Arhitectura* came into focus. In the timeframe investigated, 36 articles on the subject were featured in the magazine.[33] Interestingly, the most accurate readings of Japanese architecture were contributed by student-architects, who focused on both the alien logic of *metabolic city planning* and on the *lyrical coding of the individual dwelling*, expanding the range of programmes thought to lend themselves to one-off design

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28 See Edgar Papu, *Protochronism*, 1974. Ibid., 167-209.

29 Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură* , 129.

30 Ibid., 153.

31 Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

32 Cezar Lăzărescu, "Impresii de călătorie în Japonia" [Travel notes from Japan], *Arhitectura* 6 (1974): 65-67.

33 See *Arhitectura* 1 (1964); 1 (1965); 1, 3, 6 (1970); 2 (1971); 2 (1972); 1, 2, 3, 6 (1973); 4, 6 (1974); 1, 4, 5, 6 (1975); 2, 6 (1976); 1, 4, 5 (1977) ; 1, 3, 4 (1979); 5, 6 (1980); 3, 5, 6 (1985); 1 (1986); 1 (1987).

exercises.[34] With the clarification of these topics of significant concern, as well as forays into the Japanese method of reconstructing modernism in a culturally specific key, *Arhitectura* was the main channel of translation and dissemination of the Japanese architectural discourse.

Mircea Lupu's extensive analysis of the evolution of modern architecture in Japan, whilst astute, draws upon Arthur Drexler's seminal study, *The Architecture of Japan*, inserting nevertheless a few points illuminating the local perception of Japanese architecture as being inherently modern to a degree that minimized the shock of transition from one architectural paradigm to the next.[35] The concept of an *a-priori core of modernity* encoded in traditional architecture became hugely popular with both Romanian and Japanese architects during the second half of the 20th century resurgence of nationalist ideologies attempting to create "forced unity from diversity, coherence from inconsistencies, and homogeneity from narrative dissonance."[36] Moreover, Lupu attributes 20th century Japanese architecture a continuous, linear evolution embodied in the career progression of Kenzo Tange: from a period of deference to Western modernism, through casting its syntax into rhythms specific to traditional architecture, and into the development, at first, of a sculptural expressivity echoing the structural principles of woodworking in concrete, and, finally, the meta-urbanism of Metabolism's large-scale, marine cities.

It could be argued that this disputable unity, belied by Kisho Kurokawa, and subsequently dismantled by recent studies recovering narratives internal to the culture,[37] represents a wishful projection of the path Romanian architecture seemed to have embarked on during the late 1970s. Indeed, there is striking correspondence between concurrent preoccupations with the 'national' expression of modern architecture (1960s), and with the imperative to metabolically rethink the city structure and processes (1970s and 1980s). Both international architecture discourse preoccupations coincided, ironically enough, with local cultural policies aimed at fashioning an insular national identity in the attempt to increase political autonomy. In Romania, the resulting complex network of measures designed to "urbanise" the country and nullify the village-city distinction during Ceaușescu[38] provided the illusive opportunity of a radical shift in direction, sabotaged in practice by the inefficacy of institutionalized practice and the shortcomings of construction. The significant gap between the innovative focus of the professional milieu and the constraints placed on practice by political impetus and a State economy of resource scarcity is evident in the contrast between the conceptual freedom animating competition entries and student projects, and the dreariness of the vast majority of built projects featured in *Arhitectura* (mostly housing estates).

Japanese readings of Romanian architecture are scarce. Kisho Kurokawa's 1985 interview with *Arhitectura*, and the magazine's reports on his visits offer minimal clues, rendered more obscure by the architect's somewhat non-committal answers. He reportedly expressed an interest in traditional Romanian architecture after visits to the Village Museum in Bucharest. His message to contemporary architects, however, had a hidden edge – an oblique call for (a too long absent?) radical initiative and improvement, under the guise of an encouragement: "It's time for Romanian architects to contribute to the new era… The centre of the architectural world may still be in New York, or in France, but that is not where the system of thought will be altered from. So please, work wholeheartedly, and have faith in your creative force! I have the feeling *you can achieve valuable things*."[39]

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34 See articles by Ileana Murgescu and Oni Enescu in *Arhitectura* 2 (1973): 54-55; 6 (1973): 58-60, and the series on contemporary Japanese dwelling, 4, 5 (1977).

35 Lupu, *Școli Naționale de Arhitectură* , 55. Drexler (239-40) is of a different opinion, noting the early 20th century discontent with Western-imported architecture clashing fundamentally with basic needs such as climatic comfort as well as aesthetic appropriateness. Post-war development nevertheless required durable construction in reinforced concrete. Awareness of this need led to the formulation of strategies meant to customize modernism for the Japanese dweller during the 1910 symposium.

36 Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture,* 2002.

37 Christopher Knabe and Joerg R. Noennig, eds*., Shaking the Foundations. Japanese Architects in Dialogue* (London: Prestel Verlag, 1999), 9-20.

38 Law 58/29.10.1974 regarding the systematisation of the territory and urban and rural settlements. http://www.legex.ro/Legea-58-1974-565.aspx.

39 Kurokawa, "Convorbire cu Kisho Kurokawa", 54. Emphasis mine.

Kurokawa's stance on Western-originating modernism, however, was abundantly clear in the interview. Firstly, he argued for a functionalism (concept predating modernism and present throughout architecture history and across the world) dissociated from Western culture's excessive dependence on intellect and rationalism to the exclusion of emotion – hallmarks of the industrial-era and subsequent, science-based modernity.[40] For Kurokawa, modernism was a language of limitation through function-based dualism, industry-driven universalisation, hierarchical order, and over-reliance on the quality of materials to stand in for symbol, meaning, and nuance.[41] His Western influences were philosophical (Deleuze, Guattari, Baudrillard), though he deeply admired the symbolism of Louis Khan. Being postmodern and postmodernist were two entirely different attempts to overcome the limits of modernism. Robert Venturi, Michael Graves and Arata Isozaki practised, in his opinion, a postmodernism of short life-expectancy, too heavily reliant on stylistic reference to past European styles.[42]

After his work within the Metabolic movement, Kurokawa developed his own philosophy of architecture, branded symbiotic, whose spatial diachronicity and synchronicity eschewed temporal and spatial hierarchies, allowed mergers between past, present, future, diverse cultural influences, and reinstated the ambiguity, coexistence and overlap of contending elements characteristic of human life and the pre-modernist built environment. For Kurokawa, this metabolic flexibility also led towards a viable reconciliation of humanity and technology, anthropization and nature, dwelling and the city. One final point to make concerns the distinct factions he discerned in modern Japanese architecture: for Togo Murano, Seiichi Shirai and Kenzo Tange, "Western architecture was an absolute, almost sacred ideal," a tendency continuing today with Isozaki's generation, who "prize knowledge of Western architecture yet have an aversion to discussion of their own architectural tradition."[43]

A Taste for the Poetic: Kenzo Tange and Lyrical Functionalism

"Kenzo Tange is considered – and rightly so – the most distinguished representative of contemporary Japanese architecture, promoter and mentor of the school," wrote Lupu, in a clear indication of the Romanian professional milieu's adherence to this widespread view. The Pritzker Prize winner[44] featured somewhat regularly in *Arhitectura*: one mention in 1964 for the Yoyogi Olympic Stadium, three articles in 1973 (issues 2, 6), focusing on the urbanistic *tour de force* of Tange's Tokyo Bay Masterplan and his connections with Metabolism, and a review of *Kenzo Tange. Architecture and Urbanism 1946-1969*, edited by Udo Kultermann; in 1/1989, a feature of his winning project for Tokyo's Administrative Centre competition. However, the number of articles dealing with architecture from abroad (Japan, in particular) was in no way comparable to the space reserved by the magazine for local architectural practice, which reflected an obligation to document politically-prioritized construction sectors.

Regardless of the international recognition of his radical concept of Tokyo's expansion over the bay – "a classic and fundamental project for modern urban planning"[45] – the metropolitan scale, quasi-futuristic deployment of technology, but most of all, the shifting of urban expansion logic from radio-centric to linear and the astounding economic and social detail to which the gargantuan, 10 million inhabitant urban colossus was designed, gave the project distinct utopian undertones for the Romanian audience. Infinitely more relatable for the local context were Tange's works of architecture. Influenced during his early career by Le Corbusier, affiliated with CIAM, but also with the critique of modernism emergent from its Team X led dissolution, Kenzo
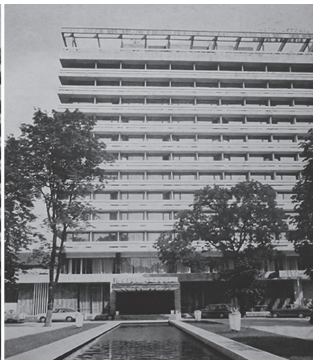
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40 Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis*, 207.

41 Kurokawa, "Convorbire cu Kisho Kurokawa", 52.

42 Kurokawa, *Philosophy of Symbiosis*, 216.

43 Ibid., 18.

44 Awarded in 1987.

45 Ileana Murgescu and Oni Enescu, "Arhitectura mărilor şi oceanelor" [The architecture of seas and oceans], *Arhitectura* 2 (1973): 55.

Tange's architecture gradually navigated away from the hard-cut purist language of international modernism towards an individual expression and, after WWII, towards an aesthetic recognized abroad as incontrovertibly contemporary, and essentially Japanese.

The Hiroshima Peace Centre (1950-55) heralds the beginning of Tange's divergence from mainstream modernism. Lupu considers the project a turning point in Japanese architecture: the main pavilion's tranquil structural rhythm, the subtle refinement of façade detailing and the contrasting, vital energy of the centre's hyperboloid monument[46] herald a conceptual merger in the making. Half a decade later, a similar shift occurred in Romanian architecture, as evidenced by the svelte, serenely horizontal lines of Cezar Lăzărescu's Perla Restaurant (Eforie, 1958).

Dubbed by Lupu 'elaborate functionalism', it stood out, mostly through finesse and conceptual depth, from the more prevalent and expressively limited en-masse design and construction,[47] which nevertheless played an important role in allowing the discourse to navigate a period of profession etatization and industry-led, high-volume construction. The echoes of this elaborate form of functionalist expression can be seen up until the end of the 1960s – for instance, Hotel Carpaţi (I. Rădăcină, 1963), Hotel Astoria (Miloş Cristea, 1963), and the new wing of the Academy of Economic Studies (Cleopatra Alifanti and team, 1967-70) share a similar in-depth modulation of the façade, via loggias, cursives and strong vertical elements, with Tange's Tokyo City Hall (1952-57), Kagawa District Administrative Centre (1955-1958), and works by other contemporary Japanese architects.

But the likeliest channel of affinity between the Japanese modern aesthetics and Romanian architecture stems from a common devotion to tradition and desire to employ it as a catalyst in the further development of modern discourse: the *poetic language of structure*, and the *lyricism* of its sculptural potential. Alongside the vigorous lucidity of imagery achieved through the manipulation of reinforced concrete towards the limits of structural capacity *and* range of expression, a good grasp on the subtleties of traditional spatiality invoked through idiomatic referencing (roof shapes, translation of structural patterns from wood to concrete) propelled Japanese architecture to an unprecedented degree of unanimously recognized specificity. Concrete had become *a new kind of earth or wood* mouldable to great symbolic expressivity.

According to Lupu, traditional Romanian architecture had always been a *balanced, synthetic blend* of functionality and lyrical disposition, "a constant penchant for the affect, a direct communication of interiority, an active state of tension far from the platitude of expressions derived from the overly-complex processes ruled by conveniences."[48] For the architectural philosophy of the time, it was a matter of great importance that this state of creative tension, momentarily displaced by the precepts of the international functionalist discourse, should once again thrive at the conceptual core of contemporary architectural thought.[49] During the 1960s and early 1970s, much like in Japan after the American occupation, civic centres, theatres, city halls and privileged, unique architecture programmes emphasized lyrical expression, sometimes cast into brutalist imagery, or strongly referencing spatial archetypes of the folk vernacular and decorative arts. This was modernism turned vernacular, indigenized, domesticated.

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46 Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură,* 56.

47 Ibid.*,* 51-53.

48 Ibid., 154.

49 Nicolae Porumbescu and Maria Vaida-Porumbescu, "Specificul în arhitectură" [Specificity in Architecture], *Arhitectura* 2 (1967): 12-17.

Fig. 1. (opposite, first row) Hiroshima Peace Centre (Kenzo Tange, 1950-55) ⏐ Perla Restaurant (Cezar Lăzărescu, 1958)

Fig. 2. (opposite, second row) Kagawa Administrative Centre (Kenzo Tange, 1955-58) ⏐ Hotel Carpaţi (Ion Rădăcină, 1963) ⏐ Hotel Astoria (Miloş Cristea, 1963)

Fig. 3. (opposite, third row, clockwise) State Circus (N. Porumbescu, C. Rulea, 1960) ⏐ Otopeni Airport (Cezar Lăzărescu, 1970) ⏐ Botoşani City Hall (Nicolae and Maria Porumbescu, 1968-70) ⏐ Baia Mare City Hall (Mircea Alifanti, 1970)
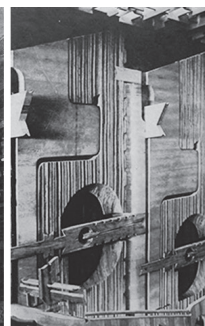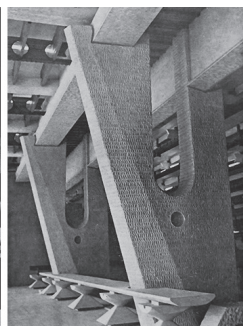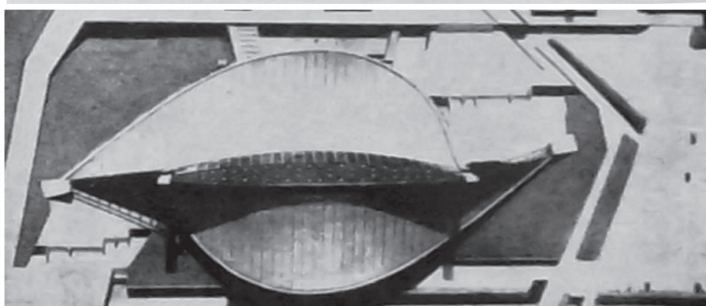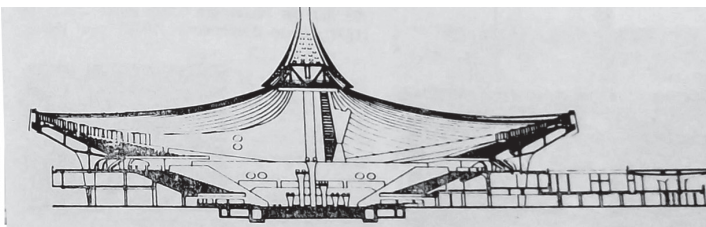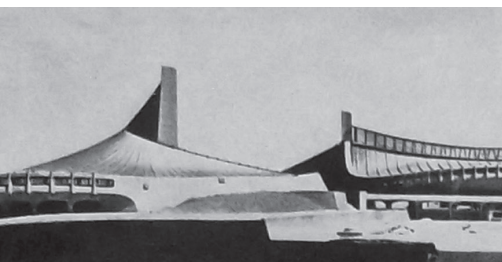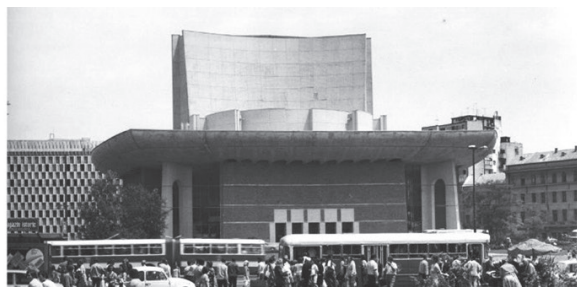
Coining the term "lyrical functionalism" for the design method balancing the tension between functionalist rationality and a local *poétique*, Lupu discerns between four main, somewhat overlapping types of lyrical expression: *plastic-structural* (C. Lăzărescu, restaurant at Eforie Nord, 1958; State Circus, N. Porumbescu, C. Rulea, 1960; National Bucharest Theatre, H. Maicu and R. Belea, 1963-71); *elaborate* (H. Maicu, T. Ricci, Sala Palatului ensemble, Bucharest, 1960; O. Doicescu, Polytechnic Institute, 1970; C. Lăzărescu, Otopeni airport, 1970); *dramatic* (M. Alifanti, A. Panaitescu, Baia Mare City Hall, 1970, Bistriţa City Hall, 1973); *sculptural* (Nicolae and Maria Porumbescu, Culture Hall Suceava, 1969, Botoşani City Hall, 1968-70).

Interestingly, these variations inhabit a spectrum between metaphorical conveyance of the philosophically outlined essential coordinates of Romanian specificity (as understood at the time) and a more literally idiomatic approach. Mircea Alifanti's designs, for instance, speculate the "logical uncanny"[50] and a contrasting, lively state of tension to arrive at an ingenuity of functional approach for complex, large-scale programmes, akin to that of folk architecture. Working with juxtaposed logics and rhythms distilled from the local patterns of living and space-making, Alifanti eschews the major difficulty of translating the spirit of traditional Romanian architecture into contemporary design: scaling.

Architecture favouring the sculptural lyrical position "models" space and its physical confines, drawing on a treasure-trove of spatial archetypes (the veranda) and decorative motifs (from structural woodcarving to household items). The diminutive scale of the Romanian vernacular, however, requires zooming-in and adding-up to effectively inform modern programmes. Tried and tested in Japan to outstanding effect,[51] the method underpinned works by Tange in both small and large scale, proving the flexibility of structural/spatial unit addition. Moreover, his use of roof shapes reminiscent of those adorning traditional homesteads as symbolic locus of design bypasses the limited sculptural capabilities of the vernacular (always rectangular, planar).

In comparison, Romanian exercises in sculpturality display the eerie sense of proportion of minute woodcarvings magnified to inhabitable scale. Even when the space-modelling uses spatio-structural units, the resulting rhythms seem slightly alien. At the heart of the problem lie two factors: firstly, the additive, borderless quality of traditional Japanese space versus the finite, enclosed, full-object logic of Romanian spatiality; secondly, the difference in rapport to built form – impermanence and change versus perpetuity and finality.

Furthermore, despite Lupu's assertion of lyrical functionalism being the dominant creative paradigm since 1965, the actual architectural production was quite low, and mostly of the one-off, high-profile, exclusive commission variety. For the majority of practitioners, the endless local and State commission reviews operated arbitrary changes based on the scarce architectural knowledge and often little common sense of their politico members. With country-wide cultural policies hard at work creating the national, a low-brow, facile derivation of the lyrical quality of top-tier architecture gradually suffused design from industrial to low-budget housing, setting in motion a pastiche decorativism which would later be dubbed, with dark humour, "parapet architecture."[52]

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50 Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură* ,160.

51 Nicolae Porumbescu and Maria Vaida-Porumbescu, "Specificul în arhitectură" [Specificity in architecture], *Arhitectura* 2 (1967): 17.

52 Marius Marcu-Lapadat, *Feţele ornamentului. Arhitectura bucureşteană în secolul 20* [The Faces of Ornament. Bucharest Architecture in the 20th Century] (Bucharest: Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2003): 128-31.

Fig. 4. (top left) Hiraoka City Hall (Junzo Sakakura, 1964) I Top right: National Bucharest Theatre (Horia Maicu, Romeo Belea, 1963-71)
(bottom left): Tokyo Metropolitan Hall (Kunio Maekawa, 1961) I Bottom right: Piteşti Sports Hall (Ion Enescu, 1968)
Fig. 5. (middle left) traditional Japanese farmhouse roof I View, section, aerial perspective: Yoyogi Olympic Stadium (Kenzo Tange, 1961-64)
Fig. 6. (bottom left) Kenzo Tange's house (1953) I Structural detailing: Suceava Cultural Centre (Nicolae and Maria Porumbescu, 1965-69)

Dwelling in the City of Tomorrow.
Kisho Kurokawa, Systematization and the Romanian Post-modern(ism)

Kisho Kurokawa rose to international architectural fame in association with the radical movement he founded, in 1960, with Kiyonori Kikutake, Arata Isozaki, Noboru Kawazoe, Fumihiko Maki and Masato Otaka, under the aegis of Kenzo Tange. The group's philosophy and design strategy, based on biological processes such as metabolic growth, was formulated in response to social demands of tremendous urgency (Japan's urban hyper-density and the skyrocketing price of land) with an outstanding degree of connection with the country's technological progress and cutting-edge industrial production. At almost unfathomable scales for Western urbanism, Metabolist projects colonized the air above extant cities and the seas in projects barred from utopianism through incredibly detailed processual schemes (social, constructive, economic, etc.). Their aim, "to provide the inhabitants with a new and specifically Japanese habitat that would reflect the true circumstances of their lives",[53] resulted in fantastic pillared mega-structures on which individual dwellings reflective of the Japanese spatial sensibility clustered, grape-like, or slid and rotated in degrees of motion freedom pre-determined by the system's particular logic.

For Lupu, Metabolism's greatest achievements were a synthetic approach to technology, and the conceptual, biology-informed flexibility thence derived, channelled into the creation of highly social, individualized spaces of collective dwelling.[54] Capsule architecture, in particular, represented a "new understanding of dwelling as a community of individualities" designed according to metabolic cycles and invested with social, rather than mechanical life.[55] Moreover, Metabolism had delivered a serialized, truly mass-produced architecture, which blurred the distinction between collective and private housing: a capsule-tree was indeed a social hive, but each pod enclosed distinct, customisable spaces, smoothing the transition to collective living for a people with express preferences for individual dwelling. Kurokawa's own summer house, Capsule

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53 Knabe and Noennig, eds*., Shaking the Foundations,* 11.
54 Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură,* 65-75.
55 Kurokawa quoted in Lupu, *Şcoli Naţionale de Arhitectură,* 74.

Fig. 7. Tokyo Bay Plan (Kenzo Tange, 1960) I City Farm (Kisho Kurokawa, 1960) I City in the Air (Arata Isozaki, 1961) I Helix City (Kisho Kurokawa, 1961)
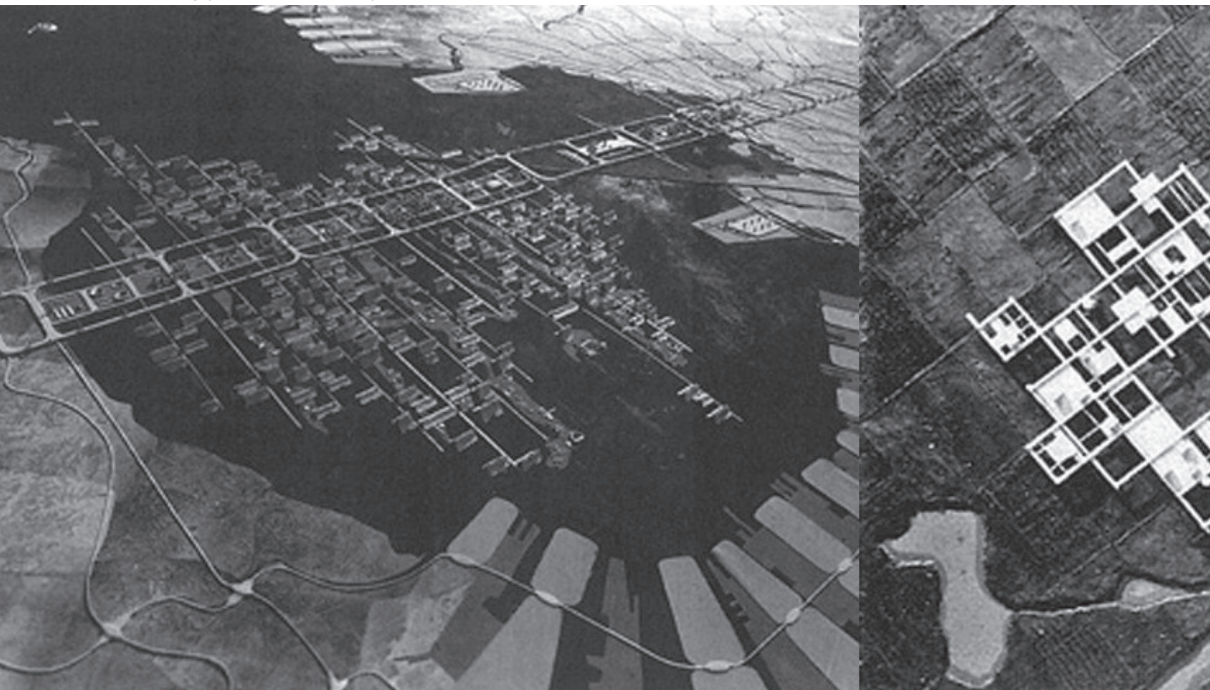
House K, is a compelling argument for the synthesis (or "antagonistic coexistence") between modern, fully-industrialized housing production and the propagation of a slowly-morphing way of traditional existence: the futuristic steel pod encloses a tatami-room dedicated to the tea ceremony.[56] For the Romanian professional audience, Metabolist architecture had the merit of merging the imperative of intensive, State-policy-led collective housing design with issues of architectural interest (a redefinition of the urban social, maintaining individuality, configuring non-alienating dwelling and social spaces in collective housing), in a new aesthetic direction and with the promise of feasible industrialisation.

But after the 1970 Osaka World Exposition, the Metabolists parted ways for good, each in pursuit of individual spin-offs of the original ethos. Kurokawa's subsequent evolution is of particular interest: a *philosophy of symbiosis* concerned with catalyzing contemporary architecture past the limitations of modernism, and bridging the gaps between past, present and the futuristic urban envisaged during the Metabolist stage. Much more contextualized and applied, Kurokawa's symbiotic architecture, unveiled before a captivated Romanian audience in Bucharest, May 1985 through lectures and an exhibition of projects and completed works, was a fully-fledged answer to a shared quandary: *the conciliation of rapid urban growth and industry-driven construction with a symbolically-rich, sociologically-accurate and culturally-specific creation of space.*

Kurokawa's architecture aimed to (re-)unite architecture and nature, man and technology, history and the future, the vernacular and the erudite, and facilitate intercultural exchanges.[57] Symbiosis was a philosophy of continuity, not of displacement of the previous discourse, of enrichment of the rational with plurivalence, cultural contextualisation, rhizomatic order, ambiguity and contradiction. It sought the annihilation of function-based pyramidal subordinations of space, and the double-bordered separation of interior and exterior. *Engawa,* the traditional porch, became, in Kurokawa's architecture, a third type of space, bringing together to greater symbolic effect heterogeneous, even contradictory elements. The resulting layering of multiple functions harked back to the Japanese city of old, whose public life clustered and coursed along the streets, and whose non-hierarchized functional and imagistic blend misread, in the West, as chaos.[58] For Kurokawa, this was simply the natural state of the city – a reflection of human life's inherent ambivalence, contradictions and richly layered accumulation of meaning.

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56 Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture*, (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 16.
57 Kurokawa, "Convorbire cu Kisho Kurokawa", 54.
58 Even in prefaces to contemporary studies. See Knabe and Noennig, *Shaking the Foundations.*
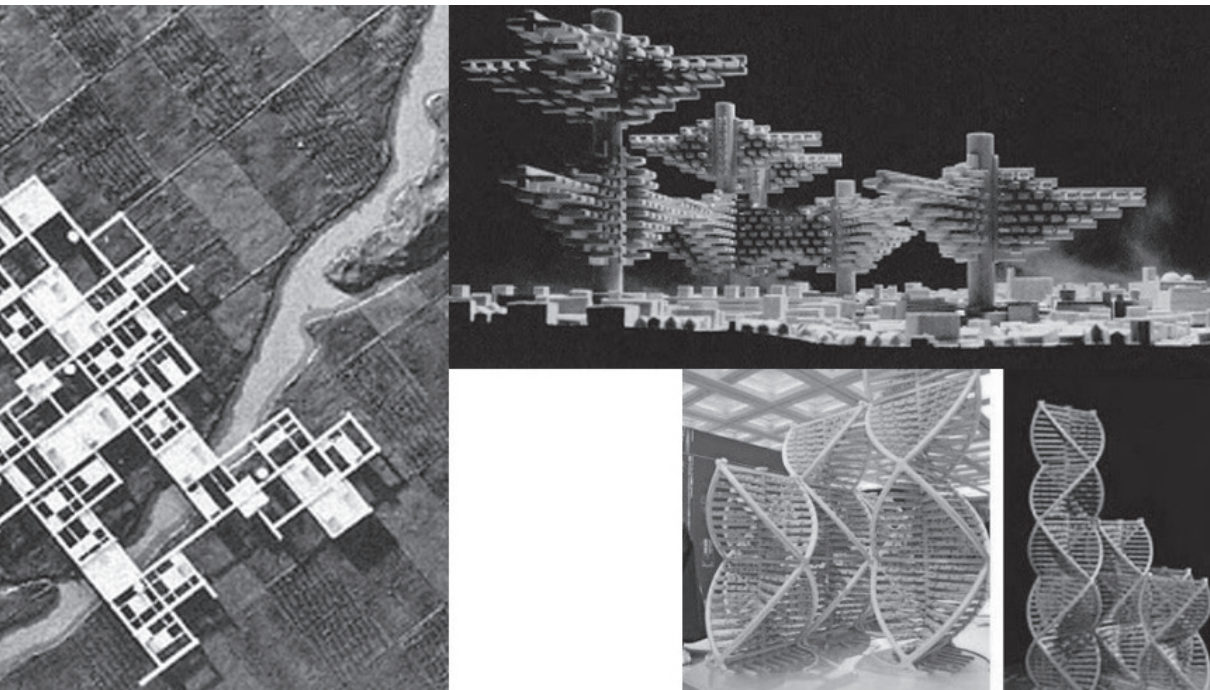
Of particular interest to his Romanian audience was his take on *the specificity of architecture*. A firm believer in cultural uniqueness, Kurokawa stresses the importance of de-Westernizing architectural thought, and dismantling the hierarchy of world cultures. "The architecture of the future? I think it's going to be the intercultural style," which he defined as a mutually beneficial, creative discursive exchange between cultures which, "keeping their identities and own systems of values, influence each other"[59] towards a cultural production remaining distinctly individual without devolving into cultural insularity. Kurokawa's position was, at a time of re-emerging ethnocentrism (especially in Ceaușescu's totalitarian dystopia), quite radical, as it argued for *international dialogue through the media of local cultures*, rather than the overarching paradigms of the "civilizing" West.

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59 Ibid, 54.

Fig. 8. Kisho Kurokawa's philosophy of symbiosis | Nagakin Capsule Tower (1970-72), K House (1973), Fukuoka Bank (1975), Saitama Prefectural Museum of Modern Art (1978-82)
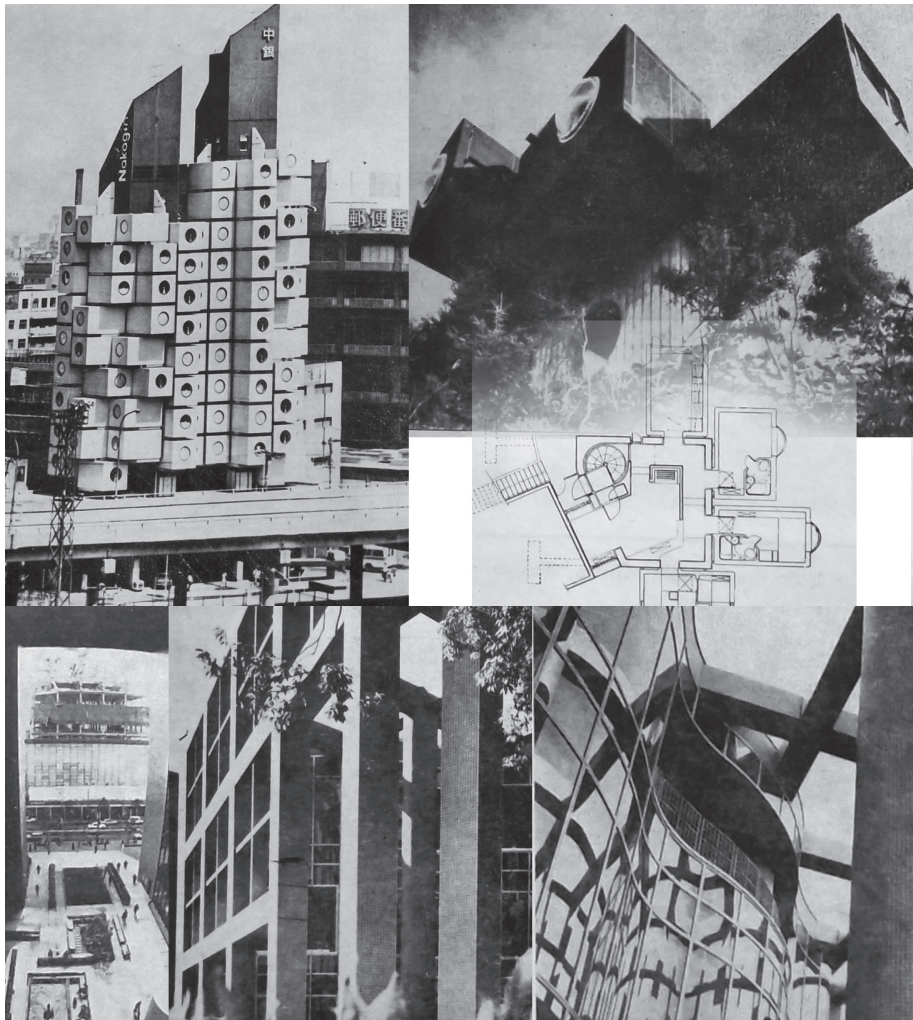
A Subtle Lineage. Conclusion

In the preceding sections, I have assembled a case for the influence of Japanese architecture on the resurgence of an indigenized brand of Romanian modernism in 1960 – 1985. The two countries shared a similar struggle for rapid economic growth through industrialized development, as well as increased political and national autonomy through claims to cultural and historical uniqueness, with country-wide cultural policies mandating the redefinition of cultural production in a contemporary key. Increased exposure of the Romanian public to the Japanese cultural phenomenon – through travel books, exhibitions and foreign as well as local media – helped solidify a common ground of cultural affinity (*kindred otherness*), which ultimately facilitated the dissemination of discursive influences from the alien other – Japan. Moreover, the Romanian architectural milieu was particularly susceptible to stimuli from an alien discourse animated by the same desire to challenge the dominance of Western modernism through a home-grown, nationally-specific architecture based on a contemporary reading of tradition. Aided by the fact that Romanian architecture could relate to and temporarily (though tacitly) place itself under the tutelage of a visibly successful Japanese counterpart from which it could learn hors-competition, a paradoxical link formed between the two during the 1960s and 1980s – a cultural exchange on the fringes of the hegemonic, Western-centric sphere of architecture, emphasizing the cultural contextualization of modernism. The stakes were high: decentralizing the architectural lingua franca towards the inclusion of marginal dialects, and, as Kurokawa hoped, a dismantling of the field's radio-centric subordination.

With the mediation and media exposure afforded by *Arhitectura*, in which Kenzo Tange and the (pre- and post-dissolution) Metabolic movement had a steady presence, Japanese architecture contributed to the shaping of (post-)modern theory and practice in Romania. Whilst not immediately discernible in a practice predominantly engaged in collective housing construction using heavy prefabricated panels, and severely affected by the resource shortage triggered by policies to pay Romania's international debt,[60] Tange's use of tradition-referencing sculpturality, Metabolist thinking and the hyper-modern, deeply symbolic conceptual imprint of Kurokawa ripple across competition entries, graduation diplomas, purely exploratory projects, and a select handful of high-profile, unique architecture programmes, published during the 1970s and 1980s in *Arhitectura*.

The following examples illustrate several new conceptual directions in Romanian architectural thought, which suggests subtle Japanese theoretical influences. Due to the *differences in cultural similarity* outlined at the beginning of this study, these conceptual grains have slowly germinated into original avenues of expansion for Romanian modernism during the second half of the 20th century. Be it the lyrical functionalism of the 1960s and 1970s, or the incipient post-modernism of the 1980s, echoes of the Japanese mode of architectural thinking can be glimpsed ghosting through the change in direction gathering momentum towards the end of the communist era.

More readily discernible in student and diploma projects increasingly liberated from immediate application in practice, the Metabolic (futuristic) acceptation of the city as organically and/or algorithmically proliferating logic has triggered reconsideration of the most ubiquitous urban and architectural design: housing. The project below blends two logics entirely dissimilar to the historical radio-centricity or the modernist, peripheral expansion via extensive housing estates, severed from extant urban areas by the distended, street-indifferent treatment of urban space. The placement of service and amenity-providing urban foci along an axis, the dual use of terrain as flexible public space *cum* overhead housing, and the punctual clustering of dwelling units are reminiscent of Metabolist projects focused on urban development. (Fig.9, following pages, top row)

The design of public space for leisure also unveils a conceptual shift from the design of street furniture to the design of outdoors social activities hosted by modular or capsular spaces. High-tech constructive logic aimed at serialized production, the motility, variety of agglutination possibilities, and the temporary, almost nomadic quality of these leisure equipment proposals hint at a Japanese ideatic filiation. (Fig.10, following pages, middle row)

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60 Steel was a luxury export commodity. Construction ran on a minimum of steel for reinforcing concrete, and steel-frame buildings remained drawing-board pipe-dreams…
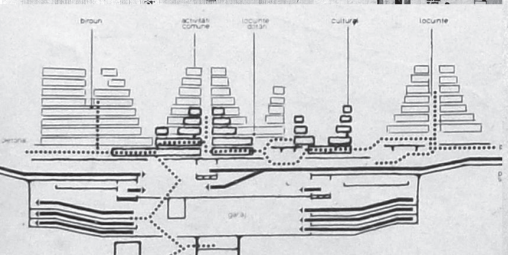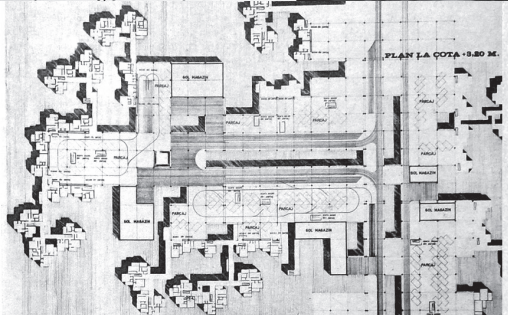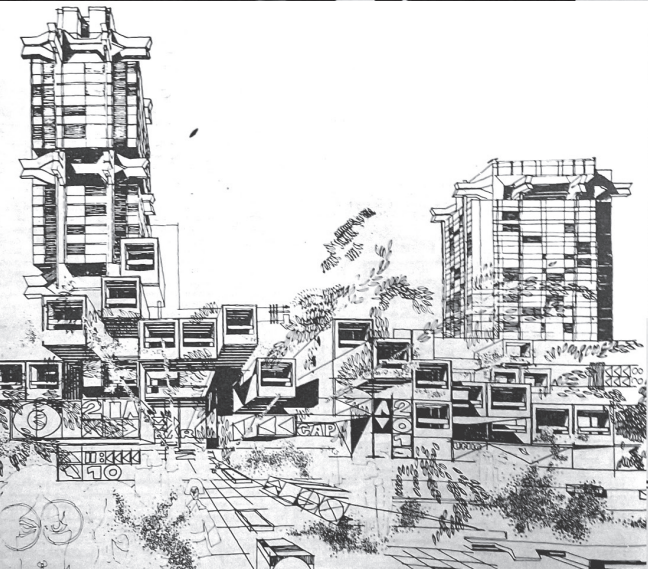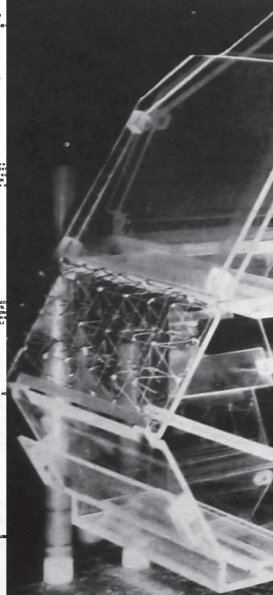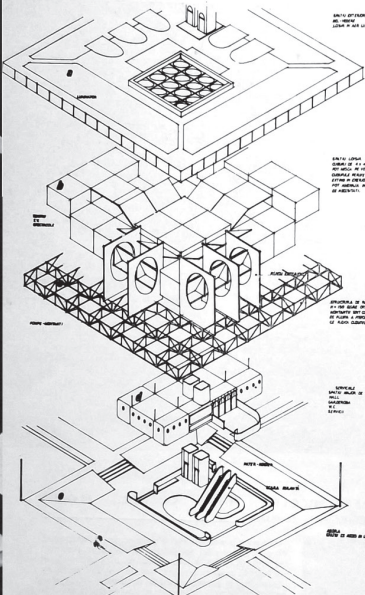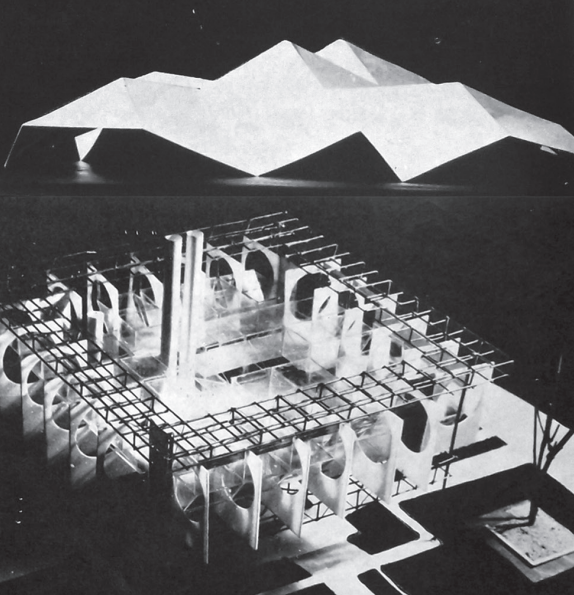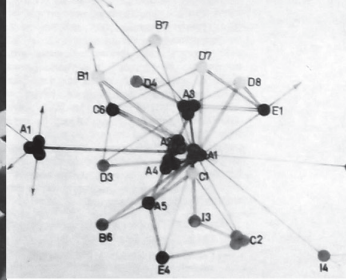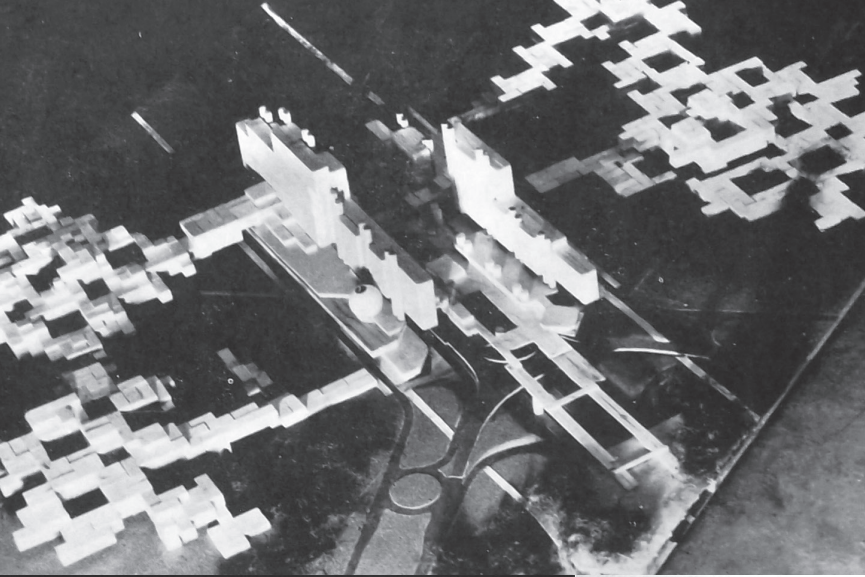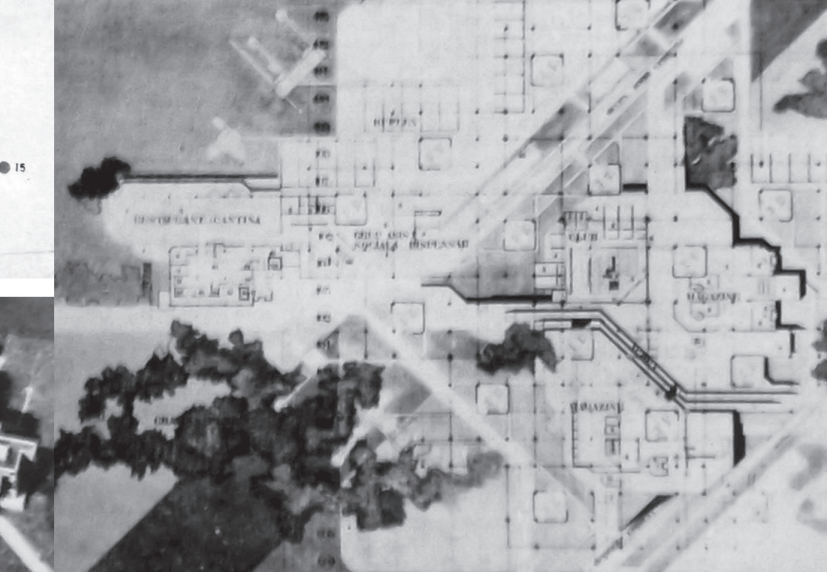
Fig. 9. Diploma project: homogeneous systems - housing study in Bucharest (Francisc Echeriu, Romeo Simiraş, 1972)
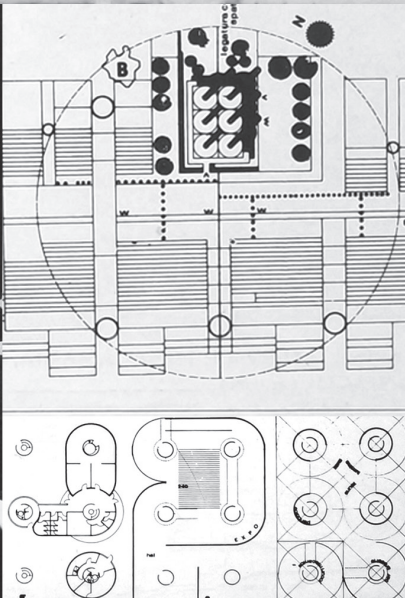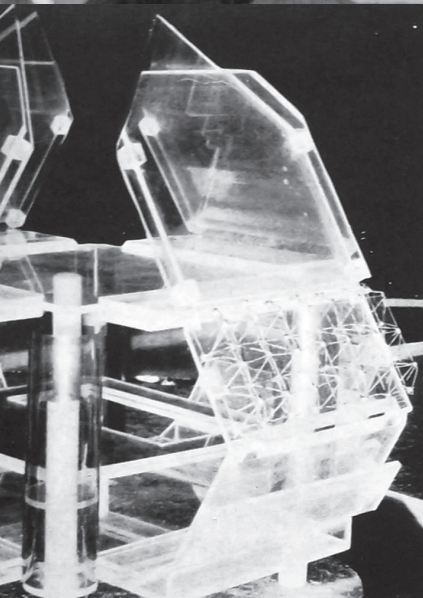

Fig. 10. Entries to competition for public leisure equipment (1972): top left: Serban-Costin Popescu, Anca Pavlu. Centre: Cristian Nicolae and team | Mihai Anania and team. Right: Viorel Simion and team.
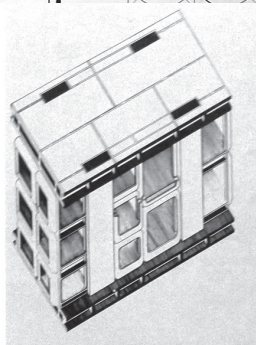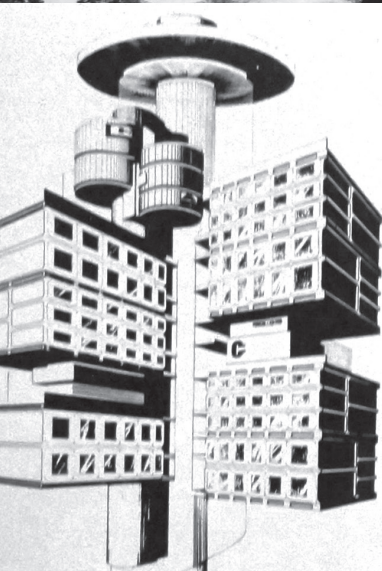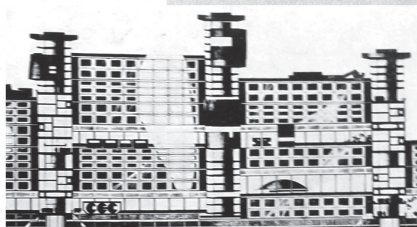
Fig. 11. Capsule and prefabricated-unit collective housing – diploma projects. Left: Roxana Savin. Right: Olga Gluvacov (1971)
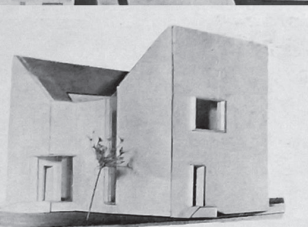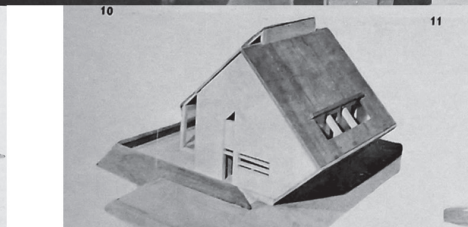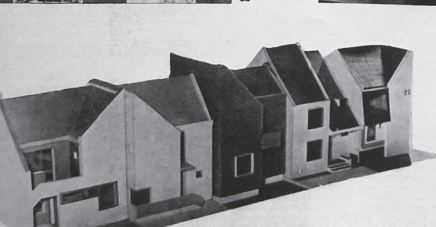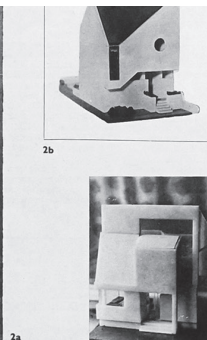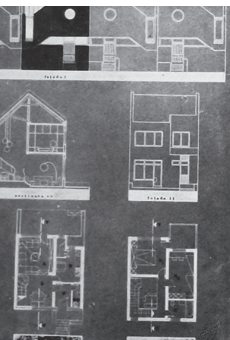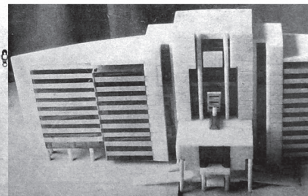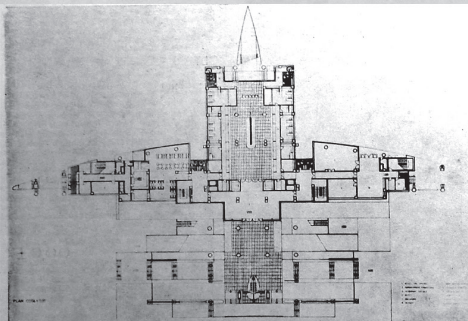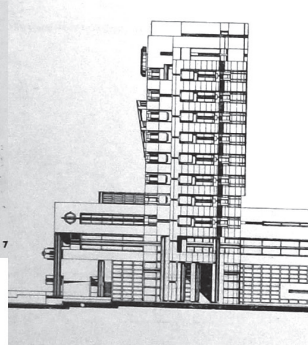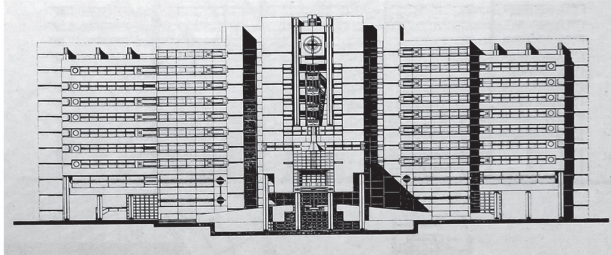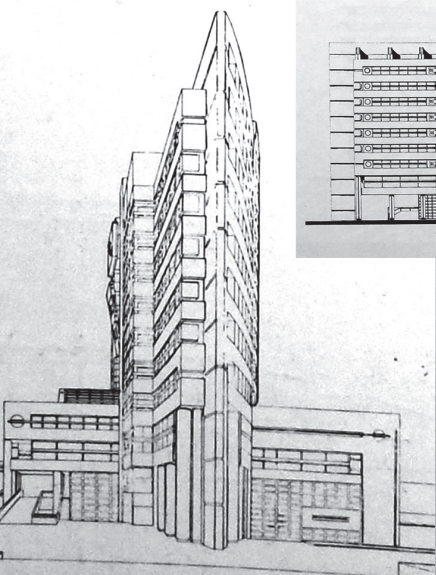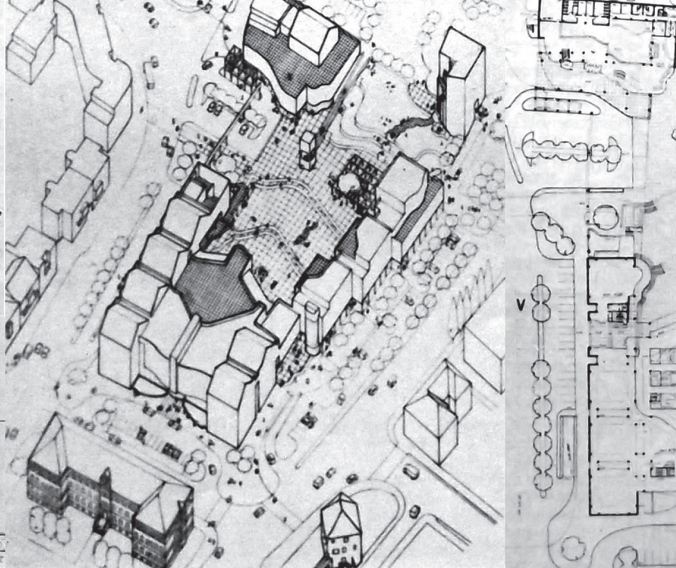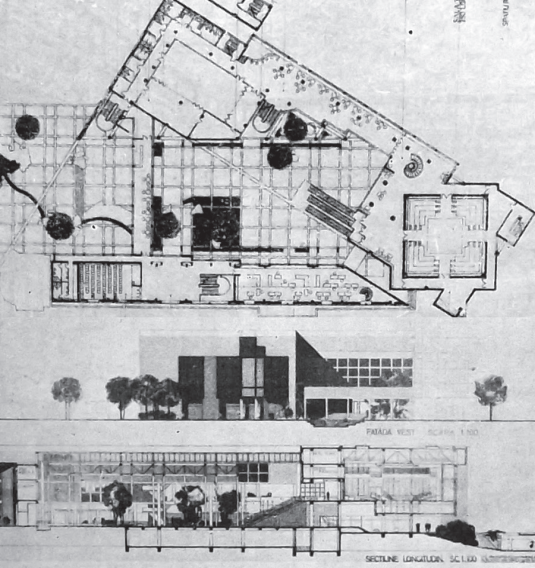
Fig. 12. Cultural urban centres – diploma projects. Far left: Marina Mărginean (1982) | Centre/right: Marcel Crişan (1984)
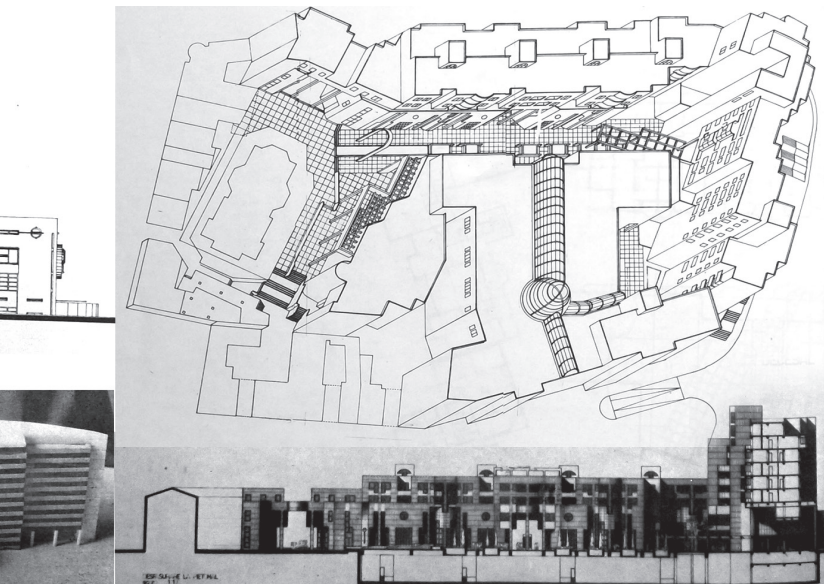
Fig 13. Diploma projects. Left/centre: political-administrative centre (Georgică Mitrache, 1988) | Right: urban restructuring (Codruţa-Anca Bănulescu, 1989)
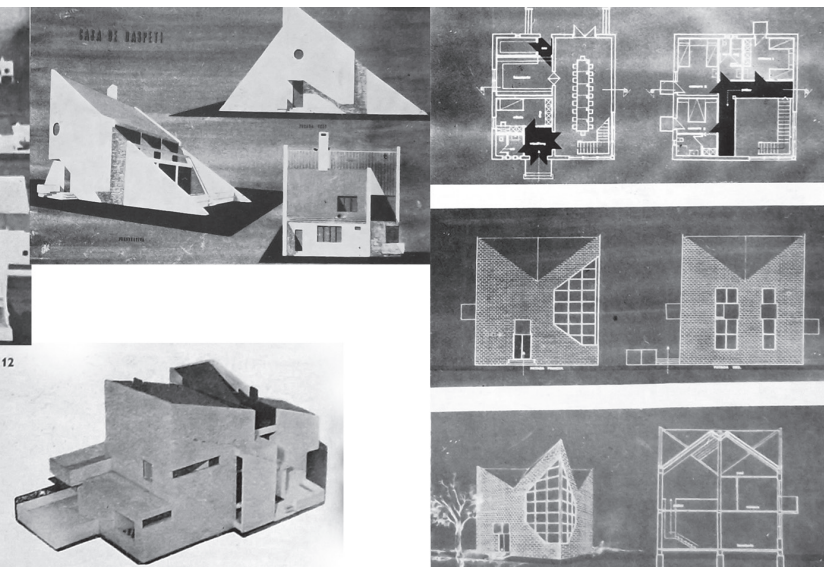
Fig. 14. 1st and 2nd year projects, Timişoara Polytechnic, 1980 (Liviu Martinescu, Vlad Gaivoronski, Corneliu Butnărescu, Dobrai Laszlo, Adrian Ionaşiu, Ştefan Mircea, Sebastian Schön)

Given the scale of high-rise collective housing construction in communist Romania, architectural influences from abroad providing alternatives to the dreary (though economical) repeatability of box-shaped concrete buildings fuelled local efforts towards the re-conceptualisation of the urban collective habitat. The influence of Kurokawa's capsular high-rise dwellings (Nagakin tower) could not be clearer. Container-like individual flats cluster in a variety of combinations suggesting flexible reconfiguration and mobility, but more importantly, increased sociability by transmuting public space onto the vertical, and even bringing some of the social flow into shared interior spaces. (Fig.11, previous pages, bottom row)

A further nod to Kurokawa's innovative take on central urban programmes (Fukuoka Bank), the projects below illustrate the use of vague space derived from the *engawa*/porch parallel at an urban scale to juxtapose a variety of functions and mediate possible contradictions in a stimulating way, with particular focus on the building's contribution to the enrichment of the urban experience for pedestrians. Overlaid grids, voided intersections of volumes, the ambiguous flow between interiority and public space, and the use of symbolic demarcations (thresholds, gates) indicates strong correspondence with Metabolist efforts to create a lively, contradiction- and event-rich urban space challenging the square/street distinction. (Fig.12, previous pages, top row)

A sense of tension, drama and ambiguity of possible Japanese inspiration characterises 1980s Romanian architecture. Reminiscent of Fumihiko Maki's Tsukuba University Centre for School of Arts & Physical Education (1974), the political-administrative centre project juxtaposes two distinct logics – urban and interior/functional – into a visually dramatic contradiction and, perhaps, an overt critical comment on the nature of the programme. The shorter entrance axis subordinates public-use spaces, with programme-specific spaces organized along the functionally dominant longitudinal axis. On the right, an example of an urban suture, reconciling mix-use function forced into a conflictual rapport by ulterior densification of the urban fabric, by transforming the interstitial, vague space between into an event-scripted, tension-diffusing trajectory. (Fig.13, previous pages, middle row)

After an astute investigative series on the modern Japanese dwelling,[61] some student projects exhibit an enthusiastic interest in catering for a socially documented preference for detached houses by devising whimsical, symbolic and context-appropriate dwellings. Combining minimal space and a minimalist aesthetics into an economically feasible approach, this type of thinking held tremendous potential in terms of revitalising the cityscape and providing a varied, psychologically-fulfilling living environment. Akin to the modern Japanese street – a vibrant agglutination of historic and contemporary housing types in a myriad of conceptual instances, this design approach sought to provide markers of identity and distinction for the anonymized urban inhabitant. (Fig.14, previous pages, bottom row)

Fig. 15
1. State Theatre (Tg. Mureş). C-tin Săvescu, Vladimir Slavu. 6 (1973): 8
2. Culture Centre (Ploieşti). Gheorghe Dorin, Medy Mayer. 6 (1973): 8
3. Syndical Culture Centre (Sibiu). Dorin Gheorghe, Miliţa Sion. 2 (1974): 28
4. Hotel (Bistriţa). Mircea Alifanti, Adrian Panaitescu. 3 (1975): 25
5. Commercial Centre Luxor (Tg. Mureş). C-tin Săvescu. 5 (1975): 30-31
6. Commercial Centre (Braşov). Ion Rădăcină. 5 (1975): 44
7. Ice-rink (Miercurea Ciuc). Ion Rădăcină. 1-2 (1978): 61
8. Youth Science Centre (Râmnicu Vâlcea). Ştefan Lungu, Emil Barbu Popescu. 6 (1982): 43-44
9. Liviu Rebreanu Memorial House. Dan C. Duzinschi, 6 (1984) 71-72
10. Youth Science Centre (Slatina). E.B. Popescu, Dorin Ştefan, 5 (1987): 11-13
11. Collective housing (Baia Mare). Angela Mureşan, Mircea Pop. 1 (1989): 17
12. Housing (Slobozia). Cristian Nicolae, Cristian Iacob. 3 (1989): 19

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61 *Arhitectura* 4 (1977): 77-87, 5 (1987): 82-91.
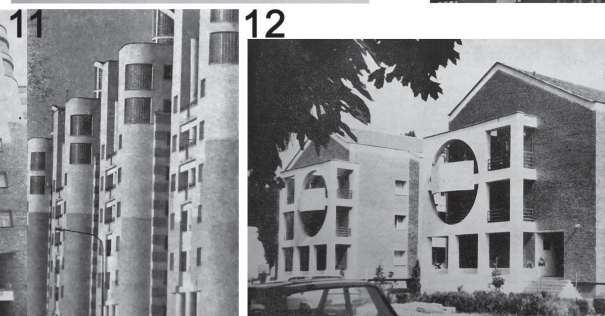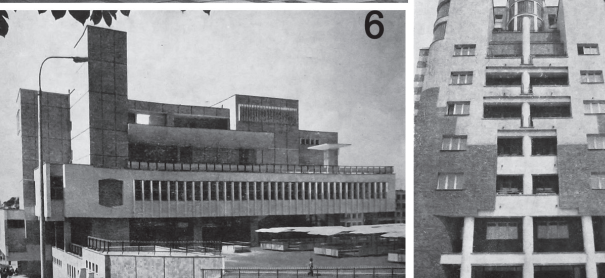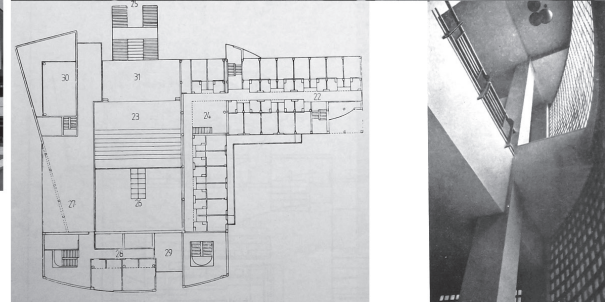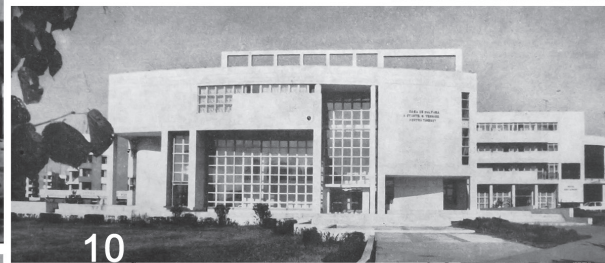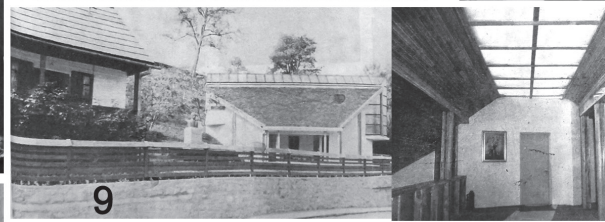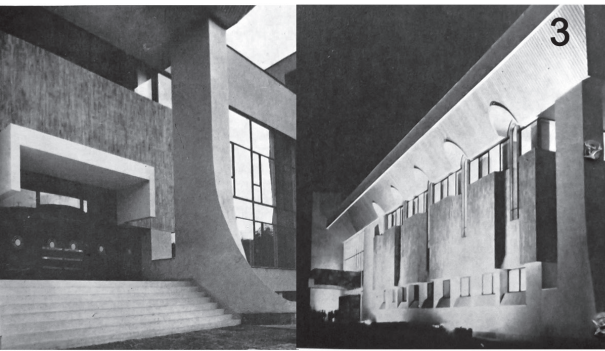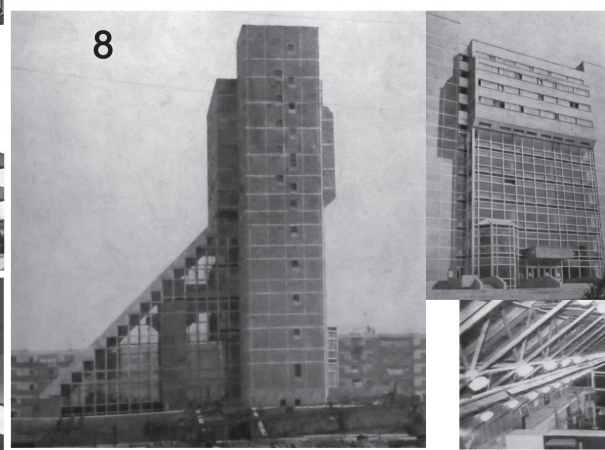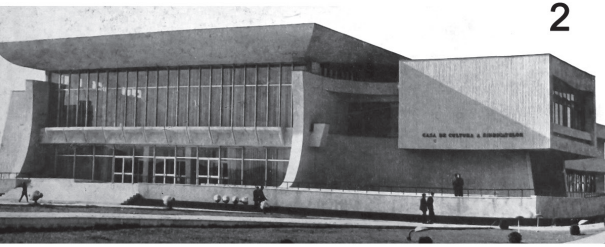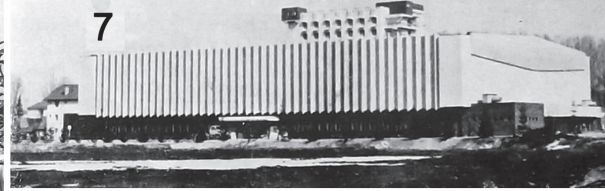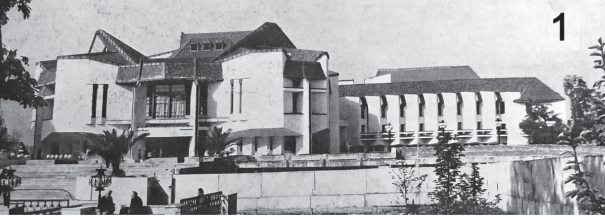
Architecture Practice in *Arhitectura*

If student works display more susceptibility to the more futuristic aspects of Japanese design (Kurokawa and post-dissolution Metabolist works), the architectural production dominated by elite practitioners also active in education shares a conceptual direction with Tange's tradition-infused sculptural expressivity and laconic, lyrical aesthetics. Particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, Romanian lyrical functionalism produced valuable buildings (Fig. 15, 1-5) with an immediately discernible local flavour, conveyed through updated spatial archetypes (porch, roof), spatial logics and rapports, or folk art vocabulary referencing. A parallel direction characterized by a merger between brutalist aesthetics, contextual specificity and a pronounced sense of drama (Fig. 15, 6-7) gradually segued, during the 1980s, into an exploration of expressivity through advanced technology (Fig. 15, 8), exposing the machine-like inner processes of the building. From the grandiose cultural urban centre and programmes, the local flair or Romanian modernism turned poetic once again, but in a diminutive, subtly symbolic manner (Fig. 15, 9). This condensed, sublimated, small-scale contemporary rephrasing of folk architecture declined during the late 1980s, only to reappear after 1989, when the pressures of globalisation once again brought to the forefront of the discourse a redefinition of identity as basis for current architecture. Finally, the development of Romanian post-modernism exhibited, perhaps through conceptual filiation with the variety of Japanese architecture reviewed by *Arhitectura*, several design directions (Fig. 15, 10-12), from minimal clarity and subtle imagery to pronounced tension, ambiguity, and even a sense of the ludic.

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Fig. 1 http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Hiroshima_Peace_Memorial_Museum#mediaviewer/File:HiroshimaCenotaphMuseum6989.jpg ǀ *Arhitectura* 6 (1971): 21.

Fig. 2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenz%C5%8D_Tange#mediaviewer/File:Kagawa-Pref-Office-east.jpg ǀ *Arhitectura* 5 (1966): 11 ǀ *Arhitectura* 5 (1970): 3.

Fig. 3 Top left: *Arhitectura* 4 (1964): 51 ǀ Top right: *Arhitectura* 3 (1970): 40 ǀ Bottom left: *Arhitectura* 6 (1972): 20 ǀ Bottom right: *Arhitectura* 1 (1973): 26.

Fig. 4 Top left: http://www.hetgallery.com/higashi-osaka-hiraoka-sakakura.html ǀ Top right: http://i2.wp.com/www.muzeuldefotografie.ro/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/72.jpg

Bottom left: Thttp://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/846/flashcards/2673846/png/toyko_metro_festival_hall-13E86F0FE702130D3FA.png ǀ Bottom right: *Arhitectura* 3-4 (1972): 119.

Fig. 5 Bottom left: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/35/Ishibe_shukubanosato04s3200.jpg ǀ Rest: *Arhitectura* 1 (1964): 40-41.

Fig. 6 http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tange_House.jpg ǀ *Arhitectura* 4 (1969): 43-49.

Fig. 7 http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-oqS58egV7i0/To79j0_-7TI/AAAAAAAANRI/ydcaRPm8ueQ/s1600/tange%2Btokyo%2B1.jpg ǀ http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-9rDctMi7mIY/To786uvJpMI/AAAAAAAANOQ/IVYrff5vSG8/s1600/kurokawa%2Bagricultural.jpg ǀ http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-HScJdiH2uQ4/To787r-7W6qI/AAAAAAAANPI/kHHLzpLavHE/s1600/isozaki%2Bc-in-the-air.jpg ǀ http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-8m7pE4mOQSo/To787dCy68I/AAAAAAAANPA/lLvlU1JWqnU/s1600/helix.jpg.

Fig. 8 *Arhitectura* 1 (1986): 68 ǀ *Arhitectura* 5 (1985): 55-58.

Fig. 9 *Arhitectura* 3-4 (1972): 111-14.

Fig. 10 *Arhitectura* 5 (1972): 24-28.

Fig. 11 *Arhitectura* 3 (1971): 55-61.

Fig. 12 *Arhitectura* 1 (1982): 68 ǀ *Arhitectura* 2 (1984): 56-60.

Fig. 13 Left/centre: *Arhitectura* 4 (1988): 60-62 ǀ Right: *Arhitectura* 4 (1989): 56.

Fig. 14 *Arhitectura* 4 (1980): 44-46.

Fig. 15 *Arhitectura* 6 (1973): 8; *Arhitectura* 6 (1973): 8; *Arhitectura* 2 (1974): 28; *Arhitectura* 3 (1975): 25; *Arhitectura* 5 (1975): 30-31; *Arhitectura* 5 (1975): 44; *Arhitectura* 1-2 (1978): 61; *Arhitectura* 6 (1982): 43-44; *Arhitectura* 6 (1984): 71-72; *Arhitectura* 5 (1987): 11-13; *Arhitectura* 1 (1989): 17; *Arhitectura* 3 (1989): 19.