



From antiquity to modern art



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PRELUDE

How dreams come true

This booklet is about the Palace Isusović-Braichi on Ulica Prijeko 22 and its recent reconstruction. The reconstruction is done in close cooperation between Acquest d.o.o. (owner of the building), architect Zeljko Peković (Omega Engineering), building company Vodopija and the local conservators. The booklet is intended to be a tribute to the building itself, the breath taking old city of Dubrovnik and all the people who are involved with the reconstruction. The result of the efforts is phenomenal.

Wouter van Wijk

Acquest d.o.o



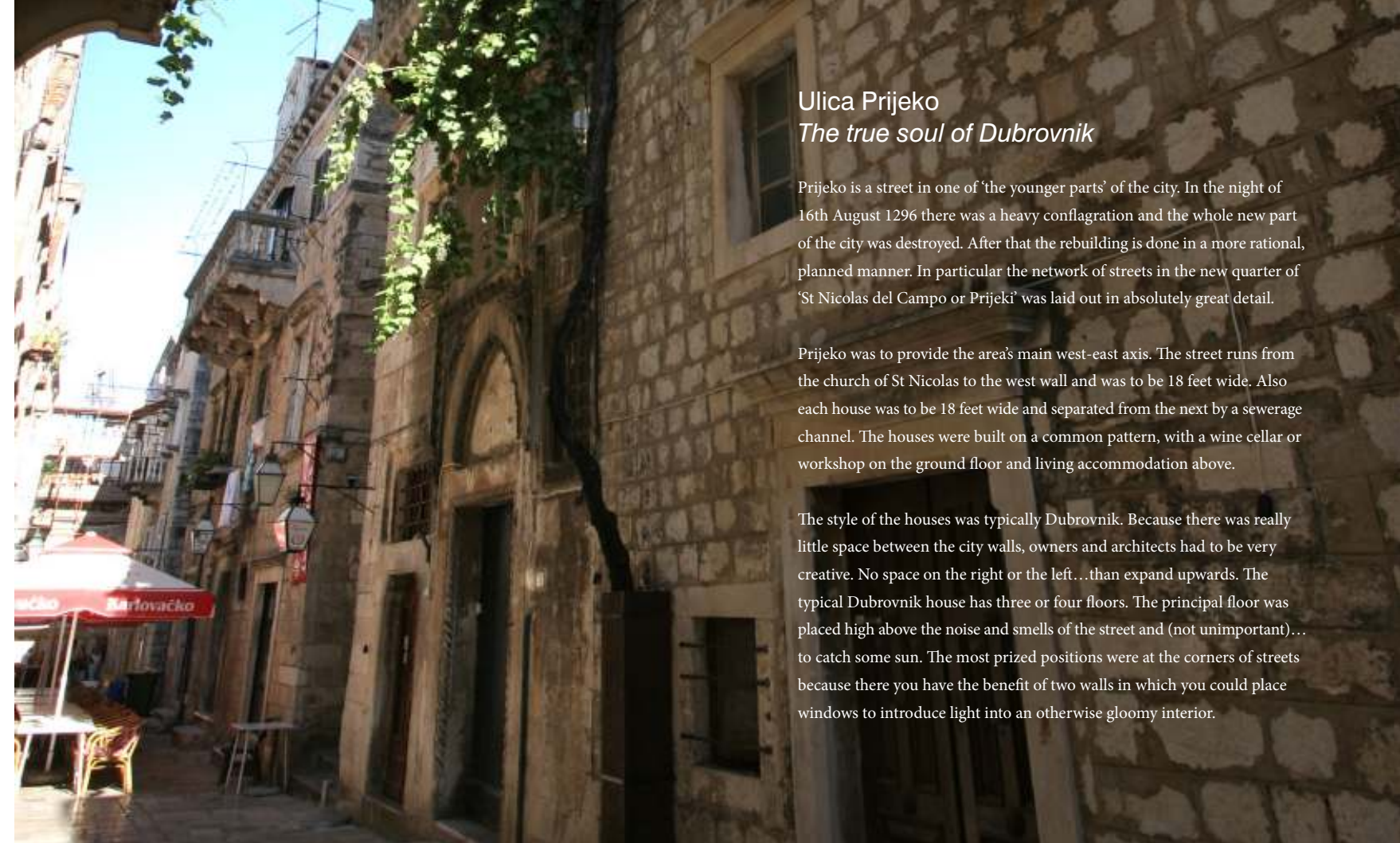
Building a future on historic grounds

From day to day, from stone to stone

Prijeko Palace, the Isusović-Braichi palace on Ulica Prijeko 22, is one of Dubrovnik's iconic buildings. The building has a long and rich history. The noble family Isusević-Braichi constructs the house in 1470. The architect was Giorgio da Sebenico, a famous architect in that time. The palace passed through violent ages with fires, war, depredation and earthquakes. The earthquake of 1667 was the worst; 2 floors of the palace collapsed and were never restored in its old shape. Over these turbulent years the palace was significantly damaged and the valuable parts were either stripped or destroyed. Ownership of the building changed hands more times and was in 2004 acquired by Acquest d.o.o. The interior of Prijeko Palace went through a complete restoration in order to modernise the building and brings it back to its former glory, with thanks to the government of Croatia who allows the owners to do so. Prijeko Palace is renovated to the highest standard and has regained its original beauty.

Prijeko Palace now offers a high degree of luxury and customizable renting plans in its nine double rooms. Nine individually decorated rooms make it ideal for romantic getaways, honeymoons, wedding parties, exclusive use, executive meetings, hideaways...

Prijeko Palace middle 2011, empty and waiting for the final approval for the fundamental > reconstruction. The same applies for the wine tree; protected and more than two hundred years some 'people' are saying.



Ulica Prijeko

The true soul of Dubrovnik

Prijeko is a street in one of 'the younger parts' of the city. In the night of 16th August 1296 there was a heavy conflagration and the whole new part of the city was destroyed. After that the rebuilding is done in a more rational, planned manner. In particular the network of streets in the new quarter of 'St Nicolas del Campo or Prijeki' was laid out in absolutely great detail.

Prijeko was to provide the area's main west-east axis. The street runs from the church of St Nicolas to the west wall and was to be 18 feet wide. Also each house was to be 18 feet wide and separated from the next by a sewerage channel. The houses were built on a common pattern, with a wine cellar or workshop on the ground floor and living accommodation above.

The style of the houses was typically Dubrovnik. Because there was really little space between the city walls, owners and architects had to be very creative. No space on the right or the left... than expand upwards. The typical Dubrovnik house has three or four floors. The principal floor was placed high above the noise and smells of the street and (not unimportant)... to catch some sun. The most prized positions were at the corners of streets because there you have the benefit of two walls in which you could place windows to introduce light into an otherwise gloomy interior.

From drawing to reality *From paper to the heart of Dubrovnik*

The Isusović-Braichi palace is one of the best examples of residential architecture in Dubrovnik. More scientists wrote and published about the building. Their opinions are woven into the text of this booklet. The Palace is built as a corner building. It is redone several times but keeps its four floors and extreme verticality. The upper floors were much more open than the lower floors: on the third floor a biphoras, on the fourth a quadriphora, on the side facade of the third floor three windows and on the fourth a thriphora between the windows with balconies. Impressive was a large balcony (balatorium) on the fourth floor which took the whole width of the front façade and even a part of the side facade.

Because no one of us was there when the building was constructed, the preservation office of Dubrovnik wants to be sure that the palace was like scientists thought it would have been. All internal walls, floors and ceilings were subjected to a thorough examination. The scientists were right: behind layers of plaster, old beams and a lot of dust the original shape of the building became visible again.



The investigations told us that the people, who lived in the house at the time of the earthquake of 1667, used the stones of the two collapsed floors to rebuild the house but now without the beautiful balconies and windows. Only traces of the rich history remain and were still visible on the elevations. Based on the findings Zeljko Peković made the drawings for the reconstruction of the palace. During the restoration the Palace is restored in its original shape with the reconstruction of the decorated openings that were lost during the earthquake of 1667.







More than 500 years of inspiration

All together in one big effort

The reconstruction took 18 month but the period of preparation and planning was four times longer, partly also because the urbanistic planning for the city chanced halfway. It gave architect and builder all the time they need to look for the best solutions for example to reinforce the building. Dubrovnik is situated on a fracture in the earth crust what causes regularly earthquakes. The biggest one in the history of Dubrovnik was in 1667, the youngest one in 1976. Prijeko Palace is situated on a big rock therefore the building is less sensitive for earthquakes than elsewhere in the city but nevertheless. In order to strengthen the building against future earthquakes the floors were reinforced and fixed to the walls. Also opposite walls were connected with metal beams to keep stability during an earthquake.

Below the ground floor was a massive water tank. All the houses of the noble families had their own water supply to be independent of the weather circumstances. The tank of Prijeko Palace has a ground floor of about 16m2 and is 3 till 4 meter high. The tank is arched completely. After the reconstruction the water tank is transformed into a wine cellar with a capacity of 2000 bottles of wine.

In and around the building are beautiful (details of) sculptures or sculptured elements for example; the balcony on the second floor and the front door. But all these elements were black, broken, damaged or covered with layers of paint. With the help of specialized sculptors all these elements are cleaned (with laser technology), repaired and if necessary updated. Now they can be admired again in their former glory.



Stone, stone and more stone

Forty tons of the Gold of Brac

When the government of Croatia allowed the owners to bring back the building in its former shape it was clear that big, big quantities of stone would be necessary for creating the new massive windows, pillars and balconies. Stone always has been very important for the city of Dubrovnik. In earlier times all the stone for construction activities in Dubrovnik came from quarries on Korcula. But since a few years these quarries are closed or exhausted. After many investigations (thanks to mr Matijašić of Pučišća, former director of the workshop of the Klesarska Škola of Brac) acceptable stone was found in an active quarry of Brac. Brac not only has active quarries of natural stone and the only school for stonemasons of Croatia but also a lot of well-educated stone craftsmen and companies. And so all the new stone pieces of Prijeko Palace are mined and cultivated by the stonemasons of Kamen Pučišća on Brac. Finally 40 ton of stone has been reworked to the elements necessary for the reconstruction of the building into its former glory. The results are amazing.





The detail is the real treasure *Eleven examples of mysterious beauty*

It must have been an important family, that family Isusević-Bračić. It is really a pity that in the earthquake of 1667 so much old papers and documents are lost, although Dubrovnik still has one of the most comprehensive libraries of the world. About the noble family Isusević-Bračić nothing remains in the old registers. (Some people think that Bračić is derived from the Italian 'ebraico' and that Isusević-Bračić means 'the Jewish family Jesus'). But a lot of small details in and outside the building do remind of the taste of the original founders and the creativity of the architect Giorgio da Sebenico.

Giorgio da Sebenico was born in Zadar, at that time part of the Republic of Venice. He was educated as a sculptor in the workshop of Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon. His work represents the golden age of Dalmatian medieval art. He was one of the main interpreters of the Adriatic Renaissance. This tendency of Renaissance was characterised by the rediscovery of Classical art but in continuity with Gothic. Particularly the carvings belong to the Late Gothic style but the style of his architecture and sculptures is early Renaissance. His most beautiful achievement remains the Cathedral of St James in Šibenik for which he was a chief architect from 1441 till 1473.



The biggest treasure

And how the lunetta disappeared and came back

The portal of the palace is breathtaking: beautiful carved with motives of centaurs and leaves. Dating the palace is possible with the features of its stone carved parts. The portal carries all the marks of late Gothic portals which are seen in the forties of the XV century, like for example the one of the Rector's palace. The motif of the centaur on the main portal and the leaves around are common motifs in the work of Giorgio da Sebenico. There is a great resemblance with the work of Giorgio's circles on the 'leafy' capitals on the biphoras façade at the second floor. The lavish, curly leaves and the male and female heads can also be compared with the biphoras of the Rector's palace. They are even more related with their basic form and distinguished arch profiling.

For determining the construction and level of performance as well, the preserved fragments of double consoles which carried the balcony on the front façade are very important; the same who carries the big balcony (balatorium).



Also the fineness of the stone curving when making the acanthus leaf and flower decorations are the same quality as the excellence of performance and the shapes of the consoles on the north portal of the Šibenik Cathedral. All resemblances and comparisons with the work of Giorgio da Sebenico lead to the conclusion that Prijeko Palace was built in the seventies of the XV century.

The portal was awarded by a beautiful and very detailed carved lunetta. For long time the lunetta was disappeared from its original place. People of Dubrovnik tell that a hundred year ago the two brothers who lived in the building get a fight. One left and took the lunetta with him to Ulica Palmoticeva, about 50 meters further. And there the lunetta is mounted in the wall till today. Sculptors from Split and the stone masons of Brac made a copy of the 'old' lunetta. This copy now adorns the old 15th century entrance door.

Through the ages artists were inspired by the portal and its lunetta. Lately by Lena Kramaric, a young talented painter who works and lives in Dubrovnik.





THE NEW FACE OF DUBROVNIK **PRIJEKO PALACE**



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One of the thousands of nails coming out of old oak floors of the Prijeko Palace.





From age-old earth to modern art

The materials and artwork of Mark Verdoes

How a great idea becomes real

One of the discoveries during the renovation of the building was a large number of ancient, handmade nails in the oak boards and beams; true masterpieces of handcraft. The nails inspired the Dutch artist Mark Verdoes (The Hague, 1960) in such a way that he took them to his studio in India – where people still use 1000 year old techniques in daily life – and used them as the basis for small art pieces. The keywords for his inspiration were nail, hole, room, space, building and key lock.

The commitment of the craftsman

The art pieces are made from Indian clay using traditional craftsmen techniques. The clay is carefully sieved, mixed with water and kneaded into model. After drying the pieces are baked in a traditional wood fired field oven made from earth. The result is sanded and treated with natural pigments. Gold pigments surround the nail and provide a warm and rich appearance. The nails start their second life; their value remains.

Mark Verdoes developed many original techniques to create his art. Much of his new work is based on mud, reflecting his strong preference for natural materials. Sometimes old objects find a next life in Verdoes' art.

His work is a reflection on how he experiences the world, and an attempt to visualise his views on the cosmos, in which all is changing shape continuously. The finite is a relative concept, as death is nothing more than a change of shape. As an artist, he attempts to visualise and capture moments during the metamorphosis. The result is his contemporary vision of the cosmos, an orderly system full of seemingly random processes, in which all is connected. Mark Verdoes lives and works in the Netherlands and India.



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