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Architect Augusta Müllerová (1906–1984)

ANNOTATION

Augusta Müllerová was one of the first Czech architects, at a time when women only rarely completed university studies in the technical field. The following text outlines the circumstances with which young adepts of architecture had to cope in the first half of the 20th century. Further on, it maps the topics for which the left-leaning Müllerová was involved in public life from a young age: it was mainly the position of women in society and health care reform. When, after long years of economic crisis and war conflict, she was able to start implementing her hitherto mostly theoretical projects, she became persona non grata due to the political process of her husband, Ladislav Machoň. Nevertheless, she never gave up architectural work, which she diligently devoted herself to in the 1960s, when the younger generation of architects was already dominating.

SUMMARY

Augusta Müllerová was one of the first women to study a technical, so far exclusively male field. Although she produced a number of projects, their stylistic evaluation is quite challenging, as they are mostly only urban and spatial designs that would undergo a number of architectural and material changes during detailed design and construction. For the large competition constructions of the 1930s, she clearly used functionalist principles from the planting of solitaires in the garden, the compositional use of vertical and horizontal lines or ribbon windows, but she manoeuvred between scientific and emotional functionalism. The most frequently published L-project gained its reputation as a unique manifesto of collectivized housing and also thanks to the connection with the theorist Karel Teige, not because of its architectural values. The culmination of her functionalist projects is clearly the typical design of post-war hospitals with a distinctive radial monoblock. Here, the effort to create a repeatable prototype of a functionalist building remains unappreciated.

Müllerová also devoted a lot of time to the artistic designs of exhibitions, which she almost "put in motion" with her concept. She worked significantly with the concept of the panels, which often filled the whole area and modelled the otherwise rectangular exhibition space with their curves. For example, she prepared several exhibitions for emancipatory women's associations and during the Second World War she helped to promote modern Czech architecture through the important exhibition For a New Architecture.

Perhaps the most promising working years for Müllerová came after the Second World War, when as a lifelong left-wing architect she was able to participate in the reconstruction of the country. On the one hand, this period must have been optimistic for her, because the atmosphere favoured the professional planning of almost anything, but at the same time she was probably dealing with disagreeing opinions and further non-implementation of prepared projects. Today, we could very easily condemn her actions as naive, or perhaps blindly biased from the beginning, but we must realize that she did not have our historical experience. Unfortunately, she got it due to the political process of her husband Ladislav Machoň and other repressions. Both architects spent their last years in seclusion. And while Machoň has already entered the history of architecture thanks to his realizations, Augusta Müllerová is almost absent from them due to the minimal number of preserved buildings.

Fig. 1. Augusta Müllerová in a studio portrait from 1936 (unknown photographer; © ČTK).

Fig. 2. Augusta Müllerová, 1931: Sanatorium in the Tatras for TB, axonometric view (taken from Müllerová 1932, 161).

Fig. 3. Augusta Müllerová, 1931: Sanatorium in the Tatras for TB, perspective view of the inpatient section (taken from Müllerová 1932, 162).

Fig. 4. Augusta Müllerová, 1932: Competition design of a sanatorium in Vyšné Hágy, overall axonometry (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 5. Augusta Müllerová, 1932: Competition design of the sanatorium in Vyšné Hágy, axonometry of the room (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 6. Peer Bücking, Jan Gillar, Augusta Müllerová and Josef Špalek, 1930: Competition design of a collectivized residential area in an L-project. **A** – overall plan of the area, **B** – apartment axonometry, **C** – apartment plan, **D** – overall axonometry of the area (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 7. Peer Bücking, Jan Gillar, Augusta Müllerová and Josef Špalek, 1930: Competition design of a collectivized residential area in an L-project, axonometry of a social club (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 8. Peer Bücking, Jan Gillar, Augusta Müllerová and Josef Špalek, 1930: Competition design of a collectivized residential area in an L-project, axonometry of a residential building (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 9. Augusta Müllerová, 1929: Anka Čekanová poster design (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 10. Augusta Müllerová, 1937: Interior of a small apartment (taken from Müllerová 1939, 51).

Fig. 11. Augusta Müllerová, 1936: Competition design of a boys' and girls' school in Semily. **A** – axonometry, **B** – façade and sections (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/01).

Fig. 12. Augusta Müllerová, 1937: Competition design of a boys' and girls' general school in Říčany, perspective (AAS NTM 82, file 20080606/07).

Fig. 13. Augusta Müllerová, 1936: Competition design of the General Hospital with university buildings in Motol. **A** – axonometry, **B** – main façade, **C, D** – side elevation (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/02).

Fig. 14. Augusta Müllerová, 1939: Competition design for the headquarters and hospital of the Czech Red Cross, axonometry (AAS NTM 82, file 20100802/02).

Fig. 15. Augusta Müllerová, about 1939: Design of the Jubilee Pavilion of Masaryk's railway employees' Health Centre in Kvetnica near Poprad, axonometry (AAS NTM 82, file 20080606/07).

Fig. 16. Augusta Müllerová, 1939: Three designs of the pension of the Women's National Council at Stará Paka. **A, C** – perspective, **B** – axonometry (AAS NTM 82, file 20080620/08).

Fig. 17. Augusta Müllerová and Ladislav Machoň, 1938: Competition design for the reconstruction of the Old Town Hall. **A** – axonometry, **B** – view of the north façade (AAS NTM 82, file 20080623/03).

Fig. 18. Augusta Müllerová, 1938: House of dr. Šádek [sic] in Březnice (AAS NTM 82, box 20070621/04).

Fig. 19. Augusta Müllerová, 1937: Preparatory sketch for the *Wood* exhibition for State Forests and Estates (AAS NTM 82, file 20080606/07).

Fig. 20. Augusta Müllerová, 1938: Stand of the Strakonice Munitions Factory at spring fairs (taken from *sine*/Müllerová 1938, 151).

Fig. 21. Augusta Müllerová, 1938: Proposal of panel layout for the *Childcare* exhibition in Belgrade for the International Congress of Women (AAS NTM 82, file 20080606/07).

Fig. 22. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1940: The layout of the exhibition *For a new architecture* in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, situation (AAS NTM 81, file 20080624/10).

Fig. 23. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1940: View of the exhibition *For a new architecture* in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, (taken from Janák 1940, 130).

Fig. 24. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1940: Garden of the exhibition *For a new architecture* in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. **A** – situation (AAS NTM 81, file 20080624/10), **B** – realized garden (taken from Janák 1940, 129).

Fig. 25. Augusta Müllerová, 1942: Competition design for the adaptation of the historical building of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. **A** – perspective of the reading room, **B** – perspective of the lecture theatre (AAS NTM 82, file 20100720/05).

Fig. 26. Augusta Müllerová, 1942: Two competition designs for the adaptation of the historical building of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (**A, B**). View of the south façade (AAS NTM 82, file 20100720/05).

Fig. 27. Augusta Müllerová, 1940: Jana Perfumery on Wenceslas Square. **A** – floor plan, **B** – shop window (taken from Müllerová 1942a, 19).

Fig. 28. Josef Havlíček and Augusta Müllerová, 1945: Competition design for the development of the Purkyňov

University Quarter in Pilsen, axonometry (AAS NTM 82, file 20100805/01).

Fig. 29. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design of the hospital in Roudnice nad Labem, axonometry (AAS NTM 81, file 20080624/09).

Fig. 30. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design of the hospital in Roudnice nad Labem, axonometry of the monoblock (AAS NTM 81, file 20080624/09).

Fig. 31. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design of the hospital in Rakovník, axonometry (AAS NTM 81, file 20080625/01).

Fig. 32. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design of the hospital in Rakovník, axonometry of the monoblock (AAS NTM 81, file 20080625/01).

Fig. 33. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1947: Competition design of a hospital in Karlovy Vary. **A** – perspective, **B** – axonometry (both AAS NTM 81, box 20081011/50), **C** – bird view (AAS NTM 81, file 20090813/04).

Fig. 34. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design for the completion of the Old Town Hall, road through the Old Town (AAS NTM 81, file 20080606/02).

Fig. 35. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Competition design for the completion of the Old Town Hall, axonometry (AAS NTM 81, file 20080606/02).

Fig. 36. Augusta Müllerová, 1946: Poster design for the exhibition *Woman in battle, work and creation!* (AAS NTM 82, file 20100805/02).

Fig. 37. Augusta Müllerová, 1946: *Woman in battle, work and creation!*, view of the exhibition of the Union of Czechoslovak Works Palace on Národní Avenue (taken from Starý 1947a).

Fig. 38. Augusta Müllerová, 1949: Analysis of the network of health facilities in the Pardubice district (AAS NTM 82, file 20100721/02).

Fig. 39. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová, 1950: Competition design of the hospital in Most, façade (AAS NTM 81, file 20090813/01).

Fig. 40. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová (Stavoprojekt, KAA), 1951: Housing estate of Telčice in Chvaletice, development plan (AAS NTM 82, file 20100721/01).

Fig. 41. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová (Stavoprojekt, KAA), 1952: Exhibition *Architecture in the Czech and Slovak National Heritage*, view of the exhibition in the U Hybernů house (AAS NTM 81, box 20081011/50).

Fig. 42. Ladislav Machoň in a portrait photograph from 1951 (unknown photographer; © ČTK).

Fig. 43. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová (SÚPRO), 1956: Competition design of the Hotel Praha in the Myslbek gap site, view from Na Příkopě Street (NG AP, sign. AP 113/8).

Fig. 44. Ladislav Machoň and Augusta Müllerová (SÚPRO), 1956: Development proposal of the stage II Vršovice housing estate, perspective view of Bělocerkevská Street (NG AP, sign. AP 767).

Fig. 45. Prague 10-Strašnice no. 2081, Bečvářova Street 14, Solidarita Hotel (private archive, after 1964).

Translation by Linda Foster