

Dušan Ogrin - Professor of Landscape Architecture

The international landscape architecture community mourns the passing of one of its pioneers: Professor Dušan Ogrin. Professor Ogrin not only paved the way for landscape architecture in education and in practice in Slovenia and the countries of former Yugoslavia but was also instrumental in setting up the milestones for the profession on the global scale.

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Dušan Ogrin, born in 1929 in Skopje, was Professor Emeritus of Landscape Architecture at University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Landscape Architecture, Slovenia, where he was responsible for introducing landscape architecture studies. Since the establishment of the landscape architecture programme there, first at postgraduate level in 1972 and subsequently also at undergraduate level, he was involved in teaching courses in landscape design studies and the theory and history of landscape design.

He was also much valued internationally as a teacher, and as a visiting professor he was invited to teach courses in the field of landscape architecture at some 30 universities in Europe, America and Asia. Amongst others, he taught at Harvard University, was a visiting professor of landscape design at the University of Zagreb and at the University of Beijing for several years.

His research focused primarily on fundamental issues related to the theory of landscape architecture, the generation of landscape forms, and issues of mimesis and design language. He conducted research projects in housing and planning methodology, landscape classification, and the theory of urban landscape. His expertise on the strategic aspects of urban green systems provided a further important contribution to the field.

Dušan Ogrin complemented his theoretical research work with practice, and during his rich career, he received a number of prizes in public landscape architectural competitions, among which his projects for cemeteries in Nova Gorica, Ptuj and Novo Mesto stand out. In addition to various planning projects in Slovenia, in the last years of his career, he also realized some of his ideas for green urban areas in Croatia.

As well as completing a substantial number of landscape design projects, Professor Ogrin received several awards, both national and international, for his work. Of these, the most important were the Silver Medal of Freedom of the President of the Republic of Slovenia (1997), the Ludwig von Sckell-Ehrenring Award from the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, Munich (1995), and Peter-Joseph Lenné

Gold Medal from the Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe Stiftung, Basel (1975) and the first Lifetime Achievement Award from the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS) in 2009.



In the field of publication, Professor Ogrin served on the editorial boards of several academic journals, including Landscape Planning in the Netherlands and Landscape Journal in the United States. He was also the author of six books on landscape architecture, one of which has been published in English by the London publisher Thames and Hudson, and subsequently translated into Italian. He paid particular attention to the development of a professional terminology in the Slovene language, and with this book, established an appropriate academic vocabulary, which he further revised in his later years, in the form of a book entitled Landscape Architecture (which has unfortunately only been published in Slovene). In his writings, he provided significant foundations for the profession, not only in Slovenia but also at an international level. As a skilled photographer, he illustrated all his books with his own exquisite photographs of landscapes, culminating in his photographic monograph on the Slovenian Landscape.

Dušan Ogrin chaired or was a member of several organisations of the Slovenian Parliament and other government bodies, and of the University of Ljubljana, as well as being closely involved with other important international institutions. These included the International Federation of Landscape Architects Grand Council (member), the Landscape Planning Committee of the International Union for Nature Conservation (chairman), the International Curatorium of the Goethe Foundation of the European Prize for Nature Conservation and Landscape Planning (member). He founded the Yugoslav Association of Landscape Architects and served as its first president. In addition, he served as the national coordinator for landscape research in the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Slovenia for several terms.

In his work in theory and practice, based on his deep knowledge concerning the laws of natural processes, landscapes are revealed as complex spatial, ecological, functional, symbolic and mythological entities, defined by ever present human need to express its place in the universe, its status in the society and its relationship to nature as its ontological core.

Over the course of his illustrious career, Professor Dušan Ogrin undertook pioneering work in the field of landscape architecture and can be counted among the doyens of the profession. The symposium on Landscape Planning, which he organised in 1972, initiated a whole sequence of symposia and conferences at the academic and research institutions in Europe and abroad and still stands as one of the cornerstones of the planning innovation. Under his leadership, landscape architecture in Slovenia has developed into a profession which, within the dynamic tensions



between economic development and environmental protection, is able to offer meaningful solutions for the problems arising from the current spatial and social restructuring of the world. He was a committed teacher in the fullest sense of the word and worked constantly towards the advancement of the education in the field.

He was one of the initiators behind the foundation of the European Council of Landscape Architecture Schools (ECLAS) in 1991, and in the following year host to its second conference in Ljubljana. As one of the founders of ECLAS his aspiration was to help tune landscape architectural education and scholarship to mirror his own highest standards. His students, many of them now themselves already renowned professionals, have already left traces in the profession, which pays a tribute to his concept of education in landscape architecture developed in Ljubljana.