

KRAJOLIK...
LANDSCAPE...

DUBROVAČKA TRILOGIJA DAMIRA FABIJANIĆA
DAMIR FABIJANIĆ, A DUBROVNIK TRILOGY



Da li hladni čar ljubičaste lavande pojačava žar žutila brniste ili je obratno? ^{18,19} Ne doživljava li se snažni volumen običnog ognjišta s dimnjakom u Popovićima – monumentalan poput neke kule ili zvonika – još sugestivnije zbog toga što je suprostavljen dubini prostora uvučenog među zidovima, vanjskim stubištem i lučnim nadvojem u Doli, na Šipanu (pa je njihov odnos kao pozitiv - negativ)? ^{42,43} Nije li pravilnost *nazubljenog* horizonta tmasto zelenim vertikalama čempresa postala izrazitija i naglašenija u komparaciji s vodoravnim prostiranjem polja intezivno žarke zemlje crljenice? ³³⁻³⁵ Dojam grubosti suhozidne bunje nesumljivo se potencira uspoređen s doradenošću i zaglađenošću apside crkvice i to upravo stoga što pripadaju identičnom stereometrijskom modelu valjka. ^{22,23}

Inventivnom kompozicijom Fabijanić interpretira na nevideni način i ono što je od svijeta viđeno. Kompozicija dviju fotografija što tvore nerazdvojnu vizualnu cjelinu – na dvostraničju otvorene knjige – nije dodatak autorovu djelu, nego Fabijanićev stvaralački princip, izraz njegova načina gledanja i mišljenja. On slaže prizore u parove po sličnosti ili po razlici, s ciljem interpretacije specifičnih likovnih kvaliteta prirodnih i ljudskih tvorevina. U takvoj *dvostrukoj igri* boja i oblika, neki se Fabijanićevi projekti svojom visokom senzibilnošću i kulturom uklapaju i moraju pribrojati u klasiku fotografije na temu krajolika i arhitekture.

Uz tipična mediteranska svojstva, dubrovački krajolik ima i neke svoje osebujne značajke. Nije to nepomućena ljepota prirode, nego nas fasciniraju upravo oni minimalistički zahvati čovjeka, koji ne narušavaju nego dopunjavaju njen sklad: prekopavši zemlju motikom, zbog svojih potreba, čovjek je samo razgrnuo njeno žarko boksitnu utrobu i usporedio je s komplementarnim zelenilom raslinja, terasastim podzidavanjem zemlje unio je novu igru paralelnih ploha polja što stepenasto prate izohipse prirodnog reljefa, a ogradiвши polje kamenim suhozidom unio je geometrijski red i mjeru i time beskonačno proticanje vidika i pretapanje oblika ritmički podijelio na odsječke.

Najsloženija i najčudesnija tvorevina ljudskog stvaralačkog duha i rada, primjer višestoljetne tradicije dubrovačkog područja su seljačke kuće i nastambe, gospodarske zgrade i konstrukcije za

preradu plodina. Najljepši primjer je niz kuća u Mrčevu. ⁴⁵ Na živoj stijeni u koju je uklesano prvih par stuba koje su zatim dograđene monolitnim blokovima kamena, dižu se zidovi od lomljenca i grubo klesanog kvadra sa zaglađenim kamenim okvirima prozora i vrata. U rastu građevine upisani su tragovi drugih vremenskih razdoblja, iskustva tisućljeća građenja kamenom na Mediteranu: stube nas sjećaju na prehistoriju neolita, megaliti na prehistoriju kiklopske gradnje, ziđe na način srednjovjekovni, a okviri na tradiciju renesanse. Ali najvažnija je sraslost ljudske gradnje s tlom, njen organski rast iz živca kamena, kao da se postupno oslobađa, nalik rastu biljke od korijena do cvijeta. Građevinu stvarno *dovršava* priroda: čovjek samo postavlja okvir, a priroda svake godine iznova gradi i prostire ljeti gusti krov od lozina lišća, što štiti od žege, a na jesen ga skida da zimsko sunce ogrije zidove kuće...

Koristeći primarne materijale, kamen i drvo i primitivnu tehnologiju predindustrijske ere s pogonom ljudskih mišića, najobičnija mlinica ili tijasak za masline ^{46,47} stvaraju dojam dostojanstva rada i podsjećaju na količine bogatstva zemaljskih plodina.

Kao simbol vjere u prirodu, stručak bršljana *protiv uroka* na vratima neke staje u Konavlima ⁵⁵ ili grančicama masline na čokotu loze u vinogradu ¹⁶⁹, posljednja, svjedoče o dosluhu čovjeka sa silama prirode koje otkriva u životnoj praksi, ali i štuje jer sluti njene još nepoznate moći.

Otkada postoji, čovjek djeluje u svom okolišu. Radom stvara djela koja postaju tragovi vremena u prostoru, što traju usporedno: od netaknute prirode do svijeta iz kojeg je isključena, osvajajući prostor, čovjek koristi i mijenja prirodu, unapređuje ju ili iskorjenjuje, samo što su danas, za razliku od nekoć, sklad i ravnoteža čovjekove djelatnosti u prostoru postali životno pitanje: problem koegzistencije s prirodom prerastao je u problem egzistencije.

Stoga današnji čovjek, sudbinski zainteresiran, drugačije promatra svijet oko sebe. Jedino takvo viđenje neslučenih mogućnosti čovjekove stvaralačke suradnje s okolišem, ali i destrukcije, nudi i umjetnička fotografija Damira Fabijanića.

Does the cool allure of the lavender purple make the gold glow of the Spanish broom stronger?^{18, 19} Does the tangible volume of an ordinary hearth with a chimney in Popovići - monumental like a tower or a church spire - appear even more suggestive because it is contrasted to the space defined by the walls, outer staircase and the vault in Doli on Šipán (creating a relationship between a positive and a negative)?^{42, 43} Is the serrated line of the horizon as traced by the deep green verticals of cypress trees emphasized by the horizontal stretches of fiery red earth?³³⁻³⁵ The coarsely built stone huts may appear even more rugged when compared to the elegant, finely-worked church apse, and all the more so because they are both cylindrical in shape.^{22, 23}

Using an inventive composition. Fabijanić gives us a new view of things already seen. The layout of two photographs side by side that constitute an inseparable visual whole on two pages of the book is not merely an artistic device, but rather Fabijanić's creative principle, an expression of his way of seeing and of thinking. He pairs images according to their similarity or contrast to interpret specific visual qualities of natural and manmade things. With their interplay of colours and shapes, some of Fabijanić's projects, highly sensitive and cultivated, are simply classics of landscape and architecture photography.

Besides typically Mediterranean features, the landscape of Dubrovnik has some characteristics very much its own. Rather than unmarred nature, what is fascinating are the minimalist touches added by the human hand that enhance the natural harmony: hoeing the soil and working the land, man has only uncovered its glowing red insides and matched it to the complementary green of vegetation; building terraced gardens, he has introduced a new play of parallel planes set against the natural relief in a broken line; encircling his fields with stone walls, he has installed a geometrical order, rhythmically dividing the endless vistas and flowing forms into segments.

The most complex and most wonderful product of man's creative work and centuries-long tradition in the Dubrovnik region are the peasant houses, farm buildings and tools for working the

land. The best examples are the houses in Mrčevo.⁴⁵ A few steps carved into a living rock and completed by monolithic stone slabs lead to a building made of broken stones and coarsely trimmed square blocks with smoothly dressed stone door and window frames. The building traces various periods in the thousands of years that stone has been used as building material in the Mediterranean: the stairs recall the prehistoric Neolithic age, the megaliths come from protohistoric Cyclopean construction, walls from the Medieval and the frames from the Renaissance tradition. The most impressive thing is the harmony of building and soil, its organic growth from the living rock as if it has gradually unfurled like a plant slowly growing from the root. The building is made complete by nature: man only sets the framework and nature builds anew every year in summertime growing a thick roof of vine leaves to protect it from the heat and in autumn removing it so that the winter sun can warm the walls...

Made of primary materials, stone and wood, and with the primitive technology of the pre-industrial era powered by muscles, even an ordinary mill or an olive press^{46, 47} testifies to the dignity of man's work and the abundance of gifts given by the soil.

A symbol of faith in nature, a posy of ivy "against the evil eye" on the door of a stable in Konavle⁵⁵ or an olive branch on the vine stock in a vineyard¹⁶⁹ tell of man's togetherness with and respect for natural forces he knows and those he may not yet know.

From the beginning, man has worked within his environment to build for his needs and his work survives within the landscape as an enduring monument of its time, a course leading from untouched nature to the world from which nature is excluded. In conquering space, man has used and changed nature, improved it or destroyed it, but now a balance between man's activity and the environment has become an existential question: no longer a problem of coexistence with nature, but that of existence. Aware of these concerns, the contemporary man looks at the world differently. Damir Fabijanić's photographic monograph offers us a view of man's creative cooperation with the environment and also of destruction wrought by man.

GRAD...
CITY...

DUBROVAČKA TRILOGIJA DAMIRA FABIJANIĆA
DAMIR FABIJANIĆ, A DUBROVNIK TRILOGY



Umjetnički zapisi Fabijanića o realitetu najpoznatijeg hrvatskog grada u svijetu, koji je postao gotovo mit, podijeljeni su u tri tematska odjeljka, nastala u slijedu od nekoliko godina: Grad Dubrovnik (1989.) - krajolik dubrovačke regije (1990.) - i njihov spoj u tragičnoj reviziji Grada i teritorija bivše Dubrovačke Republike poslije srpskocrnogorske destrukcije 1991.–1992. godine.

Ciklus fotografija o Gradu nastao je kao rezultat Fabijanićeve fascinacije skladom i ljepotom svega što je u njemu stvoreno. Iako je poticaj bio radno dokumentacijski: naredžba Zavoda za obnovu Dubrovnika (osnovanog 1979. nakon potresa) da snimi spomenike arhitekture obnovljene u proteklom desetljeću i one još u radu. Ciklus o dubrovačkom okolišu nastao je također iz radnog zadatka: Muzej – žitnica Rupe povjerio mu je da snima okolicu Dubrovnika, krajolik, pučko graditeljstvo i običaje, kao i popratnu građu za postav etnografske zbirke. Prošavši preko dvije tisuće kilometara, u nekoliko navrata od proljeća do kasne jeseni, autor je obilazio teren i lokalitete snimajući. Ni naručilac ni autor nisu slutili da će za svega godinu dana Fabijanićeve fotografije postati posljednje povijesno i umjetničko svjedočanstvo o tragovima i znakovima prastare hrvatske civilizacije dubrovačkog okružja koja će biti devastirana. Treći odjeljak svjedoči o sudbini te kulture suživota čovjeka i prirode na najvišoj razini dostignuća, koja je gotovo izbrisana s lica zemlje prije no što ju je svijet upoznao...

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Autor je u knjizi izmijenio redoslijed – u odnosu na kronologiju snimanja – smjestivši grad u sredinu, između slika idiličnog krajolika i potresnih prizora destrukcije, kao jezgru i okosnicu drugih dviju tema. Sekvenca grada prikazana je crno bijelom fotografijom. Na taj se način apsolutizira oblik i dokazuje da je djelotvoran i bez boje. Fabijanić izdvaja izrezom dio iz cjeline, svojim strogim kompozicijskim redom otuđuje od stvarnosti i osamostaljuje u estetskom poretku. Iz njegova očista stvari iskazuju svoju pripadnost svijetu likovnom, a ne realnom. Površine zidova se prostiru ili svijaju u čistoći, lome oštrim bridovima ili nabiru gustim nanosima skulpturalne dekoracije i žive igre svjetlosti i sjene.^{57-63, 72-73} Čak i u najbjeđnijoj izvedbi i materijalu stražnjih fasada⁸² otkriva autor poredak stroge likovnosti. Na širokim plohama zida žive reljefni detalji samostalnim životom,^{77, 79} a drugdje se zid probija u otvore i rastvara u arkade.^{64, 65, 67} Volumene zgrada i prostor ulica i stubišta guta perspektiva.^{66, 71, 84} Čitav program renesanse i baroka, njihova različitost, očitava se iz usporedbe renesansnog križno bačvastog svoda od sedre u gradskoj žitnici (Muzej Rupe)⁷⁴ i barokne kupole katedrale,⁷⁵ u pogledu odozdo.

Odsustvo čovjeka na Fabijanićevoj fotografiji nije mizantropsko: slika grada nudi se kao subjektivni doživljaj, što ga fotograf dijeli s nama. Grad se otkriva ljepotom zbroja i zbrojem ljepota.

Slijed sekvenci, kako ih niže Fabijanić u svojoj trilogiji sadržajno odgovara prilogu, temi i epilogu.

U početku bijaše krajolik. Znamo to, ali promatrajući krajolik dubrovačke regije, više nismo u stanju ni zamisliti, ni rekonstruirati u duhu prvobitni izgled, jer je u cjelini oblikovan ljudskim duhom i voljom i kontinuirano stoljećima kultiviran ljudskom rukom. Čempresi, masline i loza, brnistra, kadulja i lavanda, sve je to plod sadnje i kultiviranja (u doslovnom prijevodu latinske riječi: njegovanja) prirode.

Zatim je – sred šture i škrte prirode – prije tisućljeće i pol, bio utemeljen Grad i otada se trajno razvijao. Ne samo unutar zidina, jer je Dubrovnik prodirao silnicama stvaralaštva u okolni prostor, mijenjajući lice zemlje agrikulturom i hortikulturom, arhitekturom i planiranim naseljima sve do najudaljenije granice slobodne Dubrovačke Republike.

Povezanost heterogene građe u knjizi osigurala je Fabijanićeve metoda: bez obzira na promjenu teme i značenja, pa i različit stupanj emotivnog uloga, njegova fotografija se uvijek odlikuje sažetošću forme i snagom simbola. Isključivo kvadratičnog formata, dosljedno tragajući za trajnim u prolaznom, za smislom u obliku, autorove fotografije najčešće uključuju motiv minimalistički: najmanju moguću mjeru od onoga što stvarnost nudi, a ipak dovoljnu da se izrazi suština. Odnos količine i kakvoće u najkласičnijim Fabijanićevim fotografijama mogao bi poslužiti za zornu nastavu filozofije: kao interpretacija poznatih Zenonovih aporija o zrnu i gomili. Koliko komada lomljenih kamenih ploča, koliku površinu jednog krova od škriplja treba obuhvatiti da razabiremo svaku pojedinačno, a da ih ipak doživimo kao krov, kao cjelinu?⁵⁰ Koliko redova i snopova slame je minimum da se vidi da je to krov, a da još uvijek razabiremo i svaku slamku pojedinačno?⁵¹

Ponekad grupirane u parovima, autorove se fotografije antitetički dopunjuju u značenju i potenciraju ekspresiju.

Kao simbol Fabijanićevih simbola mogao bi poslužiti par fotografija predratnog i poratnog franjevačkog klaustera.^{146, 147} S istog odstojanja i kuta gledanja, identičnog izreza, dvije fotografije istog odsječka klaustera – s tri luka romaničkih heksafora – iz dviju epoha, mirnodopske i ratne. Iako su promjene minimalne i jedva uočljive, izražavaju potresno duh tih dvaju razdoblja. U miru: intenzivno zeleno lišće i žarki plodovi naranče zrače suncem, snagom i životom; u ratu: pred zidom nagriženim i izranjenim od granatiranja, preostala je samo monokromna smeđa grafika golog granja. Ovaj primjer uvodi nas u treću sekvencu.

The photographic record of the present reality of Croatia's most famous city, almost a legend was made over several years and is divided into three parts: the city of Dubrovnik (1989) - the landscape of the Dubrovnik region (1990) - and their shared fate in the tragic revision of the City and the territory of the former Republic of Ragusa after the Serbian and Montenegrin devastation in 1991-1992.

The cycle of photographs of the City reflects Fabijanić's fascination with the harmony and beauty of everything in Dubrovnik, although what initially set him to work was the commission from the Dubrovnik Restoration Board (founded in 1979 after the earthquake) to photograph the architectural monuments restored in the past decade and those under reconstruction. The series of photographs from the surroundings of Dubrovnik was also a result of a professional assignment: the Rupe Granary Museum engaged Fabijanić to photograph the landscape, folk architecture and customs in the Dubrovnik region as documentary material for an ethnographic collection. Crossing over two thousand kilometers on several trips from spring to late autumn, the photographer visited various sites and took pictures. Neither his employers nor the photographer himself could have imagined that in less than a year these photographs would be the last document of the ancient Croatian civilization in the Dubrovnik region, a civilization that has now been destroyed. The third part of the book is devoted to the fate of this harmonious coexistence of man and nature which was almost wiped from the earth, depriving the world of an opportunity to learn and profit from it...

The arrangement of photographs in the book does not adhere to the actual chronology. The photographer decided to place the cycle of photographs of the City in the middle, connecting the photographs of idyllic landscapes and the deeply moving scenes of destruction.

The sequence of the City is in black and white. In this way, form is emphasized and expresses its power without the aid of colour. Fabijanić takes details and blows them up, alienating them from reality and making them independent in the aesthetic structure. From his viewpoint, things are seen as part of the visual art world rather than the real world.

The surfaces of walls stretch or bend in full clarity, break at sharp angles, heave in thick layers of sculptural decoration or illustrate the play of light and shade.^{57-63, 72-73} Even in the poorly made back facades⁸² the author discovers visual qualities. Details of the relief spring into life^{77, 79} on large walls and elsewhere the walls break out open and turn into arcades.^{64, 65, 67} The volumes of buildings and the space of streets and stairways are swallowed up by the perspective.^{66, 71, 84} The essential difference between the Renaissance and the Baroque becomes obvious in a comparison of the Renaissance groin vault in the city Granary (Rupe Museum)⁷⁴ and the Baroque dome of the Cathedral,⁷⁵ as seen from below.

The absence of man in Fabijanić's photographs is not a sign of misanthropy: the pictures of the city are a subjective experience the photographer is sharing with us. The City is revealed as a beauty of its sum and the sum of its beauties.

The order of sequences in Fabijanić's trilogy follows the scheme of prologue, theme and epilogue.

In the beginning there was landscape. Although aware of that, when looking at Fabijanić's photographs, it is hard to imagine what the land originally looked like because it has been shaped by human spirit and human will and cultivated by human hand over the centuries. Cypresses, olive trees and vine stocks, Spanish broom, sage and lavender have all been planted and cultivated (in the original sense of the Latin word).

And then, a millennium and a half ago, the City was founded in the midst of sparse nature and has been growing ever since. Not only inside the walls; Dubrovnik has always penetrated into its environment, changing the land with agriculture and horticulture, architecture and planned settlements all the way to the furthestmost borders of the free Dubrovnik Republic.

Fabijanić's method provides an intrinsic unity to the photographs: regardless of various themes and meanings, or degrees of emotional involvement, his photographs are marked by terse forms and powerful symbols. Always square in format, his works search for the enduring in the transient, for meaning in form, by focusing on minimalist motifs: the smallest possible size offered by reality and yet large enough to express the essential. The relationship between quantity and quality in Fabijanić's most classical works may serve as an object lesson in philosophy, to explain Zeno's paradox on the grain and the crowd. How many stone tiles, how large a surface of the roof must be encompassed so that we could see each one separately and yet be able to see the roof, the whole?⁵⁰ How many rows and bundles of thatch are the minimum so that we could discern a root and still see each single straw?⁵¹

Set in pairs, Fabijanić's photographs are complementary in meaning and forceful in expression. The pair of photographs of the Franciscan cloister^{146, 147} before and after the war is symbolic of his ability to use symbols. Taken from the same distance and the same angle, identical in the frame, the two photographs show the same detail of the cloister - with three arches of Romanesque hexaphoras - in time of peace and in the aftermath of war. Although the changes are minor and hardly noticeable, they nevertheless poignantly express the spirit of the two periods. In peacetime: intensely green leaves and golden oranges glow with sunshine, zest and life. In wartime: in front of the wall pockmarked and damaged by the shelling now stands a monochrome brown outline of bare branches. This example leads us into the third sequence.

RAT...
WAR...

DUBROVAČKA TRILOGIJA DAMIRA FABIJANIĆA
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Kako fotografijom iskazati očaj ljudi koji su svoj grad, teško oštećen snažnim potresom 1979. godine, deset godina uporno obnavljali uz najveće žrtve, da bi ga pri završnim radovima obnove vidjeli ponovno razorenog? Kako dočarati istinu života suvremenih Dubrovčana i tisuća izbjeglica koje su se iz poharanih naselja u okolišu sklonili u grad: nesmiljeno bombardiranje grada i jednogodišnje (!) opsade s kopna i s mora, bez vode, struje i hrane, pakao koji je prošao? Kako prikazati ljudsku tragediju koja još traje? Fabijanić isključuje ljude s fotografija i prepušta stvarima da posredno govore o čovjekovoj sudbini. On ne teži ekspresivnosti niti u kompoziciji, niti u svjetlosti i obliku, nego krajnje smirenom i klasičnom kompozicijom nastoji nam istodobno dočarati i prošlu ljepotu stvaranja i sadašnju rugobu razaranja: izranjeni, nekoć oštri bridovi kuća i baroknih stubišta, rasprsele kupole srednjovjekovnih zvonika, unakaženi kameni renesansni zidni ormari, viseće ograde rokoko balkona bez svojih kamenih podova, sljuštene kupe kanalice (crepovi) s krovova starih crkava, prazne duplje na mjestu prozora-očiju kojima je kuća nekoć gledala u okolicu (ili njihov simbolički izrez u *hrvatski križ*), odvaljena zdjela javne česme, stravične šupljine ponutrica bivših palača, urušenih i izgorjelih do temelja...

Sugestivan je niz fotografija baroknih dućana s glavne dubrovačke ulice-trga, Place (Straduna): unutar jednostavnog, tradicijom posvećenog oblika kojim se jednim lukom povezuje ulaz i izlog trgovine – što je karakteristični motiv najživljeg središta grada – ubačene su naglo i improvizirano različite daske i letve, ploče i pregrade kojima se pokušavalo zaštititi ljude i robu. Autor nas poziva na kontemplativno promatranje, jer tek nakon izvjesnog vremena iz ikonografije ovih bijednih umetaka očitavamo svu nevolju i bijedu, strah i očaj nenaoružanih stanovnika ovog ponosnog grada tisućljetne kulturne tradicije, koji su uzaludno pokušavali da se obrane od granata podivljalih brđana.

Kao i tumačenje ljepote i sklada, tako se i u prikazu destrukcije Fabijanić često služi metodom komparacije. Potresni su parovi mirnodopskih i poratnih fotografija seljačkih kuća u dubrovačkom poljoprivrednom zaleđu, Konavlima i Čilipima.¹⁵²⁻¹⁶⁷

Slojevitost inventara stanova svjedoči o tradiciji, razini i kulturi stanovanja koju ovdje ne bismo očekivali: namještaj s odjecima baroka i prošlog stoljeća, oprema različitih doba, lica časnih i radnih ukućana koja nas gledaju s vjenčanih slika na zidu. Na kraju, makar posredno, na starim uokvirenim fotografijama osjeća se prisutnost ljudi koje ne vidimo gotovo nigdje drugdje u Fabijanićevu djelu. Ali prisustvo čovjeka je i bez toga ovdje najintezivnije, jer predmeti djeluju kao da su netom odloženi ili još topli od dodira.

Vjerojatno će se mnogo toga u Dubrovniku obnoviti, ali je pitanje da li će se ikada moći obnoviti ovaj duh kontinuiteta obiteljskog života i stoljetne tradicije običaja ruralnog zaleđa, jednostavnog dostojanstva iz kojeg zrači moralna snaga. Sjećanje i uspomene koje tako intenzivno naviru iz mirnodopskih slika Konavala i Čilipa, jednom razoreni, neće se više nikada moći uspostaviti i vjerojatno su zauvijek uništeni, jer će u obnovi sigurno nadvladati duh moderniteta. Niknut će nova sela i naselja, nalik drugima, bilo kojim drugima. Njihova ranija izvornost, individualitet i neponovljivost ustupit će mjesto konfekciji i beznačajnoj prosječnosti.

Fabijanićeve fotografije su i objektivni zapis o nekadašnjoj ljepoti krajolika, snazi grada, mnogolikosti života sela i okoliša dubrovačkog, a ujedno i njihova valorizacija. Još dugi niz godina, još nekoliko desetljeća – dok obnova ne prekrije destrukciju zaboravom, a novi život ne uhvati dublje korijenje – Fabijanićeve će fotografije biti jedno od najsnažnijih sredstava borbe protiv slabosti ljudskog pamćenja, a za punoću doživljaja o tome što je bila i što je značila visoka razina kulture Dubrovnika i njegova okoliša.

Radovan Ivančević
Sveučilište u Zagrebu
veljača 1993.

How can photography voice the anguish of people who for ten years have been laboriously repairing their city, heavily damaged in the 1979 earthquake, only to see it in ruins again just when their work was almost done? How can one show the life of the citizens of Dubrovnik and the thousands of refugees who fled their devastated villages to seek shelter in the City: the ceaseless shelling and a year-long siege from land and the sea, without water, electricity and food, a hell they all went through? How can one express human tragedy that is far from over?

Fabijanić does not include people in his photographs, preferring to let things speak indirectly of man's fate. He does not strive for expressiveness in either composition, lighting or form. In his serene and classical compositions, he attempts to capture both the past beauty of creation and present ugliness of destruction: jagged edges that used to be straight, Medieval spires blown apart, disfigured Renaissance stone wall closets, hanging railings of Rococo balconies without stone platforms, tiles stripped from the roofs of old churches, empty sockets instead of windows that used to be the eyes of the house (or the symbolic picture of the "Croatian cross"), the broken basin of a public fountain, horrible emptiness inside the former palaces, caved in and burnt to the ground...

The series of photographs of Baroque shops from Dubrovnik's main street/square - Placa (Stradun) is suggestive: a simple, tradition honoured design in which an arch links the entrance and the shopwindow - a characteristic motif in the city centre - is cluttered by a strange assortment of boards, planks and panels which were meant to protect the people and goods. The photographer invites us to contemplate this scene, and after awhile the iconography of these pitiful attempts at protection reveals the anguish, suffering, fear and despair of the unarmed citizens of this proud city with a thousand-year cultural tradition who tried in vain to defend themselves from the shells fired by crazed mountain bandits.

Fabijanić often resorts to comparison, both when showing beauty and harmony and when showing destruction. The pairing of peacetime and wartime photographs of village houses in the agricultural inland area of Dubrovnik, Konavle and Čilipi,^{152, 167} are deeply moving. The rich and varied furnishing of the interiors indicates a level of tradition and culture of living almost unexpected outside urban centres: furniture with Baroque and 19th century elements, fittings from various periods and the faces of upright and industrious tenants who look at us from wedding photographs on the wall. It is on these photographs that one feels, though indirectly, the presence of people, to be seen nowhere else in Fabijanić's work. This presence is most intensely felt here, because all things appear to have been used but a moment ago. still warm from the human touch.

Much of Dubrovnik will probably be restored, but the question is whether it will be possible to revive the continuity of family life and centuries-long tradition of rural customs in the inland area, that spirit of simple dignity that speaks of moral strength. Memories that pour forth from the peacetime photographs of Konavle and Čilipi, once destroyed, are probably lost forever because a modern spirit is bound to prevail in reconstruction. New settlements will be raised, identical to all others, any others. Their original unique quality will be replaced by something that is mass-produced and without individuality.

Fabijanić's photographs are a testimony to the once beautiful landscape, the might of the City, the variety and richness of village life in the region; they are also a valuable document. For many years to come, for many decades perhaps - until restoration replaces destruction and new life takes hold - Fabijanić's photographs will be one of the most powerful means of fighting the frailty of human memory and serve as a genuine expression of the high level of culture in Dubrovnik and its surroundings.