

# Architectonics, associativity and abstraction - 3a

DRAŽEN PEJKOVIĆ

> Architect and artist. Department of Urbanism of the City of Split and IGH on project management, Croatia  
drazen.pejkovic@gmail.com  
ORCID 0000-0001-7005-0650

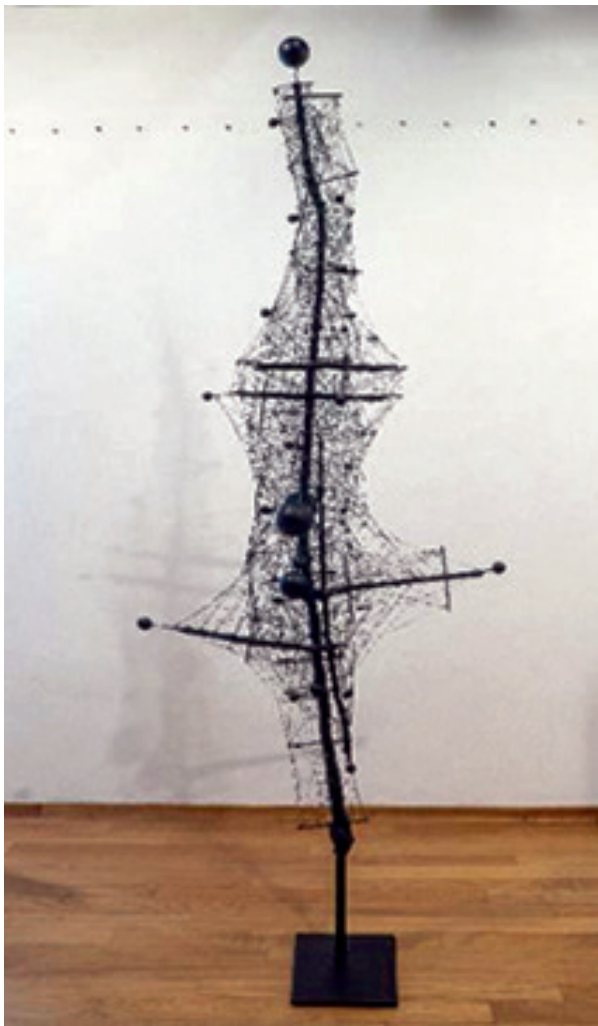
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## GENESIS 2013 - 2020

The “Genesis” cycle is conceived as a cycle of seven parts / exhibitions over seven years in a row (Viruses 2013, Networks 2014, Microns 2015, Mutations 2016, Evolution 2017, Cloning 2018, Singularity 2019 - 2020). The idea behind the Genesis cycle was to stage seven exhibitions (in a seven-year period) whose titles were mutually connected by my intention to deal with the eternal theme of the Book of Genesis. Titles of all exhibitions that form the cycle belong to the circle of “Nobel themes”, and together they summarize most important civilizational cognitions from human origins till today. As the cycle was being performed, I felt I was becoming more mature myself; and during the final exhibition, “Singularity”, it seemed I have found a shaped and creative interval to develop and explore in the future. I would say that the time I had devoted to the “Book of Genesis” was a tiresome and interesting quest that led me to some creative answers I had never expected to find. Maybe the whole the time it was all about my new personal “Genesis” after which I would commit myself much more to the artistic work.



> Figure 1. Genesis Exposition. Font: register of author.



## ABOUT GENESIS

Ive Šimat Banov

Some works and oeuvres contain a summary of time, a small recapitulation of the dramatic and expressive parts of both history and art. In addition, it is one form of experience, in which answers to the most serious of questions (on the origins of man and the universe) can be found in the configuration of the work itself. Broadly speaking; why could an act of creation not itself be a work of art. Undoubtedly, the GENESIS cycle which is divided into seven concepts (viruses, networks, microns, mutations, evolution, cloning, singularity) could, with its insistence on the question of *how did it all begin* (T. Horvatić), leave the visual arts field and instead pose a fundamental question about the earliest origins of the world and man's position in it. However, the importance of the question does not guarantee the primacy of the answer.

Since I know very little or nothing on the subject (for example, how did the universe form?), and in line with Copernican false reconciliation with the claim that man is pure biochemistry, and the spirit mere memory, I agree that the world is ruled by viruses, networks, mutations and evolutions.... but, the question still remains, what is this work that Pejšković created? Frankly, I would like to avoid serious questions of the origins of universe, as well as medical diagnostics, virology, microns and mutations and turn towards this unusually cultivated, methodical, patient and sensitive creator of the work.

The complexity of this issue takes us back to the structure, language, grammar and syntax of these more or less spatially ambitious organisms that are hanging from the ceiling or are erected in space with or without a pedestal. There are also dense informal networks, rough and verrucous epidermis of reliefs pressed against the wall...

It is possible that Pejšković, an architect, writer and urban planner, like Giacometti, showed least inclination for sculpture. It is also possible that he, like the famous sculptor, was not "good at" sculpture: *I chose sculpture because I showed least ability for it*, Giacometti said. Pejšković could say: I chose sculpture because I could "pour" all my thoughts and desires into it. Through dense reticular organisms and fantastic beings, with diaphragm and core, with proboscis in space, with a "hole" and navel in the centre, Lautréamont's claws, bells, lumps, it is as if history of the condition of "infinite pressure and density" has been brought to an end. And behold, a cycle was born, that must be accounted for and that deserves, with good reason, to find a place within contemporary sculpture. Also, here we are, with experience and knowledge to connect it with other works. So "at first glance," what we have here is Richier's Bat, O. Petlevski's beautiful disintegration, Wols' decay, but also Micheli's beasts with inverted legs, a beautiful and coarse Informel, Pollock's black totemic columns that hold everything the painting contains. And since originality belongs to idiots (K. Angeli Radovani), we might also be able to connect here deep existentialism with superficial barrage of the optical nerve (Šutej), Korkut's corporeal amorphizations with Kožarić's and Ružić's solidification of gaseous and liquid forms. And no one stands in the way of sifting through medical experience and listing all the cysts and metastases that look like "beautiful images" of the worst imaginable diseases, all the clinical images of advanced cancer that does not recede from the distant space nebula and particles which, according to Pejšković, *where there in the beginning*.

Perhaps it is all just literature and interpretation. What do we do with this work? Reveals the misery of the one who asks. Our book-

> Figure 2. Genesis Exposition. Font: register of author.



keeping spirit adoring of registry books cannot conceive of the work per se; beyond and in everything. While the loneliness of this work is magnificent. Pejkočić's methodical work and sensitive perseverance, climatologically speaking, is truly refreshing. Marginal yet in the centre, he connected the disintegrating with wholeness, rot and life, he turned dispersion into compactness, the underlying into consequential, science into art. Within fantastic knitting and cobwebs, and informelist material decay, we are struck by the culture and sensibility that examines the motif in which putrescence and health are entwined.

Explaining seven concepts or words can lead anywhere, easily beyond art, but it cannot compromise the authority of the created organism. Pathogenic diagnoses, viruses, destruction of matter and its disintegration, then solidification, can be assimilated in this work. Still, I happily include this work in art history and point to a man who works in solitude, as a patient eunuch of art, and who, in

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> Figure 5. Genesis Exposition. Font: register of author.

> Figure 6. Genesis Exposition. Font: register of author.

a state of celibacy (in relation to others), always remained on the side of the living organism. Of course, even with as little knowledge that I possess on the subject, I am still able to talk about the universe, medical diagnostics, or tense ontological arrogance. When interpreting Pejčković's work, it is possible to invoke a doctor and patient, botanist, cosmologist and ontologist... and whoever else. But for me personally, whether in cosmic relations or in the gallery, it will remain an indicator of human sensitivity and proof of human value within the great order of reality.

## POSTGENESIS

Yes, this has indeed been one of our toughest periods lately. Everybody is confused and we are hoping for a happy ending of this situation regarding the pandemic. I believe it is important to work with an intense energy during such complicated circumstances. We should strongly resist pessimism. And this was my mental attitude while I was preparing works for the exhibition that is going to be staged by a reputable curator, Mrs. Mirela Vujević Duvnjak. Twenty large format artistic works will be exhibited in a beautiful, charming environment of a Renaissance building that is home to the Museum of the City of Kaštela. Conceptually, three words dictate the exhibition: architectonics, associativity and abstraction - 3A. I believe each of the three words can be felt while the works are observed; either live or just by looking at a photo. To put it shortly, I would say that the works I am going to present in this exhibition belong to the "architectonical-associative abstraction".

## ABOUT POSTGENESIS

### Mirela Vujević Duvnjak

Seemingly corroded and eroded surfaces, hollow and transparent volumes of Dražen Pejčković's sculptures at first invoke an informal understanding of materials and abstract forms as key features in art, which is also expressed in other art disciplines and media that the artist do. The abstract fused forms of his sculptures are paradoxically opposed by their architecture and stability made by constructs of knobby verticals, diagonals, circles and spirals. Existentialist reflections were evoked in the author's previous art project, the "Genesis" cycle, realized through exhibitions over seven years and elaborated with the terms: Viruses 2013, Nets 2014, Microns 2015, Mutations 2016, Evolution 2017, Cloning 2018, and Singularity 2019. As the author himself points out, these terms summarize the most important civilizational knowledge. Working on this great cycle, he himself matured creatively and technically, implying the genesis of personal sculptural history. With the new cycle Postgenesis at the exhibition at the Kaštela Town Museum, Pejčković have presented works that stylistically and technically follow up some of the works from previous sections, such as Microns, Mutations, and especially Singularity. Referring to contemporary works, the author emphasizes the conceptual layout consisting of three common concepts in art history lexis: architecture, associativity and abstraction, which he summarizes in the name of the exhibition - 3A. Is this recent change, the abandonment of thinking about themes that remain without an ideal response, as well as questions of purpose that do not exclude anxiety and uncertainty, expressed especially and in an unusual way in the current period of the global pandemic, or a response to creativity despite them? For Pejčković, this is obviously an optimistic confirmation of the latter, giving evidence with dedicated, patient, methodical and prolific work in order to satisfy all his professional and creative interests and ideas. Unlike

the cycle “Genesis”, where concepts imputed thematic and motif outcomes that were already an excuse to do, the author is now free of references, not excluding figurative reflections, is evidence to greater freedom of personal artistic imagination. These sculptures evoke questions and provoke mixtures of feelings, but above all they evoke processuality, quiet drama, mysticism, atmosphere and almost hypnotic visual harmony. By dominating space, they suppress everything else into the illusion of absence.

By his choice of materials: wire, clay, plaster, glue, rosin, textile threads and polystyrene, and through many years of practical research, Pejkočić has developed and accomplished a technique that suits his sensibility and ideas. The associative biomorphic, anthropomorphic, architectural and totemic forms of Pejkočić’s sculptures are seemingly corroded, decaying but, in fact, carefully made structures enriched with the aesthetics of black colour and its silky sheen. Whatever the source, type or intensity of light, the author takes it into account in the ultimate subtle dynamics of the impression of his sculptures. His current dark understanding of motif /concept/ of the structure, the ambivalence of these somewhat intimidating and enigmatic “objects”, their performance sophistication, aesthetics and evocation of the material make them appealing and suggestive. Pejkočić’s prudence and diligence have contributed to his evolutive sculptural drive. The layers of fine surface textures are structured with small spherical elements with meticulous construction, and by connecting and intertwining impregnated textile threads, the artist makes more or less complex meshwork. Such techniques assume, at least in the imagination of the author of these lines, an almost contemplative atmosphere typical of fine mechanics and Pag or Hvar Benedictines while sewing their precious laces. By increasing the density of the fibers between the constructional structures, the artist makes “spatial drawings”, creating plastic images, or letting the threads fall and look like tentacles of jellyfish or some other conductors of latent vitality. Surface structures close and open volumes, cracks reveal contents, and the perception of individual sculptures changes significantly depending on the viewing angle. Pejkočić’s sculptures activate and dynamize the space around and within them, and by capturing the space they reflect essence, creation, movement and vitality. These sculptures are monuments of living matter, individual lives and symbols of modern social substance. They are the micro and macro worlds of living matter subjected not only to decay, but also to regeneration.

#### SISTINE CHAPEL - VATICAN

A crucial change in my professional life happened during my college days, more precisely during the visit to the Sistine Chapel. From a temporal standpoint, it was a short visit; but in terms of the content and creativity, it has been the most powerful life experience for me. The Book of Genesis is told on the ceiling, and The Judgement Day on the altar wall. I can still feel the thrill of seeing that masterpiece with my own eyes. From that moment onwards—except for doing my personal researches—I have collaborated with many experts from many different fields. I love collaborations and the knowledge I gain from those experiences. I am equally passionate and committed to architecture, urbanism and art. At one point, I had to choose what to study and I chose architecture, but since the art academy was nearby, I had many opportunities to attend their lectures as well. It all came together! Idea or the challenge? Both at the same time!



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> Figure 8. Genesis Exposition. Font: register of author





## ART RESEARCH

Studying architecture covers all cognitions related to the notion and function of the “construction”. I use these knowledge, and since I am familiar with the chemical and mechanical attributes of the materials I use (wire, clay, gypsum, glue, resin, thread impregnated with glue, polystyrene), I manage to create structures that at first sight may seem fragile, but at the same time they are very solid and airy. I continuously explore new possibilities, and lately I have created works that can be staged even outdoor, without any concerns of being impaired by the atmospheric damage. The research I have done to develop my own “recipe” took a couple of years. Today I could say I have achieved the final result that makes me recognized as an author, and is at the same time compatible with my basic creative ideas. And yes, I am very pleased with the results.

## DO THESE SCULPTURES HAVE AN IDEAL MEANING? WHAT DO THEY REPRESENT?

My sculptures interpret the subconscious preoccupation with forms that have associative characteristics. They present both nothing and everything. I often talk about it and I get a lot of different comments, and very often these conversations evolve into regular meetings and artistic friendships. It seems people are attracted by the sculptural interval, and to be honest with you, I did not expect that to happen. It is a great satisfaction when you realize that your work is occupying the attention and the thoughts of the observers. I would even say that their observations, in some indeterminate way, build “my sculptures”. When you achieve this state of relaxed creativity, at one point you feel as a creator of new, life forms, and perhaps that would be the right answer to this question, or at least closest to it. I will be pleased if someone, after reading this interview, visits my Facebook page and tries to figure out what my sculptures may represent.

## ARCHITECTURE AND ART

I am attracted by great challenges, and some of the greatest ones a person can face are hidden in architecture and art. It motivates me intensely, and I do not try to resist it. Actually, I would say I always run to meet it. Lately, for my personal pleasure, I have painted portraits and *vedute*, oil on laminated paper. I am exploring. Simultaneously, I spend time dealing with the urbanistic topics regarding

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my city, Split, and with my colleagues I am finishing the project of the retirement home in Zagreb. And then there are sculptures, they occupy my days, and very often even the major part of the nights. To sum up, by reconciling different fields of architecture and art, I give my thanks for the opportunity to live the life I was given.

#### FUTURE PLANS AFTER THE KASTELA EXHIBITION

I am thinking about a new cycle called the Apocalypse. It is an ancient Greek word that could be translated as “unveiling the veil”. I am intrigued by the thoughts about what we might “see” once we “unveil the veil”; that is, what is hidden under my, your, our “veils”. One tiny animate/inanimate organism, invisible to the eye, has changed our way of life so dramatically that we have to ask ourselves: What is the New World going to look like, because the Old World is disappearing right in front of our eyes. While I am writing these sentences, I am recalling the excitement as I am standing in the Sistine Chapel and watching the altar wall. “Book of Genesis” and “The Judgement Day”.

#### DRAŽEN PEJKOVIĆ (1968)

Lives and works in Split. He graduated architecture at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb in 1994. He is professional in the fields of urbanism and architecture, and works in the Department of Urbanism of the City of Split and IGH on project management.

He was elected a visiting teacher at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Geodesy in Split in 2011, and in 2016 he was a member of the editorial team for the university script Research in Urban Planning, Pedagogical Notebook Vol.2 (University of Split, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture). Pejković is a multiple award winner in urban-architectural competitions, and a participant in group and solo architectural and art exhibitions. He chaired the Association of Architects of Split and the Association of Engineers of Split, and was vice president of the Association of Croatian Architects. In addition to active participation in a number of publishing projects, he was engaged in the work of juries as part of the implementation of urban-architectural competitions in Split, Zagreb and Zadar, and was a member of several expert commissions in the field of urbanism and architecture of the City of Split, Ministry of Culture and Croatian Olympic Committee.

He is the author of several professional texts published in ČIP (Man & Space architectural magazine) and Slobodna Dalmacija news-



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paper. He is the designer-in-chief and co-author of the Spaladium arena in Split (in cooperation with 3LHD architects from Zagreb), and a member of the team that drafted the General Urban Plan of Split in 2005.

Pejković started to pursue his artistic interests in 1986 during high school under the mentorship of lawyer and art collector Dalibor Parać and architect Neven Šegvić. During his studies under the mentorship of Josip Vaništa and sculptor Andrija Krstulović, he continued his artistic research. In 1989 he set up his first solo exhibition at the Golden Gate Gallery in Split, which was reviewed by architect Frane Gotovac for *Slobodna Dalmacija* newspaper and in 1992 his second solo show was presented at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb.

Since 2013, he has been collaborating with the Croatian carpet factory Regeneracija - Zabok as part of the Self-Portraits project, which resulted in the execution of 5 designed carpets and a group exhibition *Art and Design in Wool* held in 2015 in the Old City Hall in Split. There he presented his works among works by 25 renowned Croatian artists and designers. In 2015, he collaborated with choreographer Dinko Bogdanić and music artist Joško Koludrović on the performance of the ballet work *Pixels*, which was premiered at the National Theatre in Split as part of World Dance Day.

Work on the preparation of the "Genesis" cycle began in 2000 with the publication of five works in the format of "small plastic" entitled *Viruses*, which are presented on the website [www.ahitektura.info](http://www.ahitektura.info)

The conceptual-performative format of the Genesis cycle is set at the beginning of 2012 with preparations for the first exhibition entitled *Viruses*, which opened in 2013 in the Photo Club Gallery in Split. The "Genesis" cycle is conceived as a cycle of seven parts / exhibitions over seven years in a row (*Viruses* 2013, *Networks* 2014, *Microns* 2015, *Mutations* 2016, *Evolution* 2017, *Cloning* 2018, *Singularity* 2019 - 2020).

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