

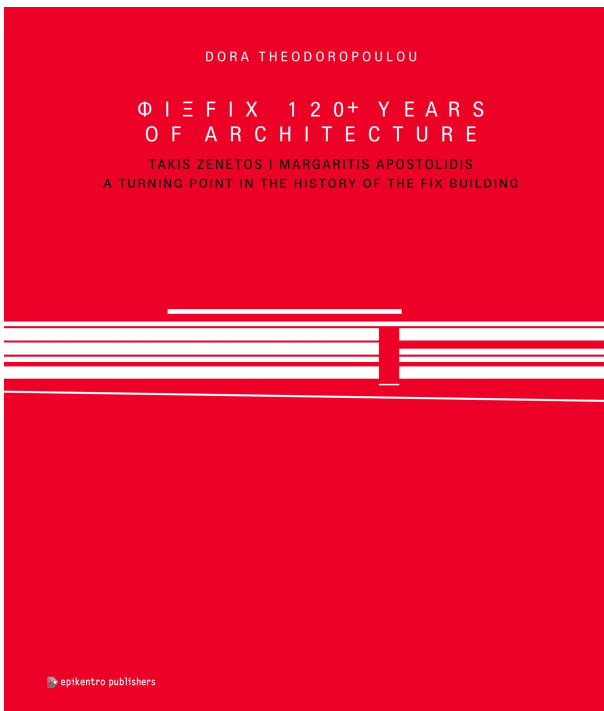
ENDURING REMNANTS FROM THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL PAST

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Abstract. This is a review of the book *ΦΙΞΙΣ 120+ Years of Architecture: Takis Zenetos - Margaritis Apostolidis, a Turning Point in the History of the FIX Building*, by Dora Theodoropoulou, 2020, 75€, Epikentro Publishers, Athens, Greece.

Key words: book review, architecture, adaptive reuse, FIX Brewery



This book analyzes the history of the FIX Building, currently adaptively reused to house the Hellenic National Museum of Contemporary Art - EMST, in Athens. A historical account, reporting the 120+ years of the FIX building, attaching particular attention to the most -and not without a good reason- famous architectural-historical phase; the Takis Zenetos period.

The FIX building was undoubtedly modern, and a perfect example of the symbology of the architectural perception, while in its prime, as indeed outlined by Dr. Theodoropoulou, it represented the architectural modernity of the post-war Athens and the dynamics of a growth-

oriented economy, seen as the author explores how previous phases of the building influenced the organizational principles in the transformation process, and as she skillfully interconnects the architectural design into the mists of the Athenian history with politics, society, psychology, and economics.

This unique archival research is divided into five lengthy sections, each containing a number of chapters. The book covers inter alia all things FIX; the FIX building over the course of history, the FIX building architecture, the FIX building architect Takis Zenetos, the FIX family, and the FIX Industry.

The penmanship follows an atypical narrative structure, a contrasting consortium of a multidimensional academic research methodology and an overall personal temperamental interpretation. A series of successive analytical approaches, parallel to the building continuous process of change and transformation over 120 years, lead the reader to reflect upon the subject in depth. One can argue over the approach; however, the author's personal angle is respectable, especially since this is the first-ever broad-based attempt to produce a comprehensive analytical record of the history and architecture of the FIX building.

A point of quite some interest in this book is how the author uses anatomical and

physiological terms in place of architectural and urban science terminology (epidermis - façade, skeleton - construction frame, birth - construction), along with physical-psychological references, a practice that serves to personify the building in terms of the relationship established between the author and the building. As a result, the author appears as the FIX Brewery "therapist", set on mending the building wounds, with a soupçon of what it seems to be a personal challenge.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, while the material presented is without a doubt extremely impressive in scope and coverage, the structure lacks coherence among topics. Although this might have been an objective set by the author, in an attempt to parallel the inconsistency of the building throughout the years, still, the usefulness may not be readily apparent and therefore can be debated. In addition, the main - conceivably obsessive - point of this volume, the role played by Takis Zenetos and Margaritis Apostolidis, an admittedly crucial turning point in the building history, leads to what might be construed as an unfair imbalance among the whole history of the building, which gives the reader an incomplete feeling. All the same, considering the relationship between the author and the building aptly produced in the overall impression, which could only be compared with the unique bond between a doctor and his patient, the author somewhat surprisingly subtly refrains from a radical architectural criticism, in a both strict and broad sense, of the latest phase of the FIX Brewery, the adaptive reuse to house the Hellenic National Museum of Contemporary Art - EMST assigned to 3SK Architects, I. Mouzakis & Associate

Architects, and Tim Ronalds Architects. *Id est* the assessment of the architects' success (or not) in meeting the aims and the objectives set for the adaptive reuse project, in the context of aesthetic, design, social, economic, urban planning, *etc.*, or even sustainability issues. Fittingly, from the reference work, throughout the course of history, interesting architectural patterns have emerged that may have benefitted from further analysis.

The core of the book belongs in the field of history of architecture, however, besides appealing to historians of architecture and architects alike, it also has a much broader reach, being of interest to scholars, among others, dealing with social sciences, archaeology, psychology of architecture, historians studying the Modern Greek history, historians dealing with Greek industry and entrepreneurs looking to obtain a critical and rigorous understanding of the past (case study).

Overall, *ΦΙΞFIX 120+ Years of Architecture: Takis Zenetos - Margaritis Apostolidis, a Turning Point in the History of the FIX Building*, is a stand-alone foundational work synthesizing a tremendous amount of historical and architectural data analysis about the renowned FIX Brewery in Athens (GR), unquestionably a noteworthy addition to the literature on architecture.

REFERENCES

Theodoropoulou D. (2020), *ΦΙΞFIX 120+ Years of Architecture: Takis Zenetos - Margaritis Apostolidis, a Turning Point in the History of the FIX Building*, Epikentro Publishers, Athens, Greece.