

## From the Bauhaus to My House: Migration of Ideas – a Personal Account

PETER MAGYAR

**Abstract:** By paraphrasing Tom Wolfe's title, I am risking the accusation, that this talk is about myself. However, I intend to use my example, as a case study.

Institutions and ideas – related to, and subjects of, this conference – played very important part in my life, from the beginning of my education up to the present time. The cyclic voyages of people and ideas travelled from east to west, and vice versa. Sometimes, their directions of movements coincided, other times pointed in opposing destinations.

Born as a Hungarian, at first I learned, that people, who wanted to obtain a special education, traveled to the West. Between the two world wars, more often – as my father also did – to Germany.

Farkas Molnár, a Weimar Bauhausean, was born forty years earlier than I. Yet, one of my professors – as a young architect – was in the same circles with him, after his return. Also, one of my high-school classmate, János Fájó, was and still is the most important follower of Lajos Kassák. And for the last 18 years, at least once, but many times twice, I am serving as guest critic at the Dessau International Architecture School, which is the anointed heir of the Bauhaus. So, my second-hand experience with the Bauhaus ideas during my education are promoted to personal involvement with them in the present time.

I hope, these outlined conditions enable me for presenting a short summary of the transferences and mutations of the Avant Garde credos, locus of their origin might have been in Germany, but their influence has been always International.

*From The Bauhaus to My House...*

The proper way to begin this short presentation is, to start with a disclaimer. As a Hungarian architect, I do not consider myself a scholar, but only a person, who observed certain recurring elements in his extensive works in architectural design, and applied these in his academic involvement in different universities in Europe, Africa and the Americas. Considering these facts, maybe the personal aspects of my references will be forgiven.

Accordingly, I start with describing some events, happened within the last twenty years. During my stay at the Florida Atlantic University, where I was the founding director of the School of Architecture (between 1996 to 2007), I came to know Professor Alfred Jacoby, who in 1999 became the director of the Dessau Institute of Architecture, today the Dessau International Architecture School (DIA). It is an internationally accredited Graduate School, active on the site of the Bauhaus, but has a new campus there. In the year of its maiden voyage, 7 of the 12 first year students came from my school. Consequently, for the last 18 years, I have participated in its educational process, as an external examiner, or in some cases, as the chair of the jury of the graduate thesis competitions. There was the opportunity to come across and become friends of Attilio Terragni, the grand-nephew of Giuseppe Terragni, the latter, one of the main characters of Italian modern Avant-Garde.

My presentation to this 34th György Ránki Hungarian Chair Conference, (See Fig. 1. on Plate XXI.) happens through the inter-

vention of my esteemed friend, Ruth and Norman Moore Professor of Architecture, Robert McCarter, so I was invited by Professor Dr. András Kappanyos. May I express my sincere thanks and appreciations to both of them, and for the University of Indiana!

Bartók, Moholy-Nagy, Kassák and Breuer, all Hungarians. With my next Image (Bartók in Dessau), I would like to tie them, directly or at least indirectly, to my education. (See Fig. 2. on Plate XXI.) On the left, stands Walter Gropius, the director of the Bauhaus in Dessau. In the middle, is Béla Bartók. On his left, Paul Klee, painter, pedagogue, guiding spirit of the establishment of the educational process of the Bauhaus.

Architecture, music and painting, three important fields of the avant-garde! It is not too inappropriate to mention the role of Hungarians in all of these three fields. Marcell Breuer, Béla Bartók, Lajos Kassák and László Moholy-Nagy – names, all on the poster. All of them – in an important but indirect way, on the second-tier level – played important roles in my life.

Some of my professors at the Technical University were educated at the Bauhaus and many were taught by Dessau educated persons. Interesting to note, that although all were involved in social issues, they were not all socialists, or communist.

During the communist system, due to the governmental support of everything “folks...”, Zoltán Kodály, the folks-musicologist, Béla Bartók’s compadre, received a nationalized castle in the vicinity of my town, for an Institute of Music Education. Consequently, in the music school of our town, the best of the best taught willing and able students (I had the will, but it was not enough, to learn my favorite instrument, the violin-cello).

My classmate, János Fájó, was the only pupil of Lajos Kassák. Even today, he continues to evolve his master’s artistic direction, and participates on exhibitions, as we speak.

To bring in the fourth name on the poster to my presentation, after this short introduction, I will show mostly the works of another

Hungarian architect of the avant-garde, Farkas Molnár. He was working with Marcell Breuer several instances in his life, and also started out in the Bauhaus, however not at Dessau, but at its first location, in Weimar.

This is the point, where I will continue with images, explaining quickly their relevance to the topic of this conference. Architecture is a non-verbal communication, therefore the images are absolutely necessary, to convey the essence of my presentation.

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## PLATE XXI



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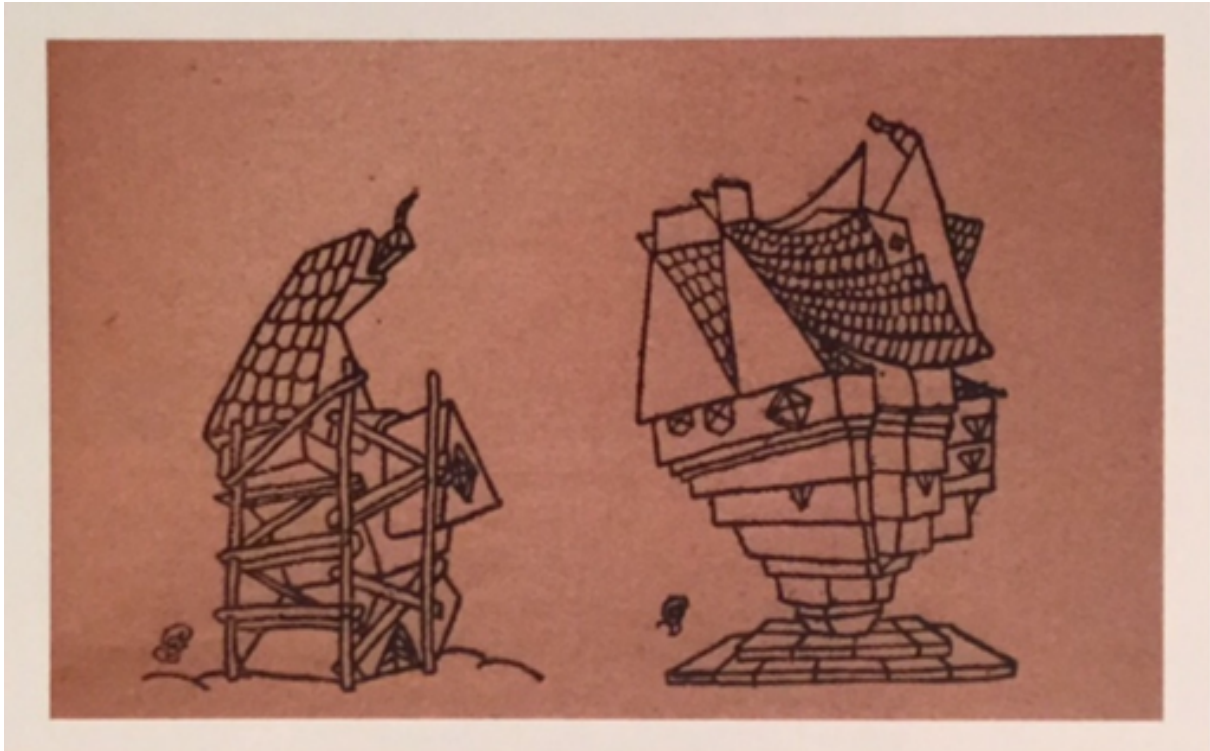


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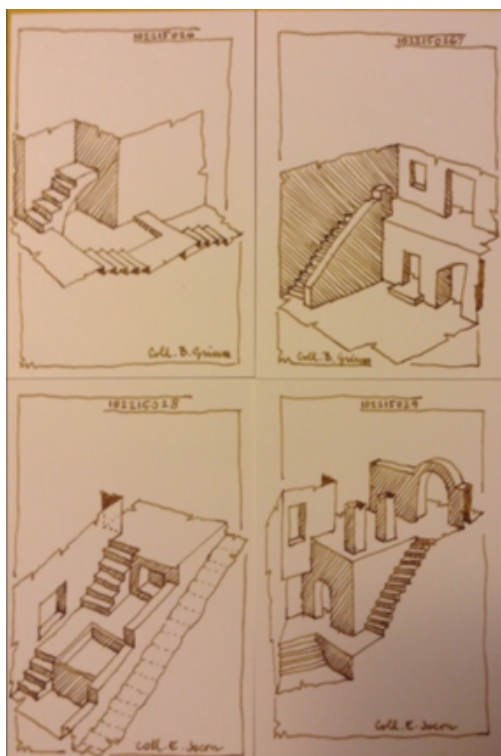


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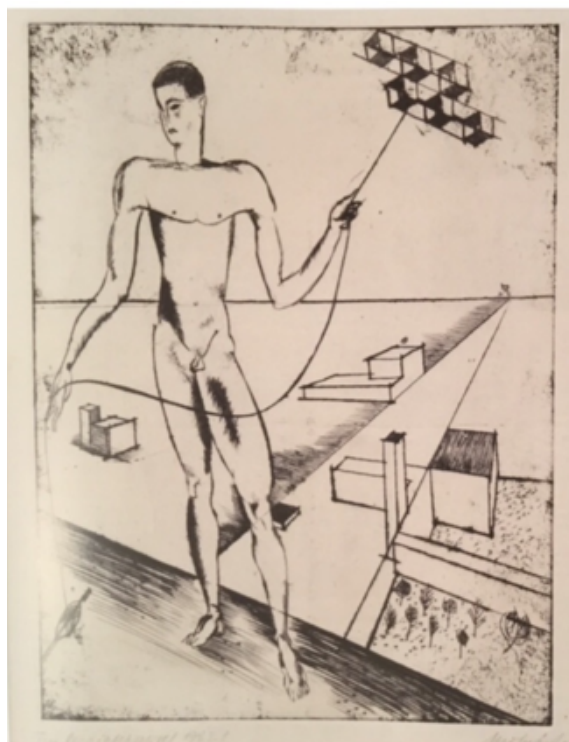


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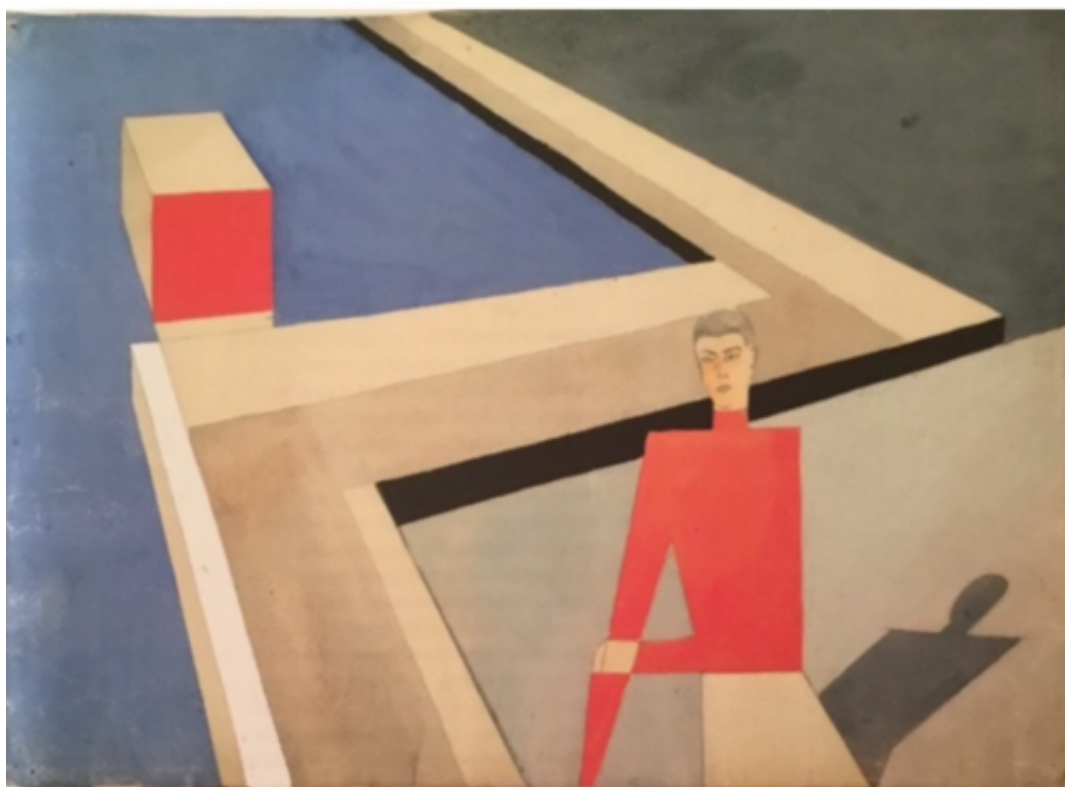


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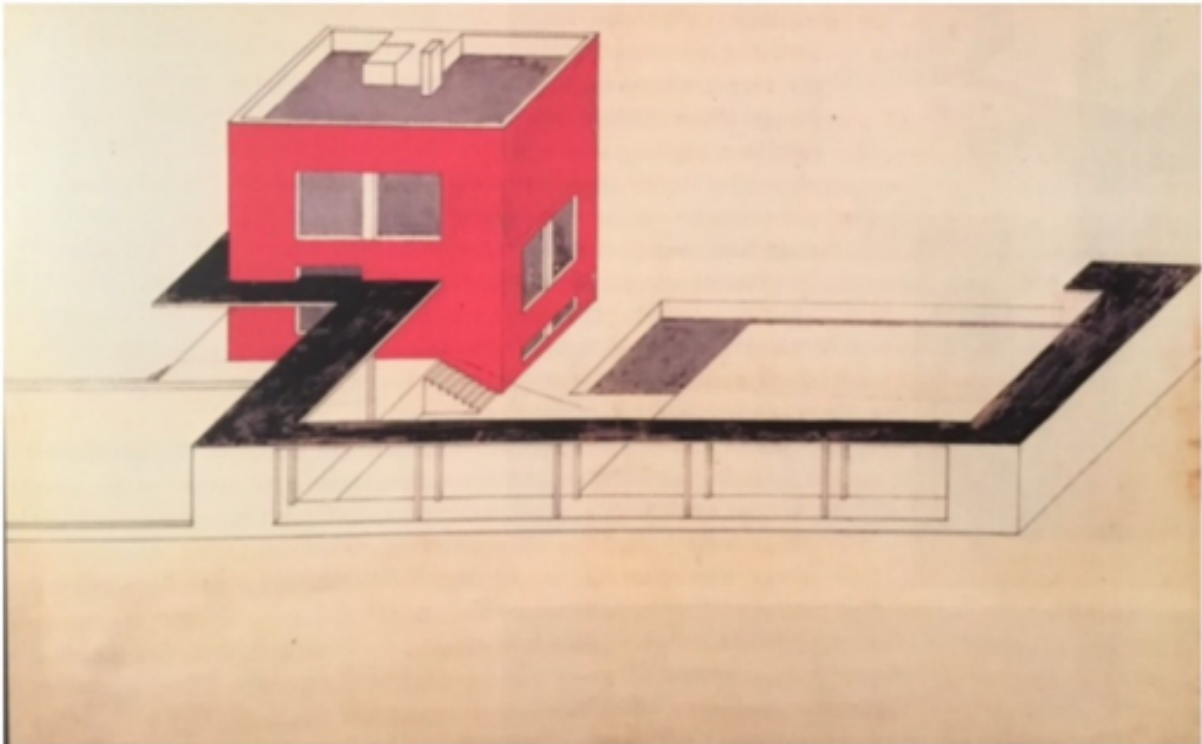


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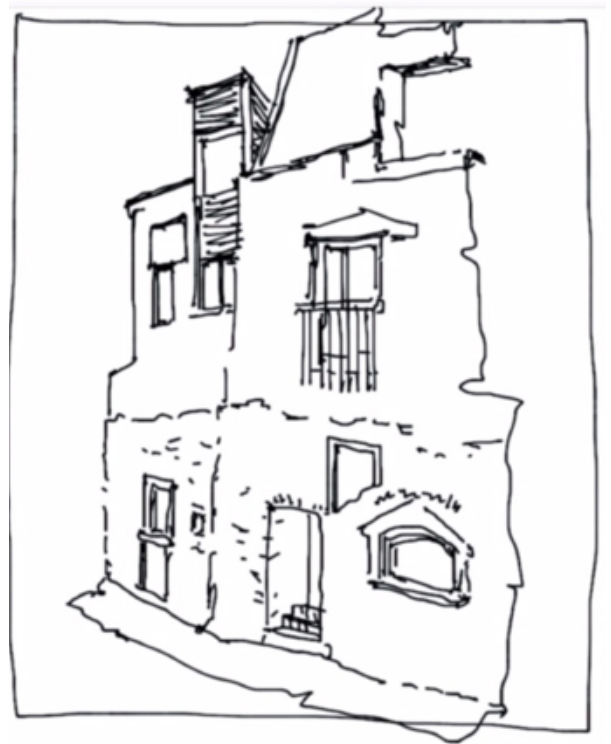


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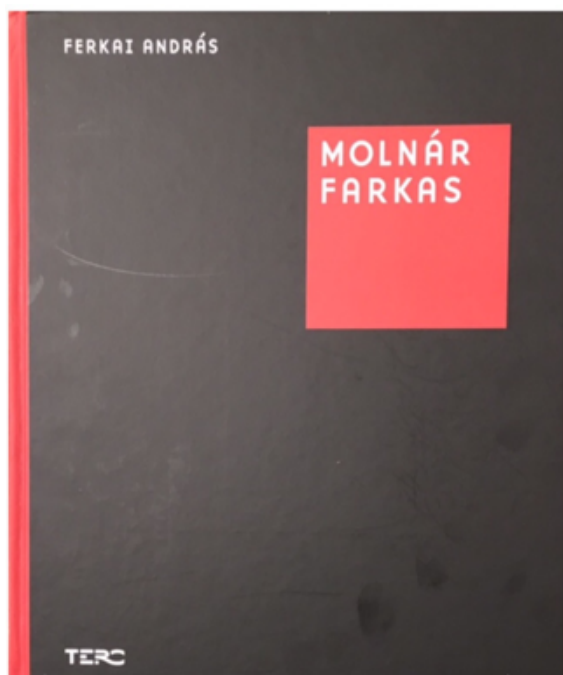


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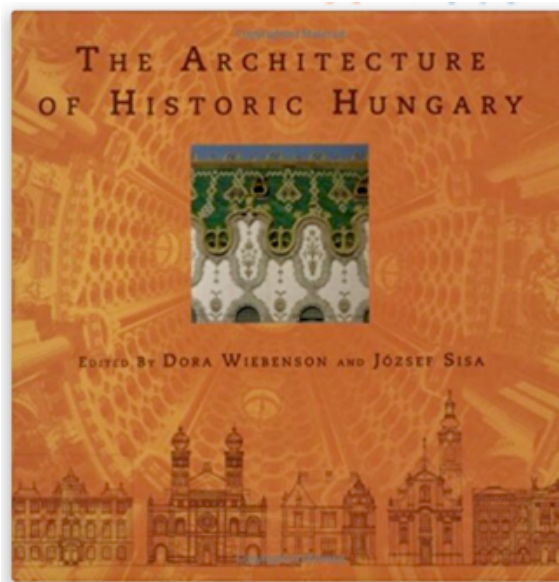


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