PLEČNIK'S LJUBLJANA

With the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy after World War I (1918), many new state entities emerged, and Slovenia found itself part of a new state of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia, or what eventually became the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929). With this, the long-standing aspirations towards a Slovene state were fulfilled.

Several architects, many of whom had studied under professor Otto Wagner in Vienna, saw Plečnik's architecture as an expression of German culture. With the emergence of new national states, they turned away from their former master and attempted to devise an original architectural style with a national point of view. At this time, the principal architect of such style was Ivan Vurnik, the founder of the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana. Jože Plečnik, who worked in Milan, was also at the forefront of Otto Wagner's students. Already before World War I he designed buildings in Vienna, the most important being Zacherl House (1905). The academy in Vienna even nominated Plečnik as Wagner's successor, but for political reasons the nomination was not approved. In 1939, Plečnik moved to Prague when in 1938 President Tomáš Masaryk appointed him as architect in charge of the renovation of the Prague Castle for purposes of the new democratic state. Despite the pro-Nazi policies, Plečnik was ready to return to his home country. Soon after he had to implement his own vision of Ljubljana as the nation's capital. With the National and University Library, All Saints Garden – the Žale Cemetery, the Church of St. Francis of Assisi and bridge over the Ljubljanica river, it was one of the most important commissions, the city deserves to be called Plečnik's Ljubljana. Rather than following trends in contemporary architecture, the architect followed his own path. He went from the current understanding of people, as he used the language of old architectural elements. He introduced the components of the city, the people's importance and the real experiences of the city were presented to the city dwellers. He kept the historical tradition and worked with perishable materials. At the same time, to the south of Vurnik's student Podskalj, the uniquely designed Church of Our Lady at Vinohrady in Prague, Plečnik employed modernist design, in many cases such a scenario involved building a new city (Karlova – Lady's Church) and Neoclassical buildings for a post-war renovation (Le Havre: Auguste Perret), just as in Ljubljana. Plečnik introduced an existing city, rebuilding it for decades in order to highlight its existing qualities. To make the city more remarkable, he designed streets, squares and parks, and placed new buildings into the existing street grid. He was aware of the importance of contact between the city and the river, as he maintained the Ljubljanica river as one of the city's guiding urban motifs. In his intervention, he acknowledged the effects of older generations and tried to reuse the old elements so that they could, at least symbolically, continue living in his new designs. While in young years in Vienna he was part of the avant-garde, and in Prague he produced monumental designs. In Ljubljana he managed to use relatively modest funds to transform the city into the capital of Slovenia. Today, those who were faced with the importance of modern urbanism, his decades-long designing of Ljubljana represents a unique and unparalleled achievement.

Tue–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
The medieval stone bridge across the river, which the 16th-century architect Peruzzi had constructed, had already been replaced by a new iron bridge, which was completed in 1898. It was to this bridge that the new citizens of Ljubljana gathered for the opening of the new City Hall, which was designed by Jože Plečnik in 1927. However, the City Hall was completed only in 1956, after Plečnik’s death. The new building was designed to serve as a city hall and a town hall, as well as a cultural and educational centre. It was constructed on the corner of two streets, Trg osvobodilne fronte and Masaryka cesta, and is one of the most important examples of modernist architecture in Ljubljana.

The design of the City Hall is characterized by its use of traditional elements and its adaptation to the site. The building is rectangular in shape, with a flat roof and a large central entrance. The facade is divided into three parts: the ground floor, the first floor, and the attic. The ground floor is the most prominent, with large windows and a large central entrance.

The entrance to the building is located on the north side of the building, and is accessed by a monumental staircase. The staircase is divided into three sections, each of which is topped by a large arched window. The entrance door is flanked by two large columns, each of which is topped by a large statue of a woman.

The interior of the building is richly decorated with murals and sculptures, which were created by some of the most important artists of the time. The main hall of the building is located on the first floor, and is accessed by a large spiral staircase. The hall is decorated with a large mural, which depicts the history of Ljubljana.

The City Hall has been designated as a national monument, and is one of the most important examples of modernist architecture in Ljubljana. It is a symbol of the city’s rebirth after the Second World War, and is a testament to the creativity and ingenuity of the architects who designed it. The building has been modernized and restored several times over the years, and is now a popular tourist attraction.