

Mostar (BiH) – Salvage of the destroyed centre

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I intend to talk about an apparently quiet place but which, in fact, is deeply marked by war and racial hate. I'm talking about the beautiful town of MOSTAR in Bosnia Herzegovina.

Eleven years have passed since two terrible wars hit Mostar, but unfortunately signs of destruction and division remain not only in the town but also in its population.



Most of the historic buildings were blown to pieces and the second war didn't even save the splendid Old Bridge which was the symbol of the town. In fact in 1993 the Croatia army demolished the Stari Most because they considered it a military objective. Photos of this barbaric destruction quickly went round the world gaining the public's indignation.

After the war, Mostar was divided into two zones: the East and the West; and the beautiful river Neretva which crosses the town, became the boundary between the two zones.

Today, although many years have passed since the conflict ended and conditions are less critical than they once were, here, as in many other parts of Bosnia, the situation is extremely delicate.

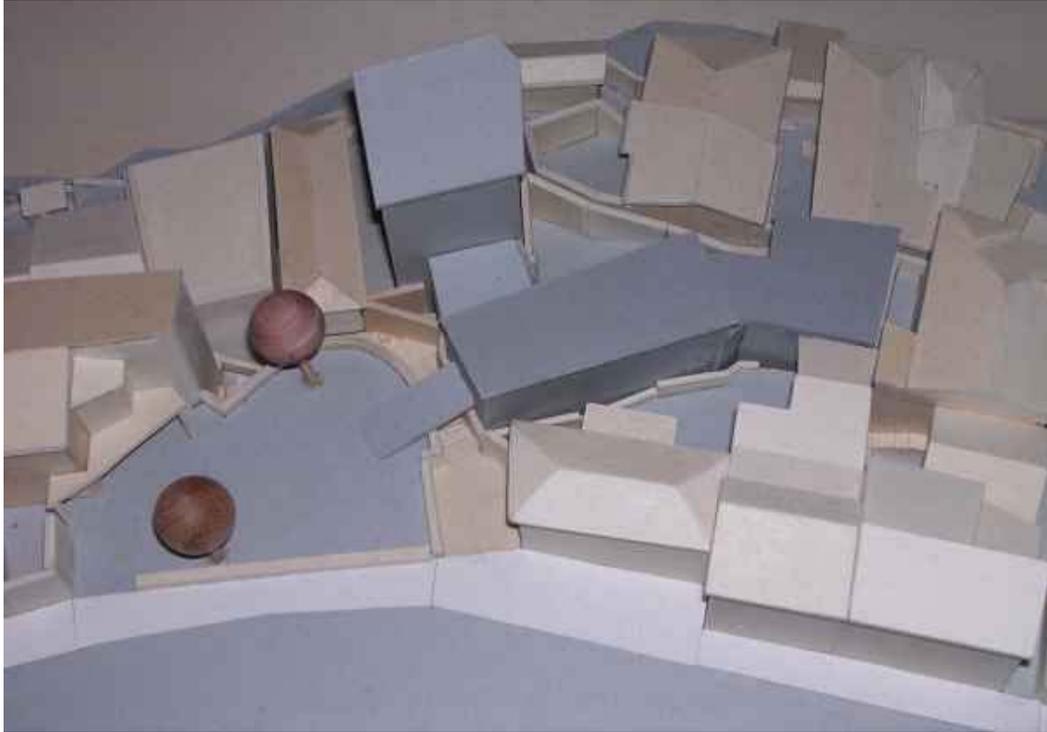
Because of this is necessary to “re-educate” the children, to teach them to have more faith in themselves in regard to others and to develop the capacity of negotiating and solving problems in a pacific way. It was for this reason that during the reconstruction of Mostar, two play schools were opened with the aim of using games to help re-educate children to the idea of PEACE.

The play school in the Croatia zone immediately found a permanent site but unfortunately the moslem zone didn't. In fact, the moslem one has been moved from one building to another without finding a permanent site and it is for this reason that the problem is serious and a suitable building needs to be designed for the school. This is why my plans are for a place in the centre of the old town, near the Old Bridge over the Neretva where the population is mainly moslem.

My plans foresee a “green play area” next to the traditional play school; that is, a garden equipped with games, where the children can play and above all re-discover nature. After the war, Mostar had first the problem of the reconstruction of housing, leaving parks and gardens to a later date and those existing have become places which are not safe.



Part of the play school is inside existing derelict buildings and it is modelled inside this area in an “L” shape. The project consists of a tower and six floors joined by a foot-bridge to a lower and more massive central building. This building gives onto the main street Marsala Tita by a second foot-bridge. This is due to the fact that the play school is on different levels as the planned site slopes down towards the river Neretva.



These two bridges are meant as homage to Stari Most which has always been seen as a link between the different cultures; hoping that this is a good omen and that the children and their teachers will face together the problems of daily life and that one day they will have healthy relations with the other part of the city.

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