

Tomb of Alija Izetbegovic

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Architects	Nihad Babovic Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Clients	Foundation for Shahid Cemeteries Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Commission	2004
Design	2004
Construction	2005
Occupancy	2005
Site	6,000 m²
Ground floor	28 m²
Total floor	28 m²
Costs	158,620 USD

Programme The tomb of the first president of the independent republic is located in a cemetery dating from Ottoman times. Surrounded by graves, this open tomb combines ancient symbolism with contemporary design and material. A chromed stainless steel dome forms a geometric shell allowing the play of light and shadow on the grave below. It is supported on eight white marble columns whose forms relate to muqarnas. Each column is a single piece of stone, surmounted by a stainless steel capital. The proportions of each element relate to symbolic Sufi meanings and the floor is a ‘cilim’ of green grass.

WITH THIS PROJECT, WE TRIED TO FIND A TIMELESS DIMENSION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE. WE TRIED TO FIND A WAY TO CONNECT TRADITIONAL SYMBOLIC SIGNS WITH CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND MATERIAL.

CONCEPT OF TOMB IS DERIVED FROM OTTOMAN PERIOD IN BOSNIA. THIS TOMB IS DOME SUPPORTED BY 8 COLUMNS. GRAVE IS IN THE CENTER OF DOME. DOME LIKE TRADITIONAL FORM IS MADE OF CONTEMPORARY MATERIAL AND DESIGN. PIECES OF CHROME STAINLESS STEEL ARE IN GEOMETRICAL ORDER PLAYING WITH SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW. WHITE STONE COLUMNS, LIKE ANCIENT MATERIAL, ARE DESIGNED WITH CONTEMPORARY FORMS RELATED TO MUQARNAS.

PLAN, SECTION, ELEMENTS... ARE SYMBOLIC NUMBERS. NUMBER 1 IS MODULAR - ARSHIN (52cm /cubitus longus).





THIS PROJECT WON A COMPETITION FOR THE TOMB OF ALIJA IZETBEGOVIC, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA. SHAHID'S CEMETARY "KOVACI" IN SARAJEVO IS MAIN MEMORIAL AFTER SREBRENICA IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA. OLD CEMETARY FROM OTTOMAN TIME (16TH CENTURY) IS REOPENED DURING A WAR IN BOSNIA IN LAST DECADE OF 20TH CENTURY. THERE ARE MORE THAN 1.400 NEW GRAVES. THE TOMB IS SATTLED IN THE HEART OF CEMETARY.

OPEN TOMB WITH CHROME STAINLESS STEEL DOME TRANSPARENT TO THE SKY, SUPPORTED BY EIGHT WHITE STONE COLUMNS IS SURROUNDED BY WHITE SHAHID'S GRAVESTONES. WALKING BETWEEN SHAHID'S GRAVES FROM ALL SIDES, WITHOUT ROAD, WE ARE COMING IN FRONT OF TOMB. FLOOR LIKE A CILIM (CARPET) IS GREEN GRASS WITH GRAVESTONES OF PRESIDENT IN THE CENTER OF DOME. MODULAR MEASURE IS ARSHIN (52cm /cubitus longus). PROPORTIONS ARE RELATED TO SIMBOLICAL SUFI MEANINGS.