István Ferencz was born in 1944 in Edeleény, Northern Hungary. His father, a miller, met his future wife, Huber Elfrida, an Austrian student, teaching in Hungary, in the comparatively urban milieu of the mill-town. Continuation of the family trade was disrupted by post-war nationalisation and the family moved to Miskolc in 1950. Childhood years spent among water-mills and steam-mills continued in the "big city". Miskolc, a peaceful country town, was transformed into a socialist industrial town in the '50s.

Interested in water sports and canoeing, István Ferencz learnt the trade of building race-boats, working as a boat-builder for one year after completing secondary school. As his real goal was to continue his studies at the Institute of Applied Arts, learning how to build boats was not merely the pursuit of an interest but also one of the stations on the way to higher education. Another crucial step towards architecture was marked by three years spent as an architectural modeller for the Planning Office in Miskolc (1965-1968). Despite the importance the acquisition of this professional knowledge was to his later career, it was overshadowed by the significance of István's meeting and working contact with Antal Piesz, which soon turned into close friendship. Antal Piesz, a member of the pre-war generation of architects and a charismatic personality, created his own school in the north-eastern region of Hungary. Piesz set the values for young architects through his commitment to the profession and his faith in the importance of creative work in architecture at a time when architects and engineers were forced to be cogs in the mechanism of the "socialist" planned economy. Many architects were forced to emigrate or flee the country in the post-war period of transformation. Soviet domination and political-cultural dictatorship. Piesz was one of those who stayed and who found a way to pass on all that his own generation had received and learnt from much respected masters. Construction begins with building the person, with the construction of the autonomous being," stated Piesz, and consequently set the example. He was the mentor of three of the most prominent architects in the region: Csaba Bodor, Ferencz Bán and István Ferencz.

After several years spent working, István Ferencz continued his studies at the Department of Architecture of the Academy of Applied Arts (1968-1973). Having the benefit of previous experience, Ferencz, as a student, worked quite independently of others. He admits that during this period it was not architects of high reputation that he learnt the most from but from Sándor Borz Kovács, a quiet but very talented teacher of the College. When István Ferencz was producing his diploma work even Sándor Sághy, the head of the department, at the time, took notice of the hard-working young man, who already had a family. After obtaining his degree with excellent results, he naturally returned to work with Antal Piesz, who was also his mentor when he was attending the Miskolc School, the post-graduate school for young architects (1974-1976).
Upon the completion of his studies at the Academy, István Ferencz became a teacher at the Department of Architecture, and it was his efforts which transformed the college workshop, then suited to practical work, furniture making and modelling, into an experimental workshop. His presence was an inspiring one in Budapest and Miskolc alike, he was a master and a student at the same time. Following an uninterrupted teaching stint between 1973 and 1983, Ferencz resumed a teaching role as the head of the Department of Architecture from 1993 to 2002. Thanks to his activities, the faculty has a prominent position within the framework of training designers in the applied arts, which is achieved at training not only interior designers but architects as well. Alongside the Budapest Technical University, the Department of Architecture of the present-day University of Applied Arts (formerly Academy) counts among the most prestigious workshops for the training of architects, where comprehensive skills ranging from the design of individual artefacts to that of large-scale architectural and urban interventions are transmitted to the students on an increasingly high standard, taking advantage of instruction in small groups.

Amongst the works produced by Ferencz at Esztergom, the planning office for northern Hungary, the most significant is the conversion of the Flóris Mill in Miskolc into a Music Centre (1981). As a consequence of large-scale planned industrialization, Miskolc, like many other towns in Hungary, became an industrial town within a few short decades: districts of single-storey residential buildings characteristic of small towns were ruthlessly demolished and replaced by mass-produced, functionalist high blocks. The site of the historical core of the estate had a narrow escape from the first round of demolition. Following much work and many conflicts, István Ferencz managed to have the town plan modified and the buildings which were intended to be erected on the site of the mill were rearranged in such a way that the mill could be preserved and provide shelter for the symphonic orchestra, lacking a concert space at that time. The large spaces of the mill were preserved whilst service functions were placed in a separate tower building. Amidst the dull and lifeless housing estate a small centre developed, centred around the mill, the small building of the nearby department store and the symbolic preservation of the bed of the Pece, a stream which had once run freely through the site but was now contained by a concrete channel. The old mill and the path of the stream, similarly to the trees, bearing witness to cleared forests, organise the residential buildings around themselves.

A further significant project in the Community Centre (1984) in Ujpest, a district of Budapest not more fortunate than Miskolc, its one-time centre was destroyed to make way for housing estates, and the site designated for the new community centre was surrounded by mass-produced housing blocks. István Ferencz intended to recall and reconstruct the intimate spaces of this traditionally working-class district. In spite of the financial restrictions, the architect succeeded in working the site-boundaries and arranging the buildings to create a real small-town atmosphere rather than a statue in a dreary public space. The artistic quality of architectural forms and details were carefully related to the background, as the objective was to create urban space by the smallest possible means.

Another landmark in Ferencz’s works is marked by the construction of the Main Hall for the Technical University for Heavy Industry in Miskolc (1985). It was not an architectural form that was the primary aim of the architect, but rather, just as in the case of the music mill, the architect acted as a catalyst and it was solely his own merits which led to the construction of the hall. For the design of the Faculty of Law (1984), Ferencz connected the new wing to the main building by two two-storey passages as opposed to single storey ones. The cost of building the second storeys, which were functionally unnecessary, had to be set aside from the budget for the Faculty of Law, as though the additional item and the stratagem was only discovered after the structure was finished. The space between the two passages simply had to be covered to receive a central economic hall that the university had been lacking for thirty years. The aesthetics of the pre-fabricated reinforced concrete framework built from a limited budget adequately reflected the time it was constructed, whilst its architectural significance is diversified by the magic of the story of a building. In Hungary the constant past when an architect played tricks in order to secure the conditions to build the most significant part of a rational educational institution. The architect performed the deed in secret, against the will of the representatives of the regime who had commissioned and employed him. And he was neither asked nor expected to do this by anyone. However, it would be wrong to think that architectural farm remains a secondary consideration for István Ferencz. When he designs residential buildings and allows such considerations, the architect places detail and the choice of material to the forefront, as can be expected of a sensitive architect accustomed to craftsmanship. His own family house in Budapest (1985) is a good example of the duality of genuine architecture and the spontaneity and openness of creating a home. The architect’s residence is a building continuously growing and changing, incorporating the row house that he built some years ago, a progressive peasant house which can be extended at any time and as well as the craftsmanship of a skilled architect. It is hopscotch and calculated at one and the same time; a fact which can hardly be stated generally about family houses built today, especially those monuments designed by well-known architects which may appear in professional journals. It is not possible to design a building like those of István Ferencz in a speculative way. Nor can they be designed spontaneously. Where spontaneity seems evident, evidence of careful deliberation becomes apparent. The easily recognisable stylistic characteristics of the buildings designed by István Ferencz do not constitute the formal language and the techniques are not the setting but are rather part of his entire being and personality. Just like his other projects, and his most important work is the Ecclesiastical Educational Centre on the Avos Hill in Miskolc (1999). Ferencz was awarded this commission through an architectural competition, and as he had won the case in the past, the real challenge was presented by the attempt to “save” perform the requirements of the design brief. Avos Hill is inhabited by more than ten thousand people, yet the central area of this housing estate had never been constructed, and the site was offered by the local government to the Benedictine order, then to the Greek Catholic Church. After the demise of the socialist re-
His intimate and friendly relationship with time characterises the latest work of István Ferencz, the reconstruction of the Artist's Colony in Tihany, which belongs to the Hungarian University of Fine Arts [1198]. The conversion of the former farm buildings is expected to be realised in several stages, so for the first part of the complex, the accommodation wing has been completed. The most architectural characteristic of the building, which functions as a guest house in the summer, is the absence of signs reflecting the intervention of the architect. And this is what reveals the presence of István Ferencz. It is a consequence of the normal and irreversible transformation of architectural culture that rarely is it possible to see on an architect handling 19th century architectural artefacts with spontaneous naturalness. Unlike the Avas Hill Church, where context had to be created, here the architect defers from entering into a dialogue between past and present. Tihany, situated near Lake Balaton, has enough strength of place for the architect to be able to withdraw into the background and to employ his professional knowledge and skills in strengthening the existing spatial order. To do so today, it is not sufficient to have clients or volunteers from the village, there is a need for an architect of exceptional capacity. This is not a complaint but a fact, that also underpins the significance of the complex in Tihany. An analysis of the works produced by István Ferencz reveals that all his buildings are characterised by genuine thought, by the power of concept rather than uniform stylistic elements. Obviously, even if personal motifs are apparent, it is not the unity of architectural form or external signature that we see in the depth of his buildings, but conceptual responses to a given architectural task. All of Ferencz's buildings are the consequences, the spatial implementation of an idea existing beyond the given programme. A given site or a given architectural programme is only a pretext for the architect to find out what is needed in that place, by the client, by the settlement and by the people living there. It is not stylistic architectural forms or abstract architectural ideas but the strength of the new situation created by the buildings that is required in order that the built environment can really become part of life.

There are few architects like István Ferencz who are so much unaffected by current architectural trends, professional journals, or referential buildings designed by star architects. What he is interested in is the concrete person, the actual context he has to work with. There is no prestigious task, what is important is the message. "When you have a task you have to find the true answer and this process involves the responsibility of making decisions," writes István Ferencz a few years ago. In the last twenty years he spent at the University of Applied Arts. "It is of fundamental significance that the "curriculum" of education should be related to a place, to a culture, to a country, otherwise no boundaries can be surpassed." This is not only the educational programme of the departmental head but also an "ora-politica", the validity of which is verified by the works István Ferencz has produced.

A Miskolci egyetem épületeként ismert és népszerű volt, mely az egyetem székhelye volt a 20. század második felében. A Miskolcon lévő épületäggészet széles körben ismert volt, és az épületek formája és megoldása számos fontos fellépést okozott a budapesti építészetben is. A Miskolci egyetemen a modern építés mesterségei is kibontakoztak, melyek a 20. század közepén és végén lették kiemelkedő jelentőséggel.

A Miskolcon több épület, amely a számos módon szerepel a 20. században. Az épületek megfelelően felügyeletére került és a munkafolyamatok közvetlenül a kommunista ideológiára nézve stílisan valósult meg.

A Miskolci egyetem épületének felügyeletét Ferencz tervezte és megvalósította. Az épületek formája és megoldása a modern építés mesterségei közé tartozott, és az épületeknek a magas színvonalú rendkívül jól megfelelő megformálása és érzékeltetése következett.

A Miskolci egyetem épületeként ismert és népszerű volt, mely az egyetem székhelye volt a 20. század második felében. A Miskolcon lévő épületäggészet széles körben ismert volt, és az épületek formája és megoldása számos fontos fellépést okozott a budapesti építészetben is. A Miskolci egyetemen a modern építés mesterségei is kibontakoztak, melyek a 20. század közepén és végén lették kiemelkedő jelentőséggel.

A Miskolcon több épület, amely a számos módon szerepel a 20. században. Az épületek megfelelően felügyeletére került és a munkafolyamatok közvetlenül a kommunista ideológiára nézve stílisan valósult meg.

A Miskolci egyetem épületének felügyeletét Ferencz tervezte és megvalósította. Az épületek formája és megoldása a modern építés mesterségei közé tartozott, és az épületeknek a magas színvonalú rendkívül jól megfelelő megformálása és érzékeltetése következett.
évadzadók, a pusztítás és építés architekturnális és ügytudatosabb, mint az európai templomok. A különböző szakmai lehetőségeket és a különböző technikák összekapcsolódása fontos az építési munkák megvalósításához. A munkákban a technológiai fejlődés és az egyéb területek is fontos szerepelnek.

FÉRENCE, István
Complexes architectural en architecture
Eszterházy Egyetemi Központ
Egyházi és kultúrája
1990–2000. Miskolc
Ungerer / Hungary