

MOBILISATION, DEMOBILISATION

Jorge Tárrago Mingo

I

"Mobilisation, demobilisation" is one of the chapters of the well-known essay *A Student's Guide to Intellectual Work* written by Jean Guitton (Saint Étienne 1901-Paris 1999) in 1951. This small book followed and supplemented the advice in another earlier work by the same author, *New art of thinking* (1946).

In "Mobilisation, Demobilisation" Guitton recalls the advice received from a university professor "who had spent his lifetime reflecting on the methods involved in intellectual work". And he said: "The way to create a method, he said, is very simple. It consists of systematically analysing the way you have been working thus far. You have to examine all the phases of your intellectual activity, one after the other and in the most minute detail, with an attitude of relentless strictness, as if you were going to be paid very well (*and in reality you are paid very well!*) for discovering defects and suggesting improvements. To do this you have to keep your self-esteem in your pocket and know how to love, something which is seldom seen".

The aforementioned professor succeeded in establishing a personal working method, putting an end to any wasted time or effort, after studying how Gutenberg, in the case of the printing press, had broken the complete wood engraving blocks, which until that time had been used to reproduce whole pages, down into smaller units –into individual letters. He had come to the similar conclusion that the elements of thought, for example those of a reading, could be broken down, *demobilised*, classified in any order –alphabetically, chronologically, conceptually– and then *re-mobilised*, as long as they were useful, therefore multiplying their meaning and action.

II

With this issue nineteen, *Ra, Revista de Arquitectura*, is preparing for its twentieth birthday. In a way that is perhaps unexpected, with a rather fragmented approach, the latest publications have led us to reconsider the journal's development over these two decades. I am particularly referring to those that, sometimes written by Juan Miguel Ochotorena or myself or both of us, since number fourteen (2012) have tried to question the evolution of academic journals, their purpose, the features that distinguish them, their limitations, their relevance. Thus we have: "What is the Future of the Academic Publishing?" (*Ra14*, 2012), "Architecture, Criticism and Literary Genres" (*Ra15*, 2013), "Texts on Architecture" (*Ra16*, 2014), "The Expert and the Philosopher" (*Ra17*, 2015) and "Thinking and Performing False Dilemmas" (*Ra18*, 2016).

In fact, the panorama of academic journals in Spain has changed radically in the last decade. Without wanting to offer a detailed diagnosis of what is a complex situation, we should mention how the significant increase in their number –generally resulting from the processes for the accreditation of teaching staff in Spanish universities– has come together with a growing homogenisation in their processes and objectives –due to the similar indexation processes– which, taking a simple vision which is probably unjust and has some exceptions, today makes it difficult to distinguish some journals from others. This is a situation that is probably beyond them, and somehow binds them.

As a whole, and I repeat without a pre-conceived plan, the aforementioned editorials have affected our development. They have forced us to reconsider the way we have worked to date and to make some decisions that I will explain later. These affect the organisational structure of the journal and, more importantly, its content, especially from the next issue (*Ra20*, 2018).

Following the flow of these brief reflections, one might think, and not without reason, that such decisions are the result of improvisation, of a certain desire to change just for the sake of it, something that from time to time affects us in the academic world. We could argue that the journal is in good health, so why change? Wouldn't that be somewhat improvised? To answer that we turn to the words of another Frenchman, Jacques Rancière, who says that "improvisation is first of all the exercise of our intelligence's leading virtue; poetic virtue. The impossibility of our saying the truth, even when we feel it, makes us speak as poets, makes us tell the story of our mind's adventures and verify that they are understood by other adventurers ...".

Finally, with the changes –some already underway and those that will be introduced in next year's issue– we intend to continue looking in more depth at the nature of academic and university journals, at the reasons that first led to their publication, namely high-level, conscious and demanding academic debate, in the current context and panorama of journals of its kind.

Some of the changes include: from this issue the journal will have a management, an editorial board and an editorial team. From the next issue, the editorial team will be joined by a guest editor, always from a School of Architecture, institution or research centre. This is perhaps the most significant change as the guest editor will play an important role, proposing the theme which will form the basis for the call for articles, guest firms and, therefore, the journal will change from its previous miscellaneous format to containing themed content. The first guest editor is Jesús Vassallo who has a PhD in Architecture from ETSAM, a Master's from Harvard's Graduate School of Design, is a Spanish critic, and is now a professor at Rice University in Houston, Texas. The scientific committee will also gradually gain new members. The journal, which will continue to be produced annually, will publish all articles in both English and Spanish, and the current design standards will be revisited, proposing a new format.

As you can imagine, and as you will see, ultimately everything comes down to *demobilising* so that we can then *re-mobilise*.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Juan Miguel Ochotorena and José Manuel Pozo for their work in the editing of the journal. It goes without saying that everything that has been achieved is in large part due to their hard work and their always authoritative and rigorous vision. The same can also be said of Carlos Sambricio who is leaving the scientific committee after producing conscientious and demanding work which we will find it difficult to match. It is also the occasion to welcome Carlos Labarta Aizpún, jointly at the School of Engineering and Architecture at the University of Zaragoza and the Technical University College of Architecture at the University of Navarra, who joins the list of people who issue their judgements and decide on the content of the journal.

AARHUS: 75 YEARS. STRUCTURE AND RIGOR: THE TOWER, THE VESTIBULE AND THE STAIRCASE. THE FORMALISATION OF THE STAIRCASE AS A STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION IN ARNE JACOBSEN

Félix Solaguren Beascoa

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the opening of Aarhus Town Hall has just taken place. Aarhus is the second most important city in Denmark and in the 1930s it had a population of around 120,000. The building that housed its Council was about eighty years old at that time and was located next to St. Clemens Cathedral, in a building that currently houses the Women's Museum. The existing building was becoming a little small and the increasing activity in the city and its significant growth in population were more than sufficient reason to propose a new construction that would bring together all the municipal functions under one roof. In 1937 a national competition was held and its winners were Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller. The council asked them to include a tower in the winning project. The structural analysis of that tower allows us to look at how architects understand this as a decorative element. This fact would have an impact on the attitude adopted by future projects and their most significant elements.

FANTASY MUST BE BROUGHT BACK INTO ARCHITECTURE

Ana Tostões

Pancho Guedes' (1925), the luso-african architect (Witwatersrand University, 1953) active in Mozambique, the former Portuguese colony till the independence in 1975, made in his writings and architectural production a major contribution to the reassessment of architectural modernity, connecting different disciplines and cultures and carrying out affinities with various creators namely with the painter Malangatana Ngwenya (1936-2009). His fantastic and magic architecture comes from the stimulus of a large worldwide network of artists and thinkers that he himself put up from different sources such as: the Modern Movement architects, namely the South African contributors as Martienssen or the Brazilian inspiring influence referred to Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer; Frank Lloyd Wright inspiring legacy or the CIAM's critic contestation movement under the scope of Team 10 which he joined as founder member at CIAM's Royaumont meeting together with the Smithson's, Aldo Van Eyck, Candilis and Giancarlo di Carlo; or finally the new African artists which he promoted.

Besides being one of Mozambique's major architects, Pancho had the sagacity to detect talent, to promote creativity, having the ability to establish a network of creative², functioning himself as a sort of mediator between art and architecture.

In Lourenço Marques (currently Maputo) Pancho created a profound complicity with Malangatana, the surrealist painter, whom inventive spirit allowed no limits³. Supernatural summoned, Malangatana stimulated Pancho in his will to “hear the voices speaking from the other side of dream”⁴. In The 50s, in an Africa of Apartheid between Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa, Pancho knew that there was the need to found an authentic and raw art, the art for authentic artists⁵. Therefore he sought for an Architecture full of significance, carrying a personal dimension based on a research focused on all formal dimensions and on the possibility for architectural elements to contain and express emotion: “I claim for architects to have the same rights and freedom painters and poets have for so long”⁶. Pancho wanted to appropriate the primitive’s universal motifs, mixing them with his own sophisticated architectural culture, in order to achieve in his buildings the ambience of Chirico’s painting. Pancho knew that Architecture is not perceived as an intellectual experience but as a sensation, an emotion⁷. Therefore he was interested in the quest for such quality “long ago lost among architects but able to reach a spontaneous architecture capable of magic intensity”⁸.

In the 50s, this search resulted from the desire to create an alternative modernity, different from the mechanical international style growing also in Africa⁹. Unlike the majority of architects working in Africa forced to draw in dialogue to climate constraints, Pancho assumes the creator’s right to innocence stimulated by the sensuality and drama of the surrounding African culture. The creation and growth of Dori¹⁰ and Pancho African art collection, which has been recently exhibited in Lisbon, bears witness to his constant interest in the dialogue with other forms of expression¹¹. The objects he collected, as he himself has stated, helped him free himself “from the dominant Eurocentric point of view of the white man who lives in the land of others”¹². The will to discover an alternative modernity was the answer to an inner appeal, but also to an Africa dawning to contemporaneity, to a new world which was in a state of ferment¹³. Pancho witness and acts in a time when Architecture is open to popular culture, when architecture without architects and architecture of fantasy are accepted¹⁴. But it is also the time for complexity and multiple solutions opened to the Modern Movement continuity or crises¹⁵, the ones Giedion identified as a result from reason and emotion related equation¹⁶.

Pancho gathered the conditions to follow an alternative, original and idiosyncratic path of his own. Besides his huge talent, wide culture, experimentalist and genuine curiosity, he had the term of living in Africa at the time: conditions he managed with cleverness. On one hand being apart from the Eurocentric European culture spreader, living in Africa in an European imperialistic peculiar colony¹⁷; on the other hand, living the period of colonial emancipation spreading throughout Africa, where, despite the imperialistic presence “anything seemed possible”¹⁸.

As Pomar states Pancho “was one of the most inventive of the architects that were building in Africa, as well as one of the three or four recognised white mediators who sought out and promoted contemporary African art in various places on the continent. Lourenço Marques was, at the time (in the early 1960s and before the surge of arrests that followed the start of the war for independence), a dynamic city and one of Africa’s cultural capitals, due, by and large, to Pancho’s international contacts in areas with quicker communicability with the outside world, such as architecture and the visual arts”¹⁹.

IT WAS A WORLD WHERE ANYTHING SEEMED POSSIBLE

From Lourenço Marques, Pancho builds an “elective affinities” network connecting African, American and European creators, allowing him in the scene of the colonial dictatorship of the Portuguese regime, to have the audacity to present himself as representing Mozambique at the São Paulo International Biennial of Arts, in 1961. As Pancho states: “During the ’50 and ’60 there was something restless and extraordinary about the beautiful city that the Portuguese had built in less than fifty years and which they called Lourenço Marques [...] At the time, Mozambique was a closed and ideal world in which there was only good news, openings and speeches from the Empire. It was a world of rumours, secrets, gossip and a growing web of informers and agents, but where, in spite of everything, anything seemed possible”²⁰.

1960 is the year of all discoveries. Is The Great European tour “annus mirabilis MCMLX”²¹ when Pancho meets Alison and Peter Smithson in London, visits Távora and Siza’s buildings in Oporto, meets the editors of the Architectural Design in London and prepares his first international appearance in reference magazines: in 1961, Pancho’s work is published by the south African architect Julian Beinart in the Architectural Review, after meetings with Reyner Banham and James Maude Richards who also wrote about him in the Times²².

Pancho acknowledges that in the beginning of the ’60 “there were a lot of other people hovering around, there were many painters”²³, especially around his studio, which would be a constant informal workshop, with its local artisans and artists. Frank McEwen, Ulli Beier, Julian Beinart and Pancho Guedes are the key figures of an active patron or promoter African network at the independences time of the ’60.

The decade starts with the Summer Workshop opening in January 1961. At first the was not set up to train black artists. In fact it has been conceived as an informal course for students at the University of Witwatersrand. However, the workers who were still finishing the building works at the Piramidal Nursery School, where the sessions were held, joined the group and produced their own versions of the themes, participating using non-academic material²⁴. “They came and made marvelous drawings themselves, much better drawings than the students”, said Pancho Guedes²⁵. A few months later Malangatana first individual exhibition took place in Lourenço Marques and a second workshop at Ibadan for Nigerian art professors, was coordinated by Julian Beinart and Pancho Guedes. Finally, between September and December, Pancho unprecedented presence at the São Paulo Biennial as the individual representative of a country called Mozambique, made official by the Mozambique Tourism and Information Centre by presenting the “Smiling Lion” made Pancho definitively going under the scope of a crescent internationalization. Next year he receives the invitation to be part of Team 10 and participates at the Royaumont Abbey Meeting. Also in 1962, he became known in France via L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, with a paper called “Y aura-t-il une architecture?” integrated in the issue dedicated by Bernard Huet to “Fantastic Architectures”²⁶ after the “Visionary Architecture” exhibition organized by the MOMA in 1960²⁷. These contributions are followed by Pancho’s collaboration in World Architecture edited by John Donat in London, as “Mozambique contributing editor”, A.D.A. Guedes, in the volumes relating to 1964, 1965 and 1967.

On the international circuit, Pancho established himself both as an architect, patron and disseminator of African art at the same time. In Paris, the publication of his article about the painted houses of the Ndebele people of South Africa, entitled “Les Mapogga”, which featured on the cover of the magazine directed by André Bloc, Aujourd’hui: Art et Architecture²⁸, is considered groundbreaking: “the first to highlight the architectural and sculptural formalism of the dwellings”²⁹.

The patronage of Malangatana had started in 1959, the Lourenço Marques “summer workshop” dates back to January 1961, the critical analysis of his work occurred the next year in the magazine Black Orpheus, which was founded in Ibadan by Ulli Beier, and the article was written by Julian Beinart. In 1962 the most important event was the First International Congress of African Culture, organized by Frank McEwen (1907-1994)³⁰ to discuss the aesthetics of contemporary African art in Salisbury, Rhodesia (today Harare, Zimbabwe) between the 1st and 11th August, in the National Gallery.

The Congress enlighten the recent interest in African cultural matters gathering the participation of 37 delegates, among them there was Alfred Barr from New York MoMA; William Fagg from the British Museum; Jean Laude from the Sorbonne; Roland Penrose, the surrealist painter and president of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London, accompanied by photographer Lee Miller; James Porter from Howard University, Washington; Udo Kultermann, researcher and author of various books on modern African architecture; the Dadaist poet Tristan Tzara; John Russel, a critic for The Sunday Times at the time³¹; Hugh Tracey, South African musicologist and the Nigerian historian and vice-chancellor of the University of Ife, Saburi O. Biobaku, who inaugurated the congress with a message of support from Nigeria³².

Frank McEwen made an intervention on contemporary African art questioning: What was happening to African traditional art now facing the evolution on ancient social structures? What would the future bring to African art? The threats called by McEwen as “airport arts” were faced and beyond Malangatana, Pancho presented the work of four more artists from Mozambique, in the exhibit dedicated to non-traditional African art³³.

Presented as an architect and promoter of African contemporary art, Pancho Guedes was one of the speakers at the opening session. The speech he later gave on his own works as an architect and artist in Africa, entitled “Things are not what they seem to be – the auto-biofarsical hour”³⁴, was introduced with Tzara’s Dadaist complicity. The Rhodesian artist and Frank McEwen’s collaborator, Pat Pearce, recalled that “one of the most interesting events of the congress was the appearance of Pancho Guedes”. For John Russell “he brought the Congress to its feet with a dazzling and poetical account of how fantasy must be brought back into Africa’s architecture”. I felt he had caught the same essence in African culture that Picasso had done before him, only much more so; that endearing simplicity, humor, and make believe that is such a part of African art and life”³⁵.

The exhibition running in parallel with the Congress as a huge show of African art and the largest ever undertaken, according to Time Magazine³⁶. As Pomar refers, it began with the cultures that preceded the arrival of European influences and continued up until “the non-traditional African art of the 1960s”. At that time, while “to most white colonizers, African art has always been a mumbo-jumbo sort of thing, proof that the native African lacked cultural instincts”, the Rhodesia Herald said it saw “nothing but crudity, primitiveness, and savagery”. McEwen aimed to show that “the entire modern movement in Western art owes a debt to primitive Africa[...] It is a fact that very few artists of contemporary style do not possess some well digested but evident influences of Africa”³⁷. At the time, Barr bought the first modern African works of art for MoMA.

The next year, in 1963, Pancho assumes publically a critic towards the colonial planning arraigning the policies in an article entitled “The Sick City” published in A Tribuna from Lourenço Marques³⁸. As Malangatana states: “For Pancho it was painful to see the contrast between the dilapidated “City of Reeds”, so lacking in hygiene and the most basic facilities, and the “City of Cement”, which were right next to one another. In the sixties he wrote a long article about this, with the intention of drawing the attention of the colonial government to the problems, and he was victimised after the publication. Even the Municipality reacted against him. But he didn’t mind. He wanted to find a solution that would at least bring some measure of relief, however small, to those people living in such abject poverty. The Portuguese Bourgeoisie aligned itself with the official attitude and also disapproved, but the populations of the depressed areas greeted Pancho’s stand jubilation, remembered even to this day. [...] Without the spellbinding hand of the Architect Miranda Guedes I would not have been given the guiding lights that illuminate the zigzag paths through life”³⁹.

BUILDINGS SHOULD SMILE AND SPEAK

The identification of Lourenço Marques as one of the focuses of an Africa undergoing change, despite the colonialist wake (at the time of the “1960s euphoria” generally experienced on the continent –and the climate of relative expectation that accompanied the presence of Counter-Admiral Sarmento Rodrigues as Governor-General of Mozambique in the period between 1961 and 1964, until he was removed by Salazar), has two decisive factors that are verified by respective documentation: the external (and specifically European) reputation achieved by Amâncio Guedes, from 1961 onwards, as an architect with projects in Mozambique and his presence as a patron of new African art in the main areas where this art was sought, planned and disseminated; the rapid international projection of Malangatana as a painter, which meant, apart from recognition of his own work, him being an example of the viability and immediate success of a new African art based on its specific local roots and cultural environment. “Malangatana may have been the first African artist to find the short cut –to become a sophisticated artist, while bypassing education” in terms of the European model, according to Ulli Beier⁴⁰.

In the area of architecture there were important “Stiloguedes” buildings in Lourenço Marques at the turn of the decade, such as the Prometheus Apartment Block (1951-1953) and The smiling Lion (1954-1955); the Aeroplane House (1951), the Three Giraffes; the Twin Houses, Matos Ribeiro, the Saipal Bakery and the Otto Barbosa Garage (1952); the Zambi Restaurant (1955), Piramidal Nursery School (1959-1961), and the Hotel in São Martinho de Bilene, which remained a draft project since 1951.

As referred, Pancho’s international projection reached as far as the cover of the most influential magazine in the profession, Architectural Review, in April, 1961, being the cover the hotel he draw for Bilene). This was followed by J.M. Richards article in The Times “Emergence of a new and original figure: remarkable work by Amâncio Guedes”⁴¹.

The search for popular art, namely mural paintings is a common interest among Beier, Guedes and Beinart. The attention given to the murals that were the result of the distribution of paints to cheer up the cane shacks (o Caniço) in Lourenço Marques when the Portuguese president visited in 1956, or the decoration of the Hotel Chuabo in Quelimane⁴² are part of the same sequence⁴³.

Beinart said: “Another way of building bridges to allow the strength of a popular tradition to cross and adapt to new ideas and techniques can be seen in the work done by Amâncio Guedes, with relatively untrained people in Mozambique. Guedes, who has been attracted by the spontaneous ability of these people, runs an architectural practice using only people whom he has trained himself. In his backyard works a woodcarver whom Guedes found working on a building site, a bricklayer who made murals, the painter Malangatana, servants who draw, and recently a needle worker who embroiders cloth. Guedes uses some of these people to work with him on his own projects, and the size and quality of the output not only says much for Guedes’

creative and inspirational powers, but shows that such teamwork can succeed and that studio technique can be an important educational method in Africa”. (p. 194)

In the end of the ’60, Ulli Beier states in his book Contemporary Art in Africa (1968) that “in Lourenço Marques, Salisbury and Oshogbo, the meeting of European and African artists sparked off new creative activity and new ‘schools’ of painting, if not movements. [...] The charming and attractive town of Lourenço Marques seems an appropriate setting for the emergence of new African artists. Not only Pancho Guedes’ buildings serve as a constant inspiration but there is a lively African community which paints the walls of its shantytown shacks with delightfully playful designs”. In the chapter “Finding a short cut” –from traditional African art to modern forms of expression, Beier refers the importance of workshops or studio communities that “have set up to deliberately create a set of circumstances, an atmosphere, in which such a development could take place” Beier adds: “the most successful were Pancho Guedes in Lourenço Marques and Frank McEwen in Salisbury”. Then, he states that Pancho was committed with the local artist’s activities: “To visit his house is like visiting a studio: painters, sculptors, and embroiderers are at work all over the place. Guedes holds no formal classes, but encourages, criticizes, buys work and sometimes provides a monthly allowance that will enable the artist to work full time without financial worries”⁴⁴.

Pomar considers that alongside the priority he gave to his own work as an architect, painter and sculptor, Pancho Guedes became interested in a number of African artists or artists (black and white) temporarily resident in Africa, whose work he supported and collected. He invested in situations distanced from the idea of an artistic career or new mainstreams, preferring uniqueness and idiosyncratic production, seeking out popular and amateur artists – considering himself an amateur artist⁴⁵. Peter Rich, former student and now also professor at Witwatersrand, states that “the work of architect Pancho Guedes is a fusion of European modernism with African artistry”⁴⁶. For him “Pancho was a great mentor because he was a painter, a sculptor, a Dadaist, a Surrealist, and he had an incredible energy. When we were at school, we were very lucky; everyone who was a student or member of staff somehow exceeded their potential by about 300%, making you believe you could do anything and everything and the more you did the better you were. You could shoot a film, create sculpture, paint, perform in a play and make architecture as well”⁴⁷.

From technical issues to poetic approaches, pop art and African expression, Pancho promoted the possibility of modernity issued from a complex procedure nourished from diverse and eccentric cultural sources. Pancho divested himself of the colonial hegemony of his time and immersed the myriad of cultural influences and motifs that constituted the very particular African cosmopolitanism of the city of Lourenço Marques in the 1950s and beginning of 1960’s⁴⁸.

Pancho promoted the viability of success of a new African Art rooted in the character of local roots and cultural conditions. Knowingly, he led a kind of patronage support to the birth of a new African art.

THE WORLD AS AN ARTEFACT. TOMÁS MALDONADO IN THE SPOTLIGHT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (1966-1972)

Joaquín Medina Warmburg

Years before Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen characterized the current geological period on earth as the “Anthropocene Era” due to the transformative domination of the planet by humans, designer Olt Aicher –the founder of the legendary Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, Germany– had already coined the term “The World as Design”. Although these concepts might seem to be a unique response to the conditions that currently prevail on our “Small Planet” (Richard Rogers), the fact is that they are not new at all. The modern vanguards were noted for their attempts to develop an all-encompassing, comprehensive architecture, arousing early suspicion of a totalitarian element. By the advent of postmodernism, if not earlier, the modern quest for a Gesamtkunstwerk in which coordinated industrial production would ensure the continuity and unity of the world of “good forms” seemed to have become irretrievably obsolete. However, environmental urgencies once again demanded a full understanding of the increasingly artificial physical surroundings, thereby reviving a modern conception of the entire world as an artifact.

This article aims to make a contribution to a history of planetary visions and environmental approaches that is worthy of study. For this purpose, it addresses the critical position defined by Argentine born design-theorist Tomás Maldonado between

1966 and 1972. In those years new scientific approaches such as cybernetics, ecology, semiotics, and system theories triggered an epistemological turn in the expanding design disciplines, offering a rational common base for the interdisciplinary methodology of a comprehensive “environmental design”. In his analysis of design disciplines in regard to their approaches towards the human environment Maldonado also included political and social concerns, as evidenced in his book *Design, Nature and Revolution. Toward a Critical Ecology* (New York 1972, first published in 1970 in Italy as *La speranza progettuale*). The article focusses on the connections between the various contexts that originated this book, written in Ulm, Princeton, and Milan, in order to gain deeper knowledge of Maldonado’s design philosophy within the international debates on “environmental design” and “existing landscapes”. Maldonado’s notions of human condition and human environment are certainly still relevant to a world increasingly designed and determined simultaneously by scarcity of resources as well as by expanding globalization and digitalization.

“PHENOMENON OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS IN POST-WAR PERIOD AND INTERIOR DESIGN BY CREATIVE CHOICE: BANHAM, SMITHSON AND ART OF INHABITATION”

Sung-Taeg Nam

In “Design by Choice” (1961), Reyner Banham reflected on the role of architects in the new visual environment of objects. Faced with uncontrollable industrial productions, post-war architects were losing their traditional role of “total designers”. Banham evoked Le Corbusier’s exercise of “creative choice” with example of the *Esprit Nouveau Pavillon* (1925). Here, the architect refused to design domestic objects and tried to impose the “background control over the choice of others”.

Banham was also interested in Alison and Peter Smithson’s “Art of Inhabitation”, demonstrated by their two exhibitions with two artists, Nigel Henderson and Edouardo Paolozzi. *Parallel of Life and Art* (1953) exhibited the accumulation of unusual images from real life and created an unexpected perception of the exhibition room. In *Patio and Pavilion* (1956), the architects were concerned only with pavilion construction inside the room, and assigned the artists to arrange the objects. It was the artists who completely renewed the space, as if inhabitants personalized inside of the new habitat.

The Smithsons were influenced by the Eames House (1949) through the media. The photo of the living room of the American furniture designer couple, published several times in the Smithsons’ writings, showed a house not “for living in” but “already lived”, and presented *mise-en-scène* of an ordinary life from American advertisements or films. The Smithsons also compared the interior of the Eames with that of Le Corbusier. The Eames House was far from the aesthetics of the architect-painter, but closer to that of a “layout man” of cinema. The arrangement of the objects by the Eames looked instantaneous and changeable, unlike the composition in a Purist still life.

According to the Smithsons, the attitude of the Eames could be translated into a strategy they called the “Select and Arrange”, almost similar to their “Art of Inhabitation”. The “Select and Arrange” is close to the everyday acts of popular people: “flower arrangement”, “furnishing”, or “apples on a plates” at breakfast. The domestic scene becomes spontaneous arrangement of objects “without rhetoric” and is completely left to the hands of real inhabitants.

The “Art of Inhabitation” continues to this day : based on the hypothesis that the separation between objects-contained and architecture-container will be more evident, architecture seeks neutrality of plan. However, it is not impossible to bridge this rupture between objects and architecture : Exemplary strategies are : Auto-Construction “without architects” but by inhabitants ; Architects’s Baukunst (art of building) from ready-made elements in industrial catalogs. The art of inhabitant influences the art of architect. Nevertheless, choice and arrangement must remain “adventurous” beyond functional and aesthetic conventions.

THE EXPOSITIONS OF 1929 IN THE NON-SPECIALISED SPANISH PRESS. "EVERYTHING IS BEAUTY AND PARADOX IN THIS PAVILION"

Alberto Ruiz Colmenar

The year 1929 is a key moment in the evolution of “modern” architecture in Spain. The incipient avant-garde movements had had few opportunities to make themselves known by the general public, beyond some specific experiences. For a few months, the country became the center of international architectural interest thanks to two

exhibitions in Barcelona and Seville. The architecture proposed in both events has been the subject of numerous studies. The aim of this paper is to study how non-specialized press helped to disseminate these architectural proposals among its readers, not used to the tendencies of modern architecture. It has been analysed the impact of the two most important newspapers of the time, ABC and La Vanguardia. Although most of the architecture exhibited was still influenced by the eclectic tradition of the 19th Century, the subjects addressed in the articles and, mainly, the way in which they were written, allow us to contemplate how Spanish society began to know the architecture proposed by the avant-gardes. In this way, the German pavilion of Mies van der Rohe of the Barcelona exhibition became the first purely modern example that got through to the Spanish public by the pages of the daily press.

THE NEW NEW OLD WEST. A LANDSCAPE WITHOUT A PLACE

Carlos Santamarina-Macho

If a modern myth is intimately connected with a territory, it is the American West. Transmitted by cinema, television, literature or advertising, the American West has transcended its status as a true American cultural reference, which was created at the same time as the historical reality on which it is based would disappear, to become a global topic that can not only be linked to a specific model of a society, but to a certain landscape as well. However, the western myth has not remained unchanged throughout the twentieth century, but it has been adapted to different historical contexts, which have allowed it revives at significant moments in American history not only as a mere fictional entertainment but also as a cultural reference that has been able to change the tangible (territorial) and intangible (social) reality.

This paper aims to introduce and frame a widely known concept in the American context, the “New American West”, that raised from the revision of the original myth, focusing on its interpretation of territories and places. Starting from the shaping of the myth in the fictional westerns, the paper shows the original sources from which its landscape was defined and the characteristics that it represents. For this purpose, some significant stages in American Western history, coinciding with the times in which some huge alterations of the western territory were taken place, are analyzed, showing the new western-landscape representations and their narratives. This research seeks to establish an elemental basis from which the revival of the interest on the western myth and its landscape, both in USA and Europe, can be better understood, but it also reflects on landscape as a powerful tool to help us understand and change our environment.

THE INFLUENCE OF GYÖRGY KEPES ON JUAN NAVARRO BALDEWEG'S EARLY WORK AT MIT'S CENTRE FOR ADVANCED VISUAL STUDIES (1971-1975)

Covadonga Lorenzo Cueva

The work of Juan Navarro Baldeweg carried out during the first years of his professional career at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) reveals the basis of his principles and the main ideas that have been present in his work throughout his life. He has acknowledged the strongest influence that had on his work the years that he spent at the CAVS, with explicit reference to some of the artists with whom he worked and specially mentioning the impact of György Kepes on his understanding of the world as a ‘coherent landscape’ and on his approaching to the perception of the physical environment. The present article tries to show the above mentioned influences, claimed by him several times but not deeply studied in depth up to the moment.

A look at the work carried out by Navarro Baldeweg during his professional career reveals his adscription to the theoretical concepts explored during these years: his desire to apprehend the reality using a variety of artistic media and his interest to show all his works sharing the same place, something that is present already in this first stage of his career at which he used different materials and media. Also, he shows a permanent interest to go deeply into the knowledge of the physical reality, through the relationship between the individual and the space that surrounds him; his search of a conceptual structure that has allows him to understand the urban and architectural space, thanks to a coordinate system based on essential variables intimately related to the individual and the manifestation of a mental space associated with the physical reality, materialized so often since then through subtle mechanisms in his paintings, installations and architectural projects, that impress directly on the human senses and incite to the participation of the individual in the definition of this complementary space.

REALISM, TACTICS AND SPECTACLE. CRITICISM OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE SUBURBIA OF VENTURI AND SCOTT BROWN

David Franco

The main purpose of this text is to address the ideas that Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown proposed in defense of the American Suburb throughout the 1970s, from a new critical perspective that can make them relevant for a contemporary reader.

To achieve this particular approach, I would like to shift the area of reflection from the notion of the “symbolic”, which Venturi and Scott Brown placed at the center of their theoretical project, to the ideas of the “quotidian” and “everyday life” as they were theorized by thinkers like Henri Lefebvre or Michel De Certeau during the second half of the Twentieth century. Within the general theory of the everyday, the article concentrates on how the complementary notions of tactics and strategies, proposed in Michel De Certeau’s ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’, apply to the ideas about suburbia proposed by Venturi and Scott Brown. On one hand, it seems clear that within the urban and architectural narratives of ‘Learning from Las Vegas’, there is an implicit admission of the economic and social logic of modern American capitalism. However, on the other hand, despite the fact the book defends the aesthetic viability of the great privatization drive of the mid-century American city, it also shows a consistent positioning against the status quo and in favor of the less favored classes.

This interpretative tension reproduces the two opposing notion of strategy and tactic proposed by De Certeau. The acquiescence with the spatial results of capitalism as a dominant economic and cultural system, makes the ideas proposed by Venturi and Scott Brown parts of a wider strategy. However, those same ideas appear as tactics insofar as they claim the architectures of capitalism to be unexpected residues that oppose to the spaces of the culturally dominant paradigm of the modern utopia. If we acknowledge these residues as fragments without a totalizing ideology, hence the byproduct of everyday practices in suburban America, then the defense of their legitimacy becomes a form of resistance. In this article I question whether such taste of resistance, which was undoubtedly premeditated by Venturi and Scott Brown and became essential for the critical success of postmodern ideology in architecture, responds to an honest analysis of Las Vegas and its social context, or if it was only the result of a rather partial –and reactionary– interpretation.

ARCHITECTURE, FURNITURE AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECT: THE PAVILION OF THE RESIDENCE OF YOUNG FEMALE STUDENTS, 1932-1933

María Villanueva Fernández, Héctor García-Diego Villarías

The debate begun years ago on the relationship between furniture and architecture remains alive during the first decades of the twentieth century. In this context, they are becoming more and more common among the pages of the architectural journals in Europe designs which propose a typology of multifunctional furniture, generated by simple forms based on orthogonal planes that adhere to the new architecture. This furniture has a unique character because of its physical connection with architecture, in which it adopts a non-standard form. Some architects begin to design this type of furniture as a sign of modernity and as a new space strategy proper to architecture.

Among this group of architects is Carlos Arniches, architect director of the works of Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios, who is contacted in 1932 by María de Maeztu, director of the Residencia de Señoritas, to be in charge of the construction of a new pavilion for students. The architect designed an avant-garde building appropriate to the modernity of the pedagogical project of the Junta. To do this, he proposed an integral project that includes a typology of multifunctional furniture that adapts to the forms of the new architecture. This initiative allowed the residents’ activities to be developed, turning them into the center of the project, following the same formative postulates dictated by the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, based on a comprehensive education. The architect approved the modernity of the pedagogical project of the Junta to apply this European model that incorporates other characteristic styles of the modernity linked to the production and the space.

Therefore, this research analyzes the Pavilion of the Residencia de Estudiantes by Arniches, from architecture to furniture design, as an enabler of the modern pedagogical project of the Junta, and reconstruct the creation process from the documents found in the Archive of the Residencia de Señoritas and the architectural journals of the time.

DRAWING AND REPETITION: MANUAL PRESENCE OF ENRIC MIRALLES IN THE PLAN FOR UTRECHT TOWN HALL

Javier Fernández Contreras

When, in February 1997, Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue won the competition for the renovation of the Town Hall of Utrecht, they were confronted with a building that had been under construction for centuries, at first as a set of medieval houses, later on as a continuous adaptation and remodeling of these houses to the uses and functions of a public building. The archive of the Miralles Foundation in Barcelona conserves 479 original drawings of Enric Miralles for the project of the Town Hall of Utrecht. Most of them are floor plans made on onionskin paper, whose size ranges approximately between DIN A5 and DIN A3, mainly on 1/400 and 1/200 scales. When Enric Miralles, through successive drawings, begun to develop a new structure for the City Hall of Utrecht, an incorporation of his way of drawing to the geometry of the floor plan occurred.

The evolution of the project shows a progressive differentiation from the architectural character of the original building, passing the floor plan of the project from having a structure built by history to having a configuration defined by a way of drawing. Miralles drew and designed: by hand, on onionskin paper superposed on the previous version of the floor plan, on small scales when searching for the overall configuration, on progressive increases of scale to define with precision the geometry of the project and its constituent parts. The repetition of this process over time produced a manual presence in the floor plan of the Utrecht project. The notion that the repetition of the same idea at different moments produced different instances would serve Miralles to explain that the geometry of his architecture was linked to the execution of multiple drawings in the design process, as a mechanism to get rid of the departing conditions in any project.

SUPERIMPOSITION: LITERAL AND PHENOMENAL. ANNI ALBERS’S INFLUENCE ON MARCEL BREUER’S DE BIJENKORF DEPARTMENT STORE.

Jon Arcaraz Puntonet

The article considers the De Bijenkorf department store as a milestone in Marcel Breuer’s career. The shift it involves can only be understood through the discoveries made in surface superimposition by his Bauhaus colleague Anni Albers. Her influence involves her evolution from 1936 onwards, following her first trip to Mexico to gain a first-hand understanding of Mayan textiles. This learning involved the transition from a design based on the structure of the fabric to another more spontaneous one in which figurative motifs were superimposed onto the structural background.

Anni Albers’ progress inspired Breuer’s Dutch project. The strategy of surface superimposition in the field of architecture made façades the subject of study. Concerning this issue, there are three main stages in the architect’s career: the first began in the 1940s, and was based on the literal superimposition of sunshades, which finally led to the vibrations of the different planes of glass used; the second was initiated in the 1950s, with the Dutch projects built in stone, and based on the notion of phenomenal superimposition as determinant; and the third was that of the 1960s and 1970s, in which stone gradually gave way to the larger scale of prefabricated concrete, enabling him to play with the project’s sculptural features.

The example studied here illustrates the transition from the first to the second stage. It is characterised by planar stratification. Firstly, the main volume was established as a background in gestaltic terms. The restaurant’s long, deep apertures emphasized the volumetric treatment. Secondly, the volume’s external planes were also addressed in superficial terms, not as the surface of the volume in itself, but as a fabric superimposed on it. In turn, this fabric was composed of different layers. The pattern of loophole windows and the texture of the travertine slabs need to be understood as transparent and superimposed. In the latter case, the pattern varied from one façade to the other due to the different shapes of the stone slabs. This enabled the architect to play with distinct vibrations that would be perceived from different distances.

The strategy of planar stratification as the result of the quality of phenomenal superimposition enables the building to acquire its characteristic presence. A phenomenon occurs when the different layers blend into one image that alludes to a textile and gives the building its materiality. Solidity and transparency then merge: Sun and Shadow.

THE SPAIN OF KAHN: A TRIP AND A DAYDREAM

Eduardo Delgado Orusco, Rubén García Rubio

Louis Kahn's interest in European architecture in general, and in the Spanish one particularly, is known and well documented. Yet, it was not until 1972 when the American architect visited our country. The reason was the invitation by the Barcelona Fair to participate in the Technical Conference about Construction and Urbanism, held in the Montjuich Campus from 6 to 9 June 1972. The singularity of this visit inspires to analyze in depth the Conference and his brief stay in Spain.

Kahn shared the event with some of the most prominent architects at the time as Kenzo Tange, James Stirling and Frei Otto. Kahn gave the lecture titled "Architecture and human agreement", a deep talk where he expressed his concerns about the nature of art and architecture. After that, he spent some days visiting Barcelona where David Mackay, partner of the architecture studio MBM, showed him some of his works along with Antoni Gaudí's masterpieces.

Nevertheless, Kahn's relationship with Spain does not end in Barcelona. His classical education, and the influence of other architects, encouraged his enthusiasm for the great examples of Spanish architecture and, especially, with Granada and Cordoba. Up to the point to prepare a specific trip to visit these two cities two years after his visit to Barcelona. Yet work problems suspended momentarily this travel and his unexpected death a few weeks later ended with this dream trip.

Despite of that, the analysis of the work of Kahn reveals certain Spanish influences. For example, the relation between central space of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla with the Court of the Myrtle of the Alhambra; or the geometrical solutions of the First Unitarian Church of Rochester or the Dominican Motherhouse in Media with the Palace of Charles V. All these relations express the interest and knowledge of Kahn about the Spanish architecture but also, the desired of trip never realized (at least physically).

5TH BIENNIAL OF LATIN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE. BAL2017 IN PAMPLONA

Rubén Labiano Novoa

The celebration last April of a new edition, the fifth edition of the BAL2017 Biennial of Latin American Architecture, brought together in Pamplona a selection of fifteen teams of young Latin American architects from seven countries. With the inclusion of the works sent by biennialists of previous editions, there were a total of thirty-two teams and eight countries represented, making Pamplona in a showcase of the best emerging Latin American architecture for a few days.

The Biennial, which also offers its programs in Madrid and Barcelona, has two parts: one in which a guest country, Colombia in this case, stars in the conferences and debates that this time focused almost thematically on the well-known social achievements achieved in Medellín and Bogotá with the strategic use of architecture as an effective tool of social action, and a second where the selected teams presented their work. What has been seen has been a set of proposals of great interest and quality, with programs as small as single-family housing to as large as an intermodal center or a government building; with environments that range from the urban periphery, the historic center or the lush landscape. A set that conveys a feeling of optimism before an architecture with commitment, with reflection, with an ethical attitude in the proportion between the means and the ends pursued, with a constructive emphasis in the approaches. An architecture with a preferential option for the most with less that has a lot of common sense and a lot of ambition and intensity in the contents and that developed in an environment lacking the suffocating European regulations produces results that seen from this periphery are enviable.

OSKAR HANSEN'S DESIGN FOR AUSCHWITZ AND THE MONUMENTALIZATION OF THE DEBATE ABOUT THE WAR

Mariano Molina Iniesta

Oskar Hansen's proposal for the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism in Auschwitz renounced to have an immutable shape, both because of the interaction it claimed from the visitor and the effect of the passage of time. Devoid of a focus for commemoration and surrounded by remnants of the camp that were meant to acquire a romantic outlook in the future, it proclaimed its inability to depict the horror provoked by the war, let alone to explain it. Its transgressor character aroused the suspicion of the victims, who did not feel themselves represented on Hansen's empty pedestal. Its novelty was based on shifting the burden of memory from the object (the traditional monument) to the subject (the viewer), as Postmodernism would do later, and stimulating critical thinking about the past. But above all, and because of its reluctance to 'talk', it aspired to remain a valid space for remembrance, regardless of the transformations that postwar society's relationship with the architectural heritage of Nazism went through. This relationship has been swinging like a pendulum over the years, first ignoring or underplaying the symbolic power of these buildings. Later on, when German society felt ready to 'come to terms with the past', almost every trace of Nazism was deemed worthy of preservation, and the birth of the counter-monument (many of which literally replicated the mechanisms that Hansen put in place in Auschwitz) helped to shape a critical review of this period. And finally, it seems that the excess of memory during the last decades of the twentieth century is giving way to the normalization of this legacy as just one more element in the urban landscape. Given the changing nature of these attitudes, rather than a specific response, what Hansen really intended to monumentalize was the debate that should be fostered on the surface of his monument, as an antidote to oblivion.

