

## Two Gardens, Two Mythologies

Eduardo Rojo

The garden of Villa Noailles in Hyères, on the French Mediterranean coast, has a precedent in the Garden of Water and of Light in the Decorative Arts Exposition of 1925. It represents a giant step in the world of gardening, which during the 19th century lagged behind the developments made in painting, sculpture and architecture. The experiments that were being performed in these art forms were transferred to the garden and as a result, the design of gardens entered the realm of the avant-garde. However, if this garden is analyzed further, it is clear that it maintains the structure of Renaissance villas in Florence. A parallelism can be established between the experimental 1920's and the studies of Antiquity of the 15th and 16th centuries. For the admirers of gardens, this garden provides another motive for delight in this art form.

### H. H. Richardson: travelling around Spain

Miguel Alonso del Val

Henry Hobson Richardson, a North American architect born in 1838 in Louisiana and generally considered to be the founder of the Chicago School, as well as being one of the main exponents of the Shingle Style, toured Europe in 1882, just four years before his premature death in 1886. The trip was a significant event in his life and professional career, as well as being an important indication of the change in perspective that occurred in the late 19th century with respect to historical architecture. Spain was the final and decisive stage of that European tour because it turned out to be an encounter with an architecture of massive presence, volumetric composition and great expressive force that, until then, he had only had a glimpse of in a few illustrations in travel books during his training in the *École de Beaux-Arts* in Paris.

Among the countries of southern Europe, Spain had been relatively unknown for most of the scholars and architects of the 19th century. This can be explained by three historical circumstances, which seem to have been resolved one hundred years later.

The first cause for isolation is the economic and political situation in Spain, which had delayed autonomous growth and scientific enlightenment. This marginal situation with respect to other European countries made it difficult for foreigners to become familiar with this large and poorly communicated country full of mountain ranges and varying architecture throughout the peninsula. In fact, many of the most interesting examples were to be found in small remote towns of the interior.

The second cause was a lack of historiographic tradition in the academic circles of this country and the nonexistence of researchers and therefore, scholars who could effectively present the past and present legacies. Nevertheless, mention must be made of isolated examples and vigorous efforts of men like Ceá Bermúdez, Caveda, Lampérez, Gómez-Moreno, Torres-Balbás, Chueca Goitia, etc. although, in general, their labors have always lacked, and continue to lack today, the academic continuity that

is required for their findings to be known outside of Spain.

The third reason is the inherent difficulty of all historiographic approximations in the Spanish academic circles that seek to gain a linear comprehension of an architecture that is complex, contradictory and radically heterodox, the understanding of which is obscured when an attempt is made to fit it into external models. Because of this, foreign scholars, usually infused with a nationalist and 19th century positivist attitude, have considered Spanish architecture to be a simple manifestation of other genuinely European architectures (French, Italian, German, etc.) and, at worst, a remote and archaic example of oriental culture and barbaric customs.

It is during this same historical period when Henry Hobson Richardson visits Spain. The New England architect was the product of a mixture of Harvard-inflicted Revival Tudor and French influences. The latter was possible because he was the first North American to graduate from the *École de Beaux-Arts* in Paris, where he had made his first contact with Spanish architecture. He was also in the midst of an academic circle that was fascinated by the medieval and renaissance worlds, as opposed to the mannerist and Baroque ideals that captivated the majority of European mid-19th century architects and that was known as the Greek-Gothic ideal. In this sense, his great influence on contemporary architects made him a pioneer figure among British and North American scholars and as a result, his work inspired movements in places as far away as Finland: the Finnish national-Romanticists and in particular, Eliel Saarinen and the Vitrebsk group.

In those days, a trip to Spain was a truly spectacular finish to the typical Grand Tour of France and Italy made by Anglo-Saxon travelers. Richardson's firm interest in history discarded archeological considerations and was limited to seeking new modes of composition that could synthesize the multiple influences that he, and America, had inherited from Europe. Richardson was not looking for a finished and refined architecture. His quest was for a firm construction that could transcend the stylistic considerations that tormented other designers and he was soon attracted by the transitive aspects of Spanish Romanesque, a style that resists historic dating and yet is capable of accurately qualifying the substance of a culture that is in constant change as a result of the complexity of its sources and its stolid indifference to any form of stylistic exigencies.

Unfortunately, this enthusiastic devotion to Spanish architecture by an architect as influential as Richardson was generally ignored and forgotten by the following generation of North American architects, who opted for Hispanic motifs simply because "Spain was in the process of being re-discovered. Forgotten cities, underrated castles and long forgotten popular architecture that is receiving more attention now than in previous generations. A part of this renovated interest should be attributed to the growing appreciation of that which is Hispanic in America and to the fact that North American architects have come to realize that Hispanic motifs can be correctly and logically adapted to certain types of buildings in this country"<sup>8</sup>.

In contrast, Richardson was not intrigued by anecdotal details; he simply admired the brick walls, grand arches and strong columns without considering them as independent or isolated pieces, and the possibility of incorporating these pieces into an academic facade never crossed his mind. He designed buildings just as he perceived them, as a unit, as the formal synthesis of what had been pre-figured in the initial sketches, where the volumetric power of the design is clearly conveyed, as in the Albany example.

"Extravagance, complacency in the quest for strange effects at the price of careful details; a disdain for constructive expression and a lack of refinement" (VR 119), are the defects that are found in the works of Richardson, as indicated in his biography by Van Rensselaer. Yet, most of the historians that have come from abroad to witness the architectural landscape of Spain have come to very similar conclusions and it is possible that this coincidence has something to do with the fact that Richardson truly felt at home in Spain.

## From structuralism to neo-rationalism in holland. Van der Hoeven and "urban rene- in Rotterdam

José María Ordeíg Corsini. August 1997.

Urbanism has nonnally been characterized by a preoccupation with obtaining a more humanized city; and the different conceptions of man and the conditions that his environment are what have inspired the different types of cities that have been conceptualized. In this correspondence between the anthropological and the urban- which never ceases- there have been diverse and more or less unified interpretations, although some of the theories involved have lacked analytical rigor. In this respect, I believe that the development of what is known as Dutch Structuralism, especially in its central European Neo-Rationalism derivatives, is of great interest because Holland is portrayed with a peculiar autonomy within the scope of urban design. Therefore, with respect to this goal of attaining a humanized city, typical of the 1970's, the central European Neo-Rationalist ideal became the doctrine for the urban values that emerged in those years: participation, the value of the vernacular, historic aspects, etc. But this did not occur in Holland, where the preoccupation acted as the evolution of a Structuralist ideal that had been avant-garde since the sixties. It became the point of articulation between the first derivations of Modern Urbanism (the Team X phenomenon) and new intellectual trends and therefore, was linked to the architectural tradition at hand.

## Norm and accent in architecture

Joaquín Lorda

Comparisons of classical repertoire and grammar have always been made: and with classical architecture, the distinction made by the linguist Coseriu, between system and norm, can also be applied. But the purpose of classical architecture is to dignify and therefore, what is important is not the meaning, but the "accent" or the tone that things acquire with respect to something like a gravity field that creates context; what is really important, more important than concrete norms, is that classical architecture have a good accent: i.e. elegance.

## The Codex of Liébena

Juan Bassegoda Nonell

Four months after the Codex of Liébena was stolen from the Dioceses Museum of Seu d'Urgell on September 29th, 1996, the Director of the Guardia Civil delivered this marvelous miniature work to the bishop Monsignor Juan Martí Alanis in the romantic setting of the cathedral on February 14th, 1997. The speedy recuperation by the Guardia Civil of this prized work of the cathedral archives spoke well of the efficiency of this corps. Once this valuable manuscript was recuperated, it was publicly exhibited in the palace of the Generalidad de Cataluña on the day of St. George, Wednesday, April 23rd, 1997, giving the Barcelona populace a chance to admire this precious work and to celebrate its recuperation.

THE CODICES.- The series of 32 codices, known as Los Beatos or The Pious Ones, was created between the 9th and 13th Centuries and are copies of an original version that dates back to the year 776 and is attributed to the Codex of Liébana. Essentially, the books deal with a commentary made about the Apocalypse by Saint John and Saint Jerome to the prophet Daniel. In some of the books, there are also tables with biblical persons and their respective degrees of kinship. These tables are illuminated with excellent miniatures of vivid colors.

The Pious One of Liébena was a priest who lived during the second half of the 8th Century in the district of Liébena in the what is currently the province of Asturias.

His original works have perished and the codices that are conserved today were produced at least one century later.

The only chronological reference to the Pious One of Liébena is that in the year 785, he was ordained by Adosinda, who was the widow of Prince Silo.

The few bits of information that are available about the Pious One of Liébena, as well as his disciple Eterius, seems to indicate that he was convinced that the end of the world was imminent. However, his most noteworthy activity was his opposition to the heretical adoptionist movement, which declared that Christ was not the natural son of the father and instead, was the adopted son, although they did not negate the divinity of Christ. The archbishop of Toledo, Elipando, sympathized with movement and in response, the Pious One of Liébena wrote a very violent text of denouncement, which in turn provoked a strong reaction by the archbishop.

AN ADOPTIONIST BISHOP.- It is important to note that Bishop Felix d'Urgell was a supporter of Elipando and the heretical adoptionist movement, a stance for which he was condemned by the Councils of Ratisbona in 792 and Frankfurt in 794, dying in exile in Lyon in 816, after abjuring his errors.

The illustrated manuscripts of the apocalyptic texts that are attributed to the Pious One Liébena indicate that he was familiar with and had frequently copied the texts of St. Augustine and St. Jerome, Ticonius, Apringius and, in particular, St. Isodoro of Seville and St. Gregory Magnus. The commentary made is based on the idea that the end of the world was imminent and he insisted that believers adopt the appropriate disposition in order to prepare for transcendental reflection.

APOCALYPSE OF ST. JOHN, THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION.- The Apocalypse has been a popular source of inspiration in literature and illustrations because the strange and mysterious nature of the texts seems to stimulate the imagination of the artist. It is impossible to be sure of the source of inspiration of the Pious One of Liébena and why he suggested the illustrations to his artists, who may have been Florence or Magius. He may also have been inspired by an illustration of the Apocalypse

made by Ticonius in North Africa in the 2nd Century.

● **OTHER CODICES.**- Of all of the preserved copies, only twenty of them are illustrated and are currently distributed among archives, museums and libraries throughout Europe and America. Only a few are found in cathedrals, such as Seu d'Urgell, Gerona and Burgos de Osma, while others are stored in monasteries such as Montserrat, San Pedro de las Dueñas and Silos. In general, the works can be found in Spain, Germany, Portugal, England, Mexico, United States, France, Italy and the Vatican. The most complete series is in Madrid and El Escorial and is made up of eight samples.

The work of the Cathedral of Urgell is from the 10th Century, is 40 x 27 cm in size and contains 239 sheets of Visigothic writing and 90 miniatures. Its origin is unknown, although it is speculated that it could be La Rioja or Leon. It is recorded as forming a part of the cathedral inventory since as early as 1147.

It consists of genealogical charts, three prologues and an interpretation, as well as commentaries on the Apocalypse, the Church and Synagogue, the anti-Christ and, among other texts, the commentary of Saint Jerome to Daniel in a text of Origins of Susan.

The manuscripts have been collected together to be exhibited on two occasions: in 1929 by the Asociación Española de Amigos del Arte, in Madrid; and in Europalia-Spain in the Chapelle Nassau of the Bibliothèque Royale Albert I in Brussels from September 26th to November 30th, 1985. In relation to the latter, a splendid catalogue was published and included research related to the Codex of Liébena and other codices, information about the texts, paintings catalogue compilation, bibliography, text and subject indices, and the writings found in the codices. It also contains 29 large color prints and another ten smaller ones.

The exposition was held under the patronage of the Spanish and Belgian royal families and the guest of honor was the Patron of the General Commission of Europalia 85 - Spain, Phillip of Borbon, Prince of Asturias.

**THE ROBBERY.**- When it was returned to Seu d'Urgell, the famous work was exhibited in a glass case of the Dioceses Museum until it was stolen in 1996 by a gang of specialized art thieves.

The Bishop reported the robbery to the Guardia Civil and the operation was headed by Captain Antonio Cortés, who coordinated the team that was successful in finding the work, along with other works that had been reported missing in Valencia, and in arresting the guilty parties. Ironically, a Barcelona newspaper criticized the fact that the operation had been carried out by the federal Guardia Civil and not by the regional Mossos d'Esquadra. Since the codex had been located in Valencia, the Catalan police lacked the jurisdiction to be able to participate in the operation.

It is also important to warn thieves and kleptomaniacs that the three works that have been stolen in Seu d'Urgell (the Virgin of Nuria, the gothic altarpiece of Abella de la Conca and the Codex of Liébena) have been recuperated and that all subsequent attempts will be thwarted.

Just after the recuperation of the codex, the curator of the museum detected the theft of the first page of the Apocalypse. The thieves had displayed it outside of the country in order to accept bids for the entire work. Nevertheless, this page has been located and will soon be returned to form a part of the Codex once again.

The Codex of Liébena of Seu d'Urgell will now be protected by state-of-the-art security devices and thanks to modern copying techniques, a facsimile of the book will be on public display instead of the authentic work for the public to perceive the beauty of the texts and the artistic quality of the illustrations.

## On images and machines in the constructive avant-garde movements

Helena Iglesias

It begins by justifying the necessity, or at least the relevancy, of continuing to deal with the "avant-garde", although, at first glance, it would seem that nothing more can be said in this respect.

A series of considerations are made regarding the sloppy translation of avant-garde texts and on the reiterative repetition of many of the images. As a result, a claim is made for an in depth analysis (which is considered necessary) of the artistic avant-garde movement, as a whole, which, since 1962, when Renato Poggioli denounced the situation, has been at a standstill until today.

From the perspective of this global sense of the avant-garde, reference is made to the characteristics that will determine and configure the "new art" that ought to serve the "new world".

Characteristics that will derive a general sense of destruction of "reality", and that break away from all previous concepts and modes of understanding, of seeing and of conceiving.

Similarly, characteristics that break away from all previously produced works of art, whether these are paintings, sculpture or buildings; break away from traditional materials for artistic production, whether these are paint, cloth, stone, metal, wood or paper; and in its most radical extreme, break away from all previous manners of speaking, singing and composing, including language itself.

This destruction of "reality" is progressive and in an initial stage, is constituted by a process of deformation and disfiguring that progressively increases the difficulty in "visual" recognition of the object in question, which, in turn, becomes the "victim" of successive experiments in schematics and abstraction.

And this transformation is accompanied by the questioning of the clarity and coherence of the image itself, by means of experiments with the characteristics of the image, such as the relationship between figure and background, or the qualities of figurative space in the painting, as exemplified in the works of A. Rodchenko.

Yet, the destruction of "reality" is only a step, necessary and inevitable, towards the next stage, which consists of the construction of another "reality", materialized initially by the "object-painting", but immediately claimed from the realization of "other things".

The "new things" or "other things" will not have, at least initially, a name, or assembly instructions or production processes. They will lack adhered meanings and in extreme cases, their reality must be an invention that is designed and predetermined

by their authors.

In this way, they will be real objects, artificial in the sense that they are produced by human beings. They will be coherent and can be justified only in the measure and manner as determined by their authors.

This is the meaning behind the "new" names, like "merz" (K. Schwitters), "proun" (El Lissitzky), "planits" or "arjitektons" (Malevich) or "contrarelieves" (Tatlin) that are used to name (and not to give a title to) the "new" objects.

These "new" objects will be composed of pieces, elements that are tangible, real and can be measured. And the laws that combine these elements will be generically referred to as "construction".

At this point, a brief disquisition is made on the term "construction" and the various words that mean or do not mean the same in German and Russian, in particular, the terms "stroitel", "bauen", "Konstruktion" and "Konstruksia".

Mention is also made of the erroneous usage of the term "Bauen" by L. Mies van der Rohe in No.2 of the magazine G "square", or of the possibility that the term is employed in this case deliberately to indicate (and precognize) a tendency to shift from generic "construction" to architectural construction.

It is then declared that the path from the "new" object to architecture (new) is a process that incorporates the aggrandizement of objects that are born in increasingly larger sizes, and that pass through the walls of T. van Doesburg in Composition XVIII, or the walls of the studio of Piet Mondrian in Paris.

A brief comparison is made between real objects that are produced by their own "construction" rules and flat objects, concluding that they are quite different, insofar as their qualities (and rules) are real and virtual, respectively.

Specifically, in real objects it is possible to perceive qualities of weight and equilibrium, static nature and a dependence on the law of gravity, even when these qualities are always acquired in a way that they appear as "constructions" conceived at the limit of this stability.

The concept of "machine" is discussed, in the sense that it is the application of these objects, which are replaced by some real "machines", never before considered or studied, such as the machines that moved simple bodies held inside the popular structures in the Monument of the III International by V. Tatlin.

As well, there is a discussion about the relation that this equilibrium, stable though on the verge of instability (because it is at the limit), establishes with the rules observed in the production of flat objects ("new" paintings), given that the concepts applied to the production of these flat objects has been converted to metaphors. From there, the metaphorical consideration of graphic "weight", "tension" and "equilibrium", specifically mentioning the syncretism of "Point and line in front of plane".

Finally, considerations are made on the graphics of constructivist architecture, at the same time, "new paintings" and representations of "new objects", that should resolve their own existence as objects within the space of representation and, in turn, construct themselves in images or representations that are faithful to the architecture that is projected or represented.

Mention is made of the possibility that graphic production can reject the concept of representation in general, while at the same time, convert itself into the representation of the object (architectural). Indications are given of the ways of resolving this contradiction; by fixing ones attention on, alternatively, the qua-

lities of the real architectural object or on the qualities of the real graphic object.

In the end, a possible path for in depth reflection is left open by studying the major or minor avant-garde characteristics that can be possessed by the architectural drawings of the avant-garde constructivists.

## On the many foundations of G.A.T.E.P.A.C. Aizpurua and the modern architecture and painting exposition, San Sebastian 1930

José Ramón Garitaonandía

One of the aspects that has been commonly accepted and undisputed in recent history is the relationship of the GATEPAC foundation with an isolated event that occurred in Zaragoza in the 1930's. The events that surrounded and preceded this foundation, as well as their relevance to its constitution, have rarely been identified. We are referring to the "Modern Architecture and Painting Exposition", which took place in San Sebastian in 1930 and that was considered the most important showcase of national avant-garde art during those agitated years. As well, the Grupo Norte of this formation has also been habitually relegated an accompanying role, which detracts merit from the efforts of its members that were so representative and crucial within the national avant-garde, such as Vallejo, Labayen, Bilbao, Zarranz and, especially, Aizpurúa, and the mechanisms that he put into motion with his vigor and determination.

Undoubtedly, the event that marked the beginning of a new epoch, organized, laden with ideals and goals and true to the most exigent avant-garde, was the "Modern Architecture and Painting Exposition", promoted by the Ateneo Guipuzcoano and that took place in the lower halls of the Gran Casino of San Sebastian in September, 1930. The selection and organization of participants was the responsibility of Aizpurúa for the architecture section and of Cabanas for the paintings section. Cabanas painted a splendid portrait of Aizpurúa and was in charge of the Cubist-inspired poster of the exposition. The participants of the architecture section were as follows: Aizpurúa, Ramón Anibal Álvarez, Armengou, Arrate, J. Barroso, Regino Borrobo, Calvo de Aizcoitia, Churrua, Esteban de la Mora, Francesc Fábregas, Fernández Shaw, García Mercadal, Labayen, López Delgado, ●ms García, Rodríguez Arias, Amós Salvador, Josep Lluís Sert, Terres Clavé, Luis Vallejo y Real de Asúa and Sixto Yllescas.

In the painting section, the following persons participated: Manuel Angeles Ortiz, Bores, Cabanas, Pancho Cossío, Juan Gris, Maruja Mallo, Francisco Maura, Miró, Moreno Villa, Olasagasti, Alfonso de Olivares, Peinado, Picasso, Ponce de León, Pruna, Ucelay and Hemando Viñes. In this same exposition, Giménez Caballero organized a showcase for avant-garde films, which included "Un chien andalous" by Buñuel and "Esencia de verbená" by Giménez Caballero himself, the latter work being produced specifically for this event.

At first glance, there seem to be two important aspects that are worth mentioning: the transcendence of the names that take part in the exposition, which does not limit itself to a regional

scope and tries to capture the avant-garde spirit that exists at a national scale; on the other hand, there is an evident interdisciplinary focus in the exposition that indicates the great influence of other fields on the trajectory and reflections of the Modern Movement.

Ramón Gabarain, in the well known publication "La Gaceta Literaria", founded by Giménez Caballero, gives an account of the impression caused on the public that summer of 1930:

"...The exposition has been visited by 2,600 persons. There has been controversy in the press and in the middle of this San Sebastian summer, this artistic manifestation has been the object of passionate manifestations, praise, abuse, glorification and even ridiculed. This should be of no surprise to the organizers of this project.

...Above all, the organization of the exposition has been impeccable.

...Large zinc arrows nailed to the floor indicate the rational path to take when visiting the exposition. In the center, metal furniture, simple, covered in bright-colored cloth. At the end, a large chassis divided into rectangles with the names of the participants. In all, a very pleasing setup, modern and in perfect consonance with the spirit of the exposition.

...The architectural section has been the object of less public attention. Practically all of the designs are inspired by the LeCorbusier school, planes without moldings, straight lines, brilliant colors and an obsession with simplicity, hygiene and luminosity. There are brilliant models and the public has had the opportunity of entering the works that, in general, have been met with indifference.

... In all, the Exposition has been the main event this summer in San Sebastian and the Ateneo Guipuzcoano has achieved a success that it can be proud of"

In March of that same year, Aizpurúa published a text in "La Gaceta Literaria" that can be defined as the Spanish rationalist manifesto. It was called "When will there be Architecture?" This text was a fierce attack on the habitual practices of Spanish society and architects of the time and sought an active purism for a complete catharsis within our society.

From an ideological perspective, the manifesto of Aizpurúa was the first link in the chain that would cause a large number of Spanish architects to definitively and radically subscribe to the European architectural avant-garde. One of the aspects that substantially differentiates this text from previous texts, such as those attributed to Lacasa and Mercadal in Páginas de Arquitectura, is the fervent active-destructive attitude and capacity for action that is perfectly in line with other avant-garde manifestos of the period.

As a result of the San Sebastian Exposition, a meeting is held by the participants on October 25th and 26th in the Gran Hotel of Zaragoza, along with supporters, to draft the foundation of G.A.T.E.P.A.C. - Grupo de Arquitectos y Técnicos Españoles para el Progreso de la Arquitectura Contemporánea (Group of Spanish Architects and Technicians in favor of the Progress of Contemporary Architecture).

Therefore, a conclusion that is immediately reached is that the prime mover behind the founding of GATEPAC is not exclusively Mercadal, the participation of whom was purely testimonial in nature, and it would seem that Aizpurúa was the true founder of this formation and promoter of the necessary spirit. He is observed to be a capable theoretician and one of the most active figures in the cultural panorama of the late 1920's and

early 1930's by promoting expositions, cultural groups assemblies, etc. At his side, another architect, Vallejo, whose peculiarity would catapult him to fame as the principal promoter of a social architecture and a firm commitment to the regeneration of architecture in favor of the rationalization of the means of production for a true avant-garde architecture at the service of the lowest classes.

## The city, the voice and the soul

### Gaspare De Fiore

I ask myself: is it possible to represent the city? If so, how? With which procedures and what methods? With planimetry, cartography, axonometry, panoramic views, like the views of Toledo by El Greco? Can the city be represented at the moment of its birth, during its development and growth until the historic center is drowned by the horrible peripheries? And, more importantly, is it possible to represent and express in some way the spirit of the city, the very "being" of the city, the character, the color, the smell, the soul, the silence...?

I wonder about these things while leaning against a parapet of the Castel S. Angelo bridge and watching the slow-moving flow of the water of the Tiber River between the high walls.

"Am I, who have always lived in Rome, capable of drawing this city, of portraying my own city? Then, while pondering over the images and the portrait of the city, I decide to take a walk in the city, following the flow of the Tiber that crosses it like an arrow, from the Milvio bridge, where I live, to the Saint Angelo bridge, where at this moment, from a parapet, I am observing the whirlpools in the water and remembering... And I see reflected in the river many images of the cities that I have drawn in my travels.

In my sketch pad that I always carry with me, I have tried to create with quick scribbles, the most significant images, the ones that have made the greatest impression on me in the cities that I have visited. Berlin, Athens, Istanbul, Dresden, Singapore, Moscow, in Egypt, in Bali. And these sketches have now become sketches of a trip, the trip of my life through the different countries over the years. While I study my drawings, while faraway images slip across the surface of the water, once again, I can see, I can feel the years of my life pass by, passing by like the water passes below the arches of the bridge, no return... no regrets?

How much time has gone by while, overwhelmed by my memories, I have watched and felt the flow of water and of time? A minute, an hour, who knows? I look around: the bridge is deserted and the air is calm, a mysterious silence has suddenly descended. It is twilight.

The autumn air in Rome is tender and intoxicating, and a light breeze whispers faraway and mysterious voices: it is the marvelous air of the instants that join and separate the day from the night, mending them with the fine thread of twilight.

Fascinated by the atmosphere, by the colors, by the scents, by the silence, I raise my eyes and see the angels with the instruments of the Passion of Jesus camouflaged in the folds of Baroque robes... In the sky, the seagulls that come from the sea along the river, the clouds advance rapidly changing from blue to pink to violet... While I slowly make my way along the Castel S. Angelo bridge, among the angels that seem to move about in the magical air of Rome, and soon I feel a puff of air and sense the

presence of someone at my side. I hear a flutter of wings, I do not see "its" shadow on the cobblestones and I am too scared to turn around; is there somebody beside me or am I dreaming? Who is guiding me now towards the piazza of San Pedro that is opening up there in front of me?

The piazza seems like a single giant basin, the plumed fountains enshrouded by the unreal silence that surrounds them.

I advance slowly: the space seems to dilate and the colonnade at the end seems to be always far off; I try to walk faster, but in vain; the piazza is endless and I somehow remain in its center.

Fascinated by the new spectacle, at first I cannot clearly make out something that slowly, little by little, seems to tremble in the air; the clouds in the sky go by quickly behind the statues of the Saints that dot the balustrade of the colonnade; as if the wind were blowing the tunics and the figures were trying to resist by wrapping themselves in the folds.

At this moment, amidst the billowing capes, I saw, I am sure of it, that the figures were moving. Are they alive? In the shadows of the afternoon, one after another, the Saints came down from their perch to the piazza, their capes swelling in the autumn wind, palpitating like the soul of the city.

They looked like snowflakes in a supernatural snowfall; and I saw the figures of the sky set foot softly on this earth and join together in a fantastic rite of solemn murmurs and gestures. The hour, the light, the atmosphere, the silence, everything was infinite; at that moment in which the saints returned to earth, and I was the involuntary spectator of a miracle that could only occur in Rome, in a piazza such as this one, in the midst of this mysterious silence and enchanted atmosphere.

I would have liked to move closer, I wanted to move but it was as if my feet were nailed to the ground. Then, unexpectedly, I realized that the shadow of the cloud that enshrouded me was moving away; the reflection of the moon was approaching and I, immobile, could not escape from it.

The clouds moved erratically, the spray of the fountain increased and, at the same time, the wind seemed to bring with it the sound of strings of an enormous harp and in an instant, the piazza was completely illuminated.

Free from my spell, I did not have time to turn around or to run towards Them; I suddenly sensed the flight of a hundred, a thousand doves that are suddenly liberated. In a second, everything was like it had been: the trickle of water, the sky full of dark clouds, the bright lights in the dark of night, the statues of the balustrade still and quiet in the wind.

Yet, in the air, a shudder could be felt. The shudder of the piazza was the soul of Rome.

I was alone; there was nobody to be seen on the wet cobblestones: I was the only one that was crossing the piazza in the moist air of the imminent rainfall.

A lightning bolt lit up the sky, thunder announced the first drops of rain; I crossed the piazza and kept walking into the wind that carried dreams, memories,...

It did not take me long to reach the nearby piazza of Gianicolo that overlooking the city. Rome was asleep at the foot of the hill. The domes dominated the city; domes of the many churches, the spiral of Saint Ivo, the flattened dome of the Pantheon, the dome of Saint Charles, of dome of Jesus, large and

small... how many? That night, they seemed to be infinite in number.

Suddenly, in the infinite silence of the night, I thought I heard a sigh, a slow and deep breath. It was as if the moon had removed its bandages and were floating in the sky. The sigh became more and more clear and distinctive: it was the voice of the city. That distressing voice in the sky of that summer night was the voice of a hundred, a thousand invocations.

It was not the voice that I had heard in the periphery; among the lofty buildings and streets full of people; I had heard the unmistakable sound of life; a murmur that seemed to come from a huge beehive made by thousands of persons in a hurry, in a rush, crowded like sardines in their houses.

It was not the same sound that I had heard when the city was awakening, walking up to Gianicolo on an April morning, when the first rays of sunlight in the trees liberate the subtle night fog; from the city that is warmed by the first light, a tranquil murmur of life could be heard after the nocturnal pause.

It was not the hoarse and grumpy voice of the city of motors, distressed by traffic, by the rush, by the constant bumping; a voice that at times seems like a scream, gloomy and frightening, the sound of civilization; the panting and heaving of cars, the demolition of houses, the lament of factories, the anxiety of men.

That night, the voice was different.

Leaning against the wall that overlooks the sleeping city, it felt like the diaphragms that separated me from the soul of the city were about to disappear; I felt like I was about to reach the very depths of its destiny and penetrate the acute corners in the shadows of churches, just like the stone angels and Saints, and along side the kneeling pilgrims and sinners.

I began to realize what that sound meant: minute after minute, it was no longer an indistinct and throbbing echo and instead had become an ocean of words, a bundle of prayers. The supplications made by each of the domes to the clouds, and an immense voice, the voice of all the domes emitting the invocations of a day in a life.

The voice that rose from the domes was the breath of Rome.

While the first rays of sun lit up the sky, I returned to the street and slowly opened my eyes once again to see the whirlpools of the river going by the arches of the bridge of Saint Angelo... Had I been here all this time? Those angels, the Saints, the domes, the wind the supplications... Had I really seen and heard them or was it a dream?

And now, drawing my city, the Castel Saint Angelo, Piazza San Pedro, the view of Rome from the Gianicolo, the breathing domes, I ask myself: "Is this the representation of the city? Is this the representation of a dream?" Yes, it may be, whether it is the soul, the breath or the voice, laden with supplications and hopes, because this is life.

Calderón de La Barca comes to mind, I hear his words and I wonder, "What is life? Just what exactly is life? A delirium. What is life? An illusion, a shadow, fiction. And the greatest asset is small, because life itself is a dream and dreams are..."

Why do you marvel at my words? Why are you surprised? My teacher was a dream and I am afraid to awaken and find myself locked in my jail cell again. And even if this does not occur, all I have to do is dream to know that all human happiness flashes by like a dream; so today I want to take the opportunity,

while I am able, to be forgiven for our errors, because forgiveness is the virtue of noble spirits".

## After deconstructivism or the transgression of the transgression

Juan M. Otxotorena

The phenomenon of deconstruction involves the transposition of art from the public realm to the graphic discourse that is exploited and advocated by the contemporary veneration of the architectural drawing; yet this attitude seems to precede and even announce the end product. At any rate, it is possible that all forms of internal questioning of design hypotheses are in themselves a kind of deconstruction inasmuch as this questioning of guidelines or themes can acquire the rank of a law in the design process.

Thus, deconstruction simply involves the questioning of design as an art form, program, operation or activity, and as a result, design efforts are developed and molded by the questioning exercise itself. The term seeks shelter below the same conceptual umbrella in the fields of philosophy and linguistics: deconstructive or deconstructivist attitudes involve the questioning of language on behalf of, directly or by means of language itself; that is, the questioning of language is made from that same language by means of the forced formulations of texts that are intent on questioning their status as texts, which, in the end, is indisputable.

This is what deconstruction is all about. If we discard occasional inspirations and symptoms of interdisciplinary overlap, what is known as deconstructivism is, in essence, an introspective discourse that questions the subjective actions of the questioner: discourse that is directly related to the conditions, circumstances, possibilities, guidelines and motives that are associated with the questioning exercise. The attitude involved in this challenge would initiate a "transgressional drift", which would denote a spiral movement that from that moment on, could not be detained.

The dynamic principle embodied and consumed by this movement would immediately form a part of the reactive dialectics of modern discourse (as well as being responsible for establishing and directing the confrontation between what is modern and post-modern), as soon as said dialectics become the only and thus the ultimate methodological resource for disciplinary discourse. Yet, there is a hint of a rebellious or accusatory attitude that stems from and even fulfills said dialectics or, better yet: as a result of this fulfillment, the attitude becomes truly significant (undeniable in itself), in the sense that it is really a experience of or at the limit.

After all, the "theme" of deconstruction will always have to deal with a basic and fundamental problem: the overlapping of its perspectives, the origin of which is found in a preliminary doubt, that forms a part of the unfurling process- precisely, at its vertex- and creates a kind of threshold: the character of discourse that is "capable" of tackling the problem. "Character", in this context, refers to methodological bias: the problem lies in the fact that the phenomenon of deconstruction leads inevitably to a clash of strategies and modes of discourse; that is, the questioning of strategies and modes of discourse per se.

The assimilation of deconstructivist operations as metaphorical functions, if the expression can be interpreted from this perspective, would, in the end, make it necessary to acknowledge

the undeniable substance of these functions, correlative to the disciplinary code that would otherwise be inexpressible and that, as a result, continues to draw attention. To scorn it as a marginal art form would only obviate its dialogue from the margin and about the margin, from the limit and about the limit, and even about the motives behind that scornful stance- foreseen and sometimes even "provoked"- that is rooted in the profession and even tends to be generalized.

## The painted architecture in Rome in XVII century

Mario Docci

Palazzo Lacellotti in Rome is the work of Francesco Capriani and Carlo Maderno, who restored several old buildings, giving them aristocratic unity and dignity. In a room on the first floor, created by restructuring the pre-existing medieval fabric, is preserved an extraordinary fresco by Agostino Tassi, depicting a loggia over a portico, covered by elegant cross-vaults in the midst of a fertile and hazy Roman countryside. The spectator always has the illusion of depth, from any position in the room. The authors decided to apply the reverse perspective procedure to represent the painted architecture as if it were real and study its relationship with the solid architectural content. This, however, meant that first of all they had to decipher the painting's latent geometric code, whence the need to determine the focal point and the vanishing points. It was therefore decided to make a study two of the frescoed walls by close-range photogrammetry, and to extend the images of the parallel symmetrical edges on the model by computer, in an attempt to identify their point of intersection. But, against all expectations, they discovered a whole series of possible focal points, and found themselves faced with the impossibility of obtaining a photogrammetric model by adopting familiar well-proven methods. They accepted the fact that the problem could not be solved and proceeded experimentally, ready to apply statistical methods if necessary.

Before formulating a hypothesis, however, they asked themselves what might have been the most likely technique used in transferring the original drawing onto the wall. By examining the accessible part of the fresco under a close oblique light they established that Tassi had mainly resorted to the use of cartoons. It was therefore presumed that, given the dimensions of the larger wall, the original drawing was at least ten times smaller than life size and had been divided into a matrix of more than a hundred elements. This would explain two errors present from the outset: one was generated by changing from one scale to another, and the other when positioning the cartoon on the wall. This led to the formulation and study of five hypotheses, three of which yielded positive results and produced the following conclusions.

The painting was definitely preceded by a careful project, which must have materialized in the form of a considerably large original drawing (possibly measuring 1.00 x 1,5 m); in this original drawing the artist respected Leonardo da Vinci's principle of linear perspective, adopting the same width for all the column shafts. It is likely that in the original sketch the apparent distortions were reduced by extending the observation point to the entire central part of the room. It can therefore reasonably be assumed that a certain number of vanishing points were used in the original drawing for the lines in perspective. The sketch was

then enlarged (not all of it, however) in the production of a series of cartoons, limiting the operation to one or two overlapping orders, and then making use of the symmetrical elements. This would have produced the errors of transfer and positioning. At this point, the initial project of giving a spatial rendering to Agostino Tassi's architectural painting, was no ordinary affair, and not so much due to the technical difficulties of the enterprise but rather because it involved a philological problem. Indeed, we learn from geometry that no real space can ever be equivalent to simulated space can evoke shapes and emotions in a way that is unique. So what would be the point of reducing a daydream, perpetuated over the centuries in the art of a dreamer, to an architectural project?

## The eloquence of the architectural drawing. The vital reference of the horizon.

José Manuel Pozo

Architectural drawings have greatly evolved over the centuries. One of the most important developments in this process was the discovery of the central perspective of the Renaissance. From that moment on, architectural space is humanized thanks to the representation of infinity (the horizon line) and therefore, of a relationship between what is near and what is far. Thus, the development of systems of representation responds directly to the ideas of the world that is represented as a function of the importance given to the person that inhabits it.

This development has two stages of graphic innovation. First, the general implementation of the dihedral system in the late 18th century and then, the resource of axonometric representation of cities and architecture that was developed in the early 20th century.

The codification and diffusion of the dihedral system could be considered the base point for modern architecture. Scientific and precise architectural drawings with shadows makes it possible to obtain a three dimensional representation of the building and its voids and is therefore the first step towards the rationalization of the graphic process.

As the point of view is progressively moved away in conical perspectives, the observer can be situated farther and farther away from the scene, before taking the definitive step axonometrics views in the avant-garde movements of contemporary architecture, in which the point of view (the observer) is displaced to infinity: the human space becomes anonymous and the new perspective clearly affirms the rational character of the representations, which have nothing to do with empirical Aristotelian ideals.

In order to recuperate the value of man, as a person and not as a simple point in time, it will be necessary to recuperate his place of honor in the dynamic space of current architecture: the horizon line should once again become the required reference point of man's world and of the expression of his architecture.