arq.urb
#20
| september - december |
| 2017 |

UNIVERSIDADE SÃO JUDAS TADEU
master in architecture and urbanism

e-magazine of architecture and urbanism
ISSN 1984-5766 | www.usjt.br/arq.urb/

versão em português

>> access the integral version of this issue

Interior of the exhibition "De Stijl", Paris, Galerie l'Effort Moderne, 1924.

> structure > editorial line > standards > previous numbers > contact

> summary > editorial > thematic > essays & research > testimonies & debates > in formation > discussing projects

Editorial

Tradução: Revisoteca Serviços Textuais

This special issue, of the academic journal *arq.urb*, is dedicated to the curators of architectural exhibitions and, by extension, to the exhibitions themselves, which nevertheless appear as more or less parallel references of the experiences that the curators present to us, always, as personal testimonies that illuminate not only the field of exhibitions but, above all, the field of architecture.

The special issue, which begins with a historical presentation of the theme of architecture (and urbanism) exhibitions and the practices of its curators, was given by Fernando G. Vázquez Ramos, co-editor of this magazine and Professor at the postgraduate program of the Universidade São Judas Tadeu, also includes articles written by important professionals from different countries. Obviously from Brazil, as part of this issue: Agnaldo Farias, Architect, Professor at the Universidade de São Paulo, art critic, and curator; Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas, Architect, Professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, and historian; Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz, Architect and curator, founding partner of the award-winning Brasil Arquitetura office, and Renato Anelli, Architect, Professor at the Universidade de São Paulo (IAU), researcher, curator, and member of the Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi Institute. Among the international contributions: Marilys Nepomechie and Eric Goldemberg (USA), professors at the Florida International University Miami Beach Urban Studios; Pedro Azara (Spain), Professor at the Escola Técnica Superior de Arquitetura de Barcelona and curator, with especial dedication to archeological exhibitions; Victoria Wilson (England) was curator at the Royal Institute of British Architects and now serves as Collections Manager of the important Ramsbury Manor collection (Wiltshire, GB); Francesco Maggiore (Italy), coordinator of the didactic and scientific activities at the Francesco Moschini Fund (FFMAAM, Polytechnic of Bari). One of our Brazilian invitees, Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas, talks about an exhibition in the United States and his relationship with curators of MoMA, Barry Bergdoll and Patricio del Real, and Jorge Francisco Liernur, from Torcuato

di Tella University, Buenos Aires, Argentina, who also participated at the exhibition in the USA.

The specific tone and intentions of each of these articles are quite varied, which enriches the panorama presented, corresponding precisely to one of the main purposes of the journal when this issue was thought. Some of the texts have more direct relationships with specific exhibitions, such as the text by Agnaldo Farias (Peter Eisenman at MASP), Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas (Latin American Architecture at MoMA) or Victoria Wilson (Mies van der Rohe and James Stirling at RIBA). Others are broader considerations that, based on the experiences that the exhibitions carried out, cover the doubts, yearnings, judgments, decisions, and reflections about the architectural exhibitions themselves in our day.

The order of presentation is not accidental, although obviously the articles can be read independently following any order that pleases the reader (like an architectural adaptation of the widely known novel by Julio Cortazar, Rayuela). However, the journal's interest was to situate each of them within a larger context. Obviously, the authors did not write their articles aiming to combine them, they worked totally independently and freely. Notwithstanding, once the texts were received and read by the editors, a rather unitary approach was observed that demanded almost a specific order of presentation. A sequence that suggests a broader and, above all, a complementary sense.

The suggested order was as follows: a chronological presentation (Fernando G. Vázquez Ramos), an account of the exhibitions in Brazil (Agnaldo Farias), a political understanding of the function of exhibitions (Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz), the perception of an educational dimension (Renato Anelli), the critical recovery of the expository tradition and an openness to new possibilities (Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas), the thematic perspective as a field of exploration of the intentions of architecture (Marilys Nepomechie and Eric Goldemberg), the recognition of the past as an enriching experience of the present (Victoria Wilson), a relation between art, poetry and architecture (Francesco Maggiore) and, finally, an ethical questioning about the material [the artifacts] on display (Pedro Azara).

This order also relates to the topics covered. Thus, the texts written by Farias, Ferraz, Anelli, Comas, and Nepomechie and Goldemberg, are connected with one another by commenting expositions or themes in common, such as the exhibitions on Latin America in MoMA, or the few architectural exhibitions showing in Brazil. All of them bring, in one way or another, reflections on the meaning of the exhibitions (Anelli and Ferraz), the role of the institutions (Comas, Farias, Maggiore, Wilson), or the diligence of the curators (Azara and Farias), including their expectations and frustrations.

The presentation offers an approach regarding the birth and consolidation of architectural exhibi-

tions and the intentions of its creators, who at first were not considered as “curators”, but viewed as promoters or organizers of exhibitions, almost always interested in producing some kind of public commotion or agitation. The history of the institutional consecration of the exhibitions and the appearance of the curator as a professional figure dedicated to thinking and putting into practice this type of exhibitions is also reported in the presentation, which ends with the formulation of the concerns that led arq.urb to suggest this theme for this special issue.

The paper by Agnaldo Farias presents the situation of architectural exhibitions in Brazil, introduces the history of how they were consolidated, especially at the end of the 20th century, and discusses the role of architecture exhibitions within the great cultural institutions, such as the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), the Museu da Casa Brasileira (MCB), the Tomie Ohtake Institute (ITO) and the Centro de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (CAU) in Rio de Janeiro. Supported by his enormous experience as a curator, since he was the general curator of the ITO, at the São Paulo Biennial of Art, and now acts as general curator of the Oscar Niemeyer Museum in Curitiba, Farias confronts us with the most acute problems that exhibitions of this type have been having in contemporary Brazil. Its vicissitudes, conflicts, and challenges, since the prestigious institutions, that today could make expositions of architecture, find serious problems to develop them. Faced with this passivity, the author asks himself “how does the role of the museum remain as a center committed to the production of knowledge? What is the duty of a curator, indeed?”

The article by Renato Anelli begins with a questioning interwoven with that of Agnaldo Farias, almost continuing his thinking about the institutions that tried to develop some work on architecture exhibitions. Comments are complementary while enriching each other. In the sequence, Anelli describes his own experience as curator within the activities of Glass House (Lina Bo Bardi) and the Institute Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi. The description is not only enumerative but it points out the difficulties, not only functional but mainly conceptual, that the assembly of exhibitions presents in the specific situation of the house-museum.

The paper by Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz seems to try to answer the questions made explicit by previous authors when he states that “designing or constructing an exhibition is a strong political act”. In this manner of questioning the social role of exhibitions, Ferraz focuses on the intentions of architectural exhibitions that propose to reveal an object that is slippery for them, since the purpose of architecture is not to be exposed, but to serve as a material basis for life. Thus, exhibitions should be conceived as communicative forms that lead the viewer to an enlightening understanding, the author argues that the curator can (and should) “enlighten the spectator’s walk creating a new reality.” The defense of the un-

derstanding that exhibitions need their own grammar, which is not necessarily that of architecture itself, but develops relationships with cinema, literature, and theater, reinforcing the appeal towards a particular understanding of the curator's duty as a political communicator of a complex social reality, as architecture is.

The article by Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas puts us in front of the vicissitudes of the great international shows managed by powerful cultural institutions that invest in architectural exhibitions from practically the beginning of this genre of a cultural phenomenon. This is the specific case of the exhibition "Latin America in Construction: Architecture, 1955-1980", held at MoMA in 2015, organized by Barry Bergdoll, Patricio del Real, Jorge Francisco Liernur and Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas himself. This assembly retakes another from the same museum, from 1955, "Latin American Architecture since 1945". After 60 years, the eyes of the curators of the museum turn again to the region trying to rethink, now with the help of local experts, what happened to the architecture, from Mexico and Cuba reaching the Southern Cone between 1955 and the 1980s. The retrospective extends the proposal of the previous paper [by Victoria Wilson] from a specific place to an entire region, but starting from the same assumption, how architecture is capable of expressing sociopolitical conditions, always in the light of the culture of the social groups that shaped it (see also the text written by Marcelo Ferraz). The panoramic vision that introduces this article is not limited to the point of view of the territorial scope of the exhibition on canvas, but it also covers the view of the curators who participated in the selection and assembly of the material, since the visions of South Americans such as Liernur and Comas, converge with Americans like Bergdoll. Patricio del Real is an interesting aggregator, because being Spanish, but working for years in the US, includes a European vision in the treatment of the issue, which certainly improves it.

The paper by Marilys Nepomechie and Eric Goldemberg describes the setting up of a thematic exhibition on social housing developments established in the twentieth century in Latin America. The article points to two significant issues: an indirect one, which evidences the importance given in the USA to the architectural experiences developed in Latin America, especially those of the post-war period, a condition that brings it closer to the text of Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas, which addresses a similar subject; and a direct one, which demonstrates how the presentation of a specific issue, in this case, regarding the large social housing complexes, can construct a broader approach capable of achieving the greater meaning of architecture, not its essence, of course, but its intentions and the general orientation which, at least in a certain period of Western history, architecture has manifested. It is precisely this contextualization that is why, although with a theme centered on Latin American production,

the exhibition places other international experiences, such as that of the Japanese metabolists, for example, to syntonize them with what was being done in America.

The text of Victoria Wilson brings us the adventures of compose a unique exhibition in its genre. We affirm that it is unique due to the union between architects of different generations in the same place of deployment, separated by time, but with a specific project and client in common. We refer to the proposals for Mansion House Square in London, one in 1962 and another in 1984. The architects are: the German, naturalized as an American citizen, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), and the Englishman Sir James Frazer Stirling (1926- 1992); the client, English tycoon Lord Peter Palumbo. As the author states, "taken as a whole, the story of the site at Mansion House can be seen as a fascinating microcosm of Britain's changing attitudes to both [modern and] contemporary architecture," resuming the narrative of urban changes taking place in the City of London for the last fifty years. The exhibition itself was thought as a moment of reflection on this historical and cultural, aesthetic and political, social and economic path, through which the architecture and its understanding (reception and use) by the society has passed. A return to the circumstances of the past, with the precise purpose of thinking the present.

Francesco Maggiore introduces us to the hectic world of cultural institutions dedicated to architecture shows, opening a field that links exhibitions with collections, libraries, universities, and museums. Art presents itself as an integrating element and permanent contact between different expositions that the author describes to us. In this direction, and in favor of a philological research that analyzes the reflective and autonomous aspects of the architecture project, the author traces the exhibitions of the Austro-American architect Raimund Abraham (1933-2010), the Spanish architect Juan Navarro Baldeweg (1939), the Dutch architect Jozef Maria Johannes (Jo) Coenen (1949), the Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn (1924-2009), the American architect Steven Holl (1947), the Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza Vieira (1933) and the Italian-Argentine architect and artist Clorindo Testa (1923-2013). As the author states, they are "seven monographic exhibitions dedicated to seven masters of architecture that have defined some of the most significant orientations of contemporary architecture".

Finally, closing the issue, the paper by Pedro Azara has two parts. It questions, in the first part, through a personal story, the origin of the pieces that can be exposed in an exhibition. Especially in those which use archaeological artifacts. The most recent cases are from the Middle East war, particularly the ones that resulted from the attacks of the Islamic State, are fundamental to the author's argument. They also highlight a situation that includes the smuggling of works of art and

the huge black market that formed around them. Azara points out not only issues related to the quality and value of the exhibitions (cultural, artistic, monetary too) but also to the ethical and moral integrity of those who expose the artifacts (which implies the curator and the institution that sponsors them). The second part narrates in a very detailed way how to set up an exhibition, which includes: location and selection of works, loans between institutions, the transfer of the works [artworks, artifacts, objects] from one place to another, rooms, museography (set design, assembly, lighting, security), and ultimately, the tremendous effort of the curator and his collaborators.

We hope that the texts compiled here will be of interest to our readers and may encourage and disseminate knowledge in the Architecture and Urbanism disciplines, as we see writings such as the following promote debate and critical reflection, which is undoubtedly the mission of the journal.

Fernando G. Vázquez Ramos
Eneida de Almeida
Editors

■

Architecture exhibitions: chronology of a modern cultural phenomenon and some inquietude

Fernando Guillermo Vázquez Ramos*
Translation: Confraria de Textos

*Adjunct Professor in the Course and in the Post-Graduate Program in Architecture and Urbanism of the Universidade São Judas Tadeu. Doctor (Polytechnic University of Madrid, 1992); Master in Aesthetics and Theory of Arts (Institute of Aesthetics and Theory of Arts, 1990); Technician in Urbanism (National Institute of Public Administration, 1988); Architect (National University of Buenos Aires, 1979).

Abstract

This paper discusses the history of architecture exhibitions (and exhibitions about architecture), which, having originated in the beginning of the twentieth century, accompany us to this day as physically-constituted statements or spatially-determined narratives on the creativity of modern architects, for it was in the Modern Age that such events developed. It argues that the exhibitions were, and still are, a stage for the experimentation and courage evidenced by avant-garde and consensually-consolidated styles architectural (and urbanistic) production, but which also respond to didactic purposes as well as propaganda for cultural, governmental and/or private institutions of all sorts. It also comments on the different forms that exhibitions assumed in the last 100 years, depending on the organizers' (artists or curators) will, to then question their intentions, or the intentions they should have, nowadays. The article also serves as introduction to the exhibition and curatorship theme, which *arq.urb* magazine defined as subject for issue 20, the last one of 2017.

Keywords: Curatorship. History of modern architecture. Art and architecture. Museums. Art Galleries.

Figure 1. The New Gallery Central Hall, London, 1888. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Gallery_(London)#/media/File:New_Gallery_London_Central_Hall_1888.jpg>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017. [Image from the "New Gallery Notes" catalogue, Summer, 1888.]

Architecture exhibitions are relatively modern. There were a few in the nineteenth century, notably in England, which produced the first world's fair in 1851, whose main exhibition object was the very building where it took place, the Crystal Palace, by Joseph Paxton. However, to properly speak of exhibitions of architecture or where architecture was shown in some way, we must wait until the promotion and propagation of the Arts & Crafts movement, especially those connected to William Morris's group, The Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society, which began in 1888, at the recently-inaugurated New Gallery (Figure 1). This cultural organization sought to promote the innovative art at the time (mainly Pre-Raphaelite) to expand the view and the influence of art on other fields, such as design, which started to flourish on the works of Morris and other movement members.

Precisely for being events who privileged and fostered contact among the arts, the exhibitions included architecture in a general manner, as one more manifestation in the comprehensive proposal of Arts & Crafts. Thus, the view of architecture was attached to the craft and design work the members produced in a collaborative way. Albeit of much reduced proportions, the movement's exhibitions had similar goals to those of the great fairs (international or universal) of the second half of the nineteenth century, with Europeans (especially French and British, but also Germans) showcasing the advances of science and art promoted by Western civilization and industrial capitalism.

To speak of architecture exhibitions *stricto sensu*, we must enter the twentieth century, who saw them rise. The first exhibitions truly dedicated to architecture (and the construction of the city) were promoted in Austria and in Germany. The Austrian case is devoted to the Vienna Secession, which, in 1897-88, under Joseph Maria Olbrich's command, executed the exhibition "Die Sezession". Then, architecture was present as the building (Figure 2), certainly emblematic, which hosted an

art exhibition, specially painting and sculpture. In this sense, it still closely follows the tradition of the British exhibitions of Arts & Crafts, but in this case the centrality of architecture, which allegorically "includes" the other arts, is evident.

The German case is different; not because it does not recognize or manifest the connection between the arts, especially painting, but because the centrality of architecture is evidenced in its predominance. The first striking exhibition certainly was "Deutscher Werkbund Ausstellung" (Exhibition of the German Building Association), which took place in 1914, in Cologne, where the first works by Walter Gropius (Fagus Factory) and Bruno Taut (Glass Pavilion) were presented. However, focusing specifically on exhibitions of architecture (buildings, but also projects) in general, and not of some buildings, the first significant proposal could be "Ausstellung für unbekannte Architekten" (Exhibition of Unknown Architects), of 1919, product of the collaborative work of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Work Council for Art), directed by architect Bruno Taut and critic Adolf Behne, which resulted from the efforts of the members of Novembergruppe (November Group, of expressionist artists that included architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, for instance) and of Deutscher Werkbund (German Building Association, which congregated industrialists, builders, craftsmen, artists, and architects connected to construction). The exhibition followed the patterns of common plastic arts exhibitions, for the architects were entirely committed to the expressionist artists groups of the time. Thus, just as with painting exhibitions, this one presented utopian architecture and city projects (*Idealprojekte*), drawings, collages, and manipulated photographs, all of which emblematic works of the critical position of members and sympathizers of Die Gläserne Kette (The Glass Chain, group of expressionists connected to Bruno Taut), such as Max Taut, Johannes Molzahns, Hermann Finsterlin, and Wenzel Hablik. In the catalogue (Figure 3), critical texts by Walter Gropius, Adolf Behne, and Bruno Taut himself on the understanding of archi-

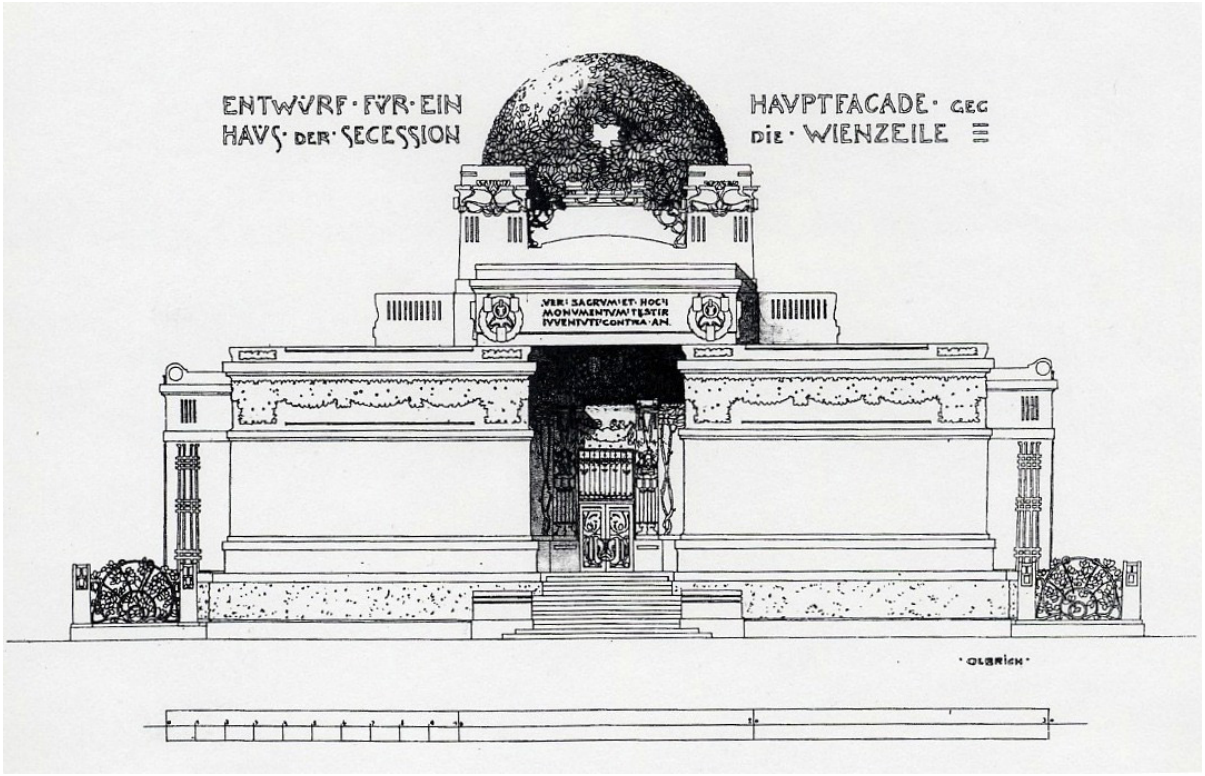


Figure 2. Drawing of the Secession building (Wiener Secessionsgebäude). Joseph Maria Olbrich, 1897. Available at: <http://www.design-is-fine.org/post/44774107173/design-for-the-wiener-secessionsgeb%C3%A4ude-vienna>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

Figure 3. "Ausstellung für unbekannte Architekten" catalogue, 1919. Available at: <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/L4UWWZIAAJ6NJFNSOSEEUZGMWSRNIC53>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

tecture and city. The exhibition reached its greatest political vocation in 1920, when Arbeitsrat für Kunst took it to the workers boroughs of Berlin, "dedicating it to the proletarians".

Although imbued with the principle of unity of the arts – so much so it is appropriate to mention the presence of members of Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter (Bridge and The Blue Rider, both associations of expressionists painters, more naturalist the first and more abstract the second, which had as members Ludwig Kirchner and Erich Heckel, as well as Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, respectively) and the influence of magazines such as *Sturm and Die Aktion* (*The Storm and The Action*) – the work of these architects and critics proclaiming the independence of architecture before the other arts. It attributes centrality to architecture and, mostly, argues it is the only art in which the others may meet and operate a synthesis which takes to the conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ("total work of art"), so coveted in the beginning of the twentieth century.

From these expressionist shows, others began to develop, in a considerable varied manner, but always in Germany. Some more complex and huge, such as Weissenhofsiedlung's, where the show "Die Wohnung" ("The Dwelling") took place, in Stuttgart, 1927, following the model of borough construction which had been inaugurated with "Mathildenhöhe" (Darmstadt, 1901), by Joseph Maria Olbrich, or as "Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin" ("Berlin Construction Exhibition"), where the show "Die Wohnung Unserer Zeit" ("The dwelling of our time") was located, in 1931. An important event, where projects (architectural and urban, which were not rare at the time) and innovations of the vigorous German construction industry and even natural-scale models of modern buildings were presented, such as one of Mies van der Rohe's famous houses. (Figure 4) All these shows wagered on experimental proposals, attesting that the architectural thinking was advanced in relation to the physical architecture production of the time.

Figure 4. Inside of "Deutsche Bauausstellung Berlin", 1931. To the lower right, Mies van der Rohe's experimental house. Available at: <http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0717-69962013000100011>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

On the other hand, there were the exhibitions of *avant-garde* quality, also experimental, but which sought to give and see critical (and spiritual) advancement of modern architecture in the cultural sphere, more than its relation to industrial production. These exhibitions were less institutional and, thus, more challenging, usually connected to art galleries. Artists of the caliber of El Lissitzky (Lazar Markovich Lissitzky) or Theo Van Doesburg (Christian Emil Marie Küpper) were core figures in the formulation of proposals both innovative and of great impact on the consolidation of architectural and urbanistic thinking of the time. In 1922, El Lissitzky organized the constructivist session ("Erste Russische Kunstauesstellung") of Van Diemen Gallery, in Berlin, showcasing for the first time the avant-garde Russian production that resulted from the Revolution of October 1917 and from the consolidation of cubist, constructivist, and suprematist groups. El Lissitzky defined two types of exhibition: passive and active. The former presented what had already been done. In this sense, they were historiographic and educational, traditional exhibitions, including those of the plastic arts, such as the ones exhibited since the nineteenth century until the 1920s. The active ones were thought more as installations, even though the term would only appear five decades later. They were supposed to be spaces dedicated to experimentation and to the construction of the new in art, whether plastic, graphic or architectural. The exhibition itself would be an open work of art, popular and communicative: pure reflective propaganda.

The exhibition "De Stijl" (Figure 5), which Van Doesburg and Cornelis van Eesteren held at Léonce Rosenberg's Galerie l'Effort Moderne, in 1923 Paris, may be considered one of the greatest exponents of such conceptual modality, having elevated architecture to a superior level of idealization and formalization hitherto unexplored and which appeared in the exhibition's production. The impact of the work presented by the organizers was enormous, especially due to the representation systems, imposing axonometry as an emblematic communication form of the new architectural conception. Predominantly in the drawings presented by the duo for the projects of their experimental houses (La Maison Particulière, or The Private House, La Maison d'Artiste, or Artist's House, and L'Hôtel Particulière, or The Private Residence), axonometry was adopted as normative representation by the architects connected to De Stijl, by modern masters, as in the case of Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius, and by other Bauhaus students and teachers. It became the representation most used by the modern during the 1920-30s and even vigorously returned in experimental works of the 1960-70s, by architects such as Peter Eisenman, for example.

The European effort to build an architectural and urbanistic thinking by means of exhibitions would continue until the early 1930s. Gradually, they became a way of disseminating modern thinking and its architecture and city conceptualization, which ended up structuring an institutional propaganda

Figure 5. Interior of "De Stijl" exhibition, Paris, Galerie l'Effort Moderne, 1923. In the front, the model of the Private Residence, Theo Van Doesburg and Cor van Eesteren. Available at: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ca/6e/16/ca6e16edbf376dcbe1cb61a228ff9c9e.jpg>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

Figure 6. Interior of "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition", New York, MoMA, 1932. At the center, the model of Ville Savoye, Le Corbusier, 1929. Available at: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ca/6e/16/ca6e16edbf376dcbe1cb61a228ff9c9e.jpg>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

whose apex may be the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), a combination of work meeting and commented exhibition of the works produced by the protagonists of the modern movement in architecture.

Across the Atlantic, architecture exhibitions were less important and much rarer. Concerning architecture, European effervescence had no precedent anywhere else in the world during the interwar years. Nevertheless, North Americans developed another type of exhibition, of a didactic quality (not only for architecture, but for the plastic arts in general). Interested in the education of a wealthier but less sensitive to the attitude of avant-garde art bourgeoisie, important cultural institutions were invested in the task of presenting and explaining these manifestations that developed in the old continent.

The most important effort in this direction came from the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), which presented, in 1932, "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition" (Figure 6). According to the museum's director, Alfred H. Barr Jr., the event was "the best way of presenting effectively to the public every aspect of the new movement". Under the curatorship of Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, varied representations (from drawings to models, photographs and detailed explanatory commentary) of the best of modern architecture from the period were efficiently and richly exhibited, centering the proposal on the works of the movement's "founders": Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and J. J. P. Oud, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright. Many other followers from over 15 countries complemented the show, from Spain to Russia and Japan, from Italy to Czechoslovakia and England, displaying how the phenomenon had already disseminated throughout the world, reaching the USA, which also appeared in the showing with works by Raymond Hood and the Bowman Brothers office. In the catalogue, critical texts by Alfred H. Barr Jr., Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr., Philip Johnson, and Lewis Mumford.

This didactic form was developed in exhibitions in the USA for over 30 years, at least until World War II. They were exhibitions such as "Modern Housing Exhibition" (1934), "Modern Exposition Architecture" (1936), and "Houses and Housing: Industrial Art" (1939), but mainly the series of itinerant exhibitions (Circulating Exhibitions – CE Program), catalogues, books, articles, and slide talks on the subject What is modern?, developed by the museum from 1938 to 1969. The question from MoMA is an intellectual, operative, and simplifying effort to influence the general North American public's perception on modern art, architecture and modern design; it also ended up rousing an internal discussion that for three decades mobilized the debate on modernity. Within this proposal, "What is Modern Architecture?", organized by art curator John McAndrew and his assistant Elizabeth Mock, may be considered the

Figure 7. Interior of "Novo mundo do espaço de Le Corbusier" exhibition, São Paulo, MASP, 1950. Source: Habitat, n. 1, 1950, p. 39.

apex of this educational modality on (modern) architecture in the USA. It circulated in two formats, visiting over 80 places between 1938 and 1945, and it even originated a catalogue-book published in 1942, with a print run of 10,000 copies, and a revised edition in 1946. Between 1962 and 1970, Arthur Drexler revisited the proposal, visiting 45 places and originating the exhibition and the book *Transformation in Modern Architecture*, from 1979, which already included late moderns such as Louis Kahn, brutalists such as Paul Rudolph, and post-moderns such as Robert Venturi or Richard Meier. Even though only the 1979 one was presented at MoMA, which saved itself for the most sophisticated exhibits, its curators' intention is evident, of amplifying the cultural base (number of people sensitive to the movement) and general understanding on modernity through didactic exhibitions, which facilitated appreciation of the "new style" (*The International Style*, which the museum had already presented in 1932, and even its variations after the 1960s).

With changes due to World War II, the exhibitions were diversified, and other forms of presentation were created; not only the artists and architects, but also critics and even historians started to promote architecture exhibitions. In general, they took place in museums, which, with framework prepared for developing art exhibitions, could perfectly do it with the architecture theme – always through images and models. Therefore, exhibitions on architecture from countries ("Brazil Builds" or "Built in USA: The Post-War Architecture"), on movements ("The Bauhaus: How It Worked"), or on architecture by renowned architects (Mies van der Rohe at MoMA in 1947, 1960, 1966, 1969, 1975, 1977, 1986, 1993, 1998, and 2001) started to integrate everyday life in large cities.

In Brazil, these exhibitions started through the efforts of Museu de Arte de São Paulo-MASP (São Paulo Art Museum) and Bienal Internacional de Arte de São Paulo (São Paulo International Art Biennial). Founded in 1948, MASP hosted, in 1950, still in the Sete de Setembro street headquarters, the exhibition "Novo mundo do espaço de Le Corbusier" (New world of Le Corbusier's space) (Figure 7), where not only the architectural production by the French-Swiss master was presented, but also his plastic opus, paintings, watercolors and gouache, as well as drawings and travel croquis.

São Paulo Biennial, whose first edition took place in 1951, kept ever since an architecture session ("Exposições Internacionais de Arquitetura", or "International Architecture Exhibitions"), with projects by 150 Brazilian and foreign architects and, as early as the II Biennial, 1953, already had the presence of relevant world modern architecture figures such as Mies van der Rohe (who had a special room at the V Biennial), Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Marcel Breuer, Alvar Aalto, and Charles Eames. With the collaboration of MoMA, it was also able to present part of the "Built in USA" exhibition (called in Brazil

Figure 8. Interior of "This is Tomorrow" exhibition, London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1956. Group 6 stand: Nigel Henderson, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alison Smithson, and Peter Smithson. Available at: <http://grupaok.tumblr.com/post/18921446230/this-is--tomorrow-group-6-nigel-henderson>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

"Estados Unidos: Arquitetura do Após Guerra"), which congregated works by Eero Saarinen, Frank Lloyd Wright, Philip Johnson, and Richard Neutra, amongst others. Sigfried Giedion, Junzo Sakakura, Mario Pani and Walter Gropius, Alvar Aalto and Ernesto Rogers, participated in the juries of the I and II editions, respectively.

In 1973, Fundação Bienal (Biennial Foundation) and Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil-IAB (Brazil Architects Institute) organized the "I Bienal de Arquitetura de São Paulo" (I São Paulo Architecture Biennial), abandoning the relationship of over 20 years with the plastic arts and relating itself to the tradition of biennials and triennials that already happened in Europe in those years. The first exhibition on architectural drawings ("Os desenhos da arquitetura", or "The drawings of architecture") would only take place in 1995, under the curatorship of Carlos Alberto Martins, Renato Anelli, and Fernando G. Vázquez Ramos, at the São Paulo gallery AS Studio. The most recent story on this topic (from the 1990s to the present) is narrated by Agnaldo Farias and Renato Anelli, in their excellents texts published in this issue.

Going back to Europe, it is in the English panorama that we find a dynamism and immense creativity in the immediate postwar period, with the formation of groups of artists who rethought the most important issues of the modern debate from the interwar period, from a point of view both critical and propositional. The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), founded by Roland Penrose, Herbert Read and E. L. T. Mesens, represented the apex of this movement of consolidation of modern principles, on whose surroundings artists and movements who transformed the British and, by extension, Western cultural panorama gravitated. One of them was the Independent Group, fundamental for the reformulation of post-war architectural issues. The exhibition, which gave the group great visibility, also made way for the consecration of a new form of architectural expression, Brutalism. It took place in 1956, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, under the title "This is Tomorrow", and had the unconditional support of Reyner Banham. It is considered the cradle of pop art (with Richard Hamilton's work) and also the starting point for the challenging work of Alison and Peter Smithson (Figure 8), which united conceptual and formal forces with various other artists, painters, sculptors, and photographers, among whom we should emphasize the figures of Nigel Henderson and Eduardo Paolozzi, who, along with the Smithsons, had executed another important exhibition, "Parallel of Life and Art", in 1953, reformulating modern life conditions linked to design, in particular, and to mass art in general.

In the 1970s, the exhibitions were centered at the great international fairs, following the pavilion tradition, which had already had excellent architectural results since the dawn of the twentieth century: the steel industry pavilion, by Bruno Taut and Franz Hoffmann (Construction Fair,

Figure 9. Assembling of Habitat'67, Montreal, 1967. Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/404803/ad-classics--habitat-67-moshe-safdie/51e85669e8e44e33c300001d-ad--classics-habitat-67-moshe-safdie-image>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

Leipzig, 1913); the Glass Pavilion, by Bruno Taut (Deutsche Werkbund Exhibition, Cologne, 1914); the Makhorka pavilion, by Konstantin Melnikov (All-Russian Agriculture and Industrial Exhibition, Moscow, 1923); by the same architect, the Soviet Union pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of Decorative Arts, 1925, where Le Corbusier's *L'Esprit Nouveau* pavilion was also built; the German pavilion at the Barcelona International Exposition, 1929, by Mies van der Rohe; *Les Temps Modernes* pavilion, by Le Corbusier, at the Paris International Exposition, 1937, which also had pavilions from the Spanish Republic, by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa, and from Finland, by Alvar and Aino Aalto; the Brazilian pavilion, by Oscar Niemeyer, Lúcio Costa, and Roberto Burle Marx (International Exposition, New York, 1939); the Breda pavilion, by Luciano Baldessari (Milan International Fair, 1952); and the Philips pavilion, *Le Poème Électronique*, by Le Corbusier (Universal Exposition, Brussels, 1958).

In 1967, the Montreal "World Exhibitions", known as "Expo'67", stands out; it gathered from the USA pavilion, with its enormous geodesic, work of Buckminster Fuller and S. Sadao, to Habitat'67 (Figure 9), a housing complex designed by Moshe Safdie, which became the symbol for architectural change in the modernity experimental ambit and for the abandonment of functionalist precepts that had dominated architecture until World War II. The summit of this tradition of buildings in fairs was the Universal Exposition of Osaka, 1970, where the Brazilian pavilion stood out, work of Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Flávio Motta, Júlio Katinsky, Ruy Ohtake, and Jorge Caron, and that had the collaboration of artists Marcello Nitsche and Carmela Gross.

In the 1980s, attention turns yet again to the subject's autonomous issues; the concern is not so much building, but thinking about architecture: not so much on the accomplishments, but on the projects. It turns to drawing, to the utopian or fantastic proposals; it goes into the whale's womb and reviews the interior of architecture, trying to expose its essence – in this case, an essence which reclaims history. The starting sign of such cultural upheaval is also an exhibition, the Venice Biennial exhibit (1980), the "Strada Novissima" (Figure 10), under the direction of Paolo Portoghesi, whose theme was La Presenza del Passato (The Presence of the Past). This exhibition launched the post-modernism issue into the global debate and put on the agenda the works of architects such as Robert A. M. Stern, Michael Graves, Oswald Mathias Ungers, Thomas Gordon Smith, Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown, Stanley Tigerman, Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, Massimo Scolari, Arata Isozaki, and Frank O. Gehry. It was a gigantic show, which had yet the participation of critics of the caliber of Vincent Scully, Christian Norberg-Schulz, and Charles Jencks (curiously, Kenneth Frampton, who was invited to participate, withdrew for disagreeing with the postmodern approach). Similar exhibi-

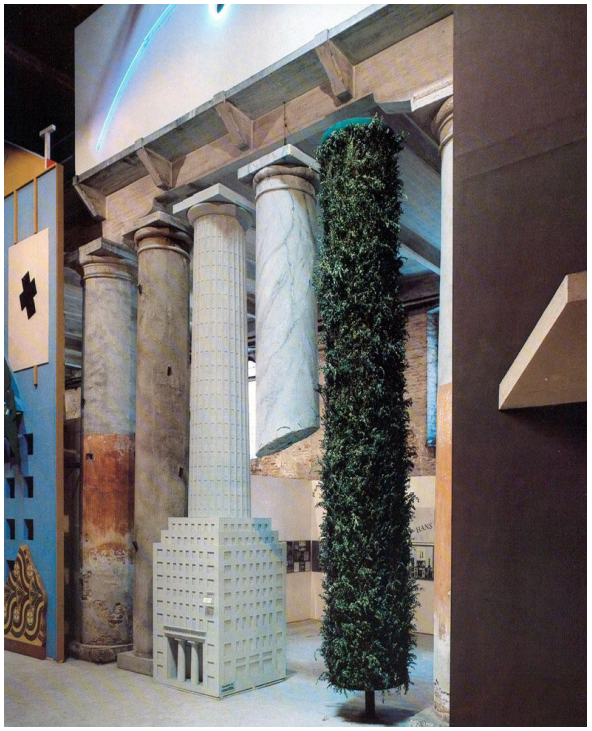


Figura 10. Interior da exposição "Strada Novissima", Veneza, 1980. Detalhe da revista Domus, n. 605. Fachada de Hans Hollein. Disponível em: <https://www.domusweb.it/en/from-the-archive/2012/08/25/-em-la-strada-novissima-em---the-1980-venice-biennale.html>. Acesso em: 19 nov. 2017.

tions became fairly common, even if none of them would repeat this one's impact.

The 1980s were prodigal in architectural drawings exhibitions, which became greatly popular. So much so the expression "paper architectures" was coined to designate the work of utopian quality, imaginative or innovative, unattached to the construction practices architecture had always developed. Often compared to the works of revolutionary architects (such as Étienne-Louis Boullée and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux), the works displayed an enormous vitality of ideas and of critique (ideological, political, social, cultural etc.). In Europe, in the USA, or in Japan, galleries developed exhibitions of different sizes and impact to showcase the works of these architects. Groups who raised a furor in the 1960-70s stood out, such as Superstudio or Archigram, but also architects who used drawing as an instrument of critique, such as Peter Eisenman, Aldo Rossi, or John Hejduk, amongst many. It is curious that this type of exhibition is kept alive to this day. (To indicate only a few of Aldo Rossi's drawings exhibitions, which keep happening nowadays, we may mention: "Aldo Rossi. Architectural Drawings 1980-1996", Antonia Jannone Gallery, 2012; "Aldo Rossi, Italian Architect", Salomon Arts Gallery, 2013; and "Aldo Rossi and the City", Pratt Institute, 2017, amongst others).

But, following the trail of tendency formation inaugurated in 1922 by the work of Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, *The International Style*, expression that became a brand for a generation that included architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Richard Neutra, other exhibitions did the same in the second half of the twentieth century. One of the most known cases, by the impact on the subject discussions in the last 20 years of the century, was the "Deconstructivist Architecture" (Figure 11), at MoMA, in 1988, under curatorship of Mark Wigley and Philip Johnson. Surpassing the post-modernism view, eight years after "Strada Novissima", MoMA launches a new crop of architects: Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Coop Himmelblau, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, and Bernard Tschumi, whose works recover those of Russian constructivists and Van Doesburg's axonometry and deflagrate a fragmented and non-historical approach of architecture.

Figure 11. Access to the "Deconstructivist Architecture" exhibition, Nova York, MoMA, 1988. Available at: <https://aho.no/en/news/impact-deconstructivist-architecture>. Accessed: 19 Nov 2017.

All these exhibitions were thought out by curators, who at times were the artists themselves,

as in "De Stijl", by Van Doesburg (Paris, 1923), sometimes professional curators, like at MoMA, sometimes art historians, critics or specialists of all sorts, as in the case of Paolo Portoghesi and Philip Johnson (with every nuance, for Johnson was many things besides a specialist). Regardless of the type of curator, the task is always the same: select works by one or several artists (in our case, architects, landscape artists, urban planners, designers) and showcase them to a varied public, composed, however, of a significant number of laymen. Yet, it matters whether the exhibition is done by an important museum institution, such as MoMA or Pompidou, for instance, or by an art gallery, as important as it may be. Normally, institutions have specific collections they may use (the case of Mies van der Rohe at MoMA, who keeps his archive, or even RIBA or Bauhaus, who also have material about the architect). In these cases, exhibitions usually have a comprehensive museum quality and present panoramic and educational views on the artist or movement they address. Exhibitions at galleries or small art centers are almost always of much modest dimensions and address specific issues; they may be educational (although it is not common), but they generally intend to raise some specific issue or theme. This always depends on the curator's standpoint. When exhibitions were organized by the artists themselves, this aspect was more evident: there is no doubt on Van Doesburg's intentions in "De Stijl" exhibition, for example, or the Independent Group's, in the attempt of situating "This is Tomorrow" as an inflexion point on the perception and the making of the works of art. But when we must answer to and understand the curator's intention, this situation is more obscure.

Some issues that arise in this case pertain to these professionals' standpoint, and it is important to understand them, for, as previously seen, architecture exhibitions may have a great impact on subject formation, on how we see and comprehend architecture and, by extension, city and society. Exhibitions so close in time and of such different approaches, such as "Transformation in Modern Architecture" (MoMA, 1979) and "Strada Novissima" (Venice, 1980) showcase, at the same time, the vitality and the multiplicity of standpoints they may present. Consequence of intelligent and very well-informed curators, these exhibitions perceived (and presented) the world (of architecture) in completely opposite manners, providing totalizing views of reality, consume as such by their visitors, but that do not necessarily constitute reality itself. The responsibility for the selection of reality is the curator, as well as the presented world view. The visitor easily accepts this institutionalized proposal.

For this reason, it is important to know how the definition of an exhibition theme came to be. In the old exhibitions, of the 1920-30s, the needs were propagandist. As well as manifests, which were the conceptual (or dogmatic) pieces used by *avant-garde* architects (and artists) to gain ad-

hesion to the new ways of comprehending and assimilating art, exhibitions were formal and operative manifestations of presentation and persuasion. They were *pièce de résistance*. Ideological propagation and political positioning always accompanied these forms of artistic work display. The decision became didactic when great cultural institutions took on the showcasing initiative and pure official propaganda replaced theme definition when the states promoted universal expositions and fairs. But the world today is extremely diversified; the last great international event may have been Sevilla'92, or Hannover'2000, but the exhibitions do appear in the world cultural spectrum, and transparency on the reasons that make an institution carry out an architecture exhibition are very relevant. What is the interest in supporting or hosting an exhibition with a theme devoted to the field of architecture?

Once this aspect is defined, the issue arises on how a "concept" to be developed at an architecture exhibition was chosen, which is a more personal than institutional trait. Although it is evident that an institution invites a curator to organize an exhibition considering that their characteristics (all of them, from political to aesthetic, from professional to personal) match those of the institution, there is an enormous leeway that may affect this development, especially because, in the course of time, the curators acquired great power and weight on the decisions that affect the final result of an exhibition, some of them transformed into great media spectacles due to these professionals' intentions and work. Institutions also profit from this type of situation, for events of a strong personal nature tend to attract considerable public.

But what do they intend this public to see in an architecture exhibition? When we talk about built work, which, as seen before, were many since the beginning of the exhibitions, in the first years of the twentieth century, and that remain important, judging, for instance, by the success of the Serpentine Galleries pavilions, the experience seems evident and immediate. But what happens when the public must deal with architectural representations? Do they recognize in drawings, photographs, collages, montages, physical models and nowadays digital representations and videos, the determining characteristics of what is, or what should be, architecture or do they only see pictures and drawings? Except for didactic exhibitions, such as those promoted by MoMA with the Circulating Exhibitions, how to conjugate the laymen's and the specialist's understanding, the common architect's and the critic's or historian's? Who is the real target of an architecture exhibition?

These questions – why do we exhibit? what for? to whom do we exhibit? – confront the curator with the world, since he [curator] is responsible for what is shown and for the way it is done. Do we exhibit because the theme is important or

because the curator is important? What is important: what is exhibited or what the curator thinks about the theme? The exhibition speaks of the curator or of its theme? When the material is selected, an interpretative option is evidenced (Drexler v. Portoghesi): there is a curator who is building a work – the exhibition – whose clear theme may be very important, but a segmented theme is a political and aesthetic option that identifies whom? The curator, the promoting institution or the object of the exhibition?

Each on the exhibitions mentioned here adopted a precise standpoint, because each one was historically built, as the world of exhibitions was constructed. The first ones were indeed natural continuity of the artist's production; the institutional ones were done as ideological constructions which supported the formation of a society's cultural understanding, or at least part of a society – commonly, the part who had access to culture. The ones who responded to specific interests were almost always intended to use, in a more or less commercial manner, a plastic subproduct, notably drawings and similar representations, whose purpose was more financial than cultural.

What are, then, the challenges faced by the curators? What type of material was researched, what was chosen, and what was showcased at the exhibition? A curator is or may be considered a specialist on the exhibited theme? Their selections of the material forming the documental base for the exhibition theme is pertinent because they know everything about the theme or because they have a special sensibility that leads them to find determinant pieces for the narrative production they are assembling?

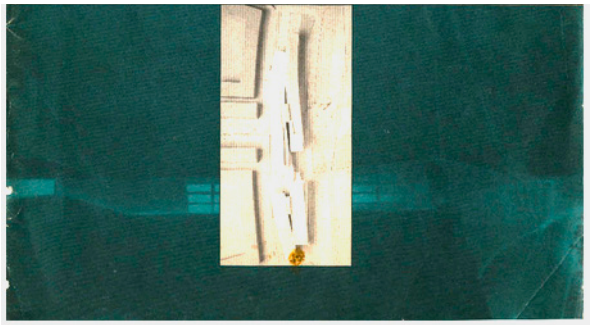
Are we, the public, conscious of all this conceptual and political, educational and propagandist, individual and public plot, when we are at an architecture exhibition? Evidently not. We are mere consumers of a cultural product which, historically determined, has followed us for over 100 years and to which we are resiliently accustomed, adapting ourselves without thinking much about what is presented to us. We see a Peter Eisenman exhibition and think we are seeing Peter Eisenman, but we forget the curator's mediation. On the other hand, we see a scenographically exhibition assembled by Bia Lessa, and what is being presented is almost indifferent. Exhibitions (of architecture or of anything else) are orchestrated and precisely thought-out actions, professional in almost every case, intended to produce very specific effects. We cannot think of them as mere naïve cultural events. They force us – or should force us – to take sides, because they have sides, always historically positioned.

Today, before an irrational conservative fury (yet politically directed, which is not irrational at all),

our focus on exhibitions should go back to being self-conscious, i.e., we should pay attention to what they propose, what they induce, teach or provoke. Conservative anger sheds light on a crucial cultural experience of modern society. Exhibitions were born with this society, they are consubstantial part of the patterns and needs of modern society, they are libertarian or educational aspects, commercial or promotional, enriching or depleting, which accompany us in cultural formation. Being conscious of their historical, political and cultural dimensions fulfills us as citizens.

For these reasons and aware of the great importance of architecture exhibitions and all they entail (artists, curators, institutions, and public) for the knowledge and the perception of architecture, we invited an important group of curators to expose what they think about the subject on this special issue of *arq.urb.*

■



Architecture Exhibitions in Brazil, a brief history

Agnaldo Farias*
Translation: Escritório de Tradução (USJT)

*Professor at FAUUSP. He is currently curator of the Oscar Niemeyer Museum in Curitiba. Was General Curator of the Tomie Ohtake Institute (2000/2012) and today is Curatorial Counselor of the same institution. Was also curator of MAMRJ (1998/2000) and curator of Temporary Exhibitions at MACUSP (1990/1992). Was Curator of the Brazilian Pavilion of 54 a. Venice Biennale (2011), General Curator of the 29th. Bienal de São Paulo (2010), of the Brazilian Representation of the 25th. (1992) and Deputy of the 23rd. (1996).

Abstract

The history of architectural exhibitions in Brazil is permeated by erratic movements, generally divergent initiatives, most of them endowed with initial originality and vigor, but which rapidly decline. Few survive, and when this happens, they are characterized by non-linearity, both with regard to the irregular periodicity of exposures and the oscillation of the results obtained. An unstable picture, you see, to some extent in tune with what also happens with art exhibitions, even though these are much more consolidated. The following text gives a concise account of the recent history of these exhibitions, beginning with a description of the failed project of an architecture curator at the “Museu de Arte de São Paulo” (São Paulo Art Museum) in the early 1990s. He goes on to mention an exceptional initiative that took place in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of the same decade, until arriving at the Tomie Ohtake Institute and Museu da Casa Brasileira, both São Paulo institutions responsible for two consistent programs, although sensitive to the circumstances of a fragile system. There is also an edition of the São Paulo Architecture Biennial, whose success contrasts and reinforces a history marked by outrages.

Keywords: Exhibitions. Mounts. Museografia.

In 1992, Fábio Magalhães, curator at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and former Art History professor at the Mackenzie University, wanted to expand the exhibition program of the institution which was designed by Lina Bo Bardi. He invited Anne Marie Sumner, architect and professor, to design an architecture exhibition program in the best art museum in Brazil, that like other museums in São Paulo and other capitals, did not have architectural shows. It was about time for that to happen since architectural exhibitions have the undeniable merit of introducing emerging propositions, reviewing historical productions through varied re-readings and, in Brazil, fertilizing the interventions in a dramatically vast country both in its history and geography.

Sumner, a meticulous researcher and professor, ran an active office and was the author of an intriguing research about Minimalism and Architecture relations. She thought the most impactful way would be to display Peter Eisenman's artwork. Eisenman's exhibition was quite daring for a country where modern thought had a great influence and "postmodern" was generically seen as bad. This is how Robert Venturi, Ricardo Bofill, Richard Meier and Zaha Hadid were seen, Eisenman's paradigm contrasted with a corbusieran matrix, and his work is still popular nowadays.

Anne Marie Sumner traveled to New York to meet Eiseman and she said he reacted to the invitation skeptically. Yet, she was motivated by her fellow curator and her fearless willingness to work on a project of highest standards, and also because there was nothing to lose but the time dedicated to design the exhibition. So, she accepted the challenge. Sumner was dedicated to arrange with the museum the necessary conditions to carry out the project and in the strikingly impeccable exhibition "Malhas, Escalas, Rastros e Dobras na Obra de Peter Eisenman / Griddings, Scalings, Tracings and Foldings in the work of Peter Eisenman", opened in 1993 (Figure 1), with exquisite

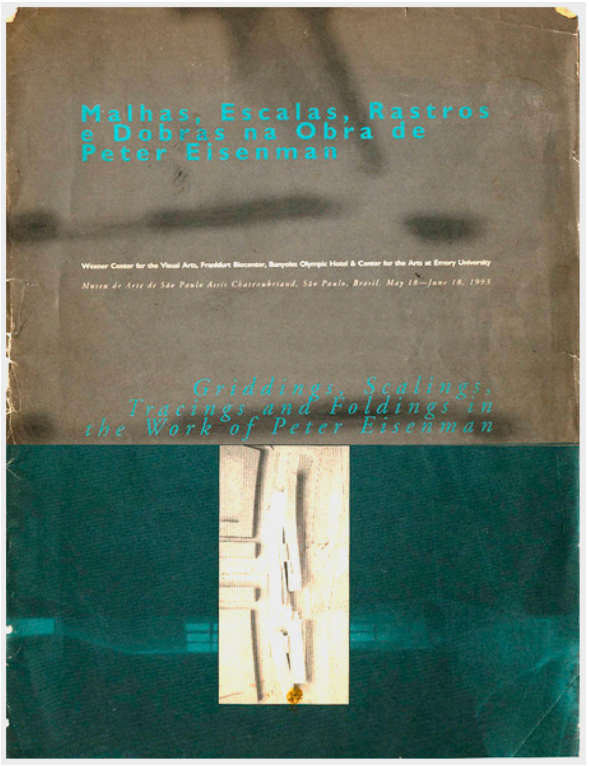


Figure 1. Exhibition catalog (cover): "Malhas, Escalas, Rastros e Dobras na Obra de Peter Eisenman / Griddings, Scalings, Tracings and Foldings in the work of Peter Eisenman". Source: Sumner (1993).

scale models, photos and urban sheets. There was a catalog with the same title containing the exhibited material as well as critical texts by Otília Arantes and Sophia Silva Telles, a profound interview with the historian Nicolau Sevcenko, and the article "The End of Classicism: The End of the Beginning, The End of the End" by Eisenman.

The exhibition had a great impact on the architectural scene, which was not used to this kind of architecture exhibitions in general, especially with such quality. Eisenman's presence was well-celebrated and his lecture had a large attendance, therefore, MASP's exhibition was off to a great start. But, when Sumner was talking to Eisenman, to her surprise, he confessed that the exhibition had surpassed all his expectations and that he had never seen an exhibition of such quality (i.e. so complete and expensive). A complete irony, since the system of the Brazilian museums are in a permanent instability. Architecture is far from being important to the artistic production because it is preferably addressed to a professional category. So how could a program of architecture exhibitions of such magnitude like Sumner's be implemented? It would not be possible, and it still is not.

But the result of this story could not be more ironic: the "Malhas, Escalas..." exhibition was the first and last architecture program at MASP.

The peculiarity of the failure of what would have been the first architecture exhibition program of a great Brazilian museum is going to be used to introduce the complexity of our panorama. In order to do so, it is necessary to reflect on some of its causes, starting from the lack of debates on the emerging national and international architectural production and what was taught in schools, in general the uncritical transfer of modern notions. Curiously, this was the side effect of our successful modernity: Niemeyer in the front: the catatonic reverence of masters such as Sérgio Bernardes, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Vilanova Artigas, Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Lina Bo Bardi, João Filgueiras, among others. We tried to honor these great contributions, when actually we were scattering it. In this provincial context, for the most established architects and the institutions that were associated with them, international architecture shows (with examples of recent production) were almost needless, besides they were expensive and far from attracting the attention and resources of arts sponsors.

Anne Marie Sumner graduated in the late 1970s. Like her peers, she was marked by the importance architecture had in culture, especially after the postmodernism outbreak, a plethoric notion for good and evil. Her generation witnessed the creation of the Venice Biennale and architecture museums, copious publications everywhere, urban interventions in Paris, London, Buenos Aires, etc. Not to mention the booming editorial field. In fact, it should be noted that in 1960 "The Architecture of the City" by Rossi and "Complex-

ity and Contradiction in Architecture" by Venturi were published in 1995.

The young architects struggled against the lack of progress in the architectural environment but without much success. And in the eagerness to engage in this debate, it was predictable that the result of situations such as the one described , typical of a confused environment, where the conjuncture, the objective conditions, the goals to be achieved, and the strategies were not properly evaluated. In case of MASP's exhibition, the curator can also hold responsibility.

Despite the failure of Eisenman's show, the Center for Architecture, Urbanism, and Infrastructure (CAUI) was inaugurated in the late 1990s. Luiz Paulo Conde was the only mayor architect ever elected in the city Rio and he was responsible for the CAUI foundation. Under Jorge Czajkowski's command, a consistent program of exhibitions, publications and debates was set up, along with expectations from architect community. By this time, things were more refined and observant, and at the same time with relative capacity to attract the laymen who were beginning to understand the importance of architecture and urbanism in their lives. CAUI opened in 1997 and operated until 2000, after that it worked only for public institutions whose main objective was not have an objective at all.

In São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil and the second largest in Latin America, the panorama is still outdated, even after upgrading the Brazilian House Museum (MCB) and the opening of Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), both in 2000. During this period, it is also important to highlight Vitruvius website and magazine in the editorial industry, due to the effort of Abilio Guerra critic and curator, and the publishers Martins Fontes and Cosac & Naify (due to the financial crisis in Brazil, Cosac & Naify shut down in 2016). The X Architecture Biennale in São Paulo was held in 2013 and curated by Guilherme Wisnik. Since this event is a topical action and does not have a plan to be implemented throughout the years, it should be analyzed separately.

MCB and ITO could implement a reasonable program of architecture exhibitions within rational budgets that were distributed moderately by the marketing directors of sponsoring companies, especially ITO, that unlike the state-owned MCB, is a private non-profit institution. The sponsors – as marketing directors – are skeptical about architecture shows because they are not as attractive as the arts. The tiring negotiations between curators and people responsible for the company's budget transformed Brazilian museums and cultural centers into a great struggle. Now, a vast majority are open counters that offer exhibitions of all kinds, not only architecture or more or less interesting exhibitions, but exhibitions that are already paid. With that, what is shown is not necessarily what it wants to show but what it has to show. The "how to show" is even less discussed, because the exhi-

bition is often accompanied by someone responsible for the production guidelines.

The better, the more equipped and the more prestigious the institution, the greater the chance of receiving a quality proposal, and in line with its own program. In view of this passive situation, it should be asked what is the role of museums as a center of the production of knowledge? Moreover, what is the curator's job?

As a curator at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), an institution dedicated to the exhibition of contemporary art and its modern references, during its first ten years, and now as a curatorial counselor, I have experienced – together with the architect Ricardo Ohtake – the hardship to implement an architectural program consistent with the scope of the institution that was not only focused on receiving externally produced shows. With a lot of effort, we held exhibitions by Vilanova Artigas, Oscar Niemeyer, Alvaro Siza, SANAA, Steven Holl, and others nearly once a year. In 2014, we also offered an annual architecture award, the AkzoNobel Architecture Award.

Currently, the main objective of the institution is to display exhibitions dedicated to Brazilian architecture. The first show curated by Abilio Guerra used significant Brazilian modernist works. Through photos, he evaluated varied boards and models, the history of the adaptations operated by the Brazilian architecture in the European architectural paradigm, and the way it considered our climate, geography and history. The second show was curated by Julio Katinsky, who was interested in working on our living spaces. So he approached the Guinle Park and the Pedregulho Housing Complex, both in Rio de Janeiro, and the the Conjunto Nacional in São Paulo, and other fundamental productions. The third show, by André Corrêa do Lago, was about the relation between architecture and photography, something that was seen differently by another curator, Nelson Brissac Peixoto, who invited three other major photographers to show "what the city hides".

The number of photographs on both Corrêa do Lago and Brissac Peixoto exhibitions should be understood as an intelligent way of getting around the lack of resources by articulating relevant issues with cheap media. We are in 2017 and we are still facing the task of building and establishing basic aspects of the architectural environment, including the production of exhibitions.

São Paulo, 2017.

References:

SUMNER, Anne Marie (org.). **Malhas, Escalas, Rastros e Dobras na Obra de Peter Eisenman / Griddings, Scalings, Tracings and Foldings in the work of Peter Eisenman.** São Paulo: MASP, 1993. Catálogo de exposição. ■

To Interpret architecture: curatorship as a formational practice

Renato Anelli*

Translation: Revisoteca Serviços Textuais

*He is a Full teacher at IAU-USP in São Carlos, São Paulo, Brazil. Nowadays, he is an adviser at Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi Institute and Coordinator on the field of Architecture and Urbanism at FAPESP. He was the Municipal Secretary of Public Works, Transportation, and Public Services in São Carlos (from 2001 to 2004). Council Municipal President of Urban Development of São Carlos (from 2011 to 2013). He took part in the Fiscal Council of ANPUR (2007/09) and he was Executive Secretary (2007/10) and member of the Fiscal Council (2011/12) of ANPARQ. His main periodical publications are *Architettura Contemporanea: Brasile (2008)* and *Rino Levi: Arquitetura e Cidade* (2001). Independent Lecturer (School of Engineering of São Carlos, 2001), Doctor Professor (FAU_USP, 1995), a researcher at University Institute of Architecture of Venecia (supported by CNPq, 1994-1998), Master's Degree in History (Unicamp, 1990), Architect (PUC-Campinas, 1982).

Abstract

Uncommon in Brazil, architectural exhibitions offer opportunities for interpretation of specific works, which depend on curative action. The article traces a brief evaluation of the conditions of production of these exhibitions in large US centers with the Brazilian precariousness, a decisive limit so that the intellectual capacity installed here can produce samples of great relevance. It highlights the author's reflections on his practice in curating architectural exhibitions at the Casa de Vidro, home of the Bardi Institute and the challenges of exposing items from the collection within a space designed and lived by the couple Lina and Pietro.

Keywords: Architecture exhibitions. Lina Bo Bardi. Glass House (Casa de Vidro).

Although we live in huge buildings and areas designed by architects, the understanding of the architectural body of work requires intellectual interpretative effort. Such effort happens through operations that demand knowledge of the architectonic culture built over time. Without the ability to locate the work in the location, in the time and in the societies in which they are produced, we are taking the risk of a naive reading. My academic activity is based on the idea of history can prevent the enjoyment *naif* of the density of knowledge accumulated that acquiesces the architecture. Nevertheless, even though it is indispensable, a restrict history to the disciplinary field of architecture is not enough because the design and the production of an architectonic work use knowledge emerged from other subject areas. So, its interpretation perhaps is the most complex one among the other arts. In the absence of this intellectual effort, the architecture easily provides to the sensorial enjoyment the qualities of the experimented spaces.

Just as bibliography productions, the curatorship of exhibitions is an exercise of interpretation of an architectonic work that aims at the general public understanding, lay or not. In this sense, the range of my academic activity to the curatorship of exhibitions was an outcome of the research and its dissemination through articles, books, websites, conferences, and interviews. It means that the exhibitions that interest me the most are those ones that promote the formation and diffusion of knowledge regarding architecture.

The exhibitions present particularities that differ them from those other means, especially for the relationship between enjoyment and movement of the visitor throughout the exhibition space. The narrative that constitutes the interpretation of the work exposed by the curatorship does not depend on the linear sequences as in books or movies. The exhibition space can offer a bigger liberty to the visitor, as in means of routes as in means of

the relations between the exposed items, allowing the enjoyment in one exhibition to be a proper exercise of free interpretation about a proposed agenda by the curatorship.

Architectonic exhibitions differ themselves from the fine arts for the lack of the work itself. In contrast to what happens in exhibitions of paintings and sculptures, the exposed building attends only through selected and organized representations by the curatorship. It is exposed not only the items produced especially to facilitate the understanding of the work, but also the original items, such as drawings, photographs, audiovisual media, templates, furniture and objects of applied arts, fragments of the building, prototypes, which offer to the visitor the contact (almost) direct with accessible objects only for teams of research.

Architectural Exhibitions, in Brazil and abroad

Architectural Exhibitions are very uncommon, especially in Brazil, and just a few ones present formative and academic approach, such as the ones presented in a static way. Of all the exhibitions that I have visited abroad since my first stay in Italy in 1994, I highlight two exhibitions organized by Barry Bergdoll at the Museum of Modern Art – MoMA, in Nova York. "Latin American in Construction: Architecture 1955 1985" is an example of investigative curatorship, which has explored art collections for seven years in 10 countries outside of the United States of America, with the support of two co-curators and all the Architecture and Design Department of the museum[1]. Most recently, Bergdoll bid farewell to the museum with the exhibition "Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive", meant to offer a new interpretation of the architect's work from the transference of his collection from the two Taliesin to the Avery Architecture & Fine Arts Library at Columbia University and MoMA, initiated in 2012.

Both exhibitions made usage of an outstanding institutional structure supported on the competence of raising substantial resources that allow some stability to medium and long-term works: seven years in the first, five years in the second. Even though the existing intellectual ability in the architectural field in Brazil can be equivalent to the one that we are able to find in countries of the western hemisphere, the institutional and financial conditions of the organization of exhibitions are incomparable. Wholly dependent on resources of culture support programs through fiscal resignation, the few Brazilian exhibitions of architecture take place due to the isolated effort of curators. Significant museums do not offer exhibitions of architecture, regularly or not. If anything, they host exhibitions organized abroad or accept *freelancers*' proposals, considering that they are being supported by a sponsor.

In this Brazilian context, it is hard to find architecture exhibitions, independent of their quality. Rio de Janeiro received some exhibitions at a spe-

1.Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955-1985. Curador Barry Bergdoll, co-curators Jorge Francisco Liernur and Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas, Patricio del Real, assistant curator at Department of Architecture & Design of the MoMA.

cial institution for a few years, the Architecture and Urbanism Center. It was inaugurated in 1997 while the administration of the mayor Luiz Paulo Conde, an architect. The center was managed by Jorge Czajkowski, a professor at UFRJ and responsible for large exhibitions on the appreciation of the architecture of Rio de Janeiro[2]. Beyond this institution, we can also highlight the "O Rio jamais visto (The Rio you have never seen before)", by Ana Luiza Nobre at the Banco do Brasil Cultural Center in 1998, which presented many not built projects, consisting on works that would yet cause a huge impact on the city's layout. We can notice that in the Rio de Janeiro, the period of these important exhibitions coincides with the development of relevant architectonic and urban works, such as the programs called Favela Bairro and Rio Cidade. Exhibitions, academic publications, research and qualitative projects implanted in the city allowed Roberto Segre to speak on the "Renaissance" of the Rio de Janeiro architecture on those years, what did not sound like an exaggeration back then[4].

In São Paulo, I highlight the exhibition "Arquitetura Brasileira: Viver na floresta (Brazilian Architecture: Livin in the woods"), organized by Abilio Guerra in 2010 at Tomie Ohtake Institute and the celebrative exhibitions of the centennial of Lina Bo Bardi held in 2014/ 2015, as well as "Maneiras de expor: Arquitetura expositiva de Lina Bo Bardi (Ways of Exhibiting: Expositive Architecture of Lina Bo Bardi", by Giancarlo Latorraca at Casa Brasileira Museum and the "Arquitetura Política de Lina Bo Bardi (Political Architecture of Lina Bo Bardi)", by André Vainer and Marcelo Ferraz at SESC Pompeia, all of them held in São Paulo. In all exhibitions, the curator's role is, clearly, informing the public and demonstrating a proposal of an interpretative strand.

An Institution that centered a relevant set of exhibitions of architecture produced in Brazil was the Bienal de Arquitetura de São Paulo (São Paulo Biennial of Architecture), reopened in 1993 after 20 years of the execution of the first one[4]. Special Exhibitions exposed works by already renowned architects, such as Oscar Niemeyer, Vilanova Artigas, Lina Bo Bardi, alongside others practically unknown by the new generations, such as Rino Levi, Victor Dubugras, Abrahão Sanovicz, Jorge Machado Moreira, Fernando Chacel. New thematic exhibitions arose, as the examples of "Construir a Escola, Construir a Cidade. A experiência do Convênio Escolar em São Paulo: 1948-54 (Building Schools, Building the City: The Scholar Covenant Experience in São Paulo: 1948-54)", "Cidades Jardins: a busca do equilíbrio social e ambiental 1898-1998" (Garden Cities: The search for social and environmental equilibrium 1898-1998), "Arquitetura e Habitação Social em São Paulo: 1989-1992" (Architecture and Social Housing in São Paulo: 1989-1992), among others. Exhibitions that brought to wide public research that were becoming developed in post-graduation courses of the main universities of the country.

2.You may want to read the necrology written by Roberto Conduru, Jorge Paul Czajkowski, Drops 037.04, 2010. Available at < http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/drops/11.037/3630 >.

3.SEGRE, Roberto. Guias de Arquitetura Carioca. In Resenhas Online, 01.22, jan. 2002. Available at < http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/resenhasonline/01.001/3257 >.

4.This article was written right before the releasing of the book Arquitetura em Retrospectiva, organized by Elisabete França.

However, the exhibitions always had to face the difficulties of attending to the necessity of the developer, the Brazilian Architects Institute, in promoting the project of the production of whom is affiliated with them. The balance between the corporate celebration of the class of architects and the promotion of investigative exhibitions.

Even the curator's image is not very present in architecture exhibitions, one needs only to remember that even today the Brazilian Architects Institute are reluctant about determining how curators, the responsible people for the Biennials of Architecture of São Paulo, are replaced by the title of competent director in some editions.

Dismissed from the Biennial Foundation building at Ibirapuera, it has almost been a decade that The Architecture Biennial wanders through the city, in search of a bigger integration towards the society. Banished from a referential physical location, it has diluted in an irreversible way in a process out of reach of any curator, do not matter how competent and devoted the professional might be.

A Casa de Vidro (Glass House) as an exhibition site.

In this a little upsetting context, a new idea of organizing architecture exhibitions at the headquarters of Badi Institute, the Casa de Vidro (Glass House), arose. Owner of one of the largest private architectural collections of the country[5], it is coherent that the Bardi Institute should promote exhibitions from curatorships' projects supported by thematic researches. The performing of these exhibitions inside the Casa de Vidro itself, in turn, stems from the space created in the living room due to the sharing of the heritage of Pietro Maria Bardi after his death in 1999[6]. The sharing resulted in the removal of the historic furniture, paintings, sculptures, decorative objects, and rugs, deconstructing the integrity of the place that had been built throughout the couple's life.

In the impossibility of fully restoring the site, the option of using the room as an exhibition site is also pertinent to its history. The pictures taken of the newly-constructed house interior in 1951 demonstrated that it was the place of rehearsal to the museology that would be created in the new MASP headquarters in the Avenida Paulista a few years later.

I had the opportunity of curating four exhibitions in the Bardi Institute headquarters. The first three ones aimed the presentation of the items that composed the collection, while the fourth one proposed a comparative study of the work by Lina Bo Bardi with foreign works that were produced at the same period as hers. Debates and lectures complemented the initiatives. It was a very specific situation regarding curatorship associated with a collection and a projected and experienced space by the architect herself, who was the object of the exhibitions.

5.The collection is composed by around 7 thousand original drawings of projects, 15 thousand photographies, textual documents, artworks, furniture, audiovisual media, professionally secured and supported by resources from Petrobras, Fapesp and Caixa Econômica Federal.

6. The couple Lina and Pietro did not have any children and they donated all their goods to the Bardi Institute. However, Pietro had daughters from his first marriage, heirs that claimed their part of the heritage after his death.

Figure 1. Detail of the exhibition "Anhangabaú, Tropical Garden". Glass House, São Paulo, October 13th – November 24th, 2013. Source: author's collection.

Figure 2. Detail of the exhibition "Lina at home: Pathways". Glass House, São Paulo, April 12th – July 19th, 2015. Source: author's collection.

"Anhangabaú, Tropical Garden" ("Anhangabaú, Jardim Tropical")

A special challenge was finding an expositive system with competitive holders to the Glass House. The first, "Anhangabaú, Jardim Tropical" ("Anhangabaú, Tropical Garden"), was composed by a large mockup of a project by Lina Bo Bardi, made specially for a contest promoted by Emurb in 1982 and by the original drawings, sketches and practices planks, all exposed in holders similar to clipboards[7]. The exhibition was complemented by two days of debates with guests, in the room turned into an auditorium, which provided for new perspectives about the architect and this peculiar work of urbanism. (Figure 1)

"Lina at Home: Pathways"

In the beginning of 2015, we organized the exhibition "Lina em Casa: Percursos" (Lina at Home: Pathways) as a part of the celebrations of the centennial of the architect[8]. The aim of this exhibition was presenting records of the intellectual and political transformation of Lina Bo Bardi in the years that she lived in Brazil, when she evolved from a Eurocentric position into a special knowledge regarding Brazilian culture, mainly the appreciation of popular culture. Excerpts of mail as yet unprecedented were unveiled to the public, by the side of documents that contextualized them as special moments of her life. Photographs, drawings, videos, and mockups composed the exhibition that had spread to several sectors of the Glass House. (Figure 2)

The expo-graphic project by the architect Marina Correia has created vertical and horizontal platforms, structured by slender black tubes, forming transparent edges of cobbles. Besides simple panels to be glued to the banners with reproductions, some holders allowed the presentation of original pieces, flat or volumetric, protected by acrylic boxes. The abstract and transparent tone of the holders subtly demarcates the space of the panels, making them being the exceptionality in the environment of the glazed room, but without contrast. It affirms its condition of a new intervention, but in a delicate way, without obstructing the continuity of the space. An exhibition system was set up that was very suitable for the home and flexible, and was used in other expositions with different contents. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Detail of the exhibition "Lina at home: Pathways". Glass House, São Paulo, April 12th – July 19th., 2015. Source: author's collection.

7."Anhangabaú, Tropical Garden", exhibition curated by Renato Anelli, sponsorship by Papaiz and mockup made by the architect José Renato Dibo at the Laboratory of Templates of IAU USP – São Carlos.

8.The centennial of Lina Bo Bardi was celebrated at December 5th, 2014. The Bardi

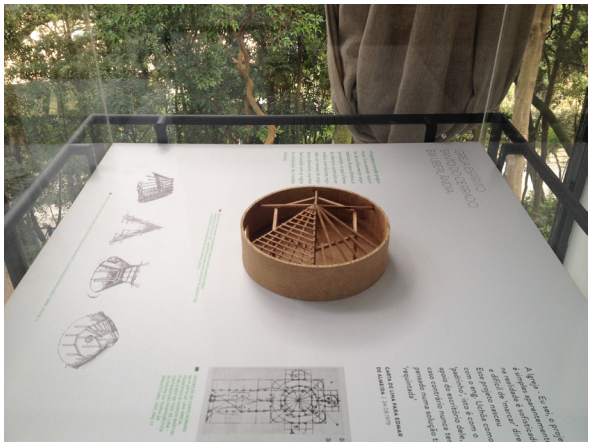


Figure 4. Detail of the exhibition "Lina at home: Pathways". Glass House, São Paulo, April 12th – July 19th, 2015. Source: author's collection.

Whenever possible, we try to establish relationships between some exposed contents and the house itself. In the last three exhibitions, it was selected academic publications about the collection of the couple Bardi and exposed along the library. In the exhibition "Lina at Home: Pathways", a holder was positioned on the concrete floor by the side of the oven and the barbecue pit, showing a picture of its original situation, with the architect amongst the greenery and pets. A drawing of a cat made by her on the still-fresh concrete floor represents with affectio her husband Pietro, according to sketches in letters exchanged by the couple. Items of the exhibition and the house interact, reverberating the strong presence of the recordings of the life of the Bardi couple. (Figure 4)

"The Design impasse"

The exhibition "The Design Impasse"[9], which took place between May and July of 2016 introduced the projects of furniture by Lina Bo Bardi performed from her staying in Salvador (1959 and 1964). It was about the moment of the beginning of critical deviation of Lina Bo Bardi, a consequence of her engagement in the national-popular project arising while the governments of Juscelino Kubitschek, Jânio Quadros, and João Goulart. In it, the regional development of Bahia constituted an effervescent situation. The ethnographic research and the exposing of "Nordeste" ("Northeast"), conducted by Lina gave subsidy to the formation of a school of Industrial Drawing

Figure 5. Detail of the exhibition "The Design Impasse. Furniture by Lina Bo Bardi: 1959 – 1992". Glass House, São Paulo, May 28th – July 31st, 2016. Source: author's collection.

intended to transforming the regional handcrafts-manship into a system of the industry of low technology and intensive usage of the workforce. After the interruption of this project by the Estate Coup of 1964, Lina disowned the serial industrial manufacturing, acknowledging the furniture production as a part of the architecture project. After the "Cadeira de Beira de Estrada" (Chair of the Edge of the Highway), resolved with four tied props, they would become the wooden furniture made on laminated timber at SESC Pompéia and the chair and tables produced in her returning to Salvador in 1986. (Figures 5 and 6)

The exhibition presents the main elements of the architects' practice in this context: texts, drawings and photographs of the time period by the side of the furniture of the collection of Bardi Institute and of SESC Pompéia. Unlikely to what is

Institute formed a coordination of the commemorative activities, aiming optimizing the material of the collection. It was defined a period of 12 months, with start on August of 2014, to the promotion of exhibitions, which took place in São Paulo, Munich, Zurich and Rome. The exhibition "Lina at home: Pathways" had the curatorship by Anna Carboncini and Renato Anelli, with the sponsorship by the Culture State Secretariat of São Paulo, from April to July of 2015.

9. "The Design Impasse. Furniture by Lina Bo Bardi: 1959 – 1992". Curatorships by Renato Anelli and sponsored by PRONAC – Ministry Of Culture. Between May and July of 2016.

Figure 6. Folder of the exhibition "The Design Impasse. Furniture by Lina Bo Bardi: 1959 – 1992". Glass House, São Paulo, May 28th – July 31st, 2016. Source: author's collection.

Figure 7. Detail of the exhibition "The Design Impasse. Furniture by Lina Bo Bardi: 1959 – 1992". Glass House, São Paulo, May 28th – July 31st, 2016. Source: author's collection.

more common in museums, it was encouraged that some people would sit on some of them. (Figures 7 and 8)

"Glass Houses"

The last exhibition "Glass Houses"[10] differs from the previous ones because of the expansion of the theme to the comparison with three other houses with transparent characteristics similar to the Bardi house: the Farnsworth houses, the Mies van der Rohe (Plano, Illinois, 1945-1951) house, the Glass House by Philip Johnson (New Canaan, Connecticut. 1946-1949) and the house Ray and Charles Eames (Pacific Palisades, California. 1945-1949). For the diversity of the collections, we opted not to present the original items rather than authorized reproductions[11]. Between 2015 and 2017, the collections of New York and Los Angeles, were a target of a broad research, besides the visitations to the houses in the USA, which allowed the elaboration of the main hypothesis of comparison.

Figure 8. Detail of the table on laminated of the exhibition "The Design Impasse. Furniture by Lina Bo Bardi: 1959 – 1992". Glass House, São Paulo, May 28th – July 31st, 2016. Source: author's collection.

The panels presented the houses on their sites, development of the project drawing and current and old photographs. Besides their projects and constructive technical characteristics, the exhibition presents recordings of the lives in the houses until their transformations in museums.

10."Glass Houses", curatorship by Renato Anelli, Ana Lúcia Cerávolo and Sol Camacho. Sponsorship by Glass Industry AGC through Statual PROAC. From October of 2017 to March of 2018.
11.The drawings and photographs of Glass House by Philip Johnson are at the Avery Library, Columbia University and at Getty Foundation. The drawings of Farnsworth are at MoMA NY and the drawings and images of Eames house are at Getty Foundation, in Los Angeles.

Figure 9. Mockup 1:200 of the Glass House in the exhibition "Glass Houses". Glass House, São Paulo, October 12th – March 04th, 2017. Source: author's collection.

Figure 10. Mockup 1:100 of the Glass House in the exhibition "Glass Houses". Glass House, São Paulo, October 12th – March 04th, 2017. Source: author's collection.

Figure 11. Mockup 1:5 of the Glass House in the exhibition "Glass Houses". Glass House, São Paulo, October 12th – March 04th, 2017. Source: author's collection.

Each house had three mockups in different scales[12]. One in the scale of 1:200 to explicit its implementation strategy; another one of 1:100, highlighting the structuring of the internal space, and finally, the mockup in the scale of 1:5 of a corner, where the structural systems and the transparent sealing is reproduced in detail. Therefore, the visitors are able to interpret the relationship between the houses with the outskirts landscapes, the necessary operations to allow the transparency of the external limits and the technical innovations to allow the iron-and-glass façade. (Figures 9, 10 and 11)

The exhibition aims the amplification of the possibilities of understanding, by the visitor, of the architecture that he/she is visiting. It offers the experience of being in a glass house in the moment that an exhibition unveils the meaning of glass architecture through the comparison among four samples. A timeline locates the houses in the glass-architecture history, developed in the hundred years after the Crystal Palace of London (1851). The representations of the architecture get mixed with the work itself, creating an instigating resonance between the exhibition and the expositive space.

We must bear in mind that the best configuration of the room would be the one existing in the last years of the life of the couple Bardi. If it were

12.The research of identification of the technical details was done by Roberto Leggeri, the models were produced by the architect José Renato Dibo in the Laboratory of Models of the IAU - São Carlos, with the support of the students Luiana Carolina Cardozo, Aluisio Teles and Isadora Romano Leoncio.

possible its reconstitution, exhibitions like those ones would not be pertinent any longer. For now, it is necessary finding break-even points between what is left of the room lived by the Bardis and the current explosive usage. These exhibitions are just a part of this research.

***

The considerations presented above comply with a clear position towards the curatorship of architecture exhibitions activity, whose formative aspect of a public able to interpret it is defended by me. Besides this formative aspect, the exhibitions are also instruments of appreciation attribution, because they select and prioritize the works. I consider the formation of a public able to interpret and appreciate the architecture of the place that they live is essential for the possibility of the elevation of its quality. Without lay appreciators, it cannot exist good clients to demand projects of quality. However, the architecture exhibitions are intended also to a specialized public, and it can contribute to their maturity as professionals.

To overcome the inconstancy of the institutional conditions that make possible the spreading of exhibitions of this kind in Brazil, it would be necessary combined efforts of the academic, cultural and professional communities. Publicizing in a special edition of the *arq.urb* magazine about the topic is an important step. ■

The curatorship of architectural exhibitions

Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz*
Translation: Escritório de Tradução (USJT)

Abstract

The article presents in a conceptual and poetic way the most sensitive issues that can be determinant to face the challenge of the design and execution of an exhibition in general, and of architecture, in particular . The political issue presents itself as the main theme, but this does not leave aside other significant aspects, such as the theme, the meaning of what is exposed and how it is exposed. The plastic issues and the technical problems are also assumed as essentials for an exhibition to reach the audience for which it is intended.

Keywords: Exhibitions. Mounts. Museografia.

*Graduated by FAU-USP in 1978, was a collaborator of Lina Bo Bardi from 1977 to 1992. Founder of the architectural office "Brasil Arquitetura" (1979), with projects awarded in Brazil and abroad, among them, the Yellow Quarter (Berlin), Rodin Museum (Salvador, Bahia), Museum of the Bread (Ilópolis), Villa Isabella (Helsinki) and Praça das Artes (São Paulo). APCA 2013 Award and Icon Awards as the Building of the Year 2013. Also founder of the cabinet-maker office Baraúna (1986), where he designs and produces unique wood furniture. Author of the books: Arquitetura Rural na Serra da Mantiqueira (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1992) and Arquitetura Convertible (São Paulo: Azougue Editorial, 2011).

I would like to start reflecting on the subject of this article precisely because of the questions already raised by the proponents as a provocation: why do we expose? Who do we expose? Do we exhibit for the theme or for us, to us? Is the selection of material (including the theme) an interpretation (free) or the result of an analysis (restricted, rational)?

These are very good questions that should command every impulse in building an exhibition. Moreover, I always recommend to my colleagues and collaborators in the architecture studio to reflect on the reason for each project in the agenda right at the beginning of the work. "Foundational" questions always help us not to get lost in the winding path of an architectural project. The project, although free, has enormous commitments to reality: social and economic commitments, ethical, and aesthetic.

Designing or building an exhibition is a strongly political act. What matters is the audience we want to reach, the "message" that we want to convey, either informative or inquiring. It is also important the little stone that we are putting in this gigantic construction of a nation that we want just, free and happy (why not say?). An exhibition should always be a libel against mediocrity.

–In my point of view, this whole preamble is important because, without being politically situated (in the richest and deepest sense of the term political as an exercise of public life), we will fail to present exhibition that add nothing to people's lives. Exhibitions without resonance in the intellect and in the will of poetry that inhabits every human being.

With the belief then that every exhibition (project) is a political act, a manifestation of ideas in a sociocultural framework, we already start from a firm base of support. In our case, Brazil, one always has to ask, "What are we? What do we want to be? "

The signs of slavery – long lasting – left deep consequences that are strong barriers in our hard way in building a more just country. These signs are felt in every act, gesture or manifestation in the most varied Brazilian social and cultural contexts. The architecture of cities – true maps of social inequality – are strong mirrors of this heritage. A kind of deaf warfare (sometimes not so much) dwells in our present lives, more than a hundred years after the emancipation.

It is worth remembering Darcy Ribeiro:

> Brazil was the last country in the world to end slavery. Brazil's current ruling class, made up of children and grandchildren of former slave owners, have the same attitude of vile contempt towards the black people. For the ruling class, the black slave, the liner, and the mulatto were merely manpower. For their descendants, free black people , mulatto and poor white represent paltry, laziness, ignorance, and innate criminality. All are blamed for their own misfortune, explained as characteristics of race and not as a result of centuries of slavery and exclusion ...

These questions here are a kind of a warning, and they make sense when we return to the initial questions: exhibitions for what, for whom? They are questions that, if well reflected, bring in themselves part of the answers and the paths to be followed in our projects. Returning to our theme, we may ask ourselves: after all, what is it, what is an architecture exhibition for? Why do we continually practice architecture in the history of mankind? What moves us constantly in the quest for a better habitat? What can you say about architecture?

Well, in architecture, architecture is everything! Drawings, photographs, physical and electronic models, texts and even movies often almost represent the three–dimensional object of multiple physical and psychological relations of architecture. But no, they cannot. Nothing replaces the experience and experience of space in time, that is, the individual enjoyment that makes architecture "a garment that dresses us." And even in collectivity, architecture is perceived differently by each individual as a psychic / bodily experience captured by the five senses. As architect Steven Holl has put it, "architecture is the container of existence."

Physical space changes behaviors, changes moods, comforts, upsets, rejoices or saddens. This all happens in a range of relationships and reactions that escape the intellectual tools of other disciplines and interpretive languages unrelated to the very experimentation of space in time. Even the phenomenological approaches, which come closest in the narratives of the experience of space, do not replace the very experience of architecture.

Figure 1. General view of the exhibition "Brasil Arquitetura: a tradição do novo" ("Brazil Architecture: the tradition of the new"), Tokio Art Museum, 2009. Projected by Brasil Arquitetura architectural office.

In saying all this, I may sound an unbeliever in the communicative efficiency of an architecture exhibition. Nevertheless, what I want to do is reinforce the difference of the nature of this discipline, if we can so name it. In addition, it increases the challenge of representing architecture, no doubt. To speak of architecture in an exhibition is like speaking of a boat out of water, out of its foundation, of its function in its habitat of action, which is the clash with the waters. Just like the boat out of water, an architectural exhibition already comes out at the start with some disadvantage. (Figure 1)

It is necessary then to find in the expository language its own forms of communication with the spectator that is in passing, a time of visitation that ends, like the patience that ends. (Figure 2) In an exhibition, the so–called insights–stimuli that move us without knowing exactly where they come from– are fundamental. In our case – architecture – we need to find forms of communication that carry us to the maximum for the experience of the "sailing boat", without caricatures and extreme juggling, of course. Hence, poetics is a great partner.

An architectural exhibition is, above all, an exhibition, even if it contains its own architecture. To assume this truth can be a liberating light in the creation and accomplishment of expographies and exhibition spaces. From there all complementary disciplines and languages of communication are valid. (Figure 3) We can have good help from literature, cinema (documentary or not),

Figure 2. Detail of the exhibition of furniture produced by the office and by the Baraúna woodworks-office. Exhibition "Brasil Arquitetura: a tradição do novo" ("Brazil Architecture: the tradition of the new"), Tokio Art Museum, 2009. Projected by Brasil Arquitetura architectural office.

photography, scenography (including lighting), music (including noise), and use the most varied media, techniques and supports in the construction of our "History", that is, of the exhibition.

The magic of the originals (sketches, notes, old photos, models of study, etc.) that generated and are testimonies of an important architectural project, undoubtedly can, in an exhibition, surpass the documentary sense – that is very important. Certain documents and objects, when exposed in a certain way, related in a new context other than that of their origin, can illuminate the course of the spectator creating a new reality, the so–called expository reality. Something new. (Figure 4)

Reinforcement: It is important to always keep in

Figure 3. Detail of the central panel. Exhibition "Brasil Arquitetura: a tradição do novo" ("Brazil Architecture: the tradition of the new"), Tokio Art Museum, 2009. Projected by Brasil Arquitetura architectural office.

Figure 4. Overview of the exhibition "À Flor da Pele", from Bob Wolfenson's photographs, Praça das Artes, São Paulo, 2015. Projected by Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz.

mind that in an exhibition of architecture we are dealing with the theme outside its context of origin. The possibility of touching some objects, such as simply sitting in a chair –which is not always possible in an exhibition for a variety of reasons – can add much to the experience. (Figure 5) But it is always good to know that an exhibition is not a book, a movie, a class, a religious service or a show, nor should it "want" to be, even though it may have a little bit of it.

Figure 5. Detail of the "Girafa" chair (Lina Bo Bardi, Marcelo Ferraz and Marcelo Suzuki), in the center of the hall. Exhibition "Brasil Arquitetura: a tradição do novo" ("Brazil Architecture: the tradition of the new"), Tokio Art Museum, 2009. Projected by Brasil Arquitetura architectural office.

The expository grammar is its own and, to complicate it even more, it varies according to the topics covered and the approaches that one wants to construct. In addition, this grammar is further defined by the human and material resources available. Thus, each story told by an exhibition is unique. Two people have two different approaches to the same theme. Therefore, exhibitions are interpretive cuts, unique individual creations, even if performed by a group of curators.

An exhibition has independence, its own light and, in many cases, more charms than many of the themes or projects presented in it. It is not necessary to mimic or want to "go by" to navigate in these murky and troubled waters of architecture.

So we come back to ground zero from nothing is allowed and everything is allowed? Sort of. The maxim "every case is a case" still counts. That is, resources and circumstances define and assist in the "drawing" of an exhibition, giving tips, opening trails and paths.

But always without jeopardizing the protagonism of the theme, which should be the source to radiate all the expographic solutions in the construction of the story that will be told. As in every creation (and to make an exhibition is to create), the measure is arbitrary, it is the unmeasured, which can work very well, but can also be a great disaster.

Here are some reminders: an exhibition is an exhibition and should try to speak its language, pure or of Babel; an exhibition is always a political gesture.

Outubro de 2017. ■

Latin American Architecture at MoMA

Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas*

*Full Professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. Coordinator of PROPAR-UFRGS (2005 to 2008). Coordinator the DOCOMOMO Núcleo-RS (2012-2017). General coordinator of DOCOMOMO Brazil (2008-2011). Coordinator of the DOCOMOMO Núcleo-RS (2005-2007). He is part of the editorial board of several periodicals specialized in the Area. Member of CICA (International Committee of Architecture Critics) of the International Union of Architects. a master's degree in Urban Planning and a Master's degree in Architecture (University of Pennsylvania, 1977), architect (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, 1966).

Abstract

The article describes in detail the path of ideation and construction of the exhibition "Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955-1980", MoMA (Mar. 29 - Jul. 19, 2015), organized by Barry Bergdoll (Curator) and Patricio del Real (Curatorial Assistant) of the Department of Architecture and Design, who had the curatorial assistance of Jorge Francisco Liernur (Torcuato di Tella University, Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Carlos Eduardo Comas (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil) . In addition, the exhibition was assisted by an advisory committee composed of specialists from all over Latin America. The exhibition presented architectural drawings, models, photographs and videos of the important modern architecture produced in the region between 1955 and 1980.

Palavras-chave: Latinamerican architecture. Curatorship. Exhibition.

Welcome, the invitation received from *arq.urb* allows me to recall six and a half years of work as guest curator of an exhibition on modern architecture in Latin America held at the Museum of Modern Art of New York- MoMA, an institution whose sense of cultural opportunity equals its firepower. In the new century, the North once again became interested in the modern architecture of the South. The 2000 DOCOMOMO International congress in Brasilia was a success, and so was the 2003 exhibition *Utopie et crueuté: villes et paysages d'Amérique Latine* at the Center International pour la Ville, l'Architecture et le Paysage de Bruxelles, CIVA, organized by architect Jean-François Lejeune, a professor at the University of Miami; I lent documents and wrote an essay in the catalog of the same title (Brussels: CIVA, 2003). The exhibition traveled to Miami and the catalog got an English version, *Utopia and cruelty: cities and landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), which won the 2005 Julius Posener Award for the best exhibition catalog, from the Comité Internationale des Critiques d'Architecture- CICA, of the Union Internationale des Architectes- UIA.

MoMA considered associating with the Florida International University's Wolfsonian Museum, which publishes an outstanding journal, *the Journal of Propaganda and Decorative Arts*. In October 2008, art historian Barry Bergdoll, professor at Columbia University, then MoMA's chief curator of architecture and design, Lejeune and Marianne Lamonaca of the Wolfsonian organized the *Modern Spirit in Latin America Colloquium*, for which I was invited along with architects Jorge Francisco (Pancho) Liernur of Argentina, Silvia Arango of Colombia, Louise Noelle of Mexico, Enrique Fernández-Shaw of Venezuela and others. But negotiations did not prosper. MoMA decided to work alone. Barry, Pancho (professor at the Universidad Torcuato di Tella) and I (professor

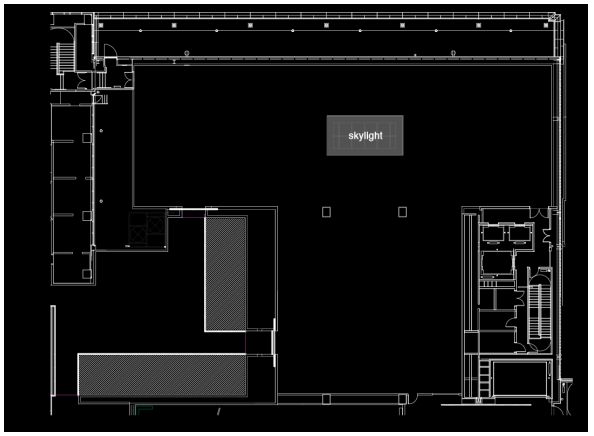


Figura 1. MoMA's sixth floor plan. Source: The Museum of Modern Art Archives, digital drawing (2013).

at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul) discussed a possible exposition in several meetings during the two subsequent years, in Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Buenos Aires, Mexico and New York. We wanted to cover half a century of architecture in Latin America, recognizing at the same time the convenience of that geographical designation and the diversity of architectural manifestations from the 1930s to the 1980s: skeptical about the existence of a "spirit of the place" common to the region's architecture and in consortium with a universal "spirit of the time", convinced that we had to have Lina Bo Bardi's SESC Pompéia (1976-86) in the show.

Ironically, our collaboration was formalized during another academic seminar at the University of Miami, *Latin American architecture: now and then*, in February 2012, held at a postmodern project by Leon Krier, the Jorge Perez Auditorium. But the occasion had a bonus, the long visit to 1111 Lincoln Road by Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, showing that the interest of the North in the modern architecture of the South was not confined to historians: the Brazilian DNA of 1111 Lincoln Road was confirmed by the owner Robert Bennett. The exhibition's inauguration date was set for April 2015. It would be held at MoMA's most important gallery of temporary exhibitions, at the sixth floor. We would have at our disposal a foyer with two voids and two galleries with a total T-shaped area of 1200m2 comprehending two freestanding pillars between the galleries. The first gallery measured 19x19m, the second measured 16x42m, and featured a large skylight. (Figure 1) Barry made it clear that the exhibition should feature primarily archival material, including drawings, photographs, models, and clips from films of the period, with a minimum of new items: a few site models, a few models showing buildings in section, photographs showing the current situation of some buildings for comparison, the video compilation of those film clips.

We had no doubts about the value and extension of Latin American architectural production in the period. But the visits to archives made up to 2012 had not been very encouraging. Although they had not been exhaustive, we were aware of embarking on an adventure. It was not only a matter of finding enough material, but also of finding material of sufficient quality to win the MoMA public, which was cultivated but not restricted to architects. We crossed our fingers and went forward with reinforcements. The architect Patricio del Real was hired in July by MoMA as assistant curator; he had just graduated from Columbia, defending his thesis entitled *Building a continent: the idea of Latin American architecture in the early postwar*. Filmmaker Joey Forsyte was commissioned to research film footage and make video compilations; Joey had worked on "Home Delivery," Barry's previous exhibit at MoMA. Brazilian photographer Leonardo Finotti embarked on an essay covering Argentina, Brazil, the Caribbean, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and

Venezuela. The directors of Constructo, MoMA's NGO partner in the program Young Architects, Jeannette Plaut and Marcelo Sarovic partnered with the School of Architecture of the Catholic University of Chile to do the sectional models. The University of Miami became responsible for the execution of the site models under Lejeune's direction. In practical terms, and for obvious reasons, the coordination of activities was divided into three geographical blocks: Barry and Patricio were responsible for Mexico, the Caribbean, and Venezuela; Pancho, for the Southern Cone and Peru; the author, for Brazil. The curatorship, however, was teamwork; we all shared responsibility at the conceptual level. No document would be exhibited that at least two curators had not seen live and approved.

The crucial decision taken at that 2012 meeting was to concentrate the exhibition on the 1955-80 period, considering the limitations of the available galleries and the contents of MoMA's previous exhibitions of modern architecture in Latin America. *Brazil Builds: New and Old, 1652-1942*, in 1943, focused on Brazilian architecture through the eyes of architect Philip Goodwin and photographer George Kidder Smith. *Latin American architecture since 1945*, in 1955, covered Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, and was the only real antecedent of our exhibition. It was Henry-Russell Hitchcock's personal critical testimony, supported by Rosalie McKenna's large photographic panels. It featured the production of a single decade, the immediate post-war in which modern architecture triumphed everywhere, and it emphasized the common formal features of modern Latin American architecture. Hitchcock's exhibition was sympathetic to Latin American architecture, as Goodwin had been regarding Brazilian architecture. Hitchcock ignored the organicist Bruno Zevi's contempt for modern Brazilian architecture of Corbusian roots. He disregarded the 1953 diatribes against Brazilian architecture criticism by Max Bill, the newly appointed dean of the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, who claimed to be the heir to the Bauhaus, and the condescendence towards it shown by former Bauhaus director Walter Gropius, then dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Nor did Hitchcock care about the criticism of modern Mexican architecture made concurrently by the widow of another Bauhaus professor, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy. But Hitchcock's opinion amounted to little in the 1960s. In the first half of the 1970s one could learn from Las Vegas with Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, but not from Brasilia, demonized by European and American critics. In the second half of the 1970s, critics decreed the death of modern architecture and the rehabilitation of the Beaux-Arts. Latin American architecture was totally irrelevant, as can be read in Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco dal Co (*Architettura Contemporanea*, Milan: Electa, Milano 1976, translated in English in 1979), or Kenneth Frampton (*A critical history of modern architecture*, London: Thames & Hud-

son, 1980). The exception confirming the rule was Luis Barragán, who exhibited at MoMA in 1977 and won the Pritzker Prize in 1980.

Our period was reduced to a quarter century, extending from a time when modern architecture made in Latin America was still a reference, despite strong criticisms, to a time when the new manuals condemned it to oblivion, despite some isolated praise as regional expression. We were not going to talk about postmodernism, but if 1955 was a plausible entrance, so was 1980 a plausible exit: they defined a period of formal re-elaboration within a modern architecture that was hegemonic but fragmented by open competition between groups. And it extended from the dissolution of CIAM (1956) to the First Architecture Biennial in Venice, when neo-historicism triumphed with *La presenza del passato and Strada Novissima* by Paolo Portoghesi (1980), passing by the demolition of Pruitt Igoe (1972); without excessive rigor, considering works under construction after 1955, such as the University City of Caracas (1940-60), by Carlos Raul Villanueva, and works in progress designed before 1980, such as SESC-Pompeia (1976-86) and the Open City in Ritoque (1972-present), by the Amereida Cooperative.

This quarter century was troubled. It was a time of persistent Cold War and fear of the atomic bomb, artificial satellites (1957) and men in the moon (1969), Glasnost (1956) and the establishment of the European Economic Community (1957), the escalation of Vietnam War (1954-75), the Cuban Revolution (1959), Alliance for Progress and the invasion of Playa Girón (1961), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the Martin Luther King marches (1968) and the Watergate scandal (1974). No less important, it was time for developmentalism, Raul Prebisch's theory influencing actions of international organizations such as CEPAL- *Comisión Económica para la América Latina*, created in 1948, before the popularization of the idea of a globe divided into Three Worlds, first articulated by the historian Alfred Sauvy (1952). It was a time where military dictatorships ruled Venezuela (1952-58), Argentina (1955-58, 1966-73, 1976-83), Brazil (1964-1985), Peru (1968-75), Uruguay (1973-85) and Chile (Pinochet, 1973-1990). And it was also a time of sexual revolution and counterculture, of economic growth, and even miracle; unfortunately, followed by an energy crisis (1973) that was minimized in Brazil for another half decade (1980) as the country substituted alcohol for gas (1976), but that there as elsewhere ultimately undermined confidence in the powerful, entrepreneurial and benevolent State, paving the way for the neoliberal policies of Ronald Reagan (1981-89) and Margaret Thatcher (1979-90).

We remembered that developing, industrializing, modernizing, and urbanizing were synonyms for Juscelino Kubitschek, the builder of Brasilia (1957-60), or Fernando Belaunde, the Peruvian architect-president who sponsored the PREVI - Proyecto Experimental de Vivienda (1969) project in Lima.

a landmark in the treatment of housing problems and economic urbanization in underdeveloped countries, in a sense the counterpart of the Peugeot contest in Buenos Aires (1962) for what would then be the largest office skyscraper in the world.

As archival research advanced, and doubts about the quantity and quality of material available for the exhibition were dispelled, the idea of development grew in importance to us in a double sense. On the one hand, as the economic development of the region, to which its modern architecture was committed, considering that the dependence of Latin American countries on the developed world did not preclude a degree of cultural autonomy. On the other hand, as the development of the syntax and vocabulary of modern architecture understood as a formal system, to which the leading Latin American architects were committed, considering that the dependence of architectural creation on social, economic, and political factors is never absolute. Hence, c. 2013, a provisional title, *The Poetics of Development. Architecture in Latin America*, 1955-80, and it was not unanimous - Pancho thought it too artistic- but other decisions had priority.

For our contentment, doubts about the existence of appropriate historical material had then disappeared. The problem was now of excess and not scarcity. The very first idea about the exhibition considered a select number of well-documented works, involving a limited number of radiating centers (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Caracas, Havana, Mexico). This organization by cities was soon discarded. The idea of an inclusive selection appeared more slowly, and contributed to disarm eventual conflicts of opinion between the curators. We opted finally- around July 2014- for a panoramic exhibition including projects and works, valuing both quantity and quality, in a total of five hundred documents: an exposition that was suggestive rather than exhaustive, an exhibition that was exploratory rather than argumentative. Or rather, the argument was very simple, in view of the American and European public, and the Latin American public inordinately influenced by the American and European public.

On the one hand, our aim was to show that modern architecture made in Latin America was not a derivative or degenerate copy of the architecture made in the developed centers, but a crucial chapter in the history of the discipline, one that expanded its frontiers in different directions, aiming at diversity of expression within a consistent formal system, informed by the logic of structure, construction, materials and the feeling of its expressive potentialities. On the other hand, the objective was to stimulate the discussion of the complex relations between this architecture and the physical, political, social and economic environment that it reflects and transforms- with a predominantly developmentalist vision, and a scope largely dependent on State action.

But we did not want to be didactic. We wanted to let the documents speak for themselves, minimizing the texts that articulated them, and in hindsight perhaps we could have been a bit more explicit given the richness and novelty of the material exhibited. I confess that I was annoyed when MoMA management vetoed the provisional title because it thought that "development" could be confused with real estate business, and when the alternative, Architecture for Progress. Latin America, 1955-80, presented by Pancho and seconded by me, was vetoed by his political allusions. We strongly disagreed with the management's suggestion, but we ended up finding it was pertinent. *Latin America in Construction* had a lower semantic load and matched the exploratory tone the exhibition had taken. As nothing gets lost, and everything may be transformed, I used *The Poetics of Development* in the title of my essay in the catalog, and Pancho used Architecture for Progress in the title of his essay.

Guidelines for the design of the exhibition were discussed between January 2013 and September 2014. To begin with, we wanted to be able to read the two galleries as spaces not interrupted by walls up to the ceiling, as usual; the foyer would have the introductory text on one of its walls, and a volume disposed so as to clearly organize the flows of visitors in and out. We would hang in this volume a box by the Uruguayan Carlos Gomez Gavazzo, carrying the suggestive title of Equation of the development (1960). Barry suggested that the squarish first gallery should have four rooms, the first three defining a linear path. The first room would house the Prelude, sub-titled "a region in motion," recalling events and projects of the quarter century prior to the period in focus with material essentially available in MoMA, plus the projection of video contextualizing the modernization of Latin American capitals. The second room, still transitional about chronology, would be dedicated to University Campuses, especially those of Mexico and Caracas, the construction of the latter extending into our period. The third room would show Brasilia. The fourth room would be titled at home with the architects, showing architects' houses for their own families or close relatives; combining historical documents with digital resources to multiply the number of projects exposed, it would have niche characteristics, where the catalogs would be placed for visitor handling. The larger rectangular gallery would present two differentiated sectors close to the exit, one called Export, which would feature works by Latin American architects outside their countries of origin, and the other called Utopia, where the Open City found its place.

Pancho proposed a rhizomatous scheme for the gallery, almost a labyrinth, with random circuits. (Figure 2) I thought of exhibiting the houses of architects in the foyer, and of something more structured for the larger gallery, with the underlying idea of using the four functions of the Athens Charter as the layout's organizational reference:

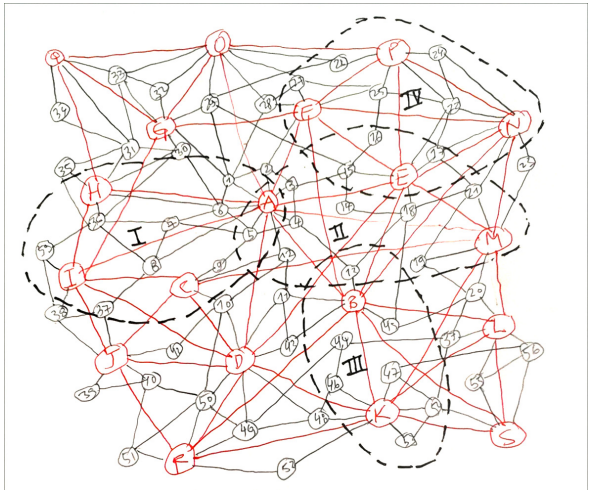


Figure 2. Exhibition design study. Jorge Francisco Liernur. Source: author's file, drawing (2013).

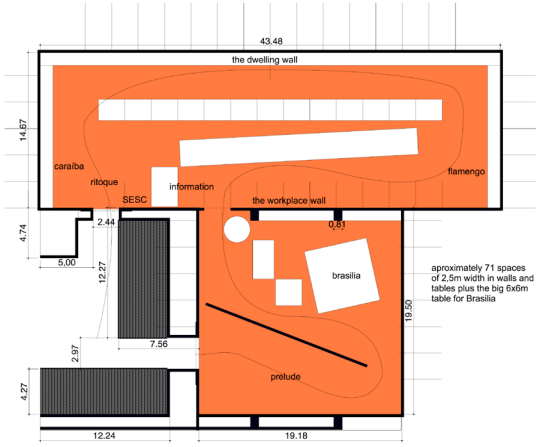


Figura 3. Exhibition design study. Carlos Eduardo Comas. Source: author's file, digital drawing (2013).

collective housing in its various forms would take the background wall, of 42m without distinguishing between housing for the poor and for the rich, but respectful of chronology, beginning in 1955 and closing in 1980; workplaces would occupy part of the long opposite wall between the galleries; the Flamengo Park would be the anchor of the transverse wall, featuring projects that involved urban circulation as well as landscape design; the center would be occupied with further projects aiming at the cultivation of body and spirit, with SESC Pompeia at the end; the transverse wall near the exit with the Cidade Nova de Caraíba by Joaquim Guedes (1976-1982) and the Open City. (Figure 3)

In September 2014 we finished listing all the documents that would appear on the exhibition, with a one-year delay. The checklist was made jointly by the four curators and considered both relevancy and availability; it did not necessarily represent the selection each would make alone. In the Brazilian case, losses to regret included the large model of Brasília on display at the Lucio Costa Space beneath the Plaza of the Three Powers, which measures 13x13m. It could only be displayed at MoMA's triple-height hall below our foyer, with which it communicates through the voids already mentioned. Unfortunately, that hall was not available. Cost considerations precluded the loan of the original model of the Museum of Modern Art, MAM-Rio, by Affonso Eduardo Reidy (1953-67), as well as the making of a facsimile of the museum's transverse structural section. We did not feature Caraíba in the exhibition due to the lack of adequate documents, and for the same reason we did not feature Cafundá Housing Complex (1977-82) by Sérgio Magalhães and team, or the DNIT Building (1972-79) in Brasília by Rodrigo Lefèvre. It is worth remembering that part of the curatorial effort was spent on logistics, due to the large number of institutions and people involved in document lending. In 2013, MoMa presented *Le Corbusier: an atlas of landscapes* in the same galleries and with the same number of documents. However, 95% of the material came from a single source, the Fondation Le Corbusier. In our case, we dealt in Brazil with fifteen lenders in three distinct cities, most of which had no prior experience of lending their documents, and a considerable amount of time was spent on understanding and reconciling local bureaucracies and MoMA's own bureaucracy.

In September 2014, we received orders to tighten belts. MoMA is rich, but it spends more than it earns, and the funds it raises do not always arrive on schedule. Barry then had the idea of exposing at different heights the final stretches of the metal uprights between the galleries' temporary walls. Leaving them mostly unfinished reinforced the idea of construction in progress and allowed for some spatial continuity within the galleries. The final solution, developed under the direction of Barry and Patricio by the skilled architects of the Museum's Department of Exhibition Design and

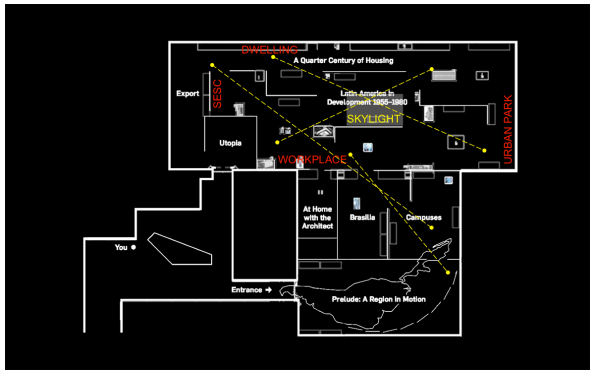


Figure 4. Floor plan of the exhibition Latin America in Construction with emphasis on diagonal views and the organization of partitions in relation to the "Development" Hall's skylight. Carlos Eduardo Comas. Source: author's file, digital drawing (2015).

Figure 5. Foyer, with "Ecuación del Desarrollo" and Tietê City model. Source: Thomas Griesel/The Museum of Modern Art Archives, photography (2015).

Production, was a successful synthesis of previous suggestions, with displays on walls, desks, consoles, monitors and iPads. (Figure 4) Large photographs were printed on adhesive vinyl and applied to walls; we called them wallpaper. The drawings were framed if the loan specifications required it, or placed between a magnetized opaque surface and kept pressed by magnetized steel discs; an independent frame fixed to the wall allowed for a protective acrylic sheet. The 1:50 sectional models were painted in deep gray; the 1: 200 site models in were left in light wood.

Ecuación del Desarrollo was fixed to a pentagonal box in the foyer along with the bronze model of the Tietê City project (1980) by Paulo Mendes da Rocha, which aimed to connect São Paulo to the River Plate basin. (Figure 5) As allegories in samba school parades, the two documents spoke of development and urbanization, and clearing and technological effort. The skew of the pentagonal box pointed to the entrance walkway, emphasizing the point corresponding to Patagonia on the map of South America drawn on the floor, which extended through the Prelude Room and ended in the Campuses Room. The distinction between these rooms was accentuated by the color of the walls, black in the first and white in the second. The gap between the dividing walls of the Campus Room and the equally white Brasilia Room defined a diagonal with the gap between the two galleries; the rooms appeared as two imbricated L's. The exposed steel frames made it possible to glimpse the Architects' Houses Room, painted yellow, accessible by the larger gallery. There, L-shaped internal walls were fixed around the skylight, reiterating the emphasis on diagonal views.

The Prelude evoked the visits of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright to South America, the Technical Architecture of Juan O'Gorman in Mexico, an Uruguayan hospital, the exhibition of the Modernist House of Gregori Warchavchik and the conversion of Lucio Costa, the success of the Latin American pavilions at the 1939 New York World's Fair, Brazil Builds (featuring the Ministry of Education model), avant-garde proposals by Gavazzo and the Argentine Amancio Williams, gardens by Luis Barragan and Roberto Burle Marx, Latin American Architecture since 1945, and the São Paulo Architecture Biennales in Ibirapuera Park. Barry conceived the idea of seven videos showing the process of modernization in the interwar period in seven cities (Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Caracas, Havana, Mexico – remnant of the idea of the organization of the exhibition by cities), projected in suspended monitors from the ceiling arranged in arch and synchronized from time to time. (Figure 6)

The Mexican extreme of the Latin American map drawn on the floor entered the Compuses Room featuring the campuses of the Universidad Autónoma de Mexico and the Central University of Venezuela. One of its highlights was the presentation for the first time of the original drawing of Teodoro

Figure 6. Exhibition entrance. Drawing of Latin America on the floor. Source: Thomas Griesel/The Museum of Modern Art Archives, photography (2015).

González de León (1940). The Brasília Room featured the competition report of Lucio Costa (1957) accompanied by drawings from the entries by Vilanova Artigas and Rino Levi. A photo of a smiling Mies van de Rohe while examining with Lucio a model of *superquadras* completed the references to the modern architecture pioneers. A Villanueva sketch analyzed the Pilot Plan as implemented for the inauguration. Prepared for his classes, it alluded to the exchanges between Hispano-America and the architecture that Brazil Builds had made famous. There were plans from the roof slab carrying the congressional domes, classic photos of their construction by Marcel Gautherot, an original model of the Central Institute of Sciences of UnB (1963-71), as well as a 1980 model of the monumental sector with the annexes of the ministries. Along with new photos of the government palaces by Finotti and the Forsyte video, a notion of the city as an evolving artifact was insinuated. The opening to the larger gallery framed on one side Finotti's monumental photograph of the Monumental Axis and on the other side the old model of the Museum of Art of Sao Paulo- MASP (1957-68) by Lina Bo Bardi. (Figure 7)

The larger gallery was divided into three rooms. The first and bigger one had access through the Brasilia Room and gave access to the Room of Architects' Houses, the earlier proposed Housing Wall at the rear being its largest boundary. Considering that the Campuses and Brasilia Rooms were already playing the development tune, I called it the

Figure 7. Brasília room. Source: Rafael Saldanha Duarte, photography (2015).

Development Hall, bounded at the left by the Export Corridor and the Utopia Room, where the exit door was located. Circulation was linear between these spaces, and two of the walls between the Utopia Room and the Development Hall stretched to the ceiling. The Housing Wall was painted yellow, like the Room of Architects' Houses. Like the walls of the Campuses and Brasilia Rooms, those of the Development Hall and the Corridor Export were painted white. The walls of the Utopia Room were painted black, like those of the Prelude; more about that later. (Figures 8, 9, 10, 11)

Theme and chronology organized the virtual division of the Hall into sectors. As suggested by a timeline at the top along the Housing Wall, to the right of the person entering the gallery were the older projects, and to the left - near the exit - the newer ones. In a first try, the wall between the galleries, opposite to the Housing Wall, was re-

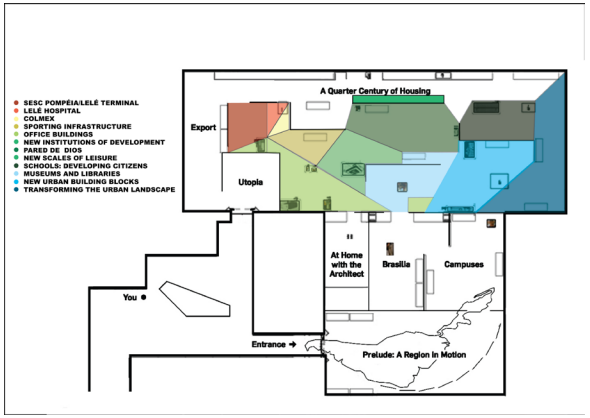


Figure 8. Floor plan of the exhibition Latin America in Construction with color zoning. Carlos Eduardo Comas. Source: author's file, digital drawing (2015).

Figure 9. Elevation of exhibition walls, study. Source: The Museum of Modern Art Archives, digital drawing (2015).

served for projects of workplaces, and the intermediary strip intended to accommodate projects involving the cultivation of body and spirit as well as circulation, to use the CIAM jargon.

Later, the lateral boundary to the right was definitively linked to the Rio de Janeiro Flamengo Park, by Affonso Eduardo Reidy and Roberto Burle Marx (1962-65), which included urban freeways, pedestrian walkways and buildings: Reidy's MAM-Rio as well as two contributions from Lucio, the ramps of Gloria Hill (1960-69) and the Monument to Estácio de Sá (1969-73). The adjacent, final section of the wall between the galleries got two projects in Valparaíso, the proposal for Avenida del Mar (1969) of the School of Architecture of the local Catholic University and Francisco Mendes Labbé's Naval Academy competition entry (1956-57), set on a windswept promontory. The lateral boundary to the left received the SESC-Pompéia, a kind of covered pocket park with important open spaces. The perpendicular partition received drawings of the

Figure 10. View of the Development Hall with the FAU-USP model in the foreground to the left and the Housing Wall to the right. Source: Rafael Saldanha Duarte, photography (2015).

Lapa Transshipment Station (1979-82) in Salvador, by João "Lelé" Figueiras Lima, reinforcing the correspondence between the two boundaries.

Given the destination of the final section of the wall between galleries to projects involving the landscape, documents related to workplaces slid along that wall and advanced through the parti-

Figure 11. View of the Development Hall with the MASP model in the foreground. Source: Rafael Saldanha Duarte, photography (2015).

tions bounding the Utopia Room. The entrances into the Brasília Room and the Room of Architects' Houses defined three sections: one was to be occupied by mixed-use buildings occupying a whole downtown block or infilling a downtown perimeter block, the others receiving office buildings. To the right of the opening communicating with the Brasilia Room, Lucio's Brazilian Jockey Club building (1956-72) exemplified a shrewd update of the perimeter block, with office buildings and club headquarters surrounding an eleven-story garage, topped by recreational equipment and terraces, while the San Martin Cultural Center (1960-70) in Buenos Aires by Mario Roberto Alvarez packed vertically several kinds of theaters, classrooms and galleries.

Preceded by images of the Tarpeya Rock Helicoid (1956-61) in Caracas, by Neuberger, Bornhost and Gutierrez, another multipurpose building occupying a whole block, and Mercado de la Merced (1957) in Mexico City by Enrique del Moral, the study for the Jaysour office building (1961-64) in Mexico City by Augusto H. Alvarez was the highlight in the stretch between the two openings, because of a tentative section recalling the columns of Niemeyer's Alvorada Palace. Just to the right were the images and historical model of various projects submitted to the Peugeot competition (1961), including twisted prisms strangely prophetic of twenty-first century iconic buildings. The interior corner with the partition of the Utopia Room received the sectional model of the Celanese Building (1966-68) by the Mexican Ricardo Legorreta, a hybrid structure of suspended slabs assuring the enormous cantilevers on the ground floor. In the next external corner stood the sectional model of the Corporación Venezolana Guayana headquarters (1967-68), in Ciudad Guayana, by Jesus Tenreiro-Dengwitz, a stepped pyramid in steel and brick proposed as tropical architecture. Among the two new models were documents of office buildings in Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina, including the German Samper's Sena (1958-60), Ernesto Katzenstein's Conurban (1969-73), and Las Palmas (1975) by Juan Sordo Madaleno; the original models of the Orinoco Insurances (1971) and the Metropolitan Bank (1976), in Caracas, by José Miguel Galia were close by.

The internal partitions in the Development Hall were set around the skylight constituting squares, reiterating the emphasis on diagonal views and allowing multiple circuits that recovered Pancho's path randomness. A disguised quasi-symmetry and thematic correspondences organized their sectorization, resulting in corridors expanding into pockets and virtual spaces with hidden boundaries.

In front of the Flamengo Park, documents depicted the Hotel Humboldt (1956) on a Caracas hilltop by Tomás Sanabria, implanted simultaneously with the San José Cable Car and its stations. Beside the Park, the Copacabana sidewalks (1970) by Burle Marx stood next to Barragan's drawing for Cigarette Square (1956), at Jardines

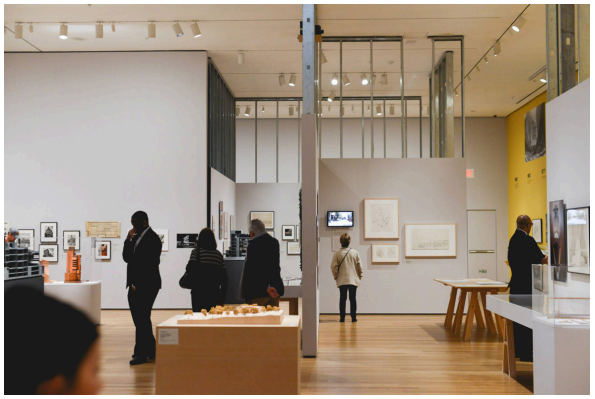


Figure 12. North Cementery Columbarium model in the foreground. Office buildings to the left. At the center, stretch of SESC Pompeia on the backmost wall. PREVI competition to the right. Source: Laura Krebs, photography (2015).

Figure 13. PREVI competition and the Housing Wall. Source: Rafael Saldanha Duarte, photography (2015).

del Pedregal (1945), his first upscale residential subdivision. The corner between the Housing Wall and that of Flamengo Park featured the sectional model of the School of Architecture of the University of São Paulo (1961-69) by Vilanova Artigas and the site model of the National School of Ballet (1961-65) in Havana by Vittorio Garatti; they anchored the schools sector, with graphic and photographic documentation of these and other projects in the adjacent walls. FIG 10. In the left side of the Hall visitors found Colégio de México (1976), by Teodoro González de León and Abraham Zabludovsky, next to Lelé's Hospital for Diseases of the Locomotive Apparatus (1976) in Brasilia, and Transshipment Station in Salvador.

Alongside the schools, the gymnasium of the Club Atlético Paulistano (1958-61) by Paulo Mendes da Rocha exemplified the "new scales of leisure", and faced the center of the Housing Wall. Its counterpart was to the left on the opposite side. Called Sporting infrastructure, it included Samper's Cartagena Stadium (1956), Felix Candela's Sports Palace (1968), and the original model from the Mendoza Stadium (1976), by MSGSSV-Manteola, Sanchez Gómez, Santos, Solsona, Viñoly. Next to the gymnasium, in correspondence with the space allocated to the Peugeot Competition in the wall between galleries, tables and partitions to the right of the Housing Wall center, showed Previ Project material provided by Peter Land, who organized that housing competition. (Figures 12 and 13)

The core, under the skylight, correlated religion and institutions for development. One end of what was informally called the Wall of God and then Sacred architecture, parallel to the Housing Wall, featured the Church of Christ the Worker (1958-60) by Eladio Dieste, including structural drawings and an original model for the study of stresses. Ahead, the site model of Montevideo's North Cementery Columbarium (1960-62) by Nelson Bayardo represented a surprising prefiguration of the São Paulo brutalism. At the other end, on the perpendicular wall, visitors found the sectional model of the Chapel of the Benedictine Monastery (1963-64) in Santiago de Chile, by Fathers Martin Correa and Gabriel Guarda, and next to the Chilean church, the new model of the Bank of London (1959-66) in Buenos Aires by Clorindo Testa, Mammon next to God. Opposite this model, to the left, and also visible from the entrance hall of the gallery, Emilio Duhart's CEPAL (1960-66) sectional model was an imposing presence. Cradle of the developmental discourse, CEPAL's graphic documentation was placed on the L- shaped wall opposite the Wall of God. Very allegorically, the cultural equipment was flanked by the intergovernmental agency and the private bank.

The extreme right-hand section of this wall showed the Luis Angel Arango Library in Bogotá (1956-59), by Esguerra Saénz Urdaneta & Suarez, which was part of the sector of museums and libraries ahead of visitors entering the large gallery from the Brasilia Room. The MASP model, already mentioned,

was an anchor seen between the models of CEPAL and the Bank of London. Behind the MASP model, the display included a video showing its inauguration by Elizabeth II, drawings from the Mexican Museum of Anthropology (1964) by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, and a pioneering computer drawing of the National Library of Argentina (1962-92), by Clorindo Testa, facing the original model of the MSGSSV competition entry for the same library on the right side of the gallery entrance. Infilling the corner lot of a perimeter block, the Bank of London was in the same league as the Brazilian Jockey Club and the San Martin Cultural Center. Accordingly, the graphic documentation of the bank faced those of the latter. Between them, a site model of the Santa Rosa Administrative Center (1955-63) recalled another building by Testa as remarkable for its integration of structure and ductwork as the Bank of London.

The Room of Architects' Houses had wallpaper in the background showing the patio of Henry Klumb's house in Puerto Rico and its BKF chairs. A platform housed a real BKF chair as well as the Puzzle Chair by Chilean Juan Inacio Baixas. Some Paulistano chairs by Paulo Mendes da Rocha furnished the room, the private counterpart for the wall of collective housing across the large gallery. FIG. 13 At the top of the Housing Wall could be seen images of paradigmatic projects: the Housing Complex 23 de Enero (1955-57) by Villanueva and the Banco Obrero team; Niemeyer's COPAN (1952-66); La Habana del Este Housing (1959-61) by Hugo d'Acosta and team; the Tlatelolco Housing Complex (1960-64) by Mario Pani; the Residential Complex San Felipe (1962-69) in Lima, by Enrique Ciriani, Mario Bernuy, Jacques Crousse, Oswaldo Nunez, Luis Vasquez, Nikita Smirnoff; the Rioja Housing Complex (1969) in Buenos Aires by MSGSSV; the Boulevard Artigas Housing Complex (1971-74) in Montevideo by Ramiro Bascans, Tomás Sprechmann, Héctor Vigliecca, Arturo Villaamil; the Parque Central Housing Complex (c. 1971) in Caracas by Daniel Fernández-Shaw and Enrique Siso. Below, a timeline recorded the major political events of the period in the region. At eye level and below, the visitor found more material on the projects mentioned and other relevant projects. Barragán was represented by its real estate projects: Jardines del Pedregal, Las Arboledas (1957-61), Satelite City (1957). From Montevideo came the Pan American Building (1958-64), by Raul Sichero; From Caracas came the Palic Building (1956) by Federico Guillermo Beckon and the Altolar Building (1965) by Jimmy Alcock, in brick and concrete. A brick skin distinguished the triad of Calderon, Wilkie and Santos (1963) houses by Fernando Martinez Sanabria, as well as the El Polo apartments (1959-62), the San Cristobal housing complex (1963) for Fundación Cristiana and the Towers of the Park (1964-70) by Rogelio Salmona, the latter represented by a site model in the middle of the wall. Chilean examples comprised the Salar del Carmen Housing Complex (1960) in Antofagasta, by Mario Rodríguez de Arce; Diego Portales

(1955-68) in Santiago, by Bresciani, Valdés, Castillo, Huidobro, and the Plaza de Armas Building (1955) by Sergio Larrain. From Brazil, in addition to COPAN, there were photographs of Reidy's Gávea Housing Complex (1952-57). A central monitor played the video recording the speech of Jacqueline Kennedy in Spanish at the launch of the Alliance for Progress (1961).

Irrespective of the income of the population targeted by the enterprises remembered in the right half of the Housing Wall, their approach was in principle totalizing, and as far as possible, aimed at completeness, with the marked separation between housing and its complements corresponding to separate sources of financing, and not always equally effective. In the left half, towards the exit, the exemplification registered the appearance of incrementalism as an alternative, often implying the improvement of traditional construction techniques, and the valuation of low-height, high-density solutions using traditional patterns of territorial subdivision. In the left half, towards the exit, the exemplification registered the appearance of incrementalism as an alternative, frequently implying the improvement of traditional construction techniques, and the valuation of low-height and high-density solutions using traditional patterns of territorial subdivision. The pioneering project was La Fragua (1958-61) by the Colombian Samper, self-help and mutual aid construction. The Housing Module in Asbestos (1964-68) by Hugo d'Acosta and Mercedes Alvarez, the Multiflex housing system (1965-70) by Fernando Salinas showed the Cuban interest in alternatives to heavy precast systems.

Taipa, in Cajueiro Seco, Recife district (1963), by Acacio Gil Borsoi, was as remarkable for the prefabrication of the wattle-and-daub panels as for its checkered urban layout. A pioneering experience of favela requalification by improving its road system with permanence and participation of the residents in the redesign of their dwellings was Brás de Pina (1969), Rio de Janeiro, directed by Carlos Nelson Ferreira dos Santos; the exposed material included house plans designed by the *favelados* themselves. Winner of a competition, the project by Mauricio Roberto & associates for the requalification of Alagados (1973), in Salvador marked the rise of incrementalism as an alternative Brazilian public policy. Next to the drawings in comic book style of the Alagados project stood Lina Bo Bardi's watercolors depicting the project for the relocation of the Sergipe community of Capumirim (1975), due to floods planned for the construction of hydroelectric dam on the São Francisco River.

The separation of the Export Corridor was accentuated by its position and the rectangular configuration resuming the linearity of the course. One wall documented pavilions in international fairs, such as those of Brazil in the XIII Triennial of Milan (1964), by Lucio Costa, and in the Osaka World Fair (1970), by Paulo Mendes da Rocha; the one of Mexico in the XIV Triennial (1968), by Eduardo Terrazas; at Expo 1967 in

Figure 14. French Communist Party model between Export Corridor and Utopia Room. Source: Rafael Saldanha Duarte, photography (2015).

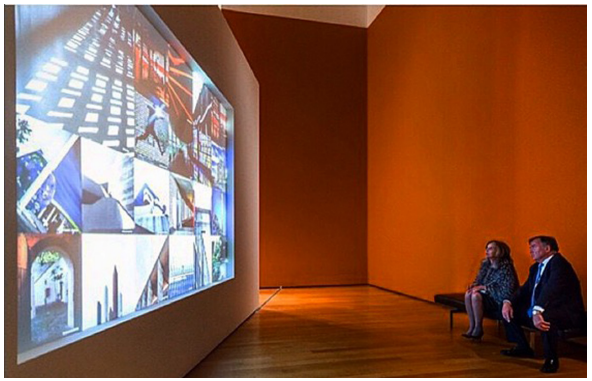


Figure 15. The box with photos of the #ArchiMoMA project on Instagram. Source: The Museum of Modern Art Archives, photography (2015).

Montreal, Villanueva's Venezuela pavilion, and Vittorio Garatti's Cuba pavilion. The opposite wall featured Reidy's Paraguay-Brazil School (1962-66) in Asuncion, Burle Marx's Parque del Este (1956-61) in Caracas, and a monitor displaying videos on the pre-fabricated Mexican Rural School (1958) by Pedro Ramirez Vazquez, sold to seventeen countries, including Italy, Yugoslavia and Turkey. In an external corner, the historical model of the French Communist Party (1965-80), by Oscar Niemeyer, participated at the same time in the Export Corridor and the Utopia Room. Painted black as the Prelude, it featured L'Unitor (1981), Uruguayan Justino Serralta's answer to Le Modulor, the Open City Cemetery (1976), by Juan Inacio Baixas, the project for Body Transformers (1966) by Argentines Marta Minujin and Mario Gandelsonas, and the disturbing photo collages of Jorge Rigamonti, with science fiction connotations, as the Caracas Transfer Node 2 (1966-76). The tone was nocturnal as in the Prelude, but while the Prelude pointed to dawn with its seven monitors, the Utopia Hall suggested the party had ended. (Figure 14) In the pentagonal box, back to the foyer, the terracotta walls framed the shifting exhibition of thousands of current photographs of some of the buildings on display, the product of an agreement between Instagram and MoMA, Barry's idea. (Figure 15)

The catalog complemented the exhibition. Prepared during 2014 to be released at the inauguration, it comprises four parts. A photographic essay by Finotti precedes three lengthy panoramic essays by the curators. In "Learning from Latin America", Barry places our exhibition in the context of the MoMA exhibitions about the region. In "Architecture for Progress", Pancho considers the architectural production of the period in the light of the different possible political positions. In "The poetics of development. Notes on two Brazilian schools", I speak of the Brazilian contributions to the development of the formal system of modern architecture in the period. Different from the exhibition, where the organization of the material was not geographical, and aiming to become a reference work, the next section of the catalog is divided by country, reproducing historical documents next to short texts on each country by guest scholars. It should be noted that the buildings mentioned in the essays and short texts do not necessarily coincide with those present in the exhibition. The catalog closes with an essay discussing the existing bibliography on modern architecture in Latin America by Patricio, followed by short texts commenting on each country's specific bibliography accompanied by a selection of twenty basic titles for each country. An expanded bibliography and an anthology of texts by Latin American architects translated into English remained a project. The exhibition was welcomed positively by newspapers and periodicals such as *The Guardian, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Architectural Record, The Architectural Review, Summa +, Arquine, The Wall Street Journal, Domus, Cuban Art News, The Architect Magazine, JSAH* and *JAE*, and the catalog received the Philip Johnson Award 2017 from SAH for the best exhibition catalog for the 2015-2017 period. ■

The Radical HIVE: Experiments in Social Housing and Urbanism in Latin America

Marilys Nepomechie* e Eric Goldemberg**

*Associate Dean, Architect, and Professor at Florida International University. Her professional and academic projects have been honored with over 40 design and research awards, national and international exhibition and publication. Marilys is a CINTAS Fellow in Architecture, and co-curator of the exhibitions Miami | La Habana: Magic City | Novia del Mar; MIAMI 2100: Envisioning a Resilient Second Century; La Habana Moderna 1902-1959; and The Radical HIVE: Social Housing + Urbanism in Latin America. She is the author of Building Paradise: An Architectural Guide to the Magic City, and editor of Bienal Miami + Beach 2001-2005: A retrospective.

**Co-founder of MONAD Studio, he is an Associate Professor at Florida International University in Miami. Eric is the author of the book Pulsation in Architecture. His works have been published in The New York Times, BBC, The Guardian, Le Monde, Forbes Magazine and Architectural Record. Also worked for: FOX News, CNBC, The Discovery Channel and National Geographic. It has been and exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, and the Jewish Museum of Florida – FIU among others.

Abstract

This essay describes and comments upon the process of researching organizing an exhibition focused on social housing in Latin America, particularly during the 20th century. Titled “The Radical Hive: Twentieth Century Experiments in Social Housing and Urbanism in Latin America”, the exhibition was mounted in the spring of 2016 (January – May) at the Miami Center for Architecture + Design, in Miami, Florida. An eponymous symposium, held at the Florida International University Miami Beach Urban Studios, subsequently brought together international academic and curatorial experts on the subject of social housing for a daylong gathering of spirited discussion.

Keywords: Architectural Exhibitions. Latin-American architecture. Social Housing.

Introduction

The effective design and production of social housing represents one of the most significant challenges facing our society today. Arguably, the topic is the unnamed elephant in the room of our design professions: insufficiently acknowledged, the subject opens a profound dimension of architecture, one that frames its substantial agency as socio-cultural engine. While recent generations of architects have looked away from this critical program and expertise, current socio-economic, environmental, political and urban pressures have conspired to bring it to the forefront of disciplinary attention once more. Assessed in conjunction with the newly augmented capacity of the profession to rethink housing in the context of an enhanced technological and material arsenal, the topic of social housing has been reframed as the subject of academic and professional relevance in the fields of architecture and urbanism.

"The Radical Hive: Twentieth Century Experiments in Social Housing and Urbanism in Latin America" (Figure 1), was an exhibition mounted in the spring of 2016 (January – May) at the Miami Center for Architecture + Design, in Miami, Florida. It was launched precisely with an eye toward convening and advancing a critical conversation about social, accessible, affordable housing with a broad audience. Among its members: the local community, the design and planning professions, the real estate development and construction industries, elected officials and urban policy makers, financiers, civic advocates and of course academic colleagues and students, whose built legacies these conditions of need will almost certainly define.

Over the course of four months, at a prominent street-front location in the heart of downtown Miami, social housing drew the attention of an academic, professional, and lay public. In a city with pronounced income disparities and widely acknowledged shortages of affordable housing,

Figure 1. General view. Exhibition inauguration day. Source: Eric Goldemberg, photographer.

the resulting level of awareness served as a reminder of the power of architectural exhibitions to envision alternative realities, and in that process, to suggest strategies with the potential to make our cities whole.

Social Housing in Latin America: a post-war legacy

"The Radical Hive" and its associated programming centered on key paradigmatic urban housing projects, realized in Latin America from the mid-twentieth century to the present. The corresponding European and Asian lineages from which those projects emerged, through the postwar legacies of, among others, Team X and its critique of CIAM, focused the research, analysis and documentation efforts incorporated in the exhibition. Through two- and three-dimensional representations, accompanied by a broad range of physical models, the exhibition highlighted multiple facets of the processes that produced, in the subject period, fertile ground for experimentation. Among these: the work of the first Archigram, the Japanese Metabolists, the work of Alison and Peter Smithson, of John Habraken and the SAR, of Moshe Safdie, and that of many others, each in resonance with the work of Le Corbusier in the Unité.

Focus subsequently turned to the challenges and opportunities historically and currently inherent in the design, construction and delivery of affordable, accessible, resilient urban housing across the Americas. In Argentina, Brazil, and many other Latin American countries, remarkable parallel developments were identified to those produced in postwar Europe. Notwithstanding their clearly traceable roots, the Latin American examples were noteworthy for their capacity to expand upon those precedents. Through the incorporation of local nuance and culture, these projects effectively articulated an intention to forge a powerful and uniquely South American identity.

For contemporary practice, the implication of the substantial number of urban planning and social housing projects produced in Latin America during this period includes the establishment of discernible legacies --for urbanism; for housing affordability and accessibility; for manufacturing systems and processes, for construction and assembly systems, for incremental and participatory design and construction practices; for social resilience and community planning strategies; and, in short, for the

social, economic and environmental sustainability that contemporary architects must address in the creation of an equitable built environment.

Re-examining housing components

A parallel line of investigation and analysis focused on the history of technological innovation in the production of social housing. Advancements in construction processes and assembly systems have long been leveraged to facilitate efficiency, speed and economies of scale. Researchers documented and analyzed the evolution of large-scale, building-delivery strategies, extending from the early part of the twentieth century, to the present-day.

The production of sizable numbers of residential units involves multiple systems and layers of operation designed to address the challenges of repetition and variation in the pursuit of efficiency, economy, identity, character, and ultimately durability and livability. As part of their work, exhibition researchers employed advanced 3D modeling and digital fabrication processes to replicate several of the building components employed in the subject projects, assessing issues of seriality, modularity, and rhythmic adaptation. The work of these combined pursuits engaged them in dual strategies for investigation and creation, allowing for a multivalent understanding of the social, economic, environmental and urban issues involved in the development of multi-family housing projects.

Themes + Strategies + Tactics:

"The Radical Hive" privileged the documentation, analysis and representation of a specific range of themes, operational design strategies, and construction tactics. Among them: Urban and infrastructure strategies, including programmatic, spatial, vehicular, pedestrian, environmental, and social. Other critical themes included: Approaches, goals and tactics for *residential unit aggregation, organization, wayfinding and livability; for manipulation of project scale and identity; for construction processes and innovation in material usage, assembly and in [pre]-fabrication; for the respective roles –advisory and/or participatory-- of the professional architect/ builder and the owner/ end user/ resident in project design and construction; for the viability of employing design competitions as instruments of project realization; for understanding the projects as laboratories for architectural / formal, technological, methodological, economic, and social 'experimentation';* and finally for a *post-occupancy assessment of the projects* through the lived and recorded experiences of its long-time residents from around the world.

A Case Study: Social Housing Projects: Estudio STAFF, Buenos Aires, Argentina

"The Radical Hive" introduced the social housing oeuvre of several seminal Latin American practices of the latter half of the twentieth century.

Figure 2. General view. Complex: "Conjunto Habitacional Moron". Source: projects belong to the archive of Estudio STAFF[1].

Figure 3. High and low buildings, with detail of vertical circulation. Complex: "Conjunto Habitacional Ciudadela I". Source: projects belong to the archive of Estudio STAFF.

Among them, *Estudio STAFF* had significant impact in the field from the late 1960s to mid 1980s, a particularly fertile period in Latin American architecture, subject of a 2015 survey by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

An architectural practice founded in 1964 by Teresa Bielus, Jorge Goldemberg and Olga Wainstein-Krasuk in Argentina, *Estudio STAFF* selected its name to reinforce the primacy of the "team" over that of any individual member's contribution. The name also reflected the attitude of the studio with regard to an understanding of the primacy of the city: architecture was understood to express its true significance through urban themes, through the comprehensive urban design that superseded isolated, spectacular episodes. Uninterested in the creation of objects, the firm understood singular works of architecture as opportunities for partial concretization of a great urban theme or as the synthesis of complex, intricately linked urban phenomena. *Estudio STAFF* defined the task of the architect as the integration of sociological, anthropological and neo-technological principles articulated through engineered systems.

The professional production of this studio concentrated on large-scale social housing projects, realized in the context of the PEVE (Plan de Erradicación de Villas de Emergencia), a state-funded program based on national architectural competitions that reformulated social housing for sites throughout Argentina where only precarious conditions of living existed. Three projects in the outskirts of Buenos Aires characterize the outcomes of this process. All were constructed in the decade of the 1970s, and all remain in use today. Models and analyses of two of the projects (*Ciudadela* and *Soldati*) were included in the exhibition:

Conjunto Habitacional Moron (Competition: 1970), located in the western part of the city of Buenos Aires, was the result of a State-funded plan to eradicate shantytowns carried out through professional architecture competitions. The complex was designed to provide social housing for 7,000 inhabitants. The design was organized as a series of four-story linear slab structures, interconnected by stairs and bridges of concrete and steel to frame a series of community courtyards. (Figure 2)

Conjunto Habitacional Ciudadela I y II (Competition: 1971) combined the typology of four-level linear slabs and large courtyards, with thirteen-level towers. Located at the intersection of the slabs, the towers form an organization of 'knots' that punctuate the assemblage. The project incorporated the innovative use of multiple colors and complex patterns to provide variation and a sense of identity to the organizational system. Built in two stages between 1973 and 1978, the complex was designed to house 17,000 inhabitants. Schools, a shopping center and community services occupied public spaces on the ground level. (Figure 3)

1.Eric Goldemberg, son of founding partners Teresa Bielus and Jorge Goldemberg, is the curator of the archive.

Figure 4 Aerial view. Complex: "Conjunto Habitacional Soldati". Source: projects belong to the archive of Estudio STAFF[2].

Conjunto Habitacional Soldati (Competition: 1972), the largest and most complex of the projects, was designed for 17,800 inhabitants and organized by a series of 'knots' combining three and four-level linear buildings with eight and sixteen-level residential towers. Throughout the project, bridges, stairs, and terraces function as social connectors and community spaces. The playful volumetric disposition of the multicolor buildings creates a variegated profile intended to echo the Buenos Aires skyline, and counter the sense of anonymity that is typical of large housing projects. (Figure 4)

Four urban strategies defined the theoretical and formal framework of the studio as evidenced in their projects: *Density, complexity, ambiguity and systematization*. Eschewing monolithic, top-down solutions, a strategy of *density* sought to achieve richness in large-scale design through the superimposition of sequential layers of data over intertwined structures, an attempt to counter the monotony born of infinite repetition. The theme of density was directly connected with those of *complexity* and theatricality. The architects sought to preserve the intricacy of the city in their projects, challenging normative definitions of typology to provide authentic settings for urban life. Interwoven with these strategies was the desire to achieve a multivalent *ambiguity*. Through the deployment of multiple color patterns over rich volumetric arrays, *Estudio STAFF* sought to recover the power of architectural delight cast aside by the Modern Movement. These strategies were integrated through ordering systems designed to safeguard the complex aspirations of the projects, while facilitating adjustment to their practical realities.

The exhibition projects

The following 30 projects, listed in alphabetical order, were selected to 1- Trace the post-war European and Asian architectural lineages of key twentieth century social housing developments, and 2- Follow the design and construction strategies that emerged from those seminal works, particularly in Latin America. The selected works were mapped, researched, documented, and analyzed in the context of the subject themes. Analog and digital models were created for each project, and the results were formatted, mounted and displayed at the *Miami Center for Architecture + Design* [MCAD].

Barbican Estate, Bouca Housing Complex, Brazil Box House, Brazil 44, Carabanchel Social Housing, Casa Bloc, Casa Urbanization Canaveral, Conjunto Habitacional Ciudadela I y II, Corviale Social Housing, Conjunto Habitacional Soldati, Gavea, Habitat 67, Ivry de Sienne, La Fundación, Lafayette Park, Mirador, Nakagin Capsule Tower, Piedrabuena, PREVI Experimental Social Housing Projects, Robin Hood Gardens, Reidy, Unidad Vecinal Portales, Unidad Residencial Presidente Suarez, Unite d'Habitacion Berlin, Urban Think

2.A video with aerial view of the complex can be seen at the link: https://www.facebook.com/alejandro.goldemberg/posts/10213055817504185?pnref=story

Tank Venezuela, Villa Nueva El Paraiso, Villa Verde, Walden 7.

Exhibition + Symposium Credits:

Co-Curators | Researchers:
Marilys Nepomechie, Eric Goldemberg. Florida International University Department of Architecture. College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts, Miami, FL.

Research + Fabrication Team:
Mohammed Aljehani, James Allen, Tatiane Almeida, Andres Barros, Marco Campa, Christopher Centeno, David Ciambotti, Brandon Cummings, Jessica Dickinson, Jihan El Abadi, Carlos Fernandez, Sara Garaulet, Valentina Garibello, Richard Gomez, Alejandro Gutierrez, Kevin Hutchinson, Sonia Jaramillo, Apoorva Varum Kulkarni, Adan Quesada Matute, Tara Mazloomi, Jorge Martinez, Branco Micic, Mark Miglionico, Manuel Menoya, Ricardo Miranda, Carolina Papale, Maria Peguero, Alejandro Reyes, Marvin Rodriguez, Adriana Rojas, Fiorella Salamanca, Daniel Salazar, David Santana, J. Turner, Oscar Vanegas, Eduardo Vera, La Shai Waterman

Symposium Panelists:
Umberto Bonomo, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Santiago, Chile; Alastair Gordon, Florida International University, Miami, FL; Ana Paula Koury, University São Judas Tadeu, São Paulo, Brazil; Margi Nothard, Glavovic Studio, Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Patricio del Real, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

Project Funding:
The Cejas Family Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation - Wolfsonian-FIU generously funded the exhibition and symposium. The Miami Center for Architecture + Design, the Florida International University School of Architecture, and the Miami Beach Urban Studios each contributed additional support.

■

Circling the Square: Mies van der Rohe and James Stirling

Exhibited at the RIBA Architecture Gallery, 66 Portland Place – March to August 2017. Curated by Marie Bak Mortensen (Head of Exhibitions) and Victoria Wilson (Assistant Curator)

Victoria Wilson*

*Until recently, was Assistant Curator of the Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings and Archives Collection and co-curator of Circling the Square: Mies van der Rohe and James Stirling with her colleague Marie Bak Mortensen (Head of Exhibitions). Also co-curated RIBA's 2015-2016 exhibition Palladian Design: the good, the bad and the unexpected. Currently, works at Ramsbury Manor in Wiltshire as Collections Manager.

Abstract

This article discusses the RIBA's recent exhibition:Circling the Square: Mies van der Rohe and James Stirling which offers a renewed examination of two iconic architectural schemes proposed for the same site in the City of London. Mies van der Rohe's unrealised Mansion House Square and it's built successor, Number One Poultry by James Stirling, were both commissioned by architectural patron and developer Lord Peter Palumbo and represent a unique opportunity to draw comparisons between the design methods and solutions of two of the most highly regarded architects of the 20th century. The planning history of the two schemes spans over five decades from the 1960s to the 1990s, providing a fascinating insight into a complex and transitional period in the history of British architecture which saw the successive rise and fall of modernism and postmodernism, and the growth of an influential conservation movement. Intended to replace an eclectic block of Victorian listed buildings, both schemes were opposed by heritage groups and subjected to high-profile public inquiries to decide their fate. Debate over the value of Britain's late twentieth century architectural heritage continues to the present day, with the recent controversial listing of Number One Poultry.

Introduction

"Circling the Square' is the story of one remarkable site in the heart of the historic City of London, one that has been at the forefront of architectural debate in Britain for over fifty years. In the early 1960s, Peter (later Lord) Palumbo approached Mies van der Rohe to design a new icon for London's then premier financial district, close to the Bank of England and opposite the Lord Mayor's residence at Mansion House. What followed was a thirty-year planning battle, initially to secure permission for Mies's classic modernist tower and plaza proposal, and later, after that scheme was finally refused in 1985, for its replacement Number One Poultry, designed by that exuberant architect of the postmodern generation, James Stirling. Ranged against both schemes were fiercely fought and highly organised campaigns by a consortium of heritage groups attempting to save from demolition the block of Victorian office buildings that stood on the site - not to mention the shifting climate of architectural taste in Britain during the later twentieth century.

The exhibition (Figures 1 and 2) came about thanks to the generosity of Lord Palumbo, who opened up his personal archive on Mansion House Square to the RIBA's curators back in 2015. Lord Palumbo had already donated material relating to the Mansion House Square public inquiry to the RIBA in the 1980s, as had architectural historians Robert Thorne and Gavin Stamp, representing the opposition. Initially, therefore, our intention was to curate an exhibition focused upon Mies's unrealised proposal, inviting comparison with present-day controversy over the impact of tall buildings on London's streets and skyline. However, in the summer of 2016 there came the thrilling discovery that the original drawings for Number One Poultry had not ended up at the Canadian Centre of Architecture with the rest of Stirling's archive, as we had supposed, but were still in London in the care of the building's Project Architect, Laurence Bain. With the benefit of Mr Bain's unrivalled knowledge of the project and archive, we could include

Figure 1. Circling the Square exhibition. Source: Francis Ware, RIBA Collections.

Figure 2. Circling the Square exhibition. Source: Francis Ware, RIBA Collections.

a fascinating sample of the Stirling office's design and development material, revealing how Number One Poultry was shaped from the beginning by a keen awareness of why Mies's scheme had failed with the planners.

We had been presented with a rare and irresistible opportunity to compare side by side the design solutions of two highly renowned architects presented with the same site, client and budget - architects who, if judged by the appearance of their buildings alone, could not be more different. But we did not want to use the exhibition to pose any trite challenge as to which is the 'better' or 'more appropriate' choice of building for such a prestigious location, surrounded as it is by icons of past ages on all sides – Sir Christopher Wren's Church of St. Stephen Walbrook (completed 1679), George Dance's Mansion House (completed 1752) and Sir Edwin Lutyens's Midland Bank (designed 1924). Instead, we wanted to trace the continuity in purpose and approach that unites two such dissimilar creations, both seeking to respond to, and find their own place in, the continuum of the City's architectural heritage.

This expansion of focus for the exhibition has proven uncannily timely, with the recent listing of Number One Poultry indicative of an apparent shift in the perception of postmodern architecture from a defunct fad to threatened heritage deserving of protection. Earlier in the twentieth century, both Victorian and modernist architecture underwent similar transformations in perception, from status quo to reviled eye-sores and finally as buildings that inspire renewed appreciation and affection.

Taken as a whole, the story of the site at Mansion House can be seen as a fascinating microcosm of Britain's changing attitudes to both contemporary and historic architecture over the last fifty years.

Mansion House Square: 1962 to 1985

The 1950s and 60s saw the zenith of modernist office building in London. Skyscraper architecture had been led by America since the late nineteenth century and by the mid-twentieth, buildings such as the Secretariat at the UN Complex by Oscar Niemeyer and Le Corbusier (completed 1952), Lever House by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, (also 1952), and the Seagram Tower by Mies van der Rohe (1958), all in New York, provided models that were imitated and copied all over the world (Wright, 2006).

Peter Palumbo discovered the work of Mies van der Rohe as a teenager in the early 1950s, shortly after the completion of the Farnsworth House (which Palumbo was to buy in 1972). By the end of the decade, Palumbo and his father, the property developer Rudolph Palumbo, had begun to purchase the first of thirteen freeholds and 348 leaseholds that made up what was to become known as the Mansion House Square site (Mansion House Square Scheme 1981). In 1962 Palumbo found himself in a position to of-

fer Mies van der Rohe his first British commission (Palumbo, 1984).

At this time, Mies was at the peak of his international career. He had begun work in his native Germany at the turn of the century, designing competent if conventional houses in the classical tradition for the upper-middle classes. By the 1920s, however, Mies had drastically changed direction in the search for an architecture more representative of its own time. His experiments in futuristic, Expressionist glass skyscrapers were in fact decades ahead of their time, whilst the Brick and Concrete country villas introduced radically free open-plans (Schultz and Windhorst, 2012). This shift in approach culminated in the two buildings widely regarded as his earliest masterpieces; the German Pavilion for the 1929 International Exposition in Barcelona, Spain and the Tugendhat villa in Brno, Czechoslovakia of 1930.

After fleeing Nazi Germany for America in 1938, Mies reinvented himself again as the proponent of a new architectural language of glass, brick, concrete and steel, reflecting the achievements and materiality of the modern, technological age. From the 1940s onwards, Mies was to apply this new language to endless variations on two main archetypes – the single-storey, clear-span structure,seen in small, domestic form at the Farnsworth House (1951), but also employed for university buildings like Crown Hall (1956) and the monumental, unbuilt Chicago Convention Hall (1953), and the multi-storey tower, perfected at Seagram (Frampton, 2007).

The enduring influence on Mies of an older generation of classicists (in particular the nineteenth century architect and planner Karl Friedrich Schinkel) is evidenced by this rational, systematic approach to design where buildings are considered as problems to be solved. Once the formulae had been perfected Mies saw no need to further develop or reinvent it; the template could be adapted and reused again and again (Schultz and Windhorst, 2012).

It was just such a variation of the classic Miesian tower type that was proposed for London – an office building clad in a skin of solid bronze mullions and bronze-tinted glass, its eighteen storeys of office accommodation elevated upon a colonnade of thin bronze stilts surrounding a double-height glazed lobby with a marble-lined interior. But the tower formed just one component of a scheme composed of three interrelated elements – an underground shopping concourse, adapted from Mies's contemporary scheme at the Toronto Dominion Centre (1969) (Carter, 1984a), was to provide traffic-free access to the tower and local tube stations, whilst above ground seventy-eight percent of the site was given over to a clean, uncluttered public plaza stretching from Mies's tower to the side of the Mansion House (*Mansion House Square Scheme*, 1981).

Figure 3. First known study model from ca. May 1967. Source: Francis Ware, RIBA Collections.

Figure 4. Feasibility Study B from set of eight studies, ca.1963-4. Source: Francis Ware, RIBA Collections.

The scheme was developed from 1962 right up until Mies's death in 1969. As Mies was based in the United States, a London office was established under the supervision of Project Architect Peter Carter, whilst Mies's grandson, Dirk Lohan, acted as Project Architect for the Chicago office. In addition, the British planner and architect Lord William Holford was brought on board to advise on the complexities of London planning and traffic regulations.

Very little original design material survives for Mansion House Square and no drawings in Mies's own hand are known (although several private archives are yet to be fully explored and published). This provided ammunition for later critics who accused Mies of turning the project over to his staff and taking little personal involvement. At this late stage in his life, however, Mies was suffering from arthritis and failing eyesight, so that study models, always important, now became the primary design tool (Schultz and Windhorst, 2012). Only when a project had been satisfactorily developed in three dimensions, progressing from smaller-scale massing models to detailed full-size mock-ups of individual components, would a set of drawings be prepared (Carter, 1984a).

The earliest known study model for Mansion House Square is recorded only in photographs (Figure 3), the original having been either discarded or mislaid. Dating to around May 1967, only the basic components of the scheme are in place and the details and finish yet to be finalised. It is unclear when this configuration of square and office block first arose, placing Mies's modernist tower in a formal relationship with its stately, classical neighbours. Lord Holford wrote to Mies on 1st February 1963 that he expected the project to essentially consist of "a large office block facing an open space" (Holford Papers, folder D147/C39/1(ii)), but a later memo by Holford suggests it was not until 1967 that the tower's location was fixed at the far west of the site, allowing enough space for the generously proportioned square (Holford Papers, folder D147/C39/6). Indeed, an earlier set of feasibility studies from ca.1963-4 (Figure 4) show that a series of very different configurations for the site were initially considered by the Mies office, many of which would have entirely precluded anything like the balanced arrangement achieved in the final design. Practical considerations were as important as the architectural effect to be gained from opening up the square; the presence of underground railway and pedestrian tunnels at Bank Junction necessitated the positioning of the building as far away from such complications as possible (Carter, 1984b).

In this early version of the scheme, the tower comprises five structural bays by three, with each bay made up of five modules of five feet each. This was later amended to a more generous six feet, six inch module, with three bays of six modules each on the long sides and three bays of four modules on the short. Mies apparently felt this adjustment

Figure 5. Ashtray in travertine marble. Source: RIBA Collections.

of the building's proportions brought it more into accordance with the monumental scale of the surrounding buildings (Carter, 1984a). As the scheme developed and after Mies had the opportunity to visit London in 1964 and see the site for himself, he incorporated many other similarly subtle concessions to the site's historic context. While Mansion House Square certainly adheres to Mies's typical design vocabulary (with the tower even reappearing in the exactly contemporary, and also unrealised, King Broadcasting Studios in Washington State, 1967-69) (Carter, 1984c), Mies was not averse to modifying his template in order to contextualise the scheme to its London setting. Most obvious is the height of the tower itself, which is significantly lower at eighty-eight and a half metres than any of those Mies built in America. Elsewhere, the height of the ground floor lobby canopy perfectly aligns with the corresponding string courses of its neighbours, establishing a direct dialogue between the new and the existing structures. Internally too, Mies broke with his own conventions in his treatment of the two service cores, relocating them from their usual position in the centre of a plan to rest here against the west wall. This modification allowed office workers an unobstructed view over the newly created square in one direction, and an equally impressive glimpse of St Paul's Cathedral from the other, to be enjoyed at leisure while waiting for the lift. As ever with Mies's architecture, the building's external features act as expressions of its internal structure and planning grid; thus, on the rear elevation, two vertical bands of louvre panels represent the unusual presence of these service cores on the other side of the wall (Carter, 1984a).

Mansion House Square provided Mies with his biggest budget since Seagram (Schultz and Windhorst, 2012) and he indulged lavishly in his favourite materials – along with their bronze skin components and shop fronts, the square, the roof of the tower, and the shopping concourse were all to be paved in Cornish granite. Key interior walls were to be faced in travertine marble and even the beautifully designed ashtrays (Figure 5) were to be fashioned out of this same expensive material.

And there are other indicators that Mansion House Square represented a special commission for Mies, one in which he took a deep interest. An early letter by Mies to Lord Holford, dated 15th February 1963, sets out his expectations of their working relationship: "…As in all of my work, I insist on the architectural control during the entire job … I am most interested in this project since Mr Palumbo wants an extremely fine building, and to build such a building in London would be indeed an honour" (Holford Papers, folder D147/C39/1(ii)).

Interestingly, Holford later expressed to Palumbo his unwillingness to act merely as a "liaison architect" (Holford Papers, letter dated 14th February 1963, folder D147/C39/1(ii)) with the necessary authorities, and clearly hoped for a more equal design collaboration. The archive at Liverpool University also includes some fascinating

alternative schemes designed by Holford himself that post-date Mies's appointment as architect (Holford Papers, folder D147/C39/3). The square formed a particularly contentious issue, with Holford left disappointed that traffic requirements meant severing the square from the base of the tower by redirecting Queen Victoria Street in front of it. Throughout the autumn of 1967 he fought for a compromise solution that involved picking up Mies's tower, turning it ninety degrees and running the road underneath it!

The first official set of drawings was not produced until September 1967, and a copy of this is now in the RIBA's collection. Mies typically designed blank, flexible office spaces to suit the needs of multiple, often unknown, occupants; these drawings therefore represent a unique concession by Mies as they indicate detailed layouts for every single floor, reflecting the specific requirements of the prospective single tenant at the time, Lloyd's International (Carter, 1984b). According to Peter Carter in his testimony at the 1984 public inquiry, by the time of his death in August 1969, Mies had overseen the preparation of two more sets of drawings, including a full set of preliminary working drawings and material specifications. Carter also recalled his final conversation with Mies, who relayed detailed instructions as to the exact positioning and profile of the bronze flagpole in the square. Carter's point was that Mansion House Square was indeed a genuine, and complete, Mies van der Rohe design - neither an off-the-shelf product of the Mies office nor a case of the team "interpreting a collection of rough sketches" left behind after his death.

Nonetheless, the scheme was not to have an easy ride through the planning process, even in the relatively modernism and high-rise-friendly 1960s. The thirty-metre height limit set by the 1894 London Building Act had been lifted in 1954 and developers had wasted no time in exploiting the economic advantages of building high. Bucklersbury House (built 1954-58, Owen Campbell Jones & Sons), which would have formed the least distinguished side to Mansion House Square, was one of the first modernist tall buildings at fifty-one metres. By the end of the 1950s, several buildings were in construction that would reach 100 metres (Wright, 2006).

In the 1960s, however, more and more obstacles were being put in the way of schemes like Mansion House Square and attitudes to tall modernist office blocks were already beginning to shift. Harold Wilson's government introduced Office Development Permits in 1965 in a bid to gain more control over the activities of profiteering developers (Wright, 2006). Palumbo's team was not able to acquire an ODP until April 1968 (Carter, 1984a) and this was still no guarantee of planning permission for the project. The building's proposed height of just under ninety metres proved to be a major obstacle to securing the approval of both the Greater London Council (which had replaced the London County

Figure 6. Public exhibition at the Royal Exchange, October 1968. Source: John Donat, RIBA Collections.

Council in 1964) and the Royal Fine Arts Commission, a government advisory body that held significant influence over planning decisions. At the very time that Mansion House Square was under discussion by these bodies, the GLC was developing its new High Buildings Policy that defined a tall building generally as anything over 150 feet (47.5 metres) and for buildings in the City as any structure "in excess of the general height of surrounding development" (Haskell, 1966). Grave concerns were expressed over the tower's potential impact on views of St Paul's Cathedral and on the wider skyline of the City. The Palumbo team had to go to great lengths to persuade the GLC to make an immediate exception to their new policy on the grounds of the scheme's "outstanding architectural merit" (Palumbo, 1968) including bringing PR's founding father Tim Traverse-Healy on board and staging a lavish public exhibition in the Great Hall of the Royal Exchange in October 1968 (Figure 6). Having stood firm on the height issue, the team eventually secured a promise of planning permission in May 1969, just three months before Mies passed away.

But there were conditions to this promise that were eventually to prove the downfall of Mansion House Square. To get around the lengthy lease remaining on the Bank of New Zealand, (the triangular building which stood right in the middle of the area proposed for the new square) the project team had proposed constructing the scheme in two phases, illustrated through a specially designed model with two interchangeable sections (Figure 7). Phase one would involve demolishing the Victorian buildings on the wedge-shaped site where Queen Victoria Street meets Poultry, and building the tower and shopping concourse immediately. Phase two would be delayed until the Bank of New Zealand could be acquired and this too demolished to make way for the square.

Although the square was pitched as a unique civic asset, after a meeting with the RFAC on 14th February 1968, Holford noted that several members had expressed an aversion to the idea of a large open space in the middle of the City, and favoured phase one over phase two (Holford Papers, folder D147/C39/1(i)). It was, therefore, rather surprising that when planning permission was at last promised, it was with the stipulation that construction could only begin once Palumbo had completed all the free and leasehold purchases and so had sufficient control over the entire site to ensure both tower and square could be completed within a single phase of development (Corporation of London, 1969). As a result, it was not until January of 1982 that the team, minus both Mies and Holford (the latter having died in 1975), was ready to resubmit its plans for a scheme now almost twenty years old.

In the intervening eleven years, attitudes to modern, high-rise developments had undergone a steady decline following the widespread ideological (and with the collapse of Ronan Point in 1968, literal) failure of residential tower blocks to provide safe and desirable social housing. This alongside

Figure 7. Model showing phase one of two phase development, 1968. Source: RIBA Collections.

the growing perception that contemporary commercial architecture offered little more than a series of repetitive glass boxes. For many, the New Brutalist concrete architecture of the 1970s was as grey and depressing as the economic situation after the oil crisis of 1973. Recession meant that restoration and re-use was increasingly seen as a more viable option than complete redevelopment, bolstered by the rise of a conservation movement which was campaigning for protection and restoration over demolition of historic buildings and townscapes (Wright, 2006).

The Victorian Society had formed in 1958, indicative of a turnaround in academic and popular interest in mid to late nineteenth century architecture, so much maligned since the end of the Victorian era. And it was not only threats to grand, stately or religious architecture that provoked campaigners, but also those to commercial and industrial heritage of just the type represented by the eclectic block of Victorian shops and offices at Mansion House (Glendinning, 2013). The most highly regarded of these was the neo-Gothic Mappin & Webb building of 1870 by John Belcher, with its distinctive cupola-topped tower at the apex of Poultry and Queen Victoria Street (Figure 8). The high-profile demolitions in the early 1960s of the Euston Arch and the London Coal exchange only succeeded in drawing increased support for the movement and as a result, many of the buildings on the Mansion House Square site received individual listed status during the 1970s and early 1980s. The surrounding area of Bank junction was also designated a conservation area under the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Perhaps most fatal of all to Mansion House Square was the formation in 1975 of the conservation group SAVE Britain's Heritage, who were to lead the consortium of heritage organisations that opposed the scheme when it came to public inquiry in 1984.

Figure 8. Mappin and Webb building, illustrated in the Builder, 1871. Source: RIBA Collections.

Figure 9. The Guildhall courtroom during the 1984 public inquiry into Mansion House Square. Source: John Donat, RIBA Collections.

All of this activity meant that by 1982 Palumbo and his team faced a formidable task to get Mansion House Square off the drawing board and into construction. The resubmitted plans had changed little from the time of Mies's involvement in the project; ever aware that the scheme would outlive him, Mies had ensured his design allowed enough flexibility that it could accommodate any new building services, technologies and regulations that might arise in the future. The hope was that the City Corporation would honour its promise of 1969; in fact, it took just 17 minutes of discussion for the Planning Sub-Committee to turn the scheme down in July 1982, citing numerous reasons, chief among them being that it would involve demolishing newly listed buildings (Carter, 1984a).

After Palumbo appealed this decision the battle lines were drawn, with the Greater London Council and SAVE both announcing their intention to fight the appeal. A public inquiry date was set for May 1984 and one of the biggest dramas in British architecture commenced (Figure 9). Building Design magazine covered the events in a weekly column like an unfolding soap-opera, with Jan Burney describing the opening as "rather like a royal wedding or, more accurately, a state funeral" (Burney, 1984) with anyone who was anyone in the architectural establishment putting in an appearance. The list of witnesses willing to attest to the merits of the scheme was indeed formidable, including Sir John Summerson, Richard Rogers, Berthold Lubetkin, RIBA President Michael Manser and even James Stirling, blissfully unaware that he would be fighting for his own scheme in just a few years' time. The scheme's opponents were also able to boast high profile supporters. Philip Johnson, a pioneer of the postmodern movement but formerly a devoted Mies disciple who had worked with him as Associate Architect on Seagram, wrote to the historian Gavin Stamp that he considered it "a bad idea for one of the greatest architects in the 20th century to be represented …. by a posthumous and unimportant piece of architecture. The continent of America is over-represented by these later "sons of Seagram" … Both Mies and London deserve better monuments" (Johnson, 1984). Johnson's comments were echoed by many opponents of the scheme who saw in its strict adherence to the Miesian canon of tower architecture a complete lack of originality or sensitivity to the City's unique historic fabric.

The most high-profile opponent of all was, of course, the Prince of Wales. 1984 was a momentous, almost dystopian, year for modern architecture in Britain. Not only was Mansion House Square and Miesian modernism on trial, but while the inquiry was still taking place the Prince delivered his now famous speech at Hampton Court Palace on 30th May. It was the RIBA's 150th anniversary gala evening and also the occasion of Indian architect Royal Gold Medalreceiving the Royal Gold Medal. However, the evening was dominated by the Prince's unprecedented attack on modern architecture and the rough-shod development

that had blighted so many historic towns and cities since the end of the Second World War. The Prince singled out several buildings for particular censure, including most famously ABK's National Gallery extension which was later scrapped, while Mansion House Square was pointedly criticized as a "giant glass stump better suited to downtown Chicago than the City of London".

This idea of the open plaza as a product of the American grid system and, as such, alien to the historic, irregular street pattern of the old City had persisted since the RFAC's criticisms of the scheme back in the 1960s. It was addressed in an alternative proposal, commissioned by SAVE and prepared by Terry Farrell. This unofficial report made the case for refurbishment of all eight of the listed buildings to provide a combination of office, shopping and dining facilities while small, enclosed public courtyards offered a direct contrast to Mies's vast, draughty square which "blasts open the tight hub of buildings and streets at the Bank intersection" (Terry Farrell Partnership, 1984, p.41).

Despite their extraordinary efforts to defend the scheme, including the production of some of the most detailed architectural presentation models ever made (painstakingly restored and reunited to form the showstopper centrepieces of the exhibition) the Palumbo team were defeated. The verdict came back in May of 1985; Secretary of State for the Environment, Patrick Jenkin, praised the scheme as a "bold and imaginative endeavour to achieve a development of real distinction". However, both square and tower were unacceptable in their scale and character and as such would fail to achieve any harmony with their surroundings. Jenkin did not, however, believe that the Victorian buildings were of such importance that any future proposal to replace them would also be refused, stating that "it would be wrong to attempt to freeze the character of the City of London for all time" (Jenkin, 1985). The door had been left open for another attempt.

After the investment of so much time, energy and money, no one would have been surprised had Peter Palumbo decided in May 1985 to sell the site at Mansion House and move on. But for Palumbo, the project had always been more about providing patronage for great architecture than it was about profit. Just a few months later, he had taken Jenkin at his word and commissioned another great architect of international fame, James Stirling, to start work on a new, and hopefully more "acceptable" proposal.

Number One Poultry: 1985 - 1998

As Mansion House Square was in its death throes, Stirling was scoring his first major success in many years with the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, completed in 1984. He was to follow it up with a string of cultural buildings in a distinctive style often identified (much to Stirling's annoyance) with the growing postmodern movement. In complete

contrast to the trajectory of Mies's output, Stirling had been most subject to modernist influences early on in his career, making his name with the stylistically daring Leicester Engineering Building (1963), in partnership with James Gowan. Stirling's influences and interests were, however, diverse, ranging from the Beaux-Arts curriculum of the Liverpool School of Architecture , where he studied in the immediate postwar period, through British vernacular buildings and an early worship of Le Corbusier. His architectural output drew on these eclectic stimuli to varying degrees throughout his career, but his later buildings brought to the fore a growing concern for a more contextually driven approach, often utilising lively historical references (Baker, 2011). Surely Stirling was the ideal architect to address the concerns of those who had condemned Mansion House Square as acontextual?

This time around the site was much more restricted than the one Mies's team had to work with. The issue of the New Zealand Bank remained unresolved and as such the Stirling team were required to come up with a more integrated solution to fit the same programmatic elements of office and retail accommodation and public space onto what was now an awkward wedge-shaped plot. Building tall, however, was no longer a viable option. The day of the City skyscraper was, for now at least, over and in its place was a new breed of medium-rise offices, designed to maximise trading floor capacity by stacking fewer storeys over a wider area (Wright, 2006). In its final form Number One Poultry rises to just five storeys above ground and three below. A public garden and restaurant are cleverly squeezed onto the roof, and an external atrium plunges all the way down through the centre of the building to light the office floors, a ground floor courtyard and a below-ground shopping concourse. Further shopping facilities are provided on the ground floor, along with a public passageway linking Poultry to Queen Victoria Street. Most striking is the building's use of colour, such a signature of Stirling's work, with the softer, natural tones of stone and brick contrasted with bright primary colours used to express manufactured materials. The façade of Number One Poultry is finished with alternating bands of soft-pink and sand-coloured sandstone, a distinctive effect but a comparatively muted one, in deference its historic surroundings. On its less visible areas, however, the building lets loose with eye-popping turquoise on the roof, glazed purple tiles in the inner walls of the atrium, punctuated by window frames of yellow, pink and blue, and on the rear elevation, a single, squat, bright yellow column interrupts the plate glass wall of the Green Man pub. In plan, the building is one complex series of interlocking geometrical forms arranged, like its classical neighbours, symmetrically about an east-west axis. Overlapping triangular openings cut into the vast drum of the central atrium, which itself sits snugly within the encompassing triangular floor plan. This formal geometry is continued on the roof with a parterre garden designed by Arabella Lennox-Boyd (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Number One Poultry. Source: Richard Bryant 1997.

While Mies had spent a lifetime fine-tuning a systematic, objective approach to design, ensuring his office's output conformed to a homogenous architectural language, Stirling's methods were more intuitive and the product of creative team interaction. Nonetheless, there is a definite Stirling office methodology of sorts and one that is illustrated clearly through the design material for Number One Poultry. When it came to selecting material for the exhibition we, as curators, were spoilt for choice as the project archive is so unusually complete. Stirling's consciousness that his design was likely to face the same scrutiny as Mies's perhaps overrode the usual tendency to throw material away when it was no longer needed.

Stirling began by sending his team to thoroughly research the site, documenting in photographs the large-scale details of the surrounding architecture. The influence of its rusticated, monumental stone work, the undulating façades of curves and arches and the classical rhythms of repeating horizontal and vertical bays can all be detected in the two proposals that followed.

The design process itself commenced with the team experimenting simply with how to fit the required elements onto the site; the archive contains hundreds of these early drawings, each idea given an intriguingly descriptive name such as the "Dart" scheme, "Temple" scheme or "House within a house" scheme. Stirling then stepped in to act as a sort of magpie, selecting and editing those solutions he liked, having them redrawn to incorporate his own ideas or combined to form new hybrid schemes (Girouard, 1998).

Again unlike Mies, Stirling continued to design through drawing until the end of his life, although by this stage he usually only contributed sketches at the beginning of a project, leaving the draughtsmanship of the distinctive 'worm's eye' axonometrics to his staff who were rigorously trained to duplicate this painstakingly precise office style (Girouard, 1998). Models featured, but only as tools for explaining the evolving concepts to the planners. The exhibition included a number of Stirling's exquisite pencil and ink sketches for Number One Poultry (Figure 11) where one can see him playing around with ideas introduced in the earlier office-produced programmatic schemes, working them up into what would become two alternative proposals, known as Schemes A and B.

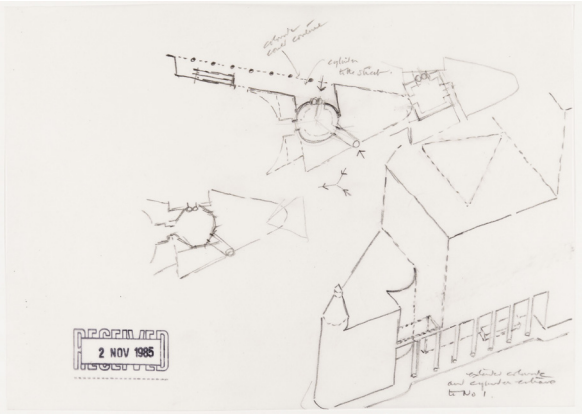


Figure 11. Stirling sketch for Scheme A incorporating colonnade, November 1985. Courtesy of Laurence Bain.

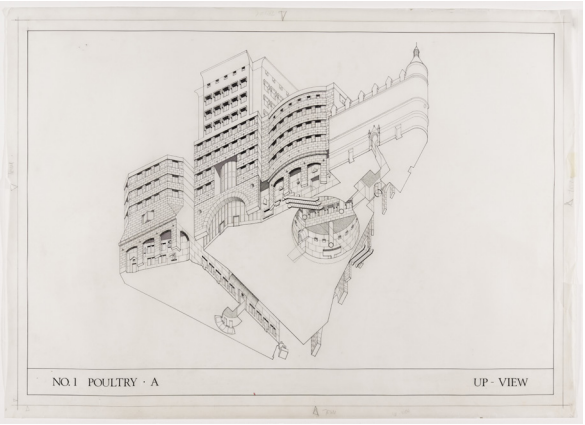


Figure 12. Scheme A up-view. Courtesy of Laurence Bain.

Interestingly, Scheme A retained the Mappin & Webb building at the apex of the site, a conciliatory gesture to those who wished to preserve what Stirling himself agreed was the best of the existing structures. Old and new are woven together in a tapestry of referential touches. Not only does the height of each, distinct, portion of Stirling's building accord with that of one of the surrounding buildings, but a ground floor loggia provides the setting for a sort of gallery of archaeological finds, displaying fragments of gothic window arches, columns and capitals copied directly from Mappin & Webb's own façade (Figure 12). An element of this archaeological approach was retained in the final design, with the inclusion over the Poultry entrance of the 1875 terracotta frieze formerly decorating the façade of the now demolished Number 12-13 Poultry.

However, retaining Mappin & Webb came at the cost of optimising space; in order to accommodate the square footage required, the building had to include a tower on its central portion 150' (45.7m) high. With height such a historically sensitive issue, the team prepared an alternative, lower scheme of just thirty metres in height which did away with Mappin & Webb but ultimately met with greater approval from the planning office (Stirling, 1988). Scheme B is, as a result, a more restrained, compact and evenly balanced building, with a greater degree of symmetry in the individual elevations. Though still displaying the Stirling tendency to compartmentalise its façade into discrete units, the fragments are unified into a cohesive whole by the consistent use of pattern and a limited palette of materials.

This breaking down of a building into separate, clearly expressed components was another feature of the office's design methodology, each one subjected to methodical analysis and experimentation before arriving at its final form (Wilford, 1994). Accordingly, we decided to group the design material on display into several sub-categories, revealing this process at work in the development of the tower, the façade and the public spaces. Of the latter, one of the most interesting sets of drawings relates to the roof which was originally intended to be left flat and undeveloped. It was not until December 1987 that ideas began to be drawn out, following a comment by the then City Architect and Planning Officer, Peter Rees, that the building's roofline should provide more visual interest to the pedestrian on the street, effectively becoming the 'fifth elevation' (Stirling, 1988). Numerous schemes were tried out on paper, loosely following two main themes; the first utilised the curve of the glazed bays above the arched side entrances, extending them upwards to form a large drum reminiscent of that at the Neue Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, encircling the existing triangular light-well. One iteration of this design playfully experiments with a rooftop river, ending in a waterfall cascading over the tip of the building (Figure 13). The alternative scheme was equally imaginative, featuring a ziggurat-type

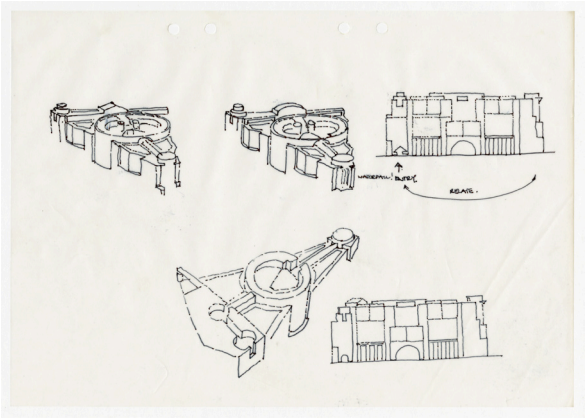


Figure 13. Designs for roof, post December 1987. Courtesy of Laurence Bain.

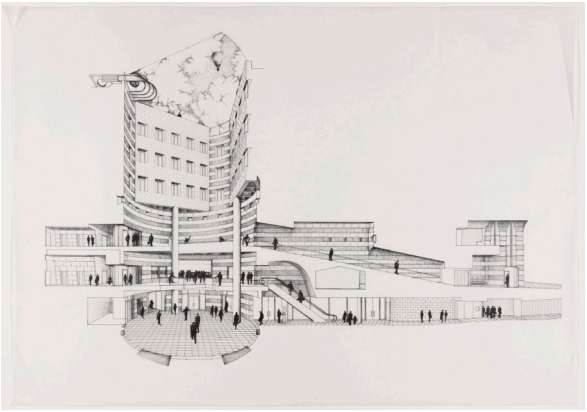


Figure 14. Sectional perspective. Courtesy of Laurence Bain.

structure of three levels sited to the west and a small cone near the apex of the building which would have combined to form a dramatic silhouette when viewed head on from Bank.

Stirling's later work was often concerned with the civic role of architecture (Maxwell, 1994), and the public elements of the scheme were as important to Stirling as the square had been to Mies's vision for the site. However, while Mansion House Square's insertion of a large new open space was heavily criticised for its perceived disregard for context, with Number One Poultry Stirling sought to make connections with the existing identity of the area. Cutting through the centre of the building, Bucklersbury passageway allows pedestrians to cut the corner between Queen Victoria Street and Poultry, entering and exiting the building through one of the forbidding arched doorways on either side and encountering on route the generous internal courtyard with an impressive view up through the atrium. This arrangement is a conscious echo of the street pattern of the old City, where narrow alleyways lead into small enclosed courts that provide sudden, startling views of the sky (Stirling, 1988).

A stunning sectional perspective (Figure 14) exposes this dynamic arrangement at the heart of the building, as well as illustrating the role of pedestrian circulation as a motivating force in Stirling's approach to planning (Wilford, 1994). As in other projects, the visitor's route through and between spaces at Number One Poultry is treated as a carefully orchestrated sequence of events, exposing them to a succession of special effects frequently punctuated by the use of ramps, staircases and lifts (Sudjic, 1986). A sense of drama and performance accompanies the long, shallow, barrel-vaulted tunnel that ascends from the Bank entrance, undergoing several changes of ceiling height before depositing the traveller onto the first-floor terrace overlooking the courtyard.

Stirling fought against the postmodern label so frequently bestowed upon him, but it is hard not to employ a postmodern reading of Stirling's repeated use of historical influences from outside, as well as from within, the site's immediate context. Early ideas for a classically inspired treatment of the façade were directly informed by buildings in Glasgow by the neoclassical architect Alexander 'Greek' Thomson (1817-75) while those for the tower seem to return to Stirling's youthful interest in English castle architecture (Girouard, 1998). Italian architectural tradition makes an appearance in the final building where a small belvedere marks the tower summit. In another dramatic flourish, from either side of this sheltered seating area, the brave visitor can step out onto two open viewing platforms which provide a spectacular view across the rooftops of the City, rooting Number One Poultry within its rich tradition of architectural evolution.

Schemes A and B were developed concurrently for several years and another public exhibition show-

casing both proposals was held at the Guildhall in June 1986. In the following year, concerns over Scheme A's height and bulk led to the decision to proceed with Scheme B alone. However, despite support from both the RFAC and the Planning Office, in July 1987 it was rejected by a narrow majority of the Planning Committee. The demolition of historic buildings and the impact of the new structure on the local character and views of nearby St Paul's Cathedral were once again cited as reasons for refusal. Work by the Stirling office continued, however, refining the scheme into what became Scheme B Revised. It was this version which was resubmitted for planning and so became the subject of the second public inquiry, held between May and June of 1988 (Stirling, 1988). Stirling was at least able to speak for his own project, and delivered as carefully argued and detailed a testimony as Peter Carter had given on behalf of Mies's scheme in 1984. On the other side, the SAVE team launched a similarly emotive stand against this renewed threat to Poultry's existing heritage. But this time, it was Palumbo who found favour with the new Secretary of State for the Environment, Nicholas Ridley.

While the outcome of the inquiry was still being considered, the building was publicly criticised by the Prince of Wales, who memorably described it as "an old 1930s wireless" in his Vision of Britain programme broadcast in October 1988. An unsent letter featured in the exhibition reveals Stirling's frustration at this royal disapproval, accusing the Prince of seeking to interfere in the result of another public inquiry, and threatening to resign his royally bestowed RIBA Gold medal in disgust.

Ridleys' favourable verdict was not the end of the battle either, with SAVE's successful appeal to the High Court in 1990 swiftly followed by reinstatement of planning permission by the House of Lords in 1991. In an eerie parallel of the events of twenty years earlier, Number One Poultry was also to be a posthumous building for its architect. Sadly, at the time of Stirling's death in 1992, the project was in jeopardy again from the opposition's new tactic of blocking consent for the necessary road closures. It was not until early in 1994 that Mappin & Webb was finally demolished, having been first exhaustively photographed by the Stirling office in a series of poignant black and white images that depict unflinchingly its state of decay after so many years in limbo. Nearly ten years after its initial conception and over thirty years since Palumbo had first decided to commission a new architectural icon for the City of London, Number One Poultry finally began construction. It was completed four years later in 1998 under a large and dedicated project team headed by Laurence Bain.

Another changing of the tide

The long-drawn-out process of bringing Number One Poultry to completion meant that it was, inevitably, doomed to suffer the same judgement as its predecessor – that of a building outdated before it was even finished. Just as modernism

had experienced a rapid rise and fall from the 1950s to the 1980s, postmodernism's time in the sun was shorter still; by the mid-1990s, as Britain once again emerged from a recession, it was all but obsolete (Sutcliffe, 2006).

At same time, however, modernist architecture was experiencing a resurgence of interest and investment. From the late 1980s, tired and unloved tower blocks began to be re-clad and restyled to enjoy a new lease of life. The founding of DOCOMOMO (International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement) in 1988 signalled modernism's entry into the canon of architectural heritage while its clean, sleek lines also became emblematic of a new cool. Trellick Tower (completed 1972) by Erno Goldfinger was a typical example of this turnaround; once a reviled symbol of the failed British social housing experiment, a programme of refurbishment and rebranding by a pro-active Tenants' Association made it a highly desirable residence for middle-class professionals (Wright, 2006). It was listed in 1998. One need only look at how the Seagram-inspired Aviva Tower in London by GMW (completed in 1969) is now revered for its timeless elegance to get an indication of how Mansion House Square might have been viewed today, had it been approved in 1985.

While many at the time believed that the negative verdict passed on Mansion House Square meant the end of tall buildings in London (Darley, 1985), high-rise offices soon began to make a comeback, beginning with the development of Canary Wharf from the late 1980s but really taking off towards the end of the millennium and gathering pace ever since thanks to the policies of successive London mayors Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson, the latter granting permission for well over 400 tall buildings during his tenure (Ijeh, 2016). Many skyscrapers of the 21st century not only make a mockery of Mies's modest ninety-metre tower with heights of 300m and over, but they often fail to display any consideration for public amenity or ground level integration (Woodman, 2014), such a central concern of Mansion House Square.

Had Mansion House Square been built of course, then there could have been no Number One Poultry. Credit must be given to the prescience of then RIBA President Rod Hackney who, after hearing the positive verdict for Number One Poultry in 1989, commented that he was sure in a hundred years' time conservationists would be fighting to preserve the building with as much passion as their present-day counterparts had fought to prevent it (*High court bid to veto Poultry*, 1989). In the end, it only took twenty years, ten less than the statutory thirty required for listing to be considered, for Hackney to be proved correct.

Increasing threats to postmodern buildings in the form of demolition or extreme redevelopment pro-

posals have sparked major efforts by the Twentieth Century Society in recent years to save and preserve the best examples intact. Successes include John Outram's Pumping Station on the Isle of Dogs (completed 1988) and Terry Farrell's Comyn Ching redevelopment (also completed 1988) in Covent Garden. Number One Poultry finally secured its protection, after yet another series of rejections and appeals, in early 2017. The application for listing was driven by proposals commissioned by the new owners from Buckley Gray Yeoman, primarily with the aim of allowing more light into the building. The most significant intervention involved enclosing the east and west colonnades with glazing and extending the ground floor shops and first floor offices (whose windows do not align with the columns) forward to meet it. Historic England's advice report considered these changes to be detrimental "to the character and structure of the original building", recommending it be listed Grade II* and concluding that it is "an outstanding commercial building, among the best architecture of its type in the City, which if permitted to remain in its original guise will take its place among key buildings of the later C20" (Historic England, 2015).

It should be noted, however, that not everyone agrees postmodern buildings deserve such consideration. John Jervis argued recently against the knee-jerk listing of such buildings simply because their retro aesthetic is again fashionable: "Undue artistic import should not be forced upon pomo because it reminds us of our youth or because a generation of young academics needs new PhD topics or retired architects are still around to lobby for preservation" (Jervis, 2016, 107).

Ultimately, there is no hard and fast lesson to take away from the extraordinary history of this endlessly contested plot of land. However objectively councils, heritage groups, journalists and planners have sought to determine what to build and what to destroy, which buildings should be allowed to survive into the next generation and which ones must be left behind in the past, the story of Mansion House Square and Number One Poultry ultimately only highlights our inability to judge on behalf of future generations, or to anticipate what will be most valued by those who inhabit our cities in the future.

However, interesting ideas in architecture, as in many other things, have a way of coming back around. Mies was not the first to consider opening up this particularly crowded area of the City – from Sir Christopher Wren's post-Fire of London plans in 1666 to Lord Holford's post-Second World War redevelopments, over the centuries many attempts have been made to regularise the messy convergence of streets at what is now Bank Junction. Today, as of May 2017, the area is undergoing a trial period of closure to all vehicles except buses and bicycles as part of attempts to make the area safer, but also pleasanter, for pedestrians and cyclists, a place to enjoy and linger as well as to pass through on one's way to work (City of

London, 2017). With the disappearance of traffic, what emerges is a wide, open space contained by a more impressive roll-call of distinguished buildings than even Mansion House Square could boast: The Royal Exchange, the Bank of England, the Natwest building (formerly the National Westminster Bank by Sir Edwin Cooper, 1932), St. Stephen Walbrook, the Mansion House, the Bank of New Zealand (now the Magistrates' Court) and of course, Number One Poultry. If the scheme is given permanent approval, the long-lived vision of a square in the heart of the historic City of London may yet be realised, and with it the space and opportunity to step back and appreciate this ever-evolving architectural back-drop as never before.

References

Baker, Geoffrey H. 2011. **The architecture of James Stirling and his partners James Gowan and Michael Wilford: a study of architectural creativity in the twentieth century.** Farnham: Ashgate.

Burney, Jan. 1984. "Mansion House Diary." **Building Design** 688, (May 4): 3.

Carter, Peter. 1984a. Proof of evidence of Peter Carter. Mansion House Square Archive. RIBA Collections, MHS/1a.

Carter, Peter. 1984b. "The Project Architect." **UIA International Architect Special issue. Mies van der Rohe: Mansion House Square and the tower type**, no. 3: 26-38.

Carter, Peter. 1984c. "An Annotated Inventory of the Tower Buildings of Mies van der Rohe". **UIA International Architect Special issue. Mies van der Rohe: Mansion House Square and the tower type**, no. 3: 8-18.

City of London. 2017. "All change at Bank". https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/traffic-management/Pages/Bank.aspx.

Corporation of London. 1969. Letter to Holford and Partners dated 22 May. Adrian Gale papers. RIBA Collections, MHS/7/2.

Darley, Gillian. 1985. "What's gone up must come down". **Town and country planning** 54, no. 7/8 (Jul/Aug): 230-231.

Frampton, Kenneth. 2007. **Modern Architecture: a critical history.** 4th ed. London: Thames & Hudson.

Girouard, Mark. 1998. *Big J***im: the life and work of James Stirling.** London: Chatto & Windus.

Glendinning, Miles. 2013. **The Conservation Movement.** London: Routledge.

Haskell, John. 1966. Notes of meeting held at Guildhall Offices dated 18 October 1966. Holford Papers, University of Liverpool Library, Special Collections and Archives, folder D147/C39/6.

"High court bid to veto Poultry". 1989. **Architects' Journal** 189, no. 24 (June 14): 9-10.

Historic England. 2015. **Advice Report**: No. 1 Poultry 15 October.

Holford Papers. University of Liverpool Library, Special Collections and Archives.

Ijeh, Ike. 2016. "Boris Johnson: assessing his legacy". **BD online** 13 April 2016.

Jenkin, Patrick. 1985. Letter to Victor Mishcon and Company dated 22 May 1985. Mansion House Square Archive. RIBA Collections, MHS/1b.

Jervis, John. 2016. "Pomo phobia". **Icon**, no. 156 (June): 98-107.

Johnson, Philip. 1984. Letter to Gavin Stamp dated 16 May. Gavin Stamp Papers. RIBA Collections, StG/1.

The Mansion House Square Scheme. 1981. [London?]: Peter Palumbo.

Maxwell, Robert. 1984. "The Work of James Stirling". In **James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates: buildings & projects** 1975-1992, 7-11. London: Thames & Hudson.

Palumbo, Peter. 1968. Memo dated 6 May. Adrian Gale papers. RIBA Collections, MHS/7/1.

Palumbo, Peter. 1984. "The Client." **UIA International Architect Special issue. Mies van der Rohe: Mansion House Square and the tower type**, no. 3: 23-25.

Schultze, Franz and Windhorst, Edward. 2012. **Mies van der Rohe: a critical biography.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stirling, James. 1988. "No 1 Poultry: Public Enquiry Proof of Evidence" dated 17 May. Gavin Stamp Papers. RIBA Collections.

Sudjic, Deyan. 1986. **Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, James Stirling: new directions in British Architecture.** London: Thames and Hudson.

Sutcliffe, Anthony. 2006. **London: an architectural history.** New Haven: Yale University Press.

Terry Farrell Partnership. 1984. "Mies is great, London is greater". **Building** 246, no. 7334 (11): 35-42.

Wilford, Michael. 1994. "Introduction" In **James Stirling Michael Wilford and Associates: buildings & projects** 1975-1992, 5-6. London: Thames & Hudson.

Woodman, Ellis. 2014. "Ground control". **Architects' Journal** 239, no. 15 (April 18): 40-47.

Wright, Herbert. 2006. **London High.** London: Frances Lincoln.

■

Abraham, Baldeweg, Coenen, Fehn, Holl, Siza, Testa: seven masters for a single gallery. A selection of architecture exhibitions presented in Milan by A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna

Francesco Maggiore*

Translation: Revisoteca Serviços Textuais

*He is an architect by the Politecnico di Bari, a doctoral candidate by the University of Basilicata's Faculty of Architecture. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna since 2005, being responsible for exhibitions, editorial activities and other cultural events.

Abstract

The paper proposes the discussion about the disciplinary research on architecture based on the analysis of the experiences brought by seven exhibitions proposed by Francesco Moschini in the gallery A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna, in which the architecture design proves to be crucial for the reflection on architecture making.

Keywords: Project activity. Poetics and representation. Architecture exhibitions.

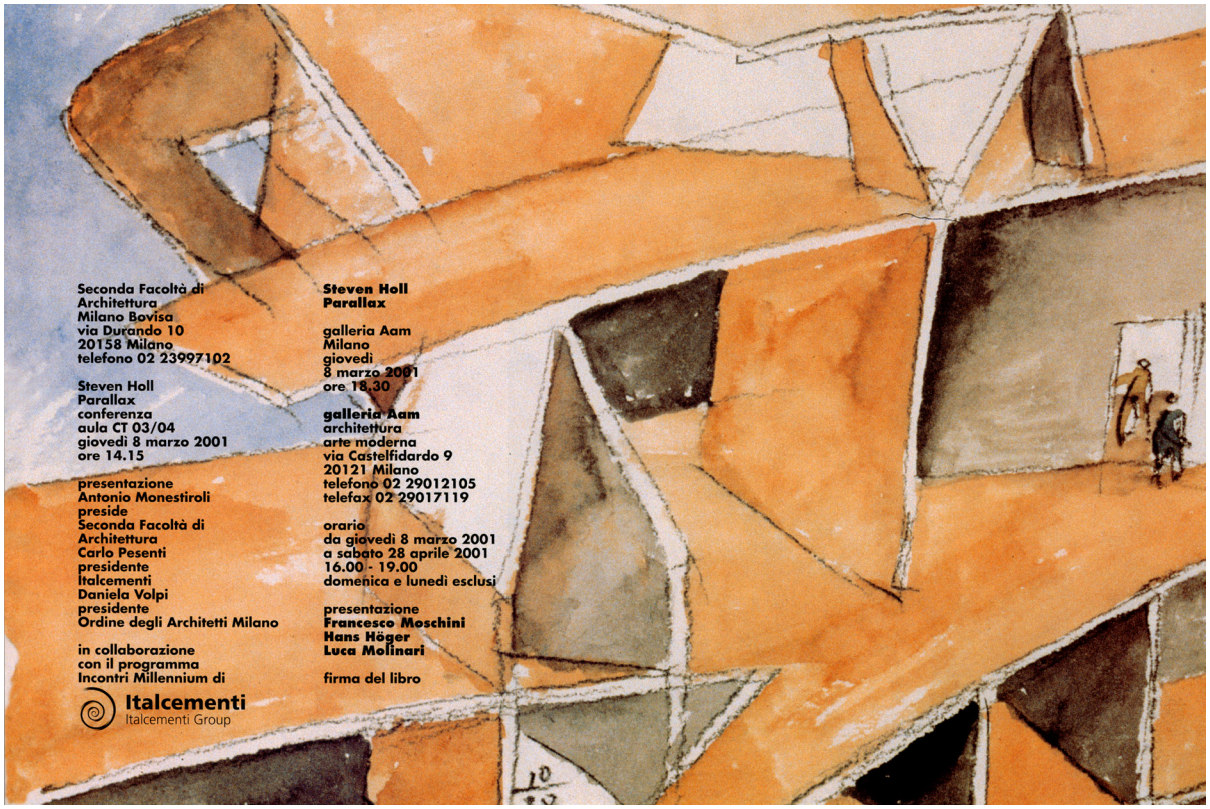


Figure 1: Poster of the conference of Francesco Moschini, Hans Höger and Luca Mollinari in the Seconda Facoltà di Achitettura Milano Bovisa, on the book by Steven Holl entitled Parallax and the exhibition "Steven Holl Parallax" promoted by Galeria A.A.M. Architettura Modern Art.

In the mid-'70s, as Manfredo Tafuri's *Progetto* e utopia invited the architects to put their projects aside, Francesco Moschini with A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna (Figure 1) attempted, in an antagonistic fashion, to bring back dignity to the architecture design and architectural theory, following the path of building a true disciplinary corpus able to collect and read the most visionary experiences of architects as useful times to the project development. During those years, Aldo Rossi was the director the fourteenth Milan Triennial whereas Vittorio Gregotti was the president of the curatorship for the First Venice Biennial. Both institutions immediately seem to relate to the idea of a "drawn architecture".

In this sense, since the mid-'60s, the A.A.M. is focused on the theoretical value of the project, setting its own exhibition activities in a strongly conceptual dimension that finds its privileged field of research, especially on architectural design.

Therefore, the choice of creating occasion for reflection on indirect issues about the project development is the common ground of many important architecture exhibitions held by A A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna in over forty years of activity. These exhibitions are valuable for offering themselves as occasions for reflection on the poetics and methodologies of architects with the same "inventive and autobiographical" vocation in architecture, although they are associated to different circumstances, times, poetics and geographies.

As a place of conflict and direct confrontation between artistic representation and architectural representation, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna has set the uniqueness of similar attitudes included in the symbiotic exchange between art and architecture.

The numerous architects engaged by Francesco Moschini (hereinafter assisted by Gabriel Vaduva) are invited to show not simply a definitive documentation of their professional production but the elements and meta-design instruments, testimony of focused poetics to the constant experimentation and joy of digressing.

Drawings, drafts, notes, sculptures, sketches, notebooks and research objects generated by some sort of primary need, a childish demand for playing – those things represent significant and precious moments that illustrate the architect's need to conform with reality for transcend it in the places of knowledge, desire and figuration.

In the exhibition spaces opened by the A.A.M. opened, first in Rome (1978) and later in Milan (1997), they were brought together to match the vital elements of artistic practice with the completeness of design course, imagining, even beyond a sense in the constructive action of architecture, the abuse and abandonment of the drawing whether in the exegesis of the design, or in the pure representation, in the *rigor mortis* of the line interpreted as a delirious and sometimes bucolic description of the environment.

Thus, during the A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna's long exhibitioning tradition, we can find the instrumental contributions of accurate and specific research that reveal the machinery and the constituent grammars for the writing and the *costruzione logica* of architecture. Aware of the international architectural situation, A.A.M. carries out an expository tradition that by successive steps aims to outline a genealogy of the "autonomous" fundaments to project and identify, among unique personalities, the linguistic affinities and the crossing "analogical connections", in an attempt to obtain a precise design identity.

In this sense, i.e., in order to focus on a philological approach that studies the reflective aspects of design, there are seven important samples highlighting the history of Milan A.A.M. headquarters; seven monographic exhibitions dedicated to seven masters of architecture that set up some of the most significant and identitary orientations

of contemporary architecture: Álvaro Siza (*Sculpture, The pleasure of work*), Sverre Fehn (*Designs and materials*), Steven Holl (*Parallax*), Raimund Abraham (*Buildings/Images 1990-2000*), Jo Coenen (*Hosting the Book*), Clorindo Testa (*A choice of Architecture Design and others*) and Juan Navarro Baldeweg (*The resonance box*).

> Art elevates the thought towards purer, more virginal principles; closer to the puerile and the archaic. When I first started to have the capacity of working with architecture I also felt a great need to be a painter, that is, to make something with my hands, in relation to any other type of thought productivity. (Baldeweg, *Architettura e arte*, 1996).

The exhibition devoted to Juan Navarro Baldeweg presents an essential witness to the architectural design and experimental activity of the Spanish architect, exposing altogether the results of a research revealed by the convergence of architectural design and artistic experiment, between the built solution and the necessary input. The formation of Navarro Baldeweg is deliberately the ambivalent result of a study initiated at Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and eventually completed at the Escuela Tecnica Superior de Arquitetura de Madrid. Hence, in his work, the architect / painter reconstructs or invents an intimate relation of reciprocity and interference, a selective correspondence, an *experimentum crucis* between artistic-visual experience and technical-architectural knowledge. This coexistence takes place both in architectural projects and in sculpture and painting experiments, in a complementary, cooperative and reciprocal fashion.

In the exhibition space, the two dimensions of this synoptic research are measured in a projective way including the complements of the visible universe to return them as correlative art and architecture purposes. Along with his previous shows, J. N. Baldeweg concurrently exposes a series of elements / sculpture, *Works of light* / *works of hand* / *works of gravity*, along with two architectural projects, the T*eatro del Canal de Madrid* and the *Music Palace and theatrical arts of Vitoria- Gasteiz*.

The protagonists of this show are gears, inventions and mockups placed on a large plane surface. There are, for example, *Five light units (Light boxes)* which are presented in the significant 1976 arrangement and the installation *Light and metals* in Vinçon room, Barcelona. On that occasion, in fact, a compilation was made gathering the results of a study on the subject of gravity, which is understood and treated as a relative and revealing agent that allows changing the Cartesian conditions of the environment in order to change perceptions and vision. Space is thought as an imaginary circumstance that induces the viewer to blur reality in order to be subject to the illusion itself. In the project for the *Music Palace and theatrical arts of Vitoria- Gasteiz*, the light becomes the cause or the pretext for the realization of a “superstructure” made of aluminum and steel, in

Figure 2: Environment of the Steven Holl Parallax exhibition

which part of the building assumes a shielding function. At the same time, this enormous filter is proposed as an evocative signal of a sculptural component, demonstrating how the work of Baldeweg can be understood as *synthèse das arts majeurs* and can be compared to architects such as Henry Van de Velde, Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto or Carlo Scarpa.

This gesture refers to the calligraphic sculptures presented in Francesco Moschini's space, placed on a large mirror that produces, by the duplication of objects, a reciprocal allusion that liberates the uniqueness of the object or the same equal external influences. If, on one hand, autonomy exalts the figure of the object, on the other, its apparent multiplicity introduces the movement, or the *eye movement*, into spatial perception as organic law governing the project development lines.

This same sensorial quality, with a more theoretical and metaphorical connotation, is found in the projects exposed in the exhibition dedicated to Steven Holl. The phenomenological dimensions of architecture, also for Holl, depend on the scientific-cognitive parameters of perception. In fact, as he writes, "the movement of the body crossing the overlapping perspectives formed within spaces is the essential connection between us and architecture" (*Parallax, 2000*). By the launch of his book Parallax, Steven Holl presents to A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna a selection of architectural projects and exhibits, including mockups and models for study, numerous sketches and watercolor drawings.

Also in this case, the exposition space is proposed as some kind of "ideal microcosm" where we can reconstruct the "uniqueness" of the architect's work. The exhibition provides the opportunity to look closely at the success of a differentiated research that moves within specific insights on the relationship between theory and design, concept and form. (Figure 2)

Holl's reflections are fulfilled in the numerous paper sheets painted in watercolor according to a usual practice of inventive or cognitive exercise representing the ordaining instrument of a *phenomenon* or a vision from the idea.

Holl does numerous approaches to the artistic world: he cooperates with V. Acconci, is influenced by B. Viola's digital art, contacts with D. Oppenhei and is aware, in a special way, of the *environmental* art by J. Turrell. His research — oriented to the treatment of light understood as intervention focused on perception — represents for the American architect an important unit of measure to determine his own experience of light, space and matter.

Marked by the very need for a parallel path between artistic experimentation and architectural design, Álvaro Siza's research is conducted on the threshold of an ongoing investigation on the "essential terms" of architecture.

The presentation of this architect's design activity by A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna focuses on a peculiar theme, that is, the relationship with sculpture.

Working between art and architecture is also a key feature of Siza's work, which, as Baldeweg's describes, through the generous exercise of sculpture "meets an intimate need to act, to express more rapidly."

To the Portuguese architect, the sculptures as well as the sketches represent the self-reflexive and "inflexibly analytical" instruments with which one must simultaneously combine the gestures of everyday life and the effects of the imaginary, satisfying the needs of enthusiasm and foreboding.

"Every design of mine," Siza writes, "was supposed to capture precisely a concrete moment of a fleeting image in all its nuances. Insofar it can grasp this fleeting quality of reality, the design will sprout more or less clearly and will be as vulnerable as precise." Siza's *fast designs* emerge from the desire to know and contemplate reality, the constant need to confront everyday life. They are improvised and spontaneous dialogues with places and things around the theme of the building and its concreteness. "Testimonies of everyday questions, small progress and errors, of the abandonment of an idea and the resume of something different from the same idea" (Siza) his *graphic pastiches* are, as Purini says, "the architect's specific view of the world," and represent the irreplaceable experiential practice in the formulation of the architectural idea.

Siza's sculptures and the corresponding sketches shown in the gallery bear witness to how this "capricious endeavor" is a spontaneous and necessary diversion that assumes an exclusive role in the practice of his *poetic profession*.

Therefore, conceived from the restlessness of the graphic gesture, the sculptures reveal – through their plastic linearity stripped of ornaments – a style that considers simplicity as wealth. The matter dealt with an "artisan feeling" is enlivened by the anonymous expression of "unusual actions" represented by *unidentified bodies of unknown* characters (as seen in the titles of the works). They are small statues, "archaeological citations", findings of lost innocence, revealing, by their uncertainty and ambiguity, the aspirations of the sign or creative dream.

"Surviving to the dream" that, like *kouroi*, paralyzed in harsh, votive and resigned positions ("but always available to continuity"), they seem to come to the surface, between mystery and archaism, of the stratigraphies of time, as veteran fragments, surviving forms of memory.

> In these plays - writes Baldeweg - we recognize a first archaic impulse, with no style or date. They have lightness and a scale that remind us of many vernacular images. They do not want

> anything. Gesticulating with embrionary arms and feet, they emerge as puppets of men and animals, with internal resources, like vacillating puppets [...] These works solve the characteristic problem of sculpture, that is, to have access to the area of the visual horizon touching the ground and leaning on the soil.

Indeed supported by pedestals, their movements are very idealized and exalted in the desire to become perfect objects "between earthly space and infinite space." Those supports or bases are "the necessary counterpoint to lightness" and represent the needed part of the *formal system* as in Brancusi's sculptures.

These plastic experiences are empathically reflected in their architectures, which inevitably assert themselves with a strong sculptural identity. This is how, for example, in the piozometric tower of University of Aveiro, one can read in the refined structure the static conditions of lightness and a puzzle of expressed signs in Giacometti's *figures* (this memory is even more evident in the lines of the preliminary sketches).

And if sculpture and design compose the sound – the dimension that must reflect the desires and delights of an "anxiously lonely life," – his architectures use these inquiries to add irony to the implacable realism of the everyday life in the worlds surrounding and going through them.

Sverre Fehn's poetic vision (less romantic) is equally sophisticated. For his exhibition at A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna some sketches were assembled and presented to underline again the importance of these forms of preventive observation or "design forecasting" to the consubstantiality between idea, design and construction. Collected on numerous books and notebooks and "marked" on the insisted view of the ship, the present sketches enliven the metaphorical view of navigation, architectural digression, which is understood as nostalgic architect awareness of finding himself powerless in face of the immeasurable sea, a "visible surface, infinitely rich with analogies, of the arcane reality of things" (Pavese).

In the land-sea dualism, the foundations underlying the ideation and conception of many of Sverre Fehn's works are noted.

The *constructive thinking* of the Norwegian architect, with "internationalist orientation", is based on the fundamental principles of modern architecture. In his work, the echoes of Miesian rationalism resound (in the affinity to order and symmetry in classical inspiration and minimalist vocation), the organic laws of Wright (as correspondence between form and nature as realistic expression and how to use natural materials "properly"), Le Corbusier's plastic discipline (the tendency to spatial dynamism, purism and conciliatory vision of tradition and technology) and also Louis Kahn's traditionalist trends and Carlo Scarpa's exhibition experiences.

Part of Fehn's *poetic* modernism arises from these assumptions, which translates the experiences of the past into a new, diverse, essentially more *primitive* "order".

"The primitive architecture can be compared to the modern architecture", as we can read in the article *Maroccan Primitive Architecture*, where Fehn collects impressions of his trip to Morocco in 1952. He describes the pivotal nature of the buildings in that country and is amazed by the way *constructive logic*, clarity and simplicity meet the peculiar characteristics of the tradition of modern functionalism.

> I find things that lead me to find myself. Today, visiting Morocco to study the primitive architecture is not like traveling to meet new things. As a matter of fact, we do nothing else but recognize. As when we look at Frank Lloyd Wright's house at Taliesin – a fragmented entity whose materials have the same rudeness. The same must happen with Mies van der Rohe's walls. The same character with no limits. And the poetry of Le Corbusier hanging gardens.

Just as African sculptures represent *reality* for Picasso, the architectures of Morocco represent *modernity* for Fehn. The essence, logic and naturalness of those buildings are reflected in his poetry, materializing the anatomical integrity of the project with reality, time, place and light.

In his Corbusian trip to the past, Fehn discovers the elementary forms and the few elements found in the source of architecture that consent returning to its *zero degree*, the " cosmogony attempt to renewal, reconstructing of the conditions of early days" (Rykwert) in *order to restart*.

On the designs exposed, the sign becomes a search – a mystical and sensuous search of the invisible or indefinite traits of a parallel course consonant to the project's course, the only possible way to reach the *reconstructive* conquer of architecture. "In his way of constructing, the primitive seems to be as simple and logical as nature." By paraphrasing this assertion, it can be said that in his way of designing, Fehn seems to be as simple and logical as the primitive. In fact, the dashed features of the his sketches appear as Neolithic incisions, adhering to an idiomatic writing that arises from the need to transpose, in figure, the somatic *characteristics* of things or primary ideas, to truly understanding them.

With the exhibition dedicated to Clorindo Testa, on the occasion of his laureate *honoris causa* granted by Università di Roma "La Sapienza", A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna of Rome aims to combine – through a careful choice of designs and projects – the operative and theoretical elements that contribute to the definition of an architecture understood not as stagnation of the language itself, but as a multidisciplinary concatenation of many reference systems to which the design of the project belongs indirectly.

Clorindo Testa develops his research giving equal importance to architectural and artistic representation. His painting records the conditioning of memory and knowledge and reveals the specific values and expressive contents of each eventual operation. Art goes to architecture leading to the mobilization of the linguistic code according to an evocative process of insemination of paper sheet, space and thought.

Observing reality and questioning the imaginary, Clorindo Testa finds in painting "the privileged laboratory of light, accidental forms, sometimes extracted from the humorous and surreal subconscious" (Ignasi de Solá-Morales).

The Italian-Argentine architect's constant focus on figuration and, therefore, on the re-figuration (of elements and episodes, either mythical or real), represents the essential premise of an autobiographical and historicist poetics, that finds its specificity in the complementary juxtaposition of factors or thoughts from many sources. From these interactions, as well as from the complicity of new confrontations or conflicts, derive the constituent elements of Clorindo Testa's work.

> The experience of painting, parallel to the experience of architecture, is always a figurative research, but not abstract by convention. The figure is a representation of a whole content and certain values linked to the emotional, individual or personal realm, to the decisions of the project and not to the mechanical and purely typological aspect. (C. Testa)

The role of *figurative research* is, in fact, decisive to the formal definition of Testa's architecture. The continuous use of imagination and pictorial invention always translates into a personal determination of complex and articulate constructive solutions, filled with "references and relations with life" but always linked to a subtle irony (understanding, writes L. Semerani, "as an autocratic weapon of an architect who does not want to be monumental").

A direct consequence of the pictorial experience and humorous line is the continuous reference to the allegorical dimension that Clorindo Testa makes when describing his works. So, for example, *las manos y las legs* becomes the figurative expression to identify the pillars or columns that support the Bank of London and South America or the National Library.

Every new project designed for the city needs to compensate the ways of society, culture and use, as well as measure with the organization of the whole. This constitutes the predominant feature of the project's criteria presented in the exhibition dedicated by A.A.M. to Jo Coenen. His design activity is continuously on the practice of design, in reducing the idea to lines. The figure is completed, in fact, by the visual and concrete deposition of primary and constitutive dimensions of architecture.

The correlation between design, as a gesture of research, and architecture, as immediate and decipherable reality of technical and executive works, is presented by Jo Coenen as a little far away, as if one or the other mode of action of the representation could break the separation whether ideological (referring to the entire history of architectural representation) or disciplinary (when the two forms of research cannot be seen separately). However, the sketches do not constitute an autonomous value corpus concerned with constructive "rationalization". Consequently, Jo Coenen's designs on display retake a stereotype of comic book reality, tending to signal the end result or even the introduction of architecture into urban landscape. This happens, therefore, with a tranquility of the graphic act marked by self-complacency in the forms because it is provoked by an organizational process of space.

Compared to Sverre Fehn's designs, a reassuring view is strongly recommended, but semi-defining the volumes on an urban context. Fehn's drawings, in fact, evoke from the beginning the connotation of a description that is not prerogative of the constructible, presented in a more elegant fashion also in the presentation that in Coenen's work, on the contrary, is melancholy given back or that surrenders, perhaps deliberately, to the reality of the composition process.

Coenen's designs derive from a systematic and instinctive methodology in which the obsessive continuity of the sign assumes specific connotations, outlining and simplifying the formal and spatial behavior of construction.

"Here I grow flowers that never die, I have seen dolls whose breath never ceases, whose movements never cease. Here the chromatism scents, and the walls are represented in immeasurable dimensions". This same value set by Rob Krier to the pictorial representations is restored in the Coenen's figurative intention. In the lucid consistency of his representation, in fact, reads the desire to "figure" in a single moment, the complex structural and distributive iconography of the project in practical and timely manner, repairing the flattery of each easy suggestion and dependency.

From the four library projects exposed in the Milanese headquarters of A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna, we can grasp the meaning of this attitude as well as the dynamics of the choices and results set up for each one of these four exercises. The projects for the Center Céramique and Bibiliioteca di Maastricht (1995), for Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam (2001), for the Bibioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura to Milano (2001) and for the Public Library in Dortmund (1995) are presented in the various phases of the project through numerous designs, sketches, photographs, renderings and models restoring the sense of a thematic research developed around the idea of housing the book.

A less "deliberative" and more material feeling is found between fierce and obsessive signs of Raimund Abraham's troubled graphics. His designs, real and concrete expressions of the imaginary and the absurd, seem to revoke the "phases" of a genesis of architecture or a return to their origins. Exposed on the walls of A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna, these "deserter studies" bring architecture back – in its ambiguity – to a preliminary dimension, to its own nature of imagined matter.

> A design is for me a model oscillating between mind and physical, built reality of architecture. It is not a step towards that reality, but an autonomous act that anticipates the concreteness of the idea itself. An architectural design can never be an illustration, but must submit to its own constructive laws that reveal the idea of their intrinsic syntactic form, through the grammar of lines. The line intends the precision of geometry, while the stratification of the pigments and its tessitura express the internal and external quality of matter. The first sign on a blank sheet, the first notch on a stone, and the first incision on a metal plate represent the beginning of architecture. Designing is to focus an idea on a body, violating its silence.

The incision Abraham talks about sets the attempt to consummate the matter to come – with subtraction processes – to the self-revelation, to its infringed order. This painful denial frees the memory and the desire for the surface materiality to bring to light the ultimate allusion to the symbol of myth. Thus, in these designs, fractures, cuts and topographical passages reveal, by some sort of telluric request, the elementary forms of architecture between natural and artificial, real and imaginary.

> Idea and matter are the polarities of architecture. They have different fates. For the thinking, the idea has to prevail. Matter becomes refusal. The idea is the manifestation of thought, totally enclosed and protected from the power of its inventor, but violated by the intention of its pursuit and its resulting realization. The expression of thought is silenced as soon as it is pronounced, while the silence of matter is violated by its own fate of decay. Matter can survive its own destiny only by means of the memory of desire: an adventure through the real and the imaginary, an adventure of work searching for itself.

Abraham's works refer to the states of architecture in the constructive and compositional temporality, therefore, in the very nightmare of an uncontrollability of the architectural gesture. In these works, there are pending forms mainly towards the artistic and sculptural ideal, but also towards a lightness of the thought of visible comprehension in ornamental forms or, more precisely, related to Massimo Scolari's work. The drawings, above all, give life to architectural visions, so it is possible to grasp the Abraham's monistic vocation, leading to visibility the multiple forms of imaginary: the unknown, the unexpected, the

surprising. This representation of the origin along with the destination, of dream along with memory, triggered by fantasy acts, reveals the project in its dimension of pure architectural object (for example, as it happens for the project of Torre Della Sapienza, 1980).

That dreamy-romantic dimension, used as image catalyst, refers theoretically, not officially, ~~to~~ "turning their backs" in Caspar David Friedrich, or even, says Abraham, to the "topography crash," to "desolate landscapes", therefore, to the" ultimate desire to make architecture". ■

Exhibition: from the idealization to the nail. (Everything you would like to know about exhibitions and were afraid to ask)

Pedro Azara*
Translation: Revisoteca Serviços Textuais

*Architect, lecturer on Esthetic at the Technical University of Architecture of Barcelona (Spain). Author of: Castillos en el aire. Mito y arquitectura en Occidente, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 2000; Cuando los arquitectos eran dioses, La Catarata, Madrid, 2015. Scholarship holder on the Los Angeles Getty Foundation (EUA) in 1998, and on Düsseldorf Gerda Henkel Foundation in 2011. He is responsible for more than thirty expositions on Europe and the United States.

Abstract

The present article is about how one can prepare the arrangements and plan an exhibition, from the selection and requests in loans of artwork pieces to museums and collectors, respecting the requirements requested by the institutions responsible for the loan, to the transportation and its conditions, and the installment of the pieces in the exhibition room, which requires a mounting that must comply with several, and a few times contradictory, needs.

Keywords: Exhibition. Museology. Museography.

About two months before the opening of the exposition "Casas del alma. Maquetas de arquitectura de la antigüedad" ("Houses of the soul. Templates of the Architecture of the Ancient Times") at the Centro de Cultura Contemporânea (Center of the Contemporary Culture) in Barcelona, 1997, I was leaving the center and crossing the street La Paja, when suddenly, to my left, in the window of an antique shop (nowadays in the Consejo de Ciento street), I saw what could not only be an excellent architectonic template made of ancient terracotta, in perfect conditions: a template nor published or unknown. After hesitating for a while, I pushed the door. I explained why I was there and I asked information about the piece. It was from Syria, of the second millennium B. C. It was for sale and the antique shop did not appear excited about lending the piece for an exhibition, even after I told the owner that the value of the piece would increase if the object were exposed. Before I left, I asked the price. Expensive, but affordable if it were found by an interested collector: around four hundred thousand pesetas. I had a conversation about the subject with a friend, who is an architect and visited the antique shop on the following day, and, distractedly, asked the price of the piece. Its price had increased twice. My comment was understood by the owner, a good listener, after all.

I came back after a few days to try to get the loan of the piece. The list of the artworks to be exposed at the exhibition was concluded, but the piece was outstanding, and it was just a few meters from the place where the exposition would open. The responsible, however, after a while, ended up explaining that the template had left Syria illegally recently. Undoubtedly, exposing it to the public would raise suspicion, and endanger the contact that the owner had in the East, who were able to bribe the police of the borders to allow the antiques to leave Syria. The famous

Roman mosaics, which had arrived from Syria recently, showed that the business had not decreased. The antiques arrived in Spain as craftsmanship, got the license of importation and, from Madrid, they were distributed in several cities. I was shocked with the information.

It was explained to me, after a few days, that the Catalan autonomous government (the *Generalitat*) was behind this business for months, but with no results.

I contacted the Department of Oriental Antiquities of the Louvre Museum, in Paris, and some experts on this kind of piece. All of them recommended that I should try getting a photography, in order to study the piece of work and classify it, before it was too late. According to the description that it offered, I had concluded that it was a unique Mesopotamic template.

I did not want to know anything more about the matter. I let the time pass by. The exhibition was opened. A few months later, I remembered the words of an art curator from the Louvre Museum. I came back to the antique shop. The owner was not there, but his son was. I did not see the template. I asked for it. I was said that it had been sold in London and that the antique shop did not know anything about the subject anymore. Nor trace or photo was left behind.

Years later, in 2011, I went to Genebra in order to document an exhibition about Mesopotamic Art. Genebra is a city where the illegal traffic of antiques is very active. Some antique shops, wanted by Interpol, and with warrants of arrest issued, keep the stores opened downtown, and they do not hide. A curator from the Museum of Genebra, who works in the search of stolen artworks or pieces that were illegally removed from their archeologic sites, has spoken about the famous case of the Greek ceramic, with a painted scene and it shows the death of the Greek hero Sarpedon, in the doors of Troy, painted by Euphronios, the first ceramic painter that signed his productions, in the V B.C. century.

In 1972, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nova York, paid a million dollars for a huge crater [a vase used for mixing wine and water], in perfect conditions, signed by the mythic Euphronios. It was the first time that an archeologic piece reached this price. The artwork was reproduced in the main weekly newspapers' covers in the city. Until last year, it was one of the masterpieces in the collection of the Museum. A journalist asked about its origin. Recklessly, it was said that it came from Zurich. Had the Greek ceramic traveled so far? The version previously told was corrected immediately. It had belonged to a Lebanese corrector. An urgent phone call warned the antique shop that a journalist was allowed to ask about the ceramic. He was advised to say that the collector's father, now deceased, found it in a grave, and had sold it because his collection was more targeted at Phoenician Art [than at the

Figure 1. Showcase of the exhibition Antes del Diluvio. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 a.C (Before the Flood. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 BC). Obra Social de La Caixa, Barcelona and Madrid (2012 and 2013), dedicated to the world of the ancient Sumerians. Curated by Pedro Azara. Source: author's collection.

Mesopotamic one]. As this last point was true, right after a journalist called, the version that was told to the person looked convincing. But, why was it mentioned, since the beginning, the city of Zurich? A journalist, Paul Watson, had left Lebanon and went to Switzerland. Finally, the Metropolitan had to reveal the origin and the history of the artwork: it was acquired, in fact, from a Swiss antique shop, which, in turn, had acquired it from a reseller. Where did the Ancient Greek masterpiece come from? The research on the matter took almost forty years.

Historians, archeologists, traders (among many, Giacomo Medici was the main one), curators of Swiss museums, and treasure hunters had helped, directly or indirectly, to steal an Etruscan grave, in Italy, since then preserved, that they had just found. Immediately, they realized the significance of the piece. They could get a fortune with it. But no Italian public museum could afford the price that the vase would cost – the amount that they would ask for it – and it was not allowed to leave the country illegally. The international right prohibits that cultural goods cross the borders of a country. The vase was carefully broken. The fragments were put in a suitcase. At the customs house, it was said that they were only some loose parts, which was evident to the customs officers, who accepted the explanation. The pieces did not have any value whatsoever. When it got to Switzerland, the loose pieces were put together precisely. The seams were attached and redone. The vase was whole again, outside Italy.

What has happened next is already known. The story finished last year. The Italian law imposed several American museums to give back some Ancient masterpieces, Greek, Etruscan and Roman, which are today the center of the attention of Florentine and Roman museums, under the penalty of forestalling any Italian piece of work to be included in exhibitions in the United States. Some curators ended up in prison.

This story reminded me that one I had lived some years ago. But here, in Barcelona, the story has ended with no conclusion.

* * *

How is an exhibition set up and what is exposed in it? We are referring to, above all, exhibitions with archeological materials. (Figure 1)

The requests of pieces must be written. Only renowned institutions are allowed to execute them. Sometimes, museums receive official loan requests, in conjunction with the exhibition itinerary and documents about the organizing institution, its measures of solvency and safety, as well as its environment conditions (temperatures, moisture levels, light control) of the exposition rooms. They accept the loan request only to institutions that have a permanent art collection (museums, academies, certain institutes and universities, professional organizations, and so on.): It is like this because it is presumed that, in this case, the organizer has experts (curators) used to and al-

Figure 2. General view of the exhibition Ciudad del espejismo. Bagdad de Wright a Venturi (City of the mirage. Baghdad from Wright to Venturi). Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Murcia (nov. 2008 - fev. 2009). Curated by Pedro Azara. Source: author's collection.

lowed to handle masterpieces (or can hire this kind of professional with no difficulty), as well as proper and safe warehouses and rooms prepared to receive the artworks.

The loan requests must be sent with a minimum twelve-month gap before the opening, although some museums, such as the University of Philadelphia Museum (Penn Museum), request eighteen months, and the Ministry of Culture of Turkey, responsible for all the Turkish public museums, requests three years (reason why so many museums give up on asking pieces of work from this country). No Museum will respond if the request arrives three months prior the previously set opening date. Except if it is an exceptional request for one or a few pieces after the organizer faced some unexpected problem with a supplier, with whom he had a signed agreement, which was not respected.

The loan letters do not have to be sent with a long notice. The museums respond the requests according to the sequence, but always paying attention to the loan date, so the permanent requests are simply filed. Therefore, many times, some of them are lost or forgotten.

The museums lend pieces of work with certain difficulty. But, the responsible people of museums are aware that without the loans, no institution would be able to organize an exhibition. The loans allow that some pieces are disseminated, which increases its worth and price; employ curators that studied the required works – at times, artworks that never were exhibited before, kept stored in warehouses, and never left them – and can, consequently, be published in catalogs. In that sense, the exhibitions allow the detailed study of forgotten or depreciated pieces of work or correct the attributions or erroneous or even questioned interpretations. The exhibitions facilitate a new look at pieces of art that are less known. (Figure 2)

Except to the most famous international museums that have great permanent collections – and, among them, exchange pieces –, the masterpieces are not generally lent to other museums. It is considered that if a famous artwork is missing, its lack will be noticed and mourned by tourists. Some museums affirm that some of their pieces cannot be lent. Although, It is also true that, in exchange for great amounts of money (because museums also need funds) anyone can get awesome loans. So, for instance, the loan of the mythic Sumerian ensign of Ur [Ensign of The Battle of Ur], of the British Museum, is not negotiable, but an exception was made to the monarchies of the Persian Gulf. The royal family of Saudi Arabia financed the unknown Kentucky Horse Museum, in the United States, and this small museum gets unthinkable loans. Despite the international known museums, just a few ones are the providers that logically do not accept financial compensations (that allow restoring rooms, the buying of new pieces, and so on) for the loan of the pieces.

The great international exhibitions, which attract hundreds of thousands of visitors, and spawn huge economic benefits, generally are organized by three or four big museums that gather their collections. Those ones compose the body of the exhibition, complete with specific loans. This policy allows the exhibition to travel to several cities for a period of more than six months, which is the time that the museums and collections accept loan their works. Logically, museums, collections, and smaller institutions cannot access the tours.

Big museums, however, have collections whose pieces are exhibited regularly. The majority of artworks stays in the backups. It does not mean that these artworks are necessarily less relevant than others. The outstanding Sumerian twenty-thousand-piece collection of Field Museum, in Chicago, is permanently stored. The museum does not have enough space to exhibit a few pieces, whose relevance to the public, in general, is smaller than the Pharaonic Egyptian Art.

The pieces that are kept in reserved rooms are generally lent easier. Therefore, a museum can reveal an unseen inheritance, that can allow us to discover, suddenly, relevant works that were once hidden.

But, artworks in reserve in big museums are not necessary caves of unexplored and unknown treasures. For instance, the ones in Prado Museum are poor, and the paintings in storage are feeble; however, the works in reserve at some departments of the British Museum would make a fortune of less known museums. The New Assyrians bas-relief paintings stored there are gorgeous. However, they do not enter the narrow rooms of the permanent collections – again, for being a collection less attractive than the Egyptian one.

There are exhibitions of different kinds. Let's concentrate on the ones with original artworks of art and archeology. The responsible people for museums thank the organizers of expositions, before sending the official loan requests, visit the institutions, participate on informal meetings, where the itinerary and the goals of the exhibition are explained, and which artworks would be the most appropriate ones is discussed. It is suitable that the museum that lends the pieces does not have the impression that it is required only for the loan. The museum has to feel comfortable enough to influence somehow on the exhibition, suggesting pieces, that maybe not taken into consideration for the curator, sometimes due to the unawareness of such works are a part of the collection of the institution. This major implication of the supplier on the project can facilitate some difficult loans.

The thematic exhibitions, which do not deal with excessively commercial or repetitive themes (the Impressionism is a recurrent theme, and maybe already drained) are preferred by loaning museums. In general, the request of masterpieces without an explicit confirmation of the need of such artwork being exposed, or determining the role that they

will play in a narrative of an exhibition, is denied many times. The works can suffer while the transfer, so, the transportation is allowed only if it will result in a new approach on the matter already known or on the discovery of a new innovative topic. And there are still many new topics. The demand of a number of visitors, both on the private and public museums parts, obliges certain caution on the part of the institutions, almost on the edge of a conservative attitude, in front of unknown themes that cannot call the general attention or, even, raise some kind of rejection.

Each museum has its own criteria for the approval of loans. Museums in countries like Turkey or Greece do not have the liberty to decide on their own what pieces they can lend. It is the respective ministries of culture, sometimes after a not-required query with the required museum, which approves or not the request for a loan. In Italy, the museums also are limited by an upper entity, which rules several provincial museums or the ones from the same city, called *Sopraintendenza* – some museums have their own Superintendency – although until the Italian Ministry of Culture does not approve the loan, the artworks cannot be exported. In the United States, on the other hand, where the museums are private, the Government almost does not intervene, and it is the patrons that approve or deny the loans, according to technicians' and curators' reports. According to the relevance of the museum, the meetings of the group of patrons can take place once or several times a year. The "when" of a loan request can interfere with the answer. It may take almost a year before an answer is obtained, positive or not, and, only then, the legal procedures for the exportation of the artworks can start.

The answers are conditioned by the importance of the requesting entity, the duration of the exhibition, the number of museums that can accommodate the exhibition, the interest on it, the forecast of an "academic" catalogue, the conditions of the rooms after the artworks are removed (a museum generally does not accept window displays or empty walls for months, such as the Louvre Museum in Paris, which discusses that its visitors demand that the majority of the works are permanently in exhibition), the importance and the number of artworks requested in a loan, their condition (what demands, before getting an answer, the analysis of the artworks by the conservators, who determine if they can be transferred without trouble), and, sometimes, on what the requesting entity offers in return.

Some national laws impede the exportation of pieces in good condition, whose transferring would not affect them. For instance, the American legislation prohibits the "commerce" – the trade of artworks, including the prehistoric ones, made of materials of endangered species (shells, ivory, and so on), independently the fact that the prehistoric species do not exist any longer or if the material does not come from slaughtered animals in present times. Due to this reason, no

piece of ivory, even if it is from three thousand years ago (such as the Assyrian ones), can be lent to other countries from the United States. What is valued, in this case, is not how old the work is, but its material. Only works made of organic materials of extinct species – such as mammoths, but not elephants – can transit freely.

The policy is not strange to the provider museum. The Greek government strongly impedes that works of Greek public museums are exposed together with private collections. Museums with donated works by individuals, such as the majority of the Swiss museums, are not well perceived by the Greek government. Not respecting this demand can mean that the exhibition will be confiscated by a court order.

Countries like Syria – before the civil war – demand (or demanded) that no work which comes from Israel can be included on an exhibition, even if such pieces do not share the same window display or even are not in the same room in which the Syrian works are exposed. The same word "Israel" cannot be mentioned in texts of the exhibition and in the catalog, which the Syrian government demands, or demanded in times of peace, to be reviewed. The United States found a solution to the problem invoking the expression "Ancient Israel" when there are archeological pieces from the range of the Eastern Mediterranean exposed.

The governments of George Bush (father), and son, on the other hand, impeded the loan of Mesopotamic pieces of American museums, because the Mesopotamia was located in the same place where Iraq is currently located, a country that was on their blacklist (the famous "The Axis of Evil"), an executive order that was annulled by President Obama. The impediment could sometimes overcome itself when it was explained that, in the third millennium B.C., Iraq did not exist.

In general, the governments of the majority of countries guarantee the return of the pieces to their respective public and private owners. But there were some cases that, suddenly, the owners met a detention order, as it happened to suspicious artworks that were ransacked while the Second World War or, today, in Iraq. The Spanish legislation, however, does not offer the warranties.

Meanwhile, countries like Mexico or Peru can withhold indefinitely pre-Columbian artworks of foreign collections included in these countries. In the face of this always present menace, international museums hesitate on lending pieces that can be fairly or unfairly requested or even absolutely denied of loan.

Sometimes, you must have "bites" [bribes] to get a piece of work – which is not spoken out loud: apparently, it is known that it was necessary to pay a certain amount of money to Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, wife of the Egyptian former president if you wanted to dispose pieces from the Pharaoh of Egypt with no problems. The illegal payment

must be done without waiting that the request becomes explicit, as it happened to some works from Syria. I remember that I had to fly to Damascus on July of 1996 with an amount of money that could not be accounted – but it was not necessary to spend in the end – to try unblocking a loan of artworks that had been obtained previously verbally, but for which there was no written confirmation. The meeting with a senior military officer at a room in the Museum of Archeology of Damascus was tense. But, the loan was performed, in the last minute, and there were burdensome requests (trips, housing, and expenses of several Syrian conservators for weeks in Spain) that could not be denied because they threatened the receiving of very important works for the exhibition.

The policy is an important doer that determines the destiny of exhibitions. A mistake can result in conflict that can be severe, and bring a diplomatic trouble with unforeseeable consequences. Since 11th, September of 2001, the organization of exhibitions with pieces that come from abroad has changed a lot. The cost of insurance (1/1500 of the worth of the piece) has increased quickly. The pieces never travel alone, but with one or two "messengers" – people from the museum that is performing the loan must accompany the boxed works.

Claims of artworks in foreign museums by countries like Peru, Turkey, Iran or Iraq, recently, had considered that their heritage was illegally explored and exported in the Colonialism Period. It had forced museums to monitor what they are lending and to whom. Greece also has become tougher. A museum that is lending something is risking "their" pieces, almost always archeologic, to be confiscated and, possibly, not returned.

The American museums, mainly, but also the Swiss ones – and, in general, in greater or lesser extent, almost all museums – are fed by – or include – donated parts by individuals in their permanent collection. When the donating collectors are the museums' patrons, they are obliged to accept the donation and expose the artwork. Due to this law, the museums, especially the American ones, are forced to show artworks whose authenticity and, above all, their origin is not always clear. The "provenance" (the place where a work comes from) is a keyword that infuses fear in the curators. A conflicting origin can cause serious diplomatic conflicts.

The international laws established in 1985, endorsed by the majority of countries, prevent any work to leave the country to be acquired by another one. But not always is possible – or desired – to know in which year a work entered into a collection. For this reason, institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, or the Louvre Museum, in Paris, do not accept that the works that are lent by them to take part in exhibitions that include other private collections – or, at least, certain collections, are many times, formed thank to rapidly acquired fortunes in the nineties.

The reason for this is simple: the desire to avoid the exhibition getting confiscated by claims of countries that suspects certain artworks has left their borders illegally. The situation gets complicated when, sometimes, those same countries facilitate the exportation – or have employees, or politicians, that close their eyes or "pull some strings" to make the illegal traffic of artworks easier – of pieces that will be claimed afterwards. The boundary line between suspicious of traffic countries and vigilant ones does not follow, by any means, the boundary that separates rich and poor countries, as we sometimes may think.

For these reasons, the museums' curators study, not only the conditions of the pieces – pieces that are apparently beautiful might have internal and not detectable fissures that cannot be seen with unaided eyes or might be made of materials that are easily corroded, such as bronze, or copper. Corrosion that might appear suddenly and not always can be stopped in time, or knowing how to stop –, but also the "origin": how and when they were acquired, to whom and for whom. The surprises are exceptional. It is found that remarkable works are fake or that they cannot be exhibited because they are possibly the result of robberies. Any mistake would imply in danger of confiscation and disbelief. Works from "conflicting" countries, such as Iran (to the United States), are given a lot of precaution.

A museum is more likely to lend pieces that exist at least two copies (archeological pieces, engravings, books, and so on). The works tend to travel supervised by messengers: curators, frequently young ones, or in training, whose task is not letting the lent pieces unwatched. The responsibility that they have to take, once that the destiny of the artworks is in their hands, sometimes, make them act with a severe and excessive attitude. They fear that any trouble might happen, and they do not trust the applicant institutions, as well as the employees, what can cause delays or shutdowns on the mounting of an exhibition. The boxes that carry the works cannot be opened at the customs house. It is a mandatory requirement. Any failure would annul the insurance efficacy. The works travel on specific means of transportation, or in a first-class seat – if the box is small, by airplane (or by ship), or by armoured carriage, followed by armed officers – what obliges the preparation of exchanging military staff on the borders, once the servicemen or the police from a country cannot enter in foreign territory, if the transportation occurs via highway. Some museums require armed officers to accompany the transferring of the lent pieces, landed by airplane, from the airport to the organizing museum.

The number of messengers is defined by the loans museum. The cost (transference, accommodation, and subsidy of subsistence) is undertaken by the organizing institute. The messenger must stay in the headquarters of the exhibition from the moment of the boxes' arrival – those which he traveled with– to the installment of the pieces in

the window display from the final closure of the same ones. The messenger's stay may last several weeks. At big exhibitions, with countless works that came from different museums, placed in collective window displays, the messengers must be always present when the display is opened to the placement or removal of the artworks.

Some museums – such as, in general, the British Museum in London – demand that their pieces are exhibited at independent showcases, without sharing the same ones with other suppliers. Other ones do not accept that their artworks, once settled, be removed from the window display, even if their location will interfere with the installment of other pieces.

Some countries (presidency, the council of ministers, ministries of culture, antiquities, and so on) or some museums demand that the messengers stay by the side of the pieces during all the time of its exhibition. The harsh rules of the Turkish Ministry of Culture are known, and feared by all the museums all over the world; only a few ones can afford the expenses of transferring and housing for two messengers that take place every fortnight (a two-week period). So, a three-month exhibition – an ordinary duration – requires the presence of six shifts of two messengers: twelve boarding passes and twelve accommodations and subsidies. Some countries, such as Egypt, before the revolution, also demanded ATM cards, with unlimited credit. The billing documents are very famous, and they are a result of the buying of the most prestigious branded fashion clothes, or high couture houses, from capital cities of different European countries (Paris and Berlin, especially), that had arrived at the French government when a big exhibition about Egyptian Art happened in the decade of 1990.

These demands are sometimes understandable, because they come from countries with no great resources, so (or not much) honest as in the "first world", they are not well paid and many times they cannot afford traveling abroad. That way, suppliers countries are able to make their employees travel and practice their craft. It is a way to reward the most conscious employees.

Paying the acquisition of pieces is not well seen in Europe and, in principle, no European museum asks any kind of financial compensation. This does not mean that the needed administrative tasks for the exportation of pieces must not be paid – an action performed by museums in difficulties, such as the British Museum (whose costs are surprisingly high and appear "suspiciously" interfere on how much the renting of pieces would cost) or that the European museums responsible for loans always deny the economical offers. The offers of the museums from the United Arab Emirates and from Japan, as well as the economical requests of the Russian museums, are well known.

It is known that it is necessary paying, under the covers, certain fees to get pieces of specific

countries, such as, in some occasion, from Syria. But, the transaction must be performed with caution and discretion, trying to find the perfect moment to not look like someone is bribing the employees. The payment, or the gift, of materials, restoration for instance, also facilitates the loans; this procedure happens, in part, logically, accordingly to the lacks of certain countries.

The artworks arrive downtown or at the museum where they will be displayed when the mounting (wood panels, window displays, stands) is concluded. The ink must be dry, the environment has to be controlled according to the international patterns, the environment must be controlled (protectors, alarms, cameras). Once the artworks are in the museum, no job which involves dust, smoke and vibration can be performed. Just finishing touches, drilling of access and fixation of ducts, and installment of placards and texts are allowed since they do not involve the displacement of the artworks.

The day of the installment of the artworks, the boxes are put in a room, one by one, always under the supervision of the messenger. The room is already properly prepared with one or several operation desks. Restaurateurs, conservators, and installers are waiting. The cleaning is performed as usual. You are not allowed to eat in the room, neither perform jobs that can cause vibrations and produce dust. The boxes must be opened very carefully. The artworks are unpacked under the messenger's attention and sight. The restaurateurs or curators of the organizing institution perform this operation and they photograph every step of the way. The artwork is placed on a desk, or on a surface, and it is inspected. It is photographed in every corner and it is sometimes inspected with the use of ultraviolet light, in order to detect possible cracks or detachments caused by the transportation. The conditions of the piece are compared with the one presented in the previous days, in the moment of the packing in the lending institution. Thank the pictures taken in that moment, all the differences are pointed out, going from small alterations or details that the pictures given by the supplier do not show. The legal papers are finally signed.

The smallest particle detached from an artwork is collected. Sometimes, the reintegration of the separated material is performed, since its amount is not excessive, because, otherwise, the piece cannot be exposed due to the suffered alteration. The pieces made of not-baked clay are generally the most fragile ones and the hardest to handle. But the pieces made of bronze also can cause unforeseen surprises. The messenger watches the window display or the platform. The alarms that can have been solicited must be installed, crystals and surfaces must be clean. The messenger guarantees the stability of the displayer, as well as the desired foothold. The artworks can come with or without a displayer. In the case of the displayer must be set up in the room, the messenger has

to approve the fixation system that was planned. It is the messenger or an allowed conservator by him/her, that transfers the artwork and puts it on the platform after it is fixed. If the artwork is big or weights considerably, it is transported in a wheelbarrow or in a crane, which only the credentialed experts are allowed to handle.

Any manipulation requires the use of gloves, made of rubber or cloth, with a special treatment that facilitates the correct adherence to the artwork. Some messengers or conservators prefer to work without gloves to make sure that the piece is safe.

Certain artworks require small restorations: only the messenger can allow them. He/She represents, in the strong meaning of the word, the loaning institution, and this person has always the last saying. If this person feels that the expositors, the room or the location, are not meeting the previously set demands, he/she can have the artwork repacked and returned.

The window displays must respect the environment conditions established by the suppliers: light, temperature and moisture levels must meet the previously established parameters (the bronze, especially from archaic eras is an easy target of corrosion, which, when it starts, although invisible, is felt on the fragile and sensible material, the window displays that protect them must be according to the very precise conditions regarding the moisture levels, which must be always under control). There are absorbing materials that control the moisture levels the whole time. The supplier institution also has to approve the conditions and systems proposed by the receiving institution.

The enlightenment is generally adapted or regulated once the window display is closed, except in the case of displays with recessed lighting, which cannot detach heat, and must have what is called of controlled lighting temperature, especially the registers of ultraviolet and soft infrared. The intensity of the lighting (“lux”) answers certain peaks. Artworks on paper painted works in general, whose color did not go through cooking, such as the Greek ceramic, demand low light (50 lux). The supplier and the recipient must guarantee that the lighting intensity meets the established parameters.

An exhibition with about one hundred and fifty pieces (Figure 3), with many suppliers, can demand two weeks for installments. If some artworks take just an hour from the moment of unpacking and its placement in a window display or platform, others might take many days: the condition of each artwork, the requirements of the exhibition, may delay the process. Occasionally, the platforms, approved by the messenger, fitted to the piece, made of approved materials that do not release gases or are not in direct contact with the piece, are fabricated in the room and its preparation and adjust-

Figure 3. Assembly of the exhibition Antes del Diluvio. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 a.C (Before the Flood. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 BC) which received pieces from 32 museums and collectors from around the world. The exhibition brought together more than 400 pieces on Sumerian culture, coinciding with the fall of the III Dynasty of Ur. Curator of Pedro Azara. Source: author's collection.

Figure 4. General view of the exhibition Antes del Diluvio. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 a.C (Before the Flood. Mesopotamia 3500-2100 BC). Curator: Pedro Azara. Source: author's collection.

Figure 5. Detail of the assembly of the exhibition Sumeria y el paradigma moderno (Sumeria and the modern paradigm). Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, 28 Oct. 2017 - 21 Jan. 2018. Curator: Pedro Azara. Video frame of Sumeria y el paradigma moderno, available in: <https://vimeo.com/242247313>. Accessed on: 01 Jan. 2018.

ment can take many days. The pieces that, once they have been unpacked, were not exhibited in time, must be returned to the reservations, always under the supervision of a police officer or with the approved security systems.

Nobody is allowed to handle any piece. Nobody can enter the room, exception made if you are licensed. All the process must be performed under the maximum control, that always demand the messenger's approval. The requirements must be respected; it depends on the museum's criteria, their personality and the demands that were previously communicated by them.

Setting up an exhibition is the closest thing to a medical surgical procedure together with a police and investigative operation. Any mistake, indeed, can result in the cancellation of the exhibition and in the loss of the trust of the supplier and of the receiver. You may only breathe unworried when it is the opening day. From then on, you are only on the critics' mercy. (Figure 4)

The long process is repeated when the demounting occurs and the pieces are returned, as many times as it is necessary, in the case of mobile exhibitions: it is generally necessary a month of working between the mounting and demounting the exhibition in another museum. Although, certainly, the demounting requires less time than the mounting, unless a piece presents any alteration that appeared while the time of exhibition.

Some pieces "travel" only once, and they cannot be present in all the museums or centers that host mobile exhibitions. Artworks made of fragile materials, especially to the light (drawings, books) can only be exposed just for a few months, and they must stay at least a year in the dark.
Setting up an exhibition is living outside the time for a few weeks. It is the best thing – and the strangest one – that can happen. The artworks are like people, whose treatment, whose care requires all the attention and worries of everyone involved. A mistake and the loss are irreparable. (Figure 5)

Barcelona, 2017.

■