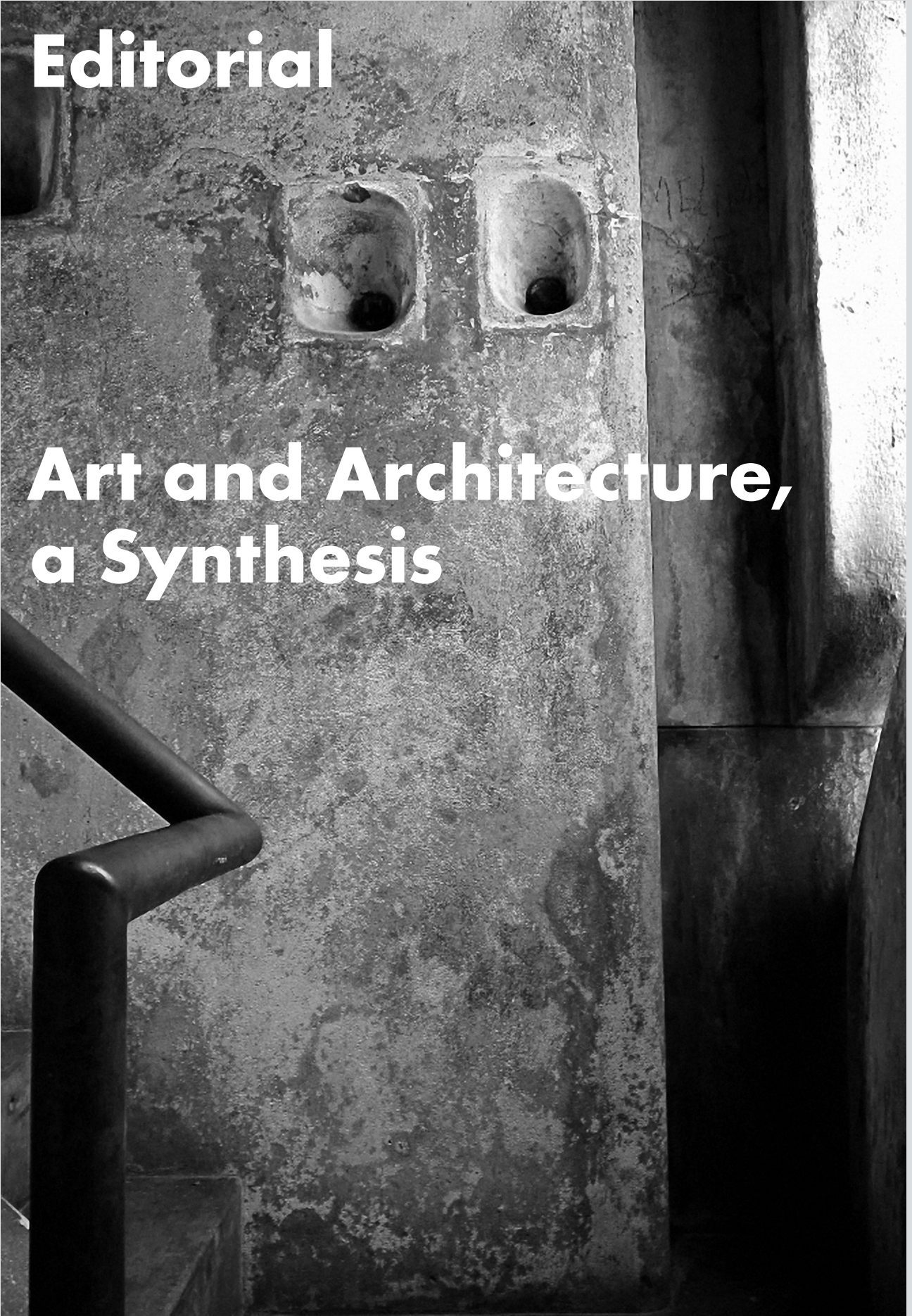




Editorial

Art and Architecture, a Synthesis

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THE argument of this **docomomo** Journal is the relation between Art and Architecture. Following the Synthesis of Art concept, this theme is the result of a challenge which is related to the Mexican University City (UNAM) public spaces created by the link between the buildings, the works of art and the space within. This year of 2010, when **docomomo** major Conference is hosted at the UNAM, the impressive stimulus of this *campus* settlement is the starting point that justifies going deeper in this relation that connects esthetics and ethics.

The question of the Image of Modernity has been discussed in **docomomo** Journal 14, exploring the aesthetic dimension and the poetic side of Modern Architecture production. The meaning of avant-garde aesthetics was understood beyond an image as a true aspiration for the emergence of a new culture focusing the strong conceptions of the Modern Movement rather than a modernist imagery.

Starting this new cycle of our Journal when we settled the **docomomo** Headquarters in Barcelona at the Mies van der Rohe Foundation last January, we wish to come to this important issue introducing the post Second World War dimension related to the New World accomplishments. The late CIAM discussions, namely the ones that took part in the scope of the Bergamo Conference in 1947, brought social and intensive public aspirations. Between North and South, the new world retook the European avant-garde issues implementing the most collective values for a better future to come. Giedion's *Architecture You and Me* or the struggle for a *New Monumentality*, were the placed questions that received an extraordinary eco from American Architecture which emerged with a creative energy. Therefore, in our days, the aim is to deepen understand the process and to find the paths for the future. A future that we may create with such awareness that may, generously, give us the tools for increase nowadays architecture and city planning.

Carlos Lazlo and Mario Panni, among others, performed a teamwork devoted to a collective and social architectural mission. This proposed new monumentality understood, not only as a progress symbol, but above all, as a motor for the future was based on technology and overall in an experimental creativity without banners. By pushing CIAM discussions towards aesthetics issues, they understood the importance of the civic center envisaged as the 5th function, looking for the possibility that "the man in the street" might be able to appreciate the synthesis between art and technique, between art and architecture.

I wish to thank Horacio Torrent who, from the first moment, accepted to be guest editor of this new **docomomo** Journal. Due to his commitment and energy, and to the skill of a wide range of **docomomo** members and researchers that have contributed with their knowledge and dedicated work, it is with great pleasure that we present this Journal.

A variety of disciplines and points of view represented by professionals and scholars, show the vitality of **docomomo** people's network. An image of heterogeneity within the cultural universality reflecting on modern heritage preservation, is a collective effort that must improve the role that **docomomo** plays in the Documentation and Preservation of Modern Movement Architecture: From Brazil to Caracas University and the Mexican muralists, from Calder to Max Bill, from Burle Marx to Josef Albers, from the corporate American design to the MoMA role, who surprisingly brakes the classic museum concept by bringing architecture to people's lives in a all new perspective, we are proud to accomplish this first colored Journal as a tribute to this creativity.

Today we live a time that requires, as Hubert-Jan Henket said, an "integrated effort of sciences, technology, arts and ethics", in order to fulfill a better future "based on social, technological and cultural responsibility and innovation."

To quote Wessel De Jonge, the "reassessment of the image of Modernity might therefore help us to re-evaluate our interpretation of the Modern Movement as a whole", for the debate of the Modern Movement challenge might be an inspiration for the future.

Ana Tostões, Chair of **docomomo** International



1. The people to the university, the university to the people.

David Alfaro Siqueiros

Rectoría, 1952-1956



2. Mexico's history dates or the right to culture.

David Alfaro Siqueiros

Rectoría, 1952-1956



3. Historic representation of culture.

Juan O'Gorman

Central Library, 1952



4. Untitled.

José Lazcarro Toquero

Central Library, 1964



5. University, family and sport in Mexico.

Diego Rivera

University Olympic Stadium, 1952



6. Human creation and economy.

Benito Messeguer

Economic's Faculty, 1963



7. The conquest of energy.

José Chávez Morado

Unidad de Posgrado, 1952-1953



8. Quetzalcóatl's return.

José Chávez Morado

Unidad de Posgrado, 1952



9. Monte Albán ruins.

José Luis Benlliure Albán

Architecture Faculty, 1961



10. The centre of forms.

Manuel Felguérez

Torre II de Humanidades, 1978



11. Man's self-improvement through culture.

Francisco Eppens Helguera

Odontology Faculty, 1952



12. Life, death, miscegenation and the four elements.

Francisco Eppens Helguera

Medicine Faculty, 1953-1954



13. A mathematical space story.

Federico Silva

Engineering Faculty, 1980-1982



14. Mexican architecture formal roots.

Álvaro Yáñez Vélez

Architecture Faculty, 1990



15. Integrated abstraction.

Carlos Mérida

University Cultural Centre, 1967



16. Inventing the future.

Arnold Belkin

Engineering Institute, 1990



17. Computer history.

Patricia Figueroa, Facundo Pérez, Vicente Díaz, Ángel Reyes, Daniel Morales

DGSCA, 1988

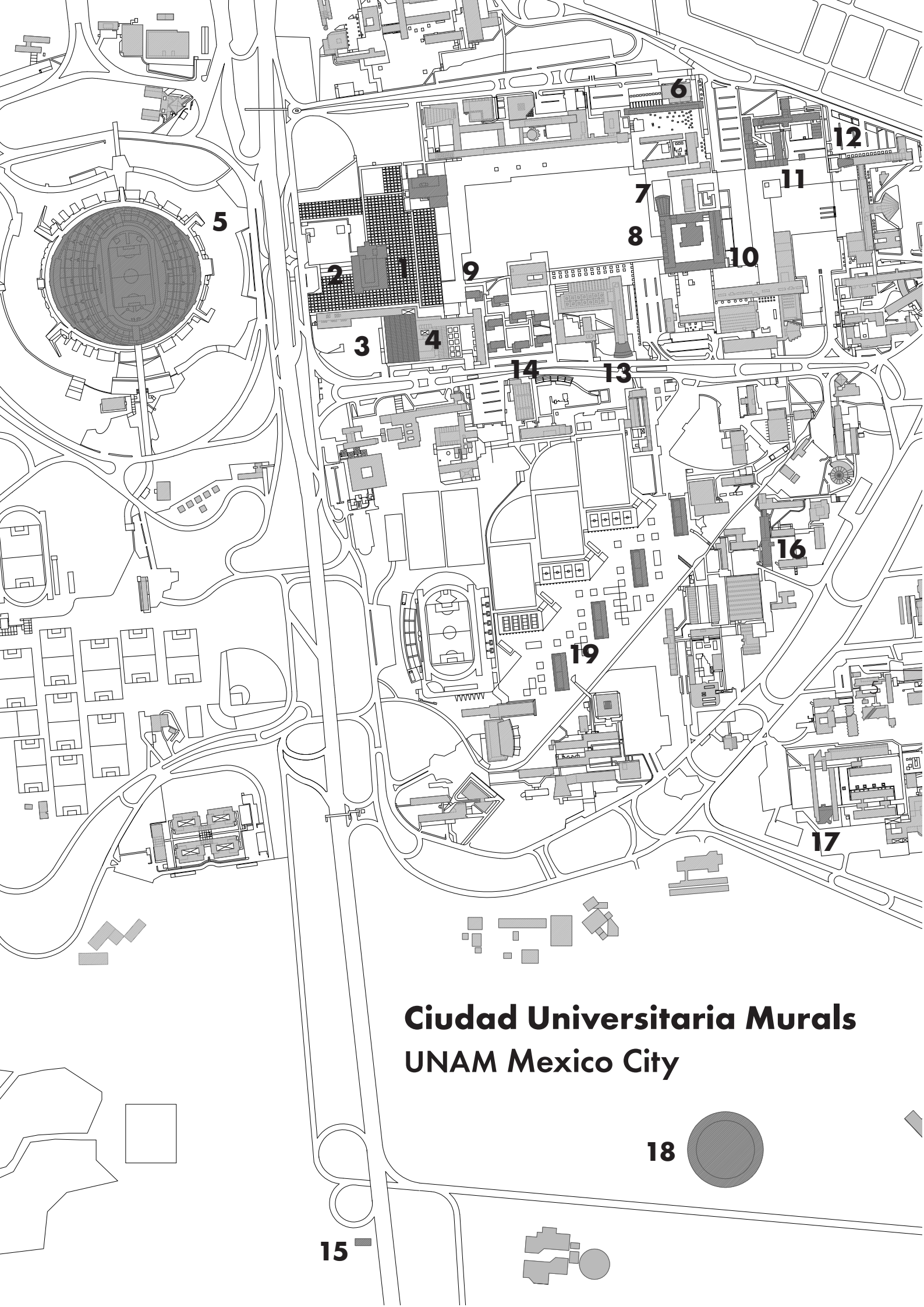


18. Sculpture space.



19. Fronton courts.

This map has been drawn with the help of the book *Guía de Murales de la Ciudad Universitaria*, published by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Dirección General del Patrimonio Universitario. A book review of this publication can be found on page 129 of this Journal.



Ciudad Universitaria Murals

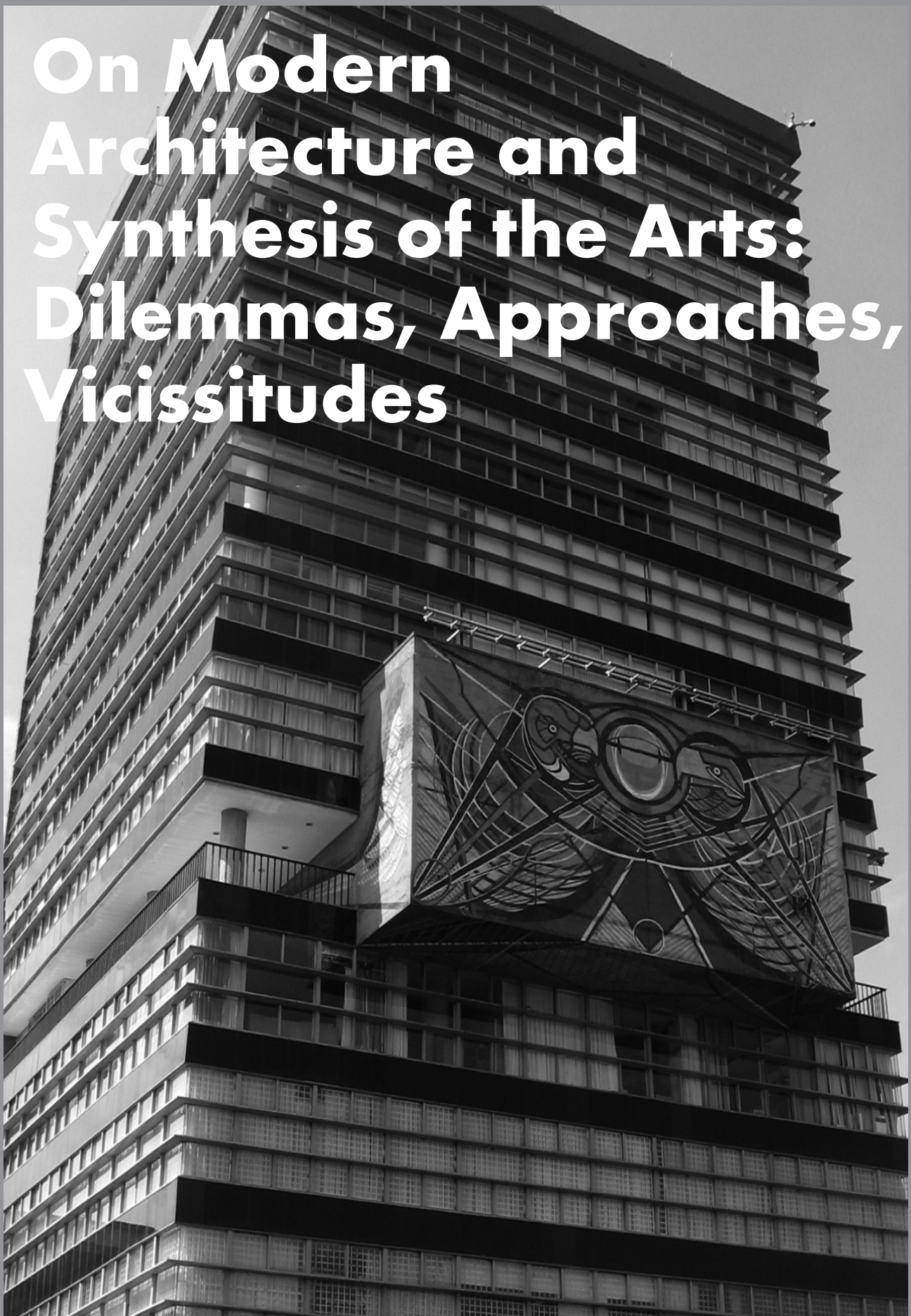
UNAM Mexico City

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On Modern Architecture and Synthesis of the Arts: Dilemmas, Approaches, Vicissitudes

6



The concept of “synthesis of the arts” became, in the 1940s, a leading principle in the search for renewing and improving modern architecture. Integration with painting and sculpture sought at bringing closer architecture and the people. But many dilemmas stood on the way: from the collaboration processes and the unity of the artistic experience, to “art for art’s sake” predominance or its social content. In the university cities of Mexico and Caracas as well as Burle Marx’s landscapes, the concept of integration reached wider scales. But it found its crisis in the extension to urban planning and the city—which had been, paradoxically, its ultimate target.

By Horacio Torrent, guest editor

THE idea of a synthesis or integration of the arts seems to persist with certain validity in the field of architecture while apparently not in the field of art, which currently falls far from the formal setting to assert itself in the field of experience. The ideas and forms on artistic integration have taken different versions during the twentieth century. The proposals on the total artwork on behalf of the avant-garde are well known, and so is the aspiration of neoplasticism for the unity of artistic creation and the dissolution of the art in the city; indeed there is countless historiography in this regard.

In retrospect, the theoretical concern about the ways in which the main arts could be integrated had for some years an intense and fairly prolific development, but it was in the early 1940s that the ideas that sought a synthesis of the arts stood as clear conceptual guidelines: overcoming constructive objectivity and absence of social representations as a question of surpassing the initial core contents of modern architecture.

This issue of the **docomomo** Journal poses the debate on the synthesis of the arts that historically lies after the initial proposals of the avant-garde, with particular emphasis on some cases, through interpretations by various authors, introducing descriptions and testimonies of the most relevant cases, and presenting resources for specific studies—such as those at the Museum of Sketches in Lund—or documentary texts of its protagonists. It thus seems appropriate to reintroduce this issue in relation to the Eleventh International **docomomo** Conference that takes place in Mexico in 2010.¹

Flesh and Skin

The *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, held in Paris during 1937, was an expression of the most diverse relationships between art

and architecture. Many artworks were included in the exhibition halls, most of them with an educational and decorative sense. The Pavilion of the Spanish Republic by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa, built in short time and with limited resources, meant the incorporation of art provided with full political meaning. Sert’s links with the Spanish avant-garde allowed the incorporation of a large number of works of art. Among others, the magnificent work of Alberto Sánchez entitled “The Spanish people have a path that leads to a star”, the “Montserrat” by Juli González, the “Catalan peasant in revolt” by Miró, several photomontages by Josep Renau, the “Fountain of Mercury” by Calder, and most notably the later famous “Guernica” by Pablo Picasso.

The Pavilion showed Sert’s concerns about the ways in which the architecture could relate to art. The architecture was quite simple, but the system of ramps and paths clearly articulated the sequence of the featured artworks, all of which with a strong political content. If art was able to show all the human suffering of the Spanish Civil War, it could also contribute to the improvement of society and civilization. That is, to transcend the political context of the moment and transform it into a new social dimension.

In 1943 Sert, Giedion and Léger wrote the famous “Nine Points on Monumentality”, which proposed to rescue the old social dimension of this idea: “A monument being the integration of the work of the planner, architect, painter, sculptor and landscapist demands close collaboration between all of them.”² The proposal would guide the debate from this statement: “Monumental architecture will be something more than strictly functional. It will have regained its lyrical value. In such monumental layouts, architecture and city planning could attain a new freedom and develop new creative possibilities, such as those that have begun to be felt in the last decades in the fields of painting, sculpture, music and poetry.”³

Publicly known since 1944, and not without some controversy, ideas therein contained began to gain significant strength. In fact, Giedion himself was responsible for circulating and even expanding its contents consistently for

< Figure 1. **David Alfaro Siqueiros** *New University Symbol* Mural Rectorate Tower, UNAM.
Photo by Horacio Torrent, 2009



over a decade.⁴ Incorporated as a theme in the VI CIAM of Bridgwater in 1947, it was introduced by Giedion referring to the state of affairs of architecture. While the prior topics had been industrialization and standardization, the new postwar social time claimed a new approach: "Now we consciously promote another step. A step towards a rather intangible subject: aesthetic problem or, you may prefer to say, emotional expression."⁵ He would then again insist on the matter in Bergamo in 1949, although the debate would focus on the CIAM Grid, while achieving a greater response in Hoddersdon in 1951, when attention was placed on the significance of "the heart of the city". Finally, Sert would clearly declare the problem, as proclaimed in his lecture: "we have outlived that period when architecture aimed solely at expressing function. New trends are now apparent towards a greater freedom of plasticity, a more complete architectural vocabulary. No matter how beautiful structure alone may be, should we forget that flesh and skin can be added to the bones? The need for the superfluous is as old as mankind."⁶

Theoretical Dilemmas

The diagnosis was clear. Industrialization and mass production had populated the world with ugliness and poor aesthetics. The mercantilism and individualism were imposed onto the community. The division of labor and specialization had promoted increasingly distant practices and disciplines, and among them including the higher arts: architecture, painting and sculpture.

Moreover, modern architecture had promoted the expression of the practical and constructive functions and thus the aesthetic ideals had been primarily located in the field of production of art works, neglecting the 'common people', stepping back and away from the expectations of the general public. What was left evident was the crisis that modern architecture had reached, and the efforts to overcome would thus be aligned around the recovery of the symbolic expression for architecture and urbanism, under the name of synthesis of the arts.

Conceptually this resembles an audience formation based on a will for a more organic and fulfilling relationship between production and reception of art. The op-



Figure 2. **Juan O’Gorman** Maquette of the Central Library, UNAM, 1952.

Photo from Mexican Architects’ Archive, Architecture Faculty, UNAM.

Figure 3. **Alberto T. Arai** Sports Area Frontons, UNAM.

Photo from Mexican Architects’ Archive, Architecture Faculty, UNAM.

Figure 4. **David Alfaro Siqueiros** *The People for the University*.

The University for the People Mural, 1952-56, UNAM.

Photo by Horacio Torrent, 2009

Figure 5. **O’Gorman** *Historic Representation of Culture Mural*, Central Library, UNAM.

Photo by Horacio Torrent, 2009



tions for this improvement were strategically oriented in two close but different senses: first, from production, the reintegration of architecture, painting and sculpture; and second—oriented for public reception—the restructuring of the unity of the visual experience.

The integration of artistic practices sought to recover the ability to work alongside, or at least the will to try this between architects, painters and sculptors. As such, this focused the role of the protagonists, either in equal terms or whether the architect acted as coordinator or as ‘artist director’. The synthesis also alluded to the artistic conception that takes place simultaneously at various levels of an individual who concentrates in itself more than one artistic practice. The emblematic figure that responded to this was clearly the “artist-architect” Le Corbusier. Stanislaus von Moss expands his relevance in a fascinating collection of notes that prophetically places him in much current cultural dynamics.

Even in a declared spirit of cooperation, the relationships between architecture and visual arts can be outlined in four steps. First, a dynamic of sharing the same

field while every practice preserved its independence, this is often the case of sculpture. Second, art applied to architecture based on the preconditions set forth by its layout, or architecture as canvas and the work of art as decoration frequently applied as murals. Third, the incorporation of art encouraged by the achievement of an effect, particularly in the case of stained glass. And fourth, integration into an interdependent resolution between architecture and artwork, in which the synthesis would be its highest expression, tending to a plastic cohesion between space and work of art, aspiring to a condition of sublime. If the first three were defined from production, the last, in its greatest extent, definitely had its effect based within reception.

Thus, the greatest expectation was based on the restructuring of the unity of the artistic experience. The controversy was raised between abstract and figurative or objective art. Figurative art was closely associated with its communicative function and therefore very close to realism, with a content more easily identifiable in its reception, while abstract art was seen as more impersonal

and meaningless and therefore more collective and democratic in its reception.⁷ Obviously, synthesis had to show a tendency towards abstraction, for it allowed a greater capacity to break the limits of existing practices and nurture different fields. That capacity stands, in the words of Barry Bergdoll, in the understanding of the dialectical development of the modern avant-garde.

The positions around one of the options were frequent, the controversies were many⁸ and the accusations on the decorative were often, but the most severe strains were established by the opposition between mere artistic expression and the social role of art.

Lúcio Costa made a lucid and analytical intervention at the International Conference of Artists organized by the Unesco in Venice, 1952,⁹ by recognizing three reasons for the negative attitude towards modern architec-

created by mechanization. The alternative was not the integration of the arts, but the pursuit of "good form" as a state of perfection and efficiency. As explained by Alejandro Crispiani, the reception of his ideas in the realm of Latin American Southern Cone, not without controversy, proposed Bill as an example of the total artist, able to produce in his work this sought synthesis; or, as regarded in the interpretation of Tomás Maldonado, an example of clear correspondence between the work of art and integral design.

Latin American Approaches

The Americas had a central role in the testing of ideas regarding integration of architecture and urbanism, perhaps because of their particular need to forge a modern tradition in art while building a public sphere through equipment and new meanings for urban space. With particular strength and aggressiveness, and beyond any conceptual dilemmas, various works applied the idea of synthesis, even if sometimes fragmented.

In North America, the search for a link towards art was, as paradigmatic site, the public spaces of corporate architecture. As noted by Theo Prudon referring to Huxtable's argument, the incorporation was only intended to soften the austerity and blandness of modern buildings, and, except rare cases, the forms were usually three: sculptures in front of buildings or in gardens, indoor sculptural applications, and murals.

In Latin America they took shape on different options and diverse expressions. One was a strong tendency to synthesize sculptural conditions in the architectural form, usually highlighted in relation to the supporting structure, as in the work of Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil, Candela in Mexico or Williams in Argentina. If the canonical-like interpretations such as those of Henry-Russell Hitchcock¹⁰ sought in the architecture of that time the influential presence of modern painting, Carlos Eduardo Comas discusses its prevalence and offers a lucid overview of the exchange between sculpture and modern architecture present in the porosity held in the most important works of the first period of modern Brazilian architecture.

The ideas for integration of art and architecture as proposed by the Mexican muralists for public art were both early and parallel to European expressions; and also generated an intellectual environment clearly leading to a challenging production, such as that highlighted by Louise Noelle. The Mexican scene associated strong theoretical positions with the practice of functionalist architecture, with the intention of overcoming the limitations imposed its universalism in a particularly interesting context as certainly was the new institutional framework forged since the Mexican Revolution. Muralismo was pro-



Figure 6. **Josep Lluís Sert** and **Luis Lacasa** Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, International Exposition, Paris, 1937.

Photo from Centro Documental del Ministerio de Cultura de España.

Figure 7. **Fernand Léger** *Bimural* partial view, UCV Covered Plaza, Caracas, 1954.

Photo by Horacio Torrent, 1992.

Figure 8. **Jean Arp** *Cloud Shepherd*, 1953 and **Mateo Manaure** *Mural*, 1954. UCV Covered Plaza, Caracas.

Photo by Horacio Torrent, 1992.

ture: it looks very different from previous forms of building, its lack of consideration of tradition, and its utilitarian and deliberately functional nature incapable of producing a dignified impression. Considering the plastic quality as an essential element in the architecture, Costa proposed to overcome the traditional conflict between social art and "art for art's sake", recognizing in the latter the capacity of distinction as something significant in the context of culture.

For Max Bill, the problem was not only the exhaustion of the modern impulse, but the loss of authenticity

posed from the 1920s and 1930s as a public art par excellence, with a capacity of social and political content yet unparalleled. Characterized by strong tensions over educational content, often loaded with realism, this attempt for integration almost always carried a message whose destination was the people and that transcended national conditions to be placed universally.

If anything characterized the integration of the arts in Latin America, was its final claim of public influence. They were mostly public works which took on a different scale, associated with the dynamics of the new social and educational programs, linked to movements of large masses of the population – with university campuses as outstanding examples. But it also extended to the more radical urban condition assumed by the use of focal intensities able to transcend the sole artworks, articulating complete

giant mural that covers it. The universalist claim to contain all the “Historic representation of culture” – as the name of the mural indicates – was what established its monumental status and therefore the need for a closed block. By contrast, in the case of Olympic Stadium, Rivera’s mural, even if undeniably powerful, is merely an addition the formal proposal masterly synthesized by Augusto Pérez Palacio. Next to the stadium, the Frontons by Alberto T. Arai overcome mere integration to move onto a different path. It is in the form of a truncated pyramid and the texture of the stone, where the prevalence of artistic integration lies in this experience. Arai himself proved this clear when he declared that “architecture is formed by the union of both distribution and construction, which are subject to the designs of a deliberate and creative artistic intention that translates into a homogeneous unit.”¹¹



sequences of urban landscape and large scale places of socialization.

For a consecrated art as the Mexican muralism, the complex of the University City of Mexico, developed between 1946 and 1952, was a wonderful opportunity to assume the condition proposed by the large scale and systematic action upon urban size. With an explicit didactic intention between subject and representation – as diligently presented by Lourdes Cruz –, together with the opportunity to adapt their work to spacial conditions as proposed by architects and planners, artists had a substantial role in the opportunity to articulate content beyond the rationalist conceptions of architecture, and thus set the thematic unity of the territory of the campus.

Juan O’Gorman’s murals in the Library (1952) have been often considered as decorative, but in fact it was fundamentally a work of synthesis: the architectural design of the massive block was conceived with the intention to grant it with a monumental character through the

The University City of Caracas was designed by Carlos Raúl Villanueva around 1940 as a rather academic project, but between 1949 and 1955 – the period of its greatest consolidation – it changed radically. The complex was composed as a series of seemingly autonomous buildings – with a center organized around two squares – but assembled by an articulated network of covered walkways strengthened by the presence of art in multiple formats. Some of these works of art fully embody the idea of integration, such as the stained-glass mural by Fernand Léger at the Central Library (1954), while others only stage exemplary works. Most are key interventions in the territorial integration of the campus and all intend to offer, in the words of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, “a recognizable likeness of the spirit, approachable by all men who see and feel.”¹² No doubt the experience of this place as a whole definitely enables a memorable one, as witnessed and testified by Hannia Gómez.

The result is certainly not a product of intuition given

that Villanueva held a quite clear position on this: "Integration of the arts results in a new architectural-sculptural-pictorial organism, where none assumes minor importance, where no fissure exists between all human aspirations."¹³ In that sense, two are clear moments of synthesis: the Aula Magna and the Covered Plaza.

Indeed the Aula Magna (1953) is without any doubt the best example of synthesis in terms of a concrete collaboration between professional and artistic practice. It is a clear moment of articulation between architectonic and structural conception, technical resolution of acoustic conditions and artistic definition. Collaboration between Villanueva and the engineers of the Danish construction firm Christiani and Nielsen succeeded in totally isolating the interior shell from the structure; collaboration between Villanueva and Calder made it possible to imagine a space where Robert B. Newman had foreseen an exemplary acoustic resolution, as regarded by Jørgen Petersen.

The Covered Plaza (projected in 1952) is probably one of the places of greatest artistic synthesis and where the integration of different works of art reaches its highest meaning. It is a complex space which brings together the different volumes of the Rectorate, the Aula Magna, and the Hall of Honor, and where there is a change of direction in the pedestrian network of the campus. Its condition as a site of synthesis comes mainly from simple movements of few elements. A higher structure, pillars and roof slabs arranged in the regularity of the square grid, oriented according to its own coordinates, not corresponding to any of the adjacent volumes; and three lower structures that define light wells and a void space in which the lateral path of the lecture hall fugues tangentially. The murals are presented as free surfaces with curves that guide the directions of the promenade: Léger's "Bimural" next to the figure of "Amphion" by Laurens, in the full light of one of the courtyards; the "Homage to Malevich" by Vasarely limits the shadow space around another patio; the work by Mateo Manaure closing the passage and setting the space around the bulbous figure of the "Cloud Shepherd" by Jean Arp, which as indicating a full condition of movement, is simply based onto the ground, without a plinth. The square cover is what Villanueva defined as the structure in which aesthetic events take place, being these beyond the coexistence of art works onto the same ground.

The landscape works of Roberto Burle Marx are without doubt the greatest extension of the concept of synthesis of the arts across regional scales and the cultural dimensions of interventions on nature. Burle Marx also paradigmatically represents the synthesis of the arts from the individual point of view, from his studies in architecture, painting and his knowledge of nature and botanical materials; he conceived the garden in a way so genu-

inely new to the epoch. As explained by Lauro Cavalcanti, Burle Marx transplanted logics and forms of artistic avant-garde into the garden. Through the lack of separation between figure and ground, the incorporation of traditional materials – such as Portuguese pavement – and recognizing microclimates, topography, and their corresponding vegetation, he put volume into abstract painting. If the Gardens of the Ministry of Education and Health (1938) formed the initial experience in integrating with the surrounding architecture, the Parque do Flamengo in Rio de Janeiro (1961) was probably the place where the synthesis operation succeeds in expanding art into the urban dimension. Burle Marx dissolved art in nature, and thus expanded the status of total art work onto the experience of landscape.

Fata Morgana

The dissolution of art in the city, the recovery of the symbolic expression for urbanism, the emphasis on the social role of art as overcoming the limitations of modern architecture and the ability to represent the intangible through the area had always been in the very concept of synthesis of the arts.

Many works were carried out under this slogan, mostly within the scale of buildings. The opportunity to verify the extension of town planning ideas through facts, not under the notion of 'heart', but to the entire city, would take place in Brazil in September 1959 during the International Congress of Art Critics.¹⁴ The theme "New Town: Synthesis of the Arts" seemed appropriate in connection with the optimism of the construction of Brasília, and the expansion of the synthesis to the field of urbanism and planning.

Many of the ideas that had been central for two decades were still present, but the debates and choices of the participants marked a direction perhaps not foreseen by the organizers. The frustrated experience of integration of the arts in the Unesco building was still latent. Therefore, the main debate was no longer placed on the forms of integration, but onto the very crisis of the idea of synthesis.

From a more orthodox point of view, Alberto Sartoris's position related the integration of art in urban design through the construction of monuments and an unavoidable plastic abstraction. From a different position, André Bloc countered any notion of architecture as part of the major arts and warned of the need for artists to assume the current conditions, "the world today, which is the world of advertising and industrial design" and "we see in our cities the huge advertisements and cars that are like moving sculptures."¹⁵ Bruno Zevi thereby equated the crisis of architecture with the crisis of society.

In a brief speech, apparently out of context of the debate, Frederick Kiesler considered the perspective created in Brasilia as an unparalleled case because it was located both far and near: a Fata Morgana. But, as for architectural units scored this perspective, he would not forget his position against the monumental character and would focus his speech to overcome the artistic vision of the city, yet being modern was still monumental and hence “contrary to the inner life and sense and psyche of human beings today,” proclaiming that “the purest simplicity of life and the most basic needs of men should be the main factors in building the city.”¹⁶

Kiesler’s intervention seems symptomatic of a moment of crisis within modern architecture. The idea of mirage as an image more fraught with intentions than owning real correlations refers to a need for change and a definite leading role for the ‘common people’.

The synthesis of the arts, a subject that had long played a central role in the debate on architecture, found its crisis in the city, which paradoxically had been its purpose. Faced with the total dimension of the urban phenomenon it would begin to unravel and disappear as an idea and begin to be a part of history.

As Rosalind Krauss subsequently warned regarding sculpture,¹⁷ the universal categories of art were forced to cover a broad spectrum of different manifestations. The expansion of the field of art since the 1960s would be considered as an effective dissolution of art in the city. As seen from a distance the claim of artistic synthesis advocated by architecture stands as a particular historical moment. What stood as a future agenda for more than three decades aiming at the relationship between artistic and social practices was then consolidated as part of the past. Those works encouraged by its momentum are now heritage of modernity.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the authors, the Fundación Villanueva, the generous collaboration of Anne-Laure Guillet and Ivan Blasi for their support, and Ana Tostões for the trust placed upon me when inviting me to be the guest editor of the first issue of her period as chair of Docomomo International.
2. Josep Lluís Sert, Fernand Léger, Siegfried Giedion, “Nine Points on Monumentality,” in Siegfried Giedion, *Architecture, You and Me* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 49.
3. Sert, Léger, Giedion, “Nine Points,” 51.
4. As for example in: Siegfried Giedion et al., *In Search of a New Monumentality*, *Architectural Review* 104 (September 1948): 117-28.
5. Siegfried Giedion, *A Decade of New Architecture* (New York: Witterborn 1951), 34.
6. Josep Lluís Sert, “Centers for Community life,” in Jacqueline Tyr-

whitt, Josep Lluís Sert, Ernesto N. Rogers (eds.), *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life* (London: Lund Humphries, 1952), 13.

7. Further reference in Paul Damaz, *Art in European Architecture* (New York: Reinhold, 1956).
8. To quote two examples, while Jean Gorin spoke about the University City of Caracas: “but the different pictorial and sculptural work represented are stuck onto the Architecture and in no way integrated into it; they have no function whatsoever beyond that which is ornamental—and therefore there is no synthesis”, Villanueva himself wondered if the Mexican case was a case of synthesis of the arts or rather a “mere juxtaposition of different artistic expressions?”. Jean Gorin, “‘Is the Synthesis of the Mayor Arts Possible? A Vital Issue of Modern Architecture.’ Open letter to the General Assembly of Groupe Espace (May 9, 1956),” in Germano Celant, *Architecture & Arts* (Milan: Skira, 2004), 200. And Carlos Raúl Villanueva, *Textos Escogidos* (Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1980), 94.
9. Lúcio Costa, “The Architect and Contemporary Society; Preliminary Address on Architecture,” International Conference of Artists; Unesco, Venice, 1952. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/venice_52.shtml. Unfortunately it was not possible to reproduce in this edition.
10. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Painting Toward Architecture* (New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1948).
11. Yurik Kifuri Rosas, “Los frontones de la ciudad universitaria,” *Bitácora* 11 (February–April 2004): 49.
12. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Carlos Raúl Villanueva y la arquitectura de Venezuela* (Caracas: Instituto de Patrimonio Cultural, 1999), 94. English version: Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, *Carlos Raúl Villanueva and the Architecture of Venezuela* (Alec Tiranti: London, 1964).
13. Carlos Raúl Villanueva as quoted by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy in *Carlos Raúl Villanueva*, 94.
14. Maria da Silveira Lobo and Roberto Segre (eds.), *Congresso Internacional Extraordinário de Críticos de Arte - Cidade Nova: Síntese das Artes* (Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ/FAU, 2009).
15. Maria da Silveira Lobo and Segre (eds.), *Congresso Internacional Extraordinário de Críticos de Arte*, 64.
16. Maria da Silveira Lobo and Segre (eds.), *Congresso Internacional Extraordinário de Críticos de Arte*, 43.
17. Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30–44.

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Is an architect, PhD, author of several publications on Latin American architecture and urbanism. His publications include *Arquitectura Reciente en Chile: Las Lógicas del Proyecto* (2001) and *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950* (2010). He received the ARIAH Fellowship in 1997, and was granted the Research Award by the Bienal Iberoamericana de Arquitectura in 2006. He is professor of History of Modern Architecture, director of research and graduate programs at the School of Architecture, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, and chair of **docomomo** Chile.

Plastic Integration in Mexico: Confluence or Nostalgia

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From the onset of contemporary architecture, the controversial presence of visual arts manifested itself as one of the approaches in its development. In the mid-twentieth century the use of the term “plastic integration” started to be widespread, exposing the confrontation between diverse stances and positions. Three of the pioneers in the forefront of this field were Carlos Obregón Santacilia, with his building for the Secretaría de Salubridad (1929), Mario Pani, with the Hotel Reforma (1936), and Enrique Yáñez, with the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (1936–1940). The movement, headed by the leading architects of the time in collaboration with important artists, searched for an intersection between the visual arts and architecture.

By Louise Noelle

FROM the onset of contemporary architecture, the controversial presence of visual arts manifested itself as one of the approaches in its development. In the mid-twentieth century the use of the term “plastic integration” became widespread, exposing the confrontation between diverse stances and positions. At the same time, a series of questions arose regarding the final results of a work shared between architects and artists, as the result of such a collaboration did not always meet a successful ending.

On one side, we have to remember that at the beginning of the past century arose a series of radical proposals which tried to liberate architecture from the academic weight. The voice of Austrian architect Adolf Loos might have been the one heard with more force, in the foreboding article from 1908 “Ornament and crime”. However, soon after many conciliatory postures emerged, such as the one adopted by the CIAM, which expressed that “a new conception of each architectural problem” was necessary, as well as a “creative satisfaction of all the material and spiritual requisites.”¹

Regarding the architects, the posture of Le Corbusier is worth noting, being both an architect and a painter led him to express himself in favor of a synthesis: “Architecture and visual arts are not two elements that are juxtaposed; they are a whole, solid and coherent.”² Furthermore, it is important to note that in the well known and revolutionary book *Vers une architecture*, published in 1923, together with his position on mass production and standardization, he proposed that “Architecture is the skilful, accurate, and magnificent play of masses seen in light; they call for the plastic artist.”³ As for Walter Gropius, reflecting on the foundation of the famous Dessau school, he explained that it was “inaugurated with the specific objective of carrying out a modern architectural art with the sovereign union of all the different arts.”⁴ We should not forget either another renowned pioneer, Frank Lloyd Wright, who pointed out in 1943 that “at last . . . we have arrived at integral ornament”, an “ornament meaning not only surface

qualified by human imagination, but imagination giving natural pattern to structure.”⁵

Returning to Mexico, it is precise to clarify that the term “Plastic Integration” (*Integración Plástica*) is coined midway through the twentieth century, even though there are examples from before this date. This movement, headed by the main architects of the time, proposed to achieve the coupling between the visual arts and architectural works. It is possible to find different proposals and concepts, from both architects and plastic artists that present themselves as *a priori* ideas, or as subsequent analysis. Probably the most comprehensive work is the one done by architect Enrique del Moral, director of the *Escuela Nacional de Arquitectura* (the National Architecture School), UNAM, between 1944 and 1949.⁶ It is of a high significance that after some years of studying under José Gaos in the *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* (Philosophy and Literature Faculty) of that same university, he produced a book of a small format, with two essays entitled *El Estilo* and *La Integración Plástica*.⁷

In the text about Plastic Integration, he begins by signaling the constant reference at the time to this trend and he elaborates his own explanation: he establishes that the collaboration between artists of different disciplines has been going on throughout history, though the true integration is only accomplished in very few occasions. He continues with the idea that this integration is not the result of the adequate work of architects and artists, but the existence of “the harmonious man . . . (that) lives in a centripetal, magic, transcendent, metaphysic world . . . submerged in the world of faith, not in the world of reason” insisting that the “peoples centered vitally and principally on the religious phenomenon express themselves formally with a common characteristic: integration.”⁸ From that statement we can obviously deduce that there were no possibilities of Plastic Integration with del Moral at the time, as he disqualifies all expressions that referred to this concept, including his own.

An opposing theory is adopted by other architects

such as Enrique Yáñez, who affirms that it is possible to propose a Plastic Integration that supports itself in the “figurative realism”⁹ because it has the function of transmitting a meaning, “Art with a message”, a “work that architects undertake with other artists . . . with the goal of enriching architectural works.”¹⁰

It is essential to note that the Mexican Muralist current, which had a profound social content and a realist expression, monopolized during many decades this production of public art. The members of this movement manifested their thinking through writings, starting with the *Manifiesto del Sindicato de Trabajadores Técnicos Pintores y Escultores* (Manifesto of the Union of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors) from 1922, where important artists such as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Xavier Guerrero, signed a document drafted by David Alfaro Siqueiros that proposed to glorify “the expression of Monumental Art, because it is public property.” To support these ideas Siqueiros, probably the most spirited and lucid of the group, expressed in several occasions his feelings about all this, when he brought forward the idea that an artist should “produce a mural painting as a painting of a given architectural space” where the “integral functionality is the *desideratum* of the integral plastic art,”¹¹ understanding the social and human aspect as the integral functionality. He proposes then the realization of the “ideological voice, the ethical expression or socio-political of architecture and of the entire integral plastic art phenomenon,”¹² an integration, in conclusion, that comprises the material, the spiritual and the moral.

For his part, Diego Rivera assured that it “is important to understand that in a true mural painting is necessarily a functional part of the life of the building; a synthetic and expressive sum of its human, general and particular functions; an element of union and amalgamation between the machine which is the building and the human society that uses it which is, ultimately the only cause and reason for its existence.”¹³ He concluded saying to the architects that “if they want a true and beautiful mural painting, they should offer the walls they built to the painters.”¹⁴ This declaration is fundamental to understand that it is the architects who, in a certain way, hold the power regarding matters of integration.

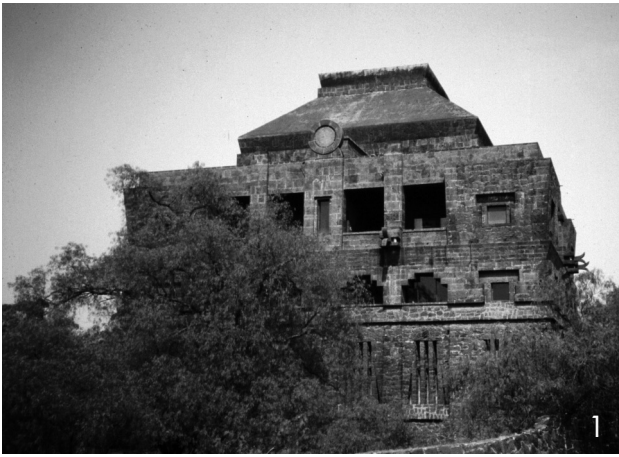
It is of great significance to include here the opinion of an accomplished architect and painter, Juan O’Gorman, author of important works in both fields. In the first place we have to remind ourselves of the long professional relationship established between Diego Rivera, the client, and O’Gorman, the architect, with the *casa-estudio* for Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, from 1931. A few years later, with the construction of the Anahuacalli they “discovered” together a method to make stone murals in the

concrete castings.¹⁵ (figures 1, 2) Afterwards O’Gorman perfected this system as he undertook the great work of the Central Library in the *Ciudad Universitaria* complex, in 1952, with 4,000 meters of mosaics made from colored stones.¹⁶ Because of this, his opinions in the article *En torno a la integración plástica* (On the Subject of Plastic Integration), are particularly attractive, renouncing his functionalist past and proposing “a realist architecture that as an artistic expression corresponds to Mexico, so that the people feel that it is theirs . . . so that when it is integrated with painting and sculpture . . . it is a legitimate contribution and original to the universal culture.”¹⁷ He shows himself thus as a champion of a “double realism”, in the pictorial and sculptural themes as much as the form of expression.

That is why, even in a concise fashion, it is “a must” to talk about a few pioneering examples of this tendency, headed by the main architects of the time that proposed to achieve a amalgamation between plastic arts and architectural works. The start took place with Carlos Obregón Santacilia¹⁸ who planned the *Secretaría de Salubridad*, in 1929, in which Diego Rivera took part with a mural that had impressive nudes in the meeting room and four very interesting stained-glass windows based on the four elements—earth, water, wind and fire. (figures 3, 4) Likewise Manuel Centurión carried out several sculptures, Hans Philling did the bas-reliefs and William Spratling designed the iron works.

The case of Mario Pani¹⁹ is marked by early forays into this tendency in the Hotel Reforma, 1936, with four controversial murals by Diego Rivera with motifs of Mexican festivities. A bit later, in the *Escuela Nacional de Maestros*, 1945, conceived by Pani as a space in which Mexican teachers of the future would feel proud, he invited both Luis Ortiz Monasterio—to participate making some bas-reliefs in stone—and José Clemente Orozco. (figure 6) The latter carried out the mural “*Alegoría Nacional*” (National Allegory), applying ethyl silicate directly over the concrete.

For his part, Enrique Yáñez and his partner Ricardo Rivas invited David Alfaro Siqueiros and his “*Retrato de la burguesía*” (Portrait of the Bourgeoisie) for the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas building, 1936–1940.²⁰ In this sense, it is appropriate to speak here of the joined proposition brought forward by Rivas and Diego Rivera for the building known as Cárcamo de Lerma, 1951, where Rivera painted “*El agua en la evolución de la especie*,”²¹ (Water in the Evolution of the Species) with polystyrene and liquid rubber, thinking that they would be resistant to the passing of water; he also created the fountain located at the front of the building, a sculpture/painting of Tlaloc, made with glazed tiles and colored stones.²²



However it is essential to mention that, probably, the artists that adopted an antagonistic posture to those at the *Escuela Mexicana de Pintura* (Mexican School of Painting) and its social message were the ones who achieved a higher coherence between their plastic arts proposals and their architectural postulates. In first place we can point out the painter of Guatemalan origin, Carlos Mérida, whose geometric expression—with bright and sharp colors and straight lines that are intertwined and set the boundaries of each area with precision—adapted to the interests of several architects.²³ He asserted that “the old concept of Mexican Muralism (Montenegro, Rivera, Siqueiros, Orozco) has stopped existing . . . the painting must be fused with the architectural body and should not be taken as mere ornamentation.” Because of this, with his ideas of a universal art without boundaries, he achieved an excellent participation in the *Centro Habitacional “Benito Juárez”*, 1952, by the architect Mario Pani; furthermore, in this case he employed concrete as a basic material, increasing the harmonious relationship of what Mérida himself called “Functional Painting”.²⁴

In this respect, Mathias Goeritz published an article entitled “*La Integración Plástica en el C.U. ‘Presidente*

Figures 1, 2. **Diego Rivera**, Anahuacalli, 1944-1947.

Figure 3. **Carlos Obregón Santacilia**, Ministry of Health, 1929.

Figure 4. **Diego Rivera**, Stained glass.

Photos by Louise Noelle



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Juárez" (The Plastic Integration in the C.U. 'Presidente Juárez'), (figures 5, 10) where he affirms that his colleague achieved "an extremely happy coordination of an integration obtained very rarely . . . (where) to create within a true harmony, you don't have to impose, but rather subdue oneself."²⁵ A small amount of time later, Goeritz would undertake his personal proposals in the confines of Plastic Integration with the significant building of the *Museo Experimental "El Eco"*. With the inauguration of this building he published the *Manifiesto de la Arquitectura Emocional* (Manifesto of Emotional Architecture), where he explains some of the concepts that took him to be "an architect, a bricklayer and a sculptor," achieving results of great originality. He described his posture this way: "The plastic integration wasn't understood as a program, but rather in a more natural sense", a "plastic integration to cause the Modern man maximum emotion."²⁶

Likewise, it is important to mention Enrique Yáñez again, as he undertook a good number of outstanding examples. Specially, one must note a series of works in the Centro Médico, 1957-1964, where he was accompanied by a group of architects to design the Oncology, Pneumology, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Nutrition Units. There can be found murals by David Alfaro Siqueiros and Luis

Nishizahua, and bas-reliefs by Federico Cantú. Amongst these works some stand out due to the good integrating proposals, such as the clinical lecture rooms in which José Chávez Morado participated with stone bas-reliefs that illustrate the "Evolution of the future of science in Mexico". (figure 12)

In the National Anthropology Museum by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Rafael Mijares and Jorge Campuzano, 1964, several craftsmen were invited to realize a mural, such as Rufino Tamayo, Jorge González Camarena, Miguel Covarrubias, Mathias Goeritz, Carlos Mérida, Raúl Anguiano and Feliciano Peña; in this case the prevailing role belongs to a bas-relief made by José Chávez Morado, "*Imagen de México*" (Image of Mexico), a metallic column that supports the monumental central umbrella, that achieves an exceptional integration.

A particular case is that of Enrique de la Mora,²⁷ with a good number of churches, in some instances associated with Félix Candela; for these works, he employed the presence of contemporary works of art, like the sculptures by Herbert Hoffman and a good number of stained glasses. Specifically, the chapel of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, located in the Seminario de San José del Altílo in Mexico City, from 1956-1958, has to be celebrated. (figure 5) In it, an almost abstract stained glass by Kitzia



Hoffman, with its vivid colors, intensifies the mystical attention towards the altar. Regarding the church of Santa Cruz in San Luis Potosí, from 1967, it is worth mentioning that the interior is illuminated with a series of interesting abstract stained glasses by Zita Basich.

In a certain sense the same can be said of the architect Alejandro Prieto,²⁸ who started as early as 1952 working with Diego Rivera in a pioneering theatre. With him, there is to be noted the design of two housing units, "*Independencia*", 1960, and "*Cuahutemoc*", where works by Luis Ortiz Monasterio, Federico Cantú and Francisco Eppens, achieve an integration that complements the generosity of the living conditions.

Amongst these examples, the house that Juan O'Gorman built for himself in San Jerónimo, 1949–1953, holds a particular place, since he achieved a totally innovative expression.²⁹ The design of the house – which unfortunately was destroyed – is both organic and dreamlike; he made the most of some existing caves to insert his home, which he then covered profusely with mosaics and tiles in a bas-relief. It can be said that amongst his sources of inspiration are Max Cetto and his interest in the Pedregal area, Carlos Lazo and the "*Cuevas civilizadas*" (civilized caves) and Diego Rivera and his sculptural mosaics, but specifically his inspiration can be tied to his

own paintings and their fantastical and imaginary content. Therefore this architect–painter closes his creative circle; his works, even though controversial, obtain in this occasion a unity that has been very seldom achieved.

Without lengthening this revision of outstanding works, we understand that the expressions that are included within this tendency actually known as Plastic Integration, are part of the modern movement, because they belong to buildings that are clearly identified with this current; however, we cannot omit saying that these interventions confer the buildings a unique quality, that ties them with the local, but does not stop them from belonging to the universal. In this sense *Ciudad Universitaria*, the main campus of the National University, 1950–1952, holds a leading position in this trend.

Actually, the more common voice is that of those who

Figure 5. **Enrique de la Mora** and **Félix Candela**, Chapel in San José del Altillio, 1956–1958. **Kitzia Hofmann**, Stained glass.

Figure 6. **Mario Pani**, *Escuela Normal de Maestros*, 1945. Open auditorium with the mural *El mestizaje*, by **José Clemente Orozco**. Photos by Louise Noelle

see in Plastic Integration a complimentary road to the contemporary movement, which has become obvious in several writings. On one hand, we find those who support nationalism like Alberto T. Arai³⁰ and Enrique Yáñez, who both search to blend the neutrality of the international style in fashion at the time, with the concurrence of Mexican Muralism, with proven national roots and tradition. On the other, professionals like Mario Pani, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez or Enrique de la Mora find, next to plastic artists, a solution for the tiring boredom facing repetitive patterns in the international trends of the time.

A final consideration

It is possible to establish that, in most of the twentieth century, the confrontation of the nationalist proposals and the desires towards international tendencies will be present in the works of numerous artists and architects. Therefore, it is appropriate to take up again the ideas of Jorge Alber to Manrique to better understand which is the meaning of the different forms of expression that make up the modern movement in Mexican architecture in its relationship with the plastic arts.

In more than one sense the Mexican culture seems to be composed by consecutive moments in which periods of openness and shutting alternate. An ambivalent situation regarding the European or Occidental cultures seems constitutive of the Mexican culture, much in the same way that, to a greater or lesser degree, this ambivalent phenomenon is present in the whole of Latin America.

In the case of Mexico, this ambivalence, which reflects itself in the double possibility of interpretation, has resolved itself in time as a succession of contradictory periods, that support themselves in complex historical situations: we have postulated ourselves alternately as both equals and different from Europe, from the Occident; we jump in delight of that which is our own, the search and complacency of that which makes us different, which presents itself as a value precisely for being different and exclusively ours, and then we skip to the following historical moment, where we are afraid to stay behind, to lose our footing in relation with the rest of the world.³¹

We understand then that the artistic and architectural production in Mexico is not trying to propose alternative postures, but more likely diverse expressions, that like a pendulum, at times it leans towards the local and at other times towards the universal. This situation, seemingly conflicting, has lead today to understanding that in a paral-

lel manner to what is known as the modern movement in architecture, other expressions have developed that are not of lesser importance or are excluded from modernity. In this sense it is possible to take up again the term "Otros Modernismos"³² (Other Modernisms), that includes the tendencies that accompanied the modern movement, particularly regarding Plastic Integration, searching with this to expand the outlook of Mexican architecture and to value its contributions with higher fairness and depth.

This assertion allows us then to accept that in the past century true synthesis was achieved where architecture and plastic arts converge in an indivisible whole, a perfect plastic integration. In these cases, more than explanations or concepts by the diverse craftsmen and architects involved, it is the experience facing the results that which permits to determine the suitability of the different postulates that speak in the name of this tendency. It can be agreed then that the fact that, in some extraordinary circumstances, the precept of collaboration with solutions that are integrated and emotional, can be accomplished, finding at the end a happy confluence in creativity.



Figures 7, 8, 9. **Juan O'Gorman**,
House in San Jerónimo, 1949-1953.
Photos by Louise Noelle



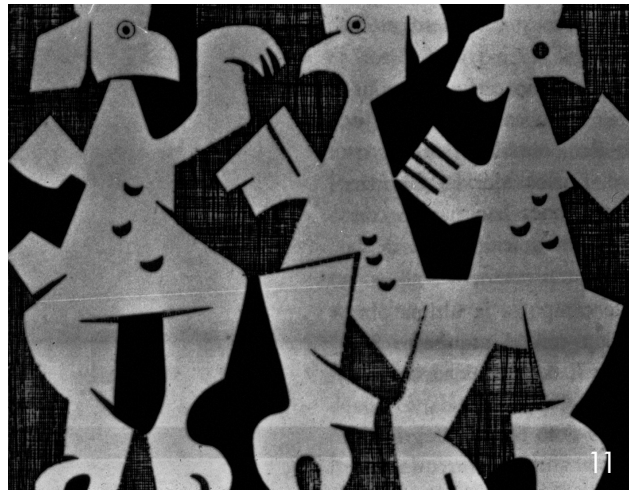
Notes

1. Official declaration of the First International Architecture Congress, CIAM, signed on June 28, 1928 by 24 participants, including Le Corbusier, Hannes Meyer, Gerrit Rietveld, y H.P. Berlage. Taken from Pere Hereu, Josep Maria Montaner y Jordi Olivares, *Textos de la modernidad* (Madrid: Nerea, 1994), 268.
2. "L'architecture et les arts plastiques ne sont pas deux choses juxtaposées; elles sont un entier solide cohérent", taken from Paul Damaz, *Art in European Architecture* (New York: Reinhold Publishing Co., 1956), 28.
3. Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 28; reproduced from the original from 1931
4. Walter Gropius, *Principios de la producción de la Bauhaus*, in Hereu, Montaner, Olivares, *Textos de la modernidad* (Madrid: Nerea, 1994) 259.
5. Frank Lloyd Wright, "Integral Ornament at Last," in *The Natural House* (New York: Horizon Press, 1943), 55.

Figure 10. **Mario Pani**, Centro Urbano "Presidente Juárez", 1951-1952. Concrete bas-relief by **Carlos Mérida**.

Figure 11. **Carlos Mérida** design.

Figure 12. **Enrique Yáñez**, Centro Médico, 1957-1964. Stone bas-relief by **José Chávez Morado**. Photos by Louise Noelle



6. See Louise Noelle, *Enrique del Moral* (México: 2004).
7. Enrique del Moral, *El Estilo. La Integración Plástica* (México: Seminario de Cultura Mexicana, 1966).
8. Del Moral, *El Estilo*, 27.
9. Enrique Yáñez, *Del Funcionalismo al Post-racionalismo* (México: Limusa, 1990), 66.
10. Enrique Yáñez, *Arquitectura. Teoría. Diseño. Contexto* (México: author's edition, 1983), 189.
11. David Alfaro Siqueiros, "Hacia una nueva Plástica integral", originally published in 1948 in the first issue of the magazine *Espacios*, and taken from Raquel Tibol, *Textos de David Alfaro Siqueiros* (México: FCE, 1974), 78.
12. David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Cometido en el arte de la pintura en la Integración Plástica*, *Espacios* 11-12 (México: October 1952).
13. Diego Rivera, *Arquitectura y pintura mural*, originally published in *The Architectural Forum* (New York: January 1934), and taken from *Textos de Arte*, compilation by Xavier Moyssén (México: Colegio Nacional, 1996), 196.
14. Rivera, *Arquitectura y pintura mural* in Moyssén, *Textos de Arte*, 198.
15. The Anahuacalli, 1944-1957, was designed by Rivera, but the calculations and the construction were done by O'Gorman, who describes the process in Antonio Luna Arroyo, *Juan O'Gorman* (México: Cuadernos Populares de Pintura Moderna, 1973), 142-143.
16. The architectural project is by Juan O'Gorman, Gustavo Saavedra and Juan Martínez de Velasco. See *Biblioteca Central. Libros muros y murales* (México: UNAM, 2006).
17. Juan O'Gorman, *En torno a la Integración Plástica*, *Espacios* (July 1953), taken from *La Palabra de Juan O'Gorman* (México: UNAM, 1983), 63. In the article "Más allá del funcionalismo: la arquitectura moderna y sus relaciones", he assures that "In the great periods of art, sculpture and painting have been the necessary complement to architecture, to enhance and give added expressive strength to the plastic art as a whole", 53.
18. Víctor Jiménez, *Carlos Obregón Santacilia. Pionero de la arquitectura mexicana* (México: CNCA-INBA, 2001).
19. Fernando González Gortázar, *La integración plástica en el trabajo de Mario Pani*, in Louise Noelle (ed.), *Mario Pani* (México: UNAM, 2008).
20. Rafael López Rangel, *Enrique Yáñez en la cultura arquitectónica mexicana* (México: UAM-A-Limusa, 1989).
21. "Offering myself . . . which represented the most interesting job proposal in my life until now," Diego Rivera, *Integración Plástica en la Cámara de Distribución del Agua del Lerma*, *Espacios* 9 (February 1952).
22. Louise Noelle, *Integración plástica y funcionalismo. El edificio del Cárcamo del Sistema Hidráulico Lerma y Ricardo Rivas*, *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 78 (2001).
23. Louise Noelle, *Los murales de Carlos Mérida, relación de un desastre*, *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 58 (1987), 125-147.
24. Carlos Mérida, *Conceptos Plásticos*, in *El diseño, la composición y la Integración Plástica de Carlos Mérida*, exhibit catalogue (México: UNAM, 1963), 15.
25. Mathias Goeritz, *La Integración Plástica en el C.U. 'Presidente Juárez'*, in Mario Pani, *Los Multifamiliares de Pensiones* (México: Editorial Arquitectura, 1952), 104.
26. The text for "Manifiesto de Arquitectura Emocional" is taken from the volume by Olivia Zuñiga, *Mathias Goeritz* (México: Editorial Intercontinental, 1963), 30-32.
27. Alberto González Pozo, *Vida y obra de Enrique de la Mora* (México: INBA, 1981).
28. Louise Noelle, *Arquitectura, in Escultura, Alejandro Prieto Posada* (México: INBA, 1993).
29. Juan O'Gorman, *Un ensayo de arquitectura orgánica*, *Arquitectura/México* 112 (November-December 1976).
30. Alberto T. Arai, *Caminos para una arquitectura Mexicana*, *Espacios* 9, 11 and 12 (1952).
31. Jorge Alberto Manrique, *El proceso de las artes: 1910-1970*, in *Historia General de México* (México: El Colegio de México, 1976), 1359.
32. This is the title of the IX International Docomomo Conference, "Other Modernisms", which took place in September 2006 in Ankara, Turkey.

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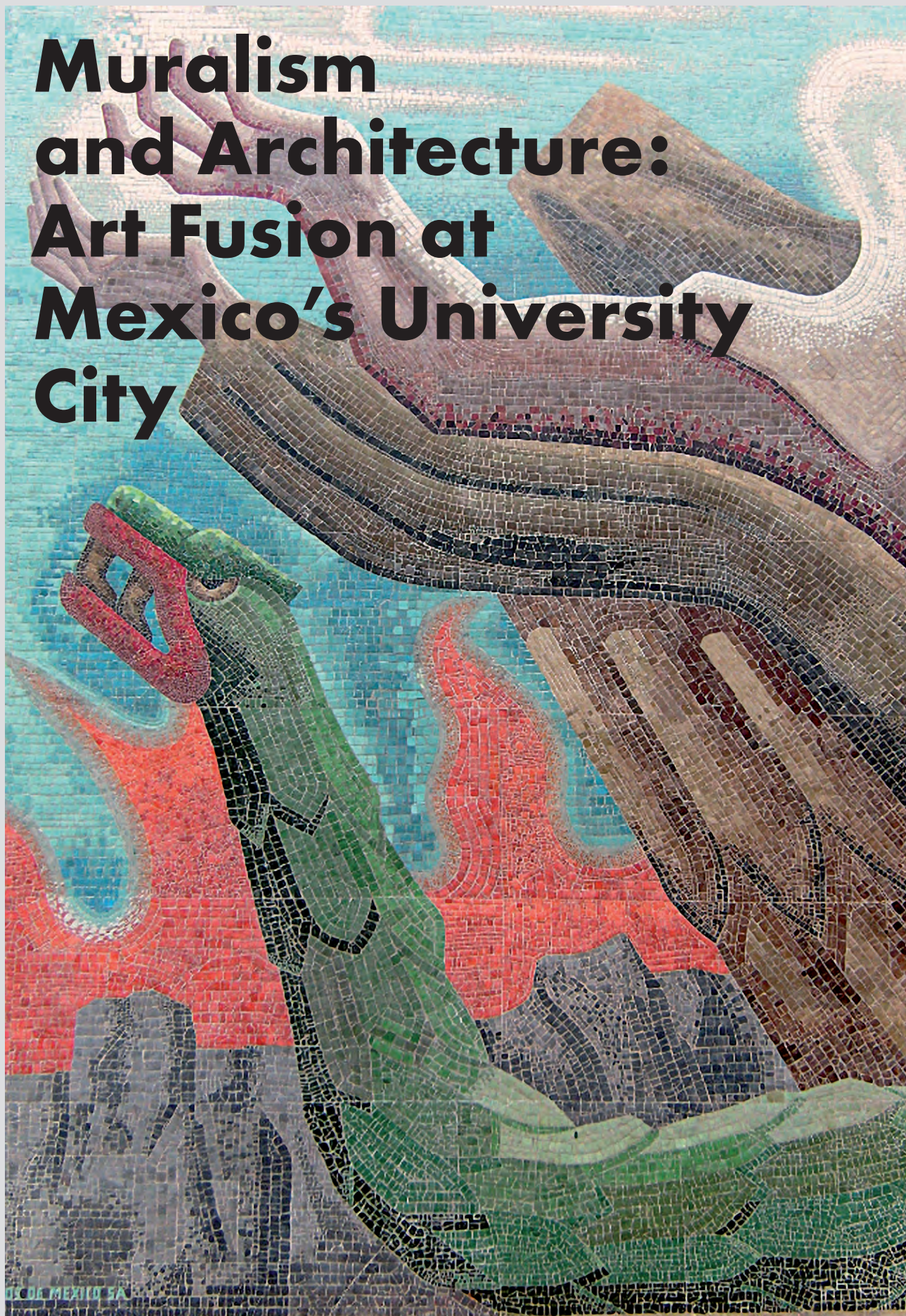
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Muralism and Architecture: Art Fusion at Mexico's University City

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University City is one of the best examples of twentieth-century Mexican architecture. It has been declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco for it managed to synthesize tradition and avant-garde to create a place where the articulating landscape design is able to assign emptiness a compositional value; while the harmonious layout of the buildings and their careful construction merge with murals that play an important role in forming their identity. These grand scale murals (1952–1956) were capable of communicating the values and spirit of the Mexican revolutionary movement, such as progress and social reform, while also teaching people about the country's history and its social struggle. The result is a very realistic, didactic, and even narrative art which appeals to the masses.

By Lourdes Cruz

EVER since the end of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), artists felt the need to create a genuine and purely Mexican aesthetic expression, which would be capable of communicating the values and spirit of the revolutionary movement such as progress and social reform, while also teaching people about the country's history and its social struggle. The result was a very realistic, didactic, and even narrative art which appealed to the masses. Examples of these grand scale mural paintings exist among the walls of both the old university buildings—found in downtown Mexico City—, and University City.

This first stage of Mexican Muralism left us ten murals by five different artists on the main buildings of the University City's campus. Their grand scale, themes, and innovative use of techniques and materials to resist environmental hazards make them a very unique example during the twentieth-century Mexico.

University City at the Pedregal de San Ángel

Located on the southern part of Mexico City, University City is the biggest university campus of the whole country and the most important element among the UNAM's vast heritage, for it is one of the best examples of twentieth-century Mexican architecture. On July 7, 2007, the campus was declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco, because it represents tangible and intangible values that make it exceptional, for it managed to synthesize tradition and avant-garde to create a place where the harmonious layout of the buildings and their careful construction, merge with murals that play an important role in forming their identity; and where the landscape plays an articulating role between the various volumes that conform the campus—assigning to the emptiness a compositional value. Also, the site was chosen because it is a public, secular, and free university, and because it is the country's cultural paradigm.

The University City project was part of a competition

won by the Escuela Nacional de Arquitectura (National School of Architecture). Architects Mario Pani and Enrique del Moral were in charge of producing the final site plan and of coordinating each particular project, appointing the architects and technicians who would take part in each one of them. Architect Carlos Lazo's presence as the project's principal manager was also decisive in the organization of the construction process, which gathered more than 150 architects and engineers, nearly a hundred contractors, hundreds of technicians and almost ten thousand workers; along with some of the best visual artists at that time.

At the end of the 1940s, the more than seven million square meters site—covered by volcanic rock from the eruption of the Xitle volcano—was located on the outskirts of Mexico City. Yet little by little the city expanded in that direction, due to the fact that Insurgentes Avenue—one of the city's most important avenues—had just been extended to reach the Mexico–Cuernavaca highway. At the same time, the neighboring Jardines del Pedregal was becoming a huge financial success. The project's plan is dominated by two main themes: the irregular spaces left over by the absence of rock and the fact that the plot is divided by the Insurgentes Avenue. The layout is determined by a peripheral ring of two-way traffic—inspired by Herman Herrey's system—which connects with closed circuits that define the different campus zones. Pedestrian circulation is placed underneath these circuits, therefore avoiding interference with the vehicles above. The main axes that govern the site are the north-south and the east-west axes so that all the buildings respond to this grid in one way or another.

All of the Faculties were done on the first stage and centered around the idea of the *campus*, a great green open-air space without any lava residues, that has a significant physical and academic value, for it has served as a meeting point for both students and teachers throughout the years. One of the campus' most striking character-

istics is the generosity of its spaces, for even though the university was planned to hold up to 25,000 students—a number which has been totally surpassed—its open-air spaces, plazas, patios, and enormous staircases, among other elements, render it a monumental character which evokes Mesoamerican architecture. It is also worth mentioning that the spaces in between the buildings allow for porches and covered spots that protect pedestrians from the environment, and that serve as transitions between interior and exterior spaces.¹

International style's paradigms such as the use of the straight line, cubic shapes, asymmetry, modulation, and standardization are present in this project. Also part of this modern discourse is the simplicity and purity of the buildings' façades. Still, the fusion of visual arts with architecture on a grand scale, the tectonics of the buildings, the character of exterior spaces such as the patio, and other isolated examples such as the Olympic Stadium by Augusto Pérez Palacios, Raúl Salinas Moro and Jorge Bravo Jiménez, or the frontón courts² by Alberto T. Arai, suggest a deliberate impulse to try and find some kind of national identity.

Buildings such as the Central Library by Juan O'Gorman, Gustavo Saavedra and Juan Martínez de Velasco; the Rectoría Tower by Mario Pani, Enrique del Moral and Salvador Ortega; and the Faculty of Science building by Raúl Cacho, Eugenio Peschard and Félix Sánchez are also worth mentioning, not only for their symbolic relevance, but also because of their value as architectural pieces.

O'Gorman at the Central Library

This building is divided into two very clear sections: the ground floor where the reading rooms are, and the ten-story volume which holds the library's collection and several other offices. This nearly blind tower is covered by one of the country's biggest murals, Juan O'Gorman's "*Representación histórica de la cultura*" ("Historic representation of culture"), where the artist uses the nearly 4,000 square meters of glass and naturally colored stones set into precast concrete slabs to represent Mexican culture.³ O'Gorman chose these stones—which were picked up from various parts of the country—so that they could withstand the hardships of the environment. On the other hand, he used volcanic rock for the base of the building, and embellished it with high relieves, clearly of Mesoamerican inspiration.

Each of the tower's four walls is heavily laden with iconography representing some part of Mexican history: the north façade has indigenous motifs such as Tezcatlipoca, Chalchuihtlicue, Quetzalcóatl, Tláloc, and the founding myth of Tenochtitlán, the former Aztec capital; the south-

ern façade deals with the western world—part of Mexican culture after the conquest—and includes Ptolemy's geocentric and Copernicus's heliocentric models of the universe. The west and east façades represent contemporary Mexico, with themes such as the Mexican Revolution and the university itself.

Siqueiros at the Rectoría Tower

Headquarters of the UNAM's governing body, the Rectoría Tower is the highest ranked building among the campus. It is made up of a base and a tower, and holds three Siqueiros's murals. Out of the three, the most important is *El pueblo a la universidad, la universidad al pueblo* (The people to the university, the university to the people) and can be found on the southern façade. It shows a group of students holding out their arms and carrying objects that represent their professional activity, offering their knowledge to the country. The mural is a high relief, with a steel structure coated by cement and covered by glass mosaics. Its integral polychromic nature as well as its dynamic composition—which relates to the movement of the spectator walking through the open-air spaces of the campus or traveling by car along *Insurgentes Avenue*—makes this mural a great piece of art.

On the north façade, "*Las fechas en la historia o el derecho a la cultura*" ("Dates through history or the right to culture"), made of concrete and vinylite, represents the struggle of the Mexican people to attain a national culture, shown by an extended arm crowned by two intertwining hands that are trying to grab a book which shows some of the country's most important dates: 1521, the Conquest; 1810, Independence; 1857, Liberal Constitution; 1910, Mexican Revolution; while the last remains question-marked, as if waiting for the next big event in Mexican History. The third mural is found wrapped around an extruded volume on the eastern façade. Also made up of concrete and vinylite, the unfinished "*Nuevo símbolo universitario*" ("New university symbol") is a complex composition, for it shows a diagonal-line based abstraction of the South-American condor and the Mexican eagle, both part of the university's emblem.

Figure 1. **Juan O'Gorman**, *Historic representation of culture*, Central Library.

Photo by by Lourdes Díaz

Figure 2. **José Chávez Morado**, *The conquest of energy*, former Faculty of Science.

Photo by by Lourdes Cruz.



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Figure 3. **Mario Pani** and **Enrique del Moral**, *Rectoría Tower*.
Photo by Lourdes Díaz.

Figure 4. **David Alfaro Siqueiros**, *New university's symbol*, *Rectoría Tower*.

Figure 5. **David Alfaro Siqueiros**, *The people to the university, the university to the people*, *Rectoría Tower*.

Photos by Lourdes Cruz.



Rivera at the Olympic Stadium

Diego Rivera's unfinished *"La universidad, la familia y el deporte en México"* ("The University, the family, and sport in Mexico") is a natural stone high relief which decorates the stadium's eastern façade. The mural shows the UNAM's emblem — an eagle and a condor, both with their wings outstretched, standing over a nopal — which shelters three anthropomorphic figures: a man and a woman joining hands over their half-caste son, to whom they are giving a white dove. Two gigantic athletes who are lighting the Olympic fire surround this image. The original project was conceived to cover up all of the stadium's peripheral slopes, showing the history of Mexican sport from pre-Hispanic to contemporary times. However, lack of funds and Rivera's own health became obstacles for its completion.

Chávez at the Science Faculty Building⁴

This Faculty is formed by many buildings: a free-standing tower, an auditorium, and a horizontal, three-story building that holds the classrooms. Its characteristic presence in the campus is not only due to its volumetric appeal, but also because it holds three José Chávez Morado murals. *"La conquista de la energía"* ("The conquest of energy") can be found crowning the northern façade of the Alfonso Caso auditorium, facing the main plaza. This three part glass mosaic mural symbolizes man's struggle to find the 'vital source', from the discovery of fire until the development of atomic fission. The leftmost part shows Death covering the Elements with its veil, while a lit up torch which is blown by the wind frames the central human figures. These men, with their arms outstretched in various directions, are pointing at a figure which rises up from the ground and wraps up the composition.

"La ciencia y el trabajo" ("Science and labor"), which used the same vinylite technique as Siqueiros's murals, can also be found on this auditorium on one of the sides of the ground floor though. Through a horizontal promenade, the artist depicts scenes of the various social groups that took part in the building process of the University City and that made an impact on him, from the peasants and labor workers to the architects, university officials, and the outstanding scientists of that time.

Figure 6. **Francisco Eppens**, *Life, death, miscegenation, and the four elements*, Faculty of Medicine.

Photograph by Lourdes Cruz.

Figure 7. **Diego Rivera**, *The University, the family, and sport in Mexico*, Olympic Stadium.

Photograph from Mexican Architects' Archive, Faculty of Architecture, UNAM.



The glass mosaic mural *"El retorno de Quetzalcóatl"* ("Quetzalcóatl's return") can be found within the compound's main patio. This pre-Hispanic god is shown as a serpent-shaped boat that carries various characters which represent past cultures: an Egyptian, a Franciscan monk, a man with an Ehécatl-shaped mask,⁵ along with Babylonian, Greek and Islamic figures. Its colors and location—overlooking a water-mirror that underlines the idea of the serpentine boat—make it a very eye-catching piece. Rodrigo Arena Betancourt's bronze statue, called *"Prometeo Encadenado"* ("Bound Prometheus"), could also be found on the grounds of the Faculty, standing in the middle of a fountain. Its great realism and meaning—man's thirst for knowledge—made it a symbol for the UNAM.⁶

Eppens at the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry

Francisco Eppens, who belonged to the second generation of Mexican muralists, did a couple of glass mosaic murals, one in the Faculty of Medicine and another in the Faculty of Dentistry. These murals offer a rich insight into symbols and concepts related to ontological and cultural issues of the human being. *"La superación del hombre por medio de la cultura"* ("Man's self-improvement through culture") is the representation of the struggle of mankind, which on the one hand tries to rise up to infinity while, on the other, insists on belonging to its own place. Pictorially, the mural consists of a great diagonal axis that rips through the composition, where a winged man's head is wrapped in the gods' flames, while he finds himself tied by roots to the ground. This piece is located on the exterior wall of the José J. Rojo auditorium, in the Faculty of Dentistry.

Atop one of the buildings' western façade, the massive scale, colors, and location of the Faculty of Medicine's *"La vida, la muerte, el mestizaje y los cuatro elementos"* ("Life, death, miscegenation, and the four elements"), turn this mural into one of the most important focal points of



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the whole *campus*. Full of pre-Hispanic references, like Coatlicue's breasts and hands,⁷ it also appeals to the vital elements: water, wind, earth, and fire. Yet the center is dominated by a triple face that represents miscegenation: the Spanish father, the indigenous mother, and, in the middle, the face of the modern Mexican. Framing the whole image is a serpent biting its own tail, eliciting eternal life.

A tradition that is still up and running

Since its construction the fusion of visual arts with architecture has been the norm in University City, where more than forty new murals – both interior and exterior – have joined the work of pioneers and are spread all throughout the *campus*. Yet the techniques with which they were made, the themes they represent, and the quality of their making, have not been able to achieve the degree of significance of the former murals. University City's sculpture has flourished the most in all its expressions, perhaps with

better results. Busts of famous people decorate gardens, *auditoriums*, and classrooms, while abstract shapes seem to spring up from the ground to become part of the environment in plazas, streets and libraries. However, the most important sculptures can be found at the University Cultural Center (1979). This arts center is comprised by theatres, libraries, *auditoriums*, and a series of grand scale sculptures that, contrasting with the boulder-strewn volcanic landscape, form a wonderful promenade. Federico Silva's "*Las serpientes del Pedregal*" ("Pedregal's serpents") and the collective piece "*Espacio escultórico*" ("Sculptural space")⁸ add up to the afore mentioned works, to become one of the main attractions not only inside the *campus*, but of the entire south of Mexico City. We can assume that this rich fusion will continue to flourish inside UNAM, for it is one of the strongest signs of its personal identity, and has become one of the most prolific reflections of the country's cultural scene.

Notes

1. Unesco's declaration of World Heritage Site only includes the original project, inaugurated on November 20, 1952 and bordered on the west side by the Olympic Stadium, on the south by the frontón courts and the sporting facilities, on the east by the Faculty of Medicine, and on the north by the Faculties of Humanities. It is made up of a total of 52 buildings scattered around 176 hectares which add up to 25 per cent of the total 370 which make up the University City. For further reading go to www.unam.mx/patrimonio/index.html
2. Frontón is a sport played with a ball and rackets in a three-walled range. Its origins are Basque, and it is played in both Spain and Latin America, as well as in some parts of Southern France.
3. O'Gorman had already developed this technique for Diego Rivera's Anahuacalli studio, built in 1941.
4. Nowadays, this building holds many administrative offices and various other classrooms, as the Faculty of Science moved to a new location at the end of the 1970s.

5. Ehécatl was the Aztec god of the wind.
6. The statue was moved along with the Faculty of Science to their new site, and has since been replaced by Federico Silva's *El Pájaro móvil* (The mobile bird).
7. Coatlicue, 'the Mother of Gods', was the Aztec goddess of fertility; therefore its image represents life.
8. Helen Escobedo, Manuel Felguérez, Mathias Goeritz, Hersua, Sebastián, and Federico Silva.

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Figure 8. **José Chávez Morado**, *Quetzalcóatl's return*, former Faculty of Science. Detail.

Figure 9. **Francisco Eppens**, *Man's self-improvement through culture*, Faculty of Dentistry. Photographs by Lourdes Cruz.

Mexican Art in Lund's Museum of Sketches, Sweden



The Mexican collection at Lund's Museum of Sketches is an unusual and valuable collection both from a Mexican and from an international perspective: the collection was built by Gunnar Bråhammar in the late 1960s, and counts works by David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco and Juan O'Gorman but also Francisco Eppens, Rufino Tamayo, González Camarena, Raul Angiano, Leopoldo Méndez and Desiderio Xochitiotzin. The article discusses especially "the New Deal" by Rivera, "the Image of Mexico" at the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City by Morado Chavez, and "El Pájaro Amarillo" by Goertiz, and the great stone mosaic at the Central Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico by O'Gorman.

By Linda Fagerström and Elisabet Haglund

DURING the 1960s, when art often was used in political struggles and had many social overtones, Gunnar Bråhammar – head of the Archives for Decorative Art (today Museum of Sketches) in Lund – decided to buy sketches and models of Mexican public art. According to his diary, Bråhammar chose Mexico since "this country represents one of the monumental peaks in the art of the twentieth century" and holds an "art, so full of social pathos, which was enormously influential and had great impact far beyond the borders of Mexico."¹ During three trips he made in 1966, 1967 and 1974 Bråhammar, in collaboration with Swedish artist Rosa Lie Johansson – who lived in Mexico –, collected works by the most famous artists involved in Mexican modern mural painting.

The raison d'être and mission of the museum – created in 1934 – were the collection of sketches and models of public works of art. Its founder, professor in Art History at Lund University Ragnar Josephson, considered the moment of creation as fundamental in what he called "the birth of a work of art."² In a time when few artists, galleries and collectors considered sketches a valuable material, when many overlooked the unique possibilities – when it comes to understanding artistic creation – that sketches can offer, Josephson and the museum's personnel realized the importance of such material and decided to visit artists in their studios in order to collect models and sketches: first in Sweden and Scandinavia; then in Paris in the beginning of the 1960s where they collected significant works by Matisse, Dufy, Ozenfant and Sonia and Robert Delaunay.

When Bråhammar showed up in Mexico in 1966, he had the opportunity to bring back to Sweden the work of many famous artists and representative examples from Mexican public art. The Mexican collection gathers works by David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco – three artists often called "the great ones" – but also by Francisco Eppens, Rufino Tamayo, González Camarena, Raúl Angiano, Leopoldo Méndez

and Desiderio Xochitiotzin. In 1966 Bråhammar had the opportunity to take photographs of Siqueiros' studio in Cuernavaca where the Mexican painter was finishing "The March of Humanity" for Polyforum (built in Mexico in the end of the 1960s) – of which the museum acquired some sketches. Bråhammar did not succeed in buying the material he wished to from Orozco's family, but one of his 1924 sketches for the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria is amongst the oldest ones in the collection.

The collection offers various perspectives on Mexican history after the independence in the early 1800s, and on the 1910 revolution. In 1922, when minister of education José Vasconcelos held his speech at the opening of the new building for the Secretariat of Public Education, he presented his plans for a historical and cultural project where the new revolutionary administration would focus on the national by searching and finding the essence in the original Hispanic-American culture. Vasconcelos trusted in art's revolutionary mission. In his speech he mentioned a painting by Diego Rivera which pictures women wearing typical dresses from Mexico's various provinces: this official explicit attention towards the traditions of the People later became part of Mexican public art when it gathered pre-Colombian aesthetics, historical images and modern expression.

The gigantic work Juan O'Gorman executed at the Central Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (1951–1952) is maybe one of the utmost achievements of the union between pre-Colombian esthetic ideals and modern expression. Sketches of the stone mosaics covering the whole building are also part of the museum's collections. O'Gorman provided the museum with almost all the sketches of "Scenes from the Liberation Struggle" (1961–1962), a big-scale wall painting made for the Historical Museum (*Museo Nacional de Historia*) in Chapultepec Castle.

Many public works of art were made between 1920 and 1960 in the spirit of Vasconcelos' policy. The artists had started painting political murals on their own in the



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Figure 1. **José Chavez Morado**, *Image of Mexico*, Central courtyard of the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964. Model in bronze for pillar in bronze, 42 cm, scale 1:25.

Figure 2. **José Chavez Morado**, *Image of Mexico*, Central courtyard of the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City, 1964. Models in paper for pillar in bronze, 107 cm, scale 1:10. Photos from Museum of Sketches, Sweden



very beginning of the 1920s. In the first years of the revolution, Mexican society underwent heavy changes with important attempts to redistribute land, improve workers and farmers' condition, and provide education for everyone. But, towards the end of the 1930s, the great social project came to stagnation.

Nobel Prize Winner, poet and writer Octavio Paz described how revolutionary artists came to adapt to political circumstances, and how the government, on the other hand, came to adjust to the artists.³ According to Paz, Rivera and Siqueiros can be considered revolutionary artists⁴ but their art was financed by a government which was not Marxist and furthermore had stopped being revolutionary. In that way, the government could give the impression of being progressive and populist; but Paz considered that only a mask. Anyhow, the artists in Mexi-

co had the possibility to work independently – which had been impossible in Russia. In this political context, Paz stressed Orozco's independence and rebel attitude, often more genuine than the others.

Diego Rivera: A Political Site. Place for Change

"The New Deal" by Diego Rivera is not a sketch but a work of art in itself. It is one of twenty-one fresco panels in the great work "Portrait of America" painted in 1933–1934 for the New Workers' School at 51 West 14th street – the headquarters of the Communist Party in New York.

"Portrait of America" tells, in a pedagogic and/or propaganda-like way, the global political situation in 1933 and the struggle between communism, fascism and capitalism. It depicts contemporary recognizable figures

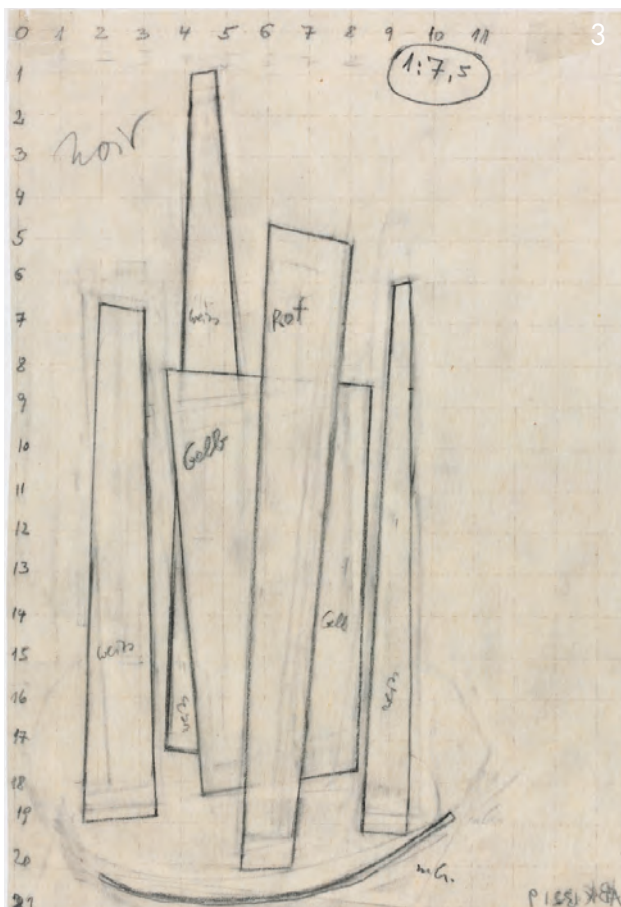


Figure 3. **Mathias Goeritz**, *The Satellite Towers*, Plaza de las Torres, Ciudad Satélite, Mexico City, 1957-1958. Sketch in graphite for sculpture in polychrome concrete, 21 x 15 cm.

Figure 4. **Mathias Goeritz**, *The Yellow Bird*, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, 1957. Sketch in graphite for sculpture in painted concrete, 24 x 32 cm.

Figure 5. **Mathias Goeritz**, *The Yellow Bird*, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, 1957. Collage in paper for sculpture in painted concrete, 37 x 52 cm.

Figure 6. **Mathias Goeritz**, *The Yellow Bird*, Jardines del Bosque, Guadalajara, 1957. Sculpture in painted concrete.

Figure 7. **Diego Rivera**, *The New Deal*, Mural painting in al fresco, panel n° 15 from the suite *Portrait of America*, 182 x 178 cm. Made for New Workers School in New York in 1933. Photos from Museum of Sketches, Sweden.

– Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Einstein –, historical characters – Lenin, Marx, Engels, Washington, Lincoln –, but also American communist leaders and workers from industrial companies. (Apart from a group of anonymous textile workers and Rosa Luxemburg, there are no or extremely few women in “Portrait of America”; both past and present are a men’s world in Rivera’s work.)

“The New Deal” panel bears the name of Roosevelt’s reform program in the early 1930s. Rivera represented the NRA (National Recovery Administration) as a blue eagle in the central panel: it is surrounded by a violent battle between coalmine workers and the steel industry agents. The dynamic composition is filled with movement: armed men and police are fighting everywhere. The sign says: “Workers unite! Or the blue eagle will wear a brown shirt. NRA paves the way for fascism!!”

In May 1933, little time before he started working at the New Workers’ School, Rivera had been forced away from his work on a mural named “Man at the Crossroads” for the Rockefeller Center in New York: he had refused to accede to Rockefeller’s demand to take away Lenin’s figure from the original composition. The artist got paid however, and was able to work at the New Workers’ School instead. With “Portrait of America” he wished to arouse unity among the Left in New York and the United States,



but it was – ironically perhaps – Rockefeller’s decision to destroy the unfinished “Man at the Crossroads” in February 1934 which brought together “leftist artists in a way that no other single event of the early 1930s did.”⁵

In 1942 a fire destroyed most of the panels of “Portrait of America”, except eight that were saved: “Modern Industry”, “World War”, “The New Freedom”, “The New Deal”, “Mussolini”, “Opponent of Fascism”, “Opponent of Nazism” and “Proletarian Unity”. Of those surviving panels, Bråhammar had the chance to buy “The New Deal” (today the most important artwork in the museum’s Mexican collection).

Mathias Goertiz:

A Bird of Architecture or Architecture as a Bird

In 1957 Mathias Goertiz (1915–1990) made the sculpture “El Pájaro Amarillo” (“The Yellow Bird”) in Guadalajara: its architectonic form associated with expressive color – reminding abstract monochromatic painting – makes it one of Mexico’s most important abstract public art work of the second half of the twentieth century.

The sculpture, after many years of decay, was restored in 2008. A series of sketches for “El Pájaro Amarillo” is in the collection, and shows Goertiz’s search, starting from the image of a flying bird until he finds a more abstract

form. This tendency is also present in “Las Torres Satélite” – the “Satellite Towers” (1957–1958) – where the artist, inspired by pre-Colombian tradition (especially a group of stone stelae at a cult place in Tula), reached a synthesis between architecture and sculpture. The towers, between 36 and 58 meters high, were designed in collaboration with Luis Barragán.⁶

José Chávez Morado: How to Support a Museum?

José Chávez Morado (1909–2002) created several monumental works in bronze from 1960 onwards. One of the best known, “Image of Mexico” (1964), stands in the atrium of the National Museum of Anthropology and

History (Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia) in Mexico City. A colossal bronze pillar supports the ceiling while water flows from its top down into a basin underneath. Chávez Morado covered the column’s surface with reliefs depicting two main themes: the consequences of Spanish colonization in Mexico, and the struggle for freedom and the social and agrarian revolution.

Some drawings for the reliefs, a small bronze model of the column, as well as sketches of Chávez Morado’s great stone mosaic “Life and Death” (made for CIBA Pharmacology Plant in 1954), are also in the museum’s collection.

Notes

- 1 Gunnar Bråhammar, “Ateljébesök i Mexico” in Jan Torsten Ahlstrand (ed.), *Visionärer och utmanare* (Lund: Skissernas Museum, 1995).
- 2 Ernst Josephson, *Konstverkets Födelse (Birth of a Work of Art)* (Lund: Sweden, 1940).
- 3 Octavio Paz, “Mural Painting” in *Essays on Mexican Art* (Mexico: Fondo de la Cultura Económica, 1987) (English translation 1993): 111–202.
- 4 Octavio Paz, “Mural Painting” in *Essays on Mexican Art*: 132.
- 5 Luis Martin Lozano & Juan Coronel Rivera, “Portrait of America” in Luis-Martin Lozano & Juan Coronel Rivera, *Diego Rivera. The Complete Murals* (Taschen, 2008): 376.
- 6 Sketches will be shown at the exhibition “Beyond Borders: Mexican Public Art” opening in the museum October 10, 2010.

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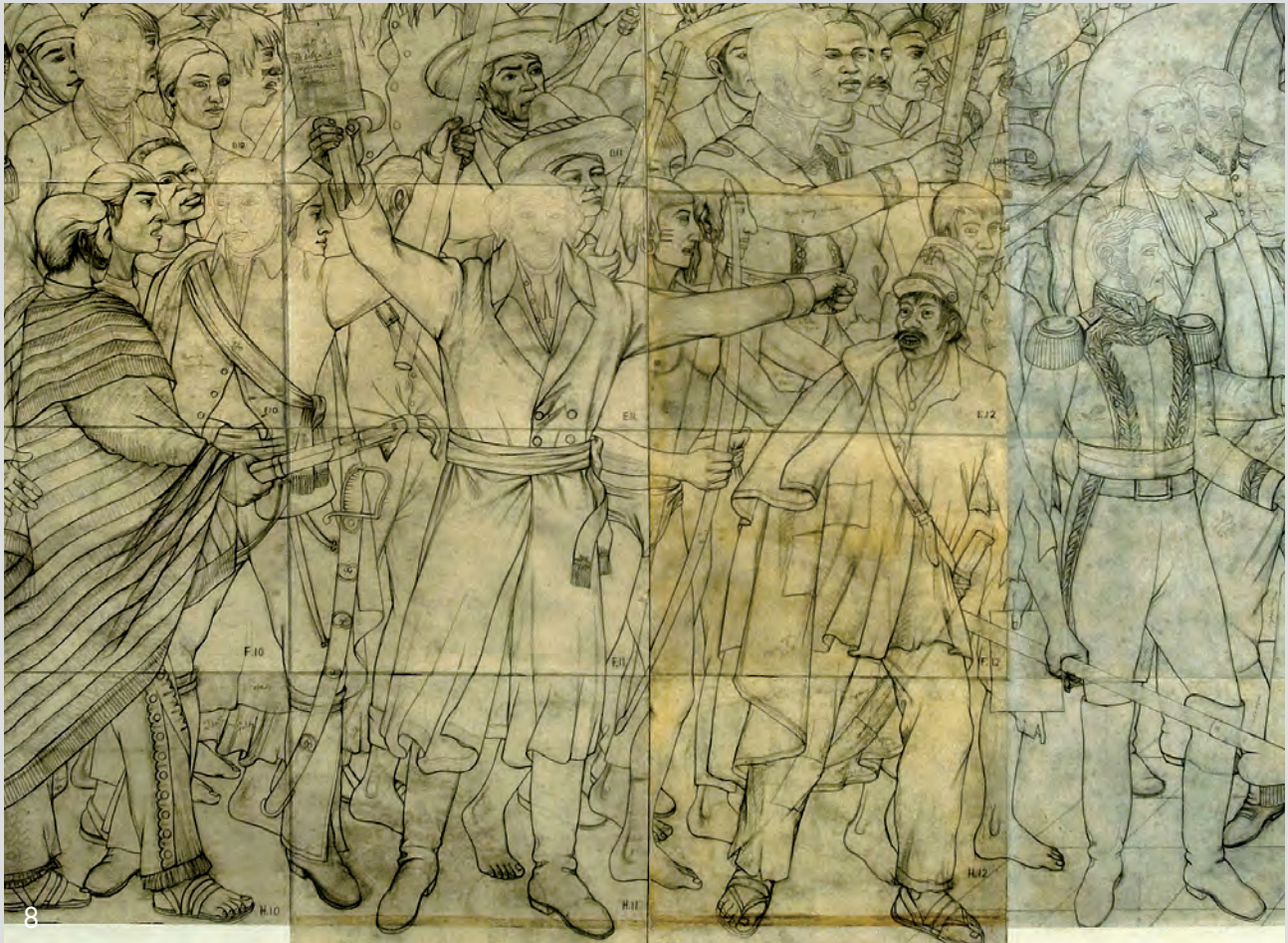
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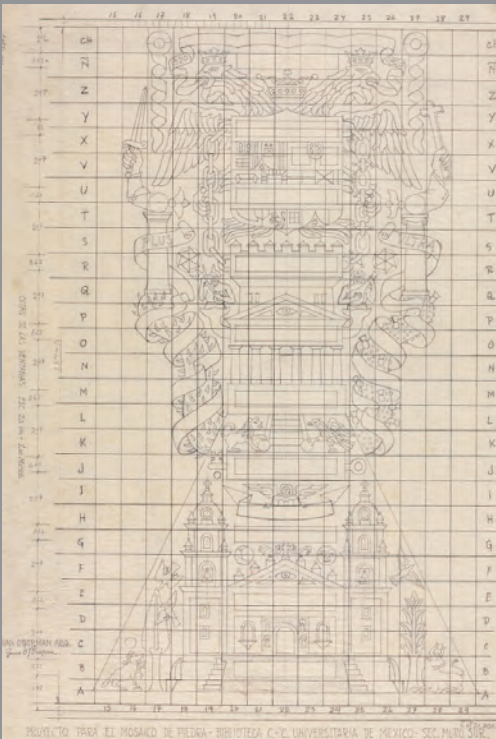
Figure 8. **Juan O’Gorman**, *The Independence*, National Museum of History, Mexico City, 1961–1962. Sketches in graphite for mural painting, scale 1:1.

Figure 9. **Juan O’Gorman**, *The Independence*, National Museum of History, Mexico City, 1961–1962. Mural painting, 450 x 1580 cm. Photos from Museum of Sketches, Sweden





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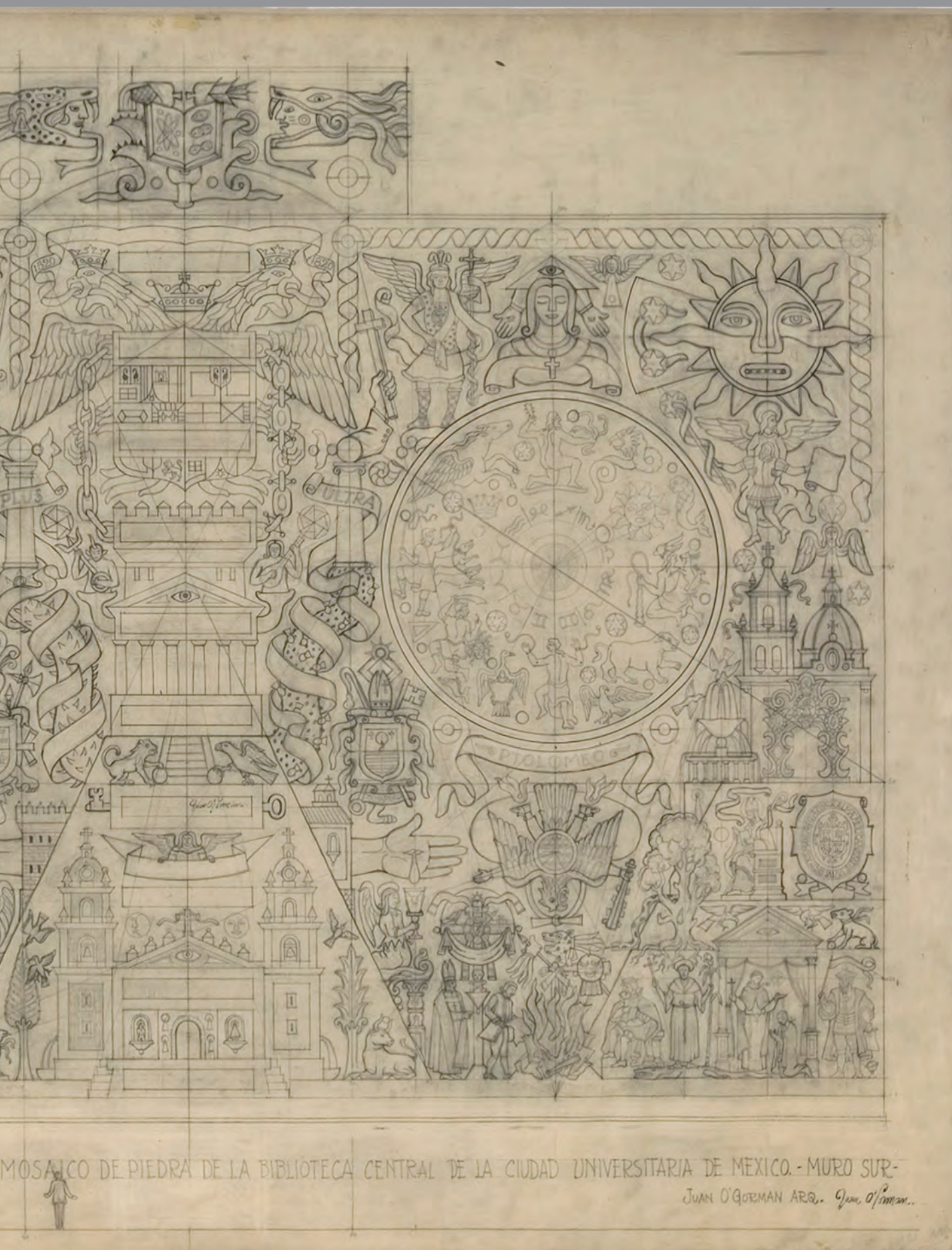
Figure 10. **Juan O'Gorman**, *Three Periods of Mexican Culture*, Mural mosaic at Library of National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City, 1951-1953.

Figure 11. **Juan O'Gorman**, *Three Periods of Mexican Culture*, Library of National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City, 1951-1953. Sketch in graphite for mural mosaic, 73 x 50 cm.

Figure 12. **Juan O'Gorman**, *Three Periods of Mexican Culture*, Library of National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City, 1951-1953. Sketch in graphite for mural mosaic, 94 x 120 cm. Photos from Museum of Sketches, Sweden.



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Alexander Calder's Flying Saucers



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One of Alexander Calder's largest artworks can be found in Venezuela, at the University of Caracas. It is the result of a unique collaboration between an architect, an acoustician and an artist. The university's great fan-shaped auditorium, designed by Carlos Villanueva in 1953, proved to be acoustically problematic and the engineer therefore proposed a solution with interior claddings. This was rejected, however, because it would radically change the shape of the hall. Finally, Alexander Calder was approached. He came up with an innovative installation consisting of 30 reflectors shaped as flying saucers and suspended from the ceiling.

By Jørgen Petersen

ONE of Alexander Calder's largest stables can be found at the University of Caracas.

Most people will no doubt assume that this gigantic spatial installation is merely a visual adornment. It has, however, an auditory function as well, providing the right conditions for sound perception of speech and music in this great hall, which seats 2,600 people. Its conception is an interesting example of a collaboration between an architect, an artist and an acoustician.

In 1950, the architect Carlos R. Villanueva (1900-1975) designed a proposal for the university's great auditorium, conceived as a fan-shaped space with a vaulted plastered ceiling suspended from the supporting roof structure. Villanueva asked the American acoustician Robert B. Newman to evaluate the project.

Newman had great hesitations about the acoustic qualities of the space; the vaulted ceiling would result in a very uneven sound distribution pattern with echo-like sound concentration in some places and "dead spots" in others.

Newman recommended that the project should be revised with interior cladding of walls and ceiling that would radically change the shape of the hall. Villanueva didn't like the idea of this, and Newman suggested that the problems should instead be solved with the use of flat and rectangular reflectors attached to the ceiling and walls in such a way that you could still discern the actual shape of the surfaces behind them.

But Carlos Villanueva wasn't enthusiastic about the rectangular reflectors either. He therefore asked Alexander Calder to join in collaboration about an artistic design

of the required acoustical elements. Calder accepted the challenge and created, through this unconventional collaboration, his largest stabile so far.

"The Flying Saucers", which he called it, comprises in all 30 individual elements. These are made of two layers of plywood mounted on a 10-20 cm frame structure which is attached to steel wires. Together, the reflective panels cover an area of approximately 600 m².

Although such a large multi-purpose space will rarely be high on the music-acoustical rankings, Aula Magna was in fact very well received in musical circles. After a concert tour with the New York Philharmonics, the conductor Leonard Bernstein declared that: "This hall is the best I have performed in during my tour in South America."

The reverberation time during concerts with an audience in the hall is said to be approximately 1.7 s at the frequency range of 500-1,000 Hz. For conferences, where speech perception is of paramount importance, the hall is "toned down" by attaching 25 mm fibre-glass mats to the backs of some of the reflective panels, thereby attaining a more appropriate reverberation time of 1.3 s.

Calder greatly admired Villanueva for his courage in believing in the flying saucers. He is quoted for saying: "What I did by suggesting them is nothing compared to his courage!" "None of my mobiles have had a more extraordinary and grandiose setting. This is one of the most important pieces in my oeuvre."

Aula Magna is a remarkable example of how collaboration between architect, acoustician and artist can result in a building which is of high artistic quality—both visually and auditorily.

< Interior view of the auditorium and the stage with Alexander Calder's "Flying Saucers", Photo by Paolo Casparini (Fundación Villanueva Collection).

The article is translated from Danish. It is an excerpt from the Journal Proces, November 1996, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture.

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The Dwellers: The Integration of Art and the Architecture in the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas

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"I am concerned about the problem of a new synthesis of the different means of expression. It is my aspiration to redirect architecture, painting, sculpture, to an intimate, inextricable, significant cohesion."¹

Carlos Raúl Villanueva

When Villanueva worked in the Integration of the Arts project for the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas, he moved from the idea of 'synthesis of the arts' (where arts "preserved their traditional features in order to qualify something whose existence was prior to them and of which architecture was the previous framework") to the idea of 'integration of the arts', which "created a new architectural-sculptural-pictorial organism which did not express hierarchy but the formal combination of the functional and the spatial as equal categories," he took a transcendental step to open his architecture to experimentation in the field of modern art.*

By Hannia Gómez

It was born and raised to the art of architecture within the realm of the Universidad Central de Venezuela in Caracas, the masterpiece of Venezuelan architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva, and a Unesco World Heritage Cultural Site since 2000. Its spaces – contained by the equilibrium of its masses, tamed and stimulated by its particular combination of light and shadow, color and structure, art and architecture – forged my aesthetical senses, spatial sensibilities and tastes.

An Urban Art

At the beginning of the 1950s, architecture was called to solve more risky and vigorous problems than other forms of art, principally, painting. Villanueva – who had a long relationship with the experience of the Synthesis of the Arts – aimed to experiment anew with various forms of integration (sculptures and murals free of any intentional relationship with the space in which they are located, works with a decorative function à l'ancienne, and proper integrations within the architectural context). The resulting Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas was so successful in doing so that the surrounding city of Caracas, after sixty years of coexistence with this experience, passed from observing it merely as a singular chapter in art history to absorb it as a daily component of its urban and architectural identity. The paradigmatic art/architecture collaboration was highly educational. It soon crossed the doors of the Ciudad Universitaria of the 1950s to be installed in the real city it from the 1960s, wherever conditions permitted it.² The rest of Venezuelan cities also began to be influenced by the experience of the Universidad Central, and the aim for integrating art and architecture became part of greater urban territories.³

The heart of Caracas beats inside the Aula Magna, the campus' main auditorium. The Aula Magna performs as the core for both cities: the university city and the capital city. Here, Villanueva and Alexander Calder achieved together one of the most important examples in the world of a total work of art. Since its construction, the auditorium's design was naturally felt by the people, together with

Calder's floating "Clouds", as a single, inseparable entity; the most successful work of integration of the whole university project.

Thus, the Aula Magna is a paramount, the strongest key to understand the different scales and nuances of the collection of interactions between Villanueva's strong architectural framework and the numerous artists' interventions that spread and multiply along the campus. Departing from there, it is easier to understand primarily, how the more Villanueva's architecture becomes abstract, the more it approaches modern art; secondly, how art, in one other hand, has many manners of being integrated in the spaces within the academic city; and third, how the different integrations in the other hand offer infinite ways of being sensed, as they were meant to be perceived in the fourth dimension of time. Here is where the issue of the *promenade* takes an important role: as solely by walking over and over again this urban art land can we discover and thoroughly apprehend the quality of the kaleidoscopic conversation of the artistic objects within the architectural space.

An inhabited city

The Ciudad Universitaria – as Paulina Villanueva wrote – "might be considered as a Museum City in which art becomes inseparable from architecture and becomes an inadvertent companion of daily life; but beyond this, it is one of the most exceptional and successful examples of modern urbanism." Moreover, the rich and varying perspectives within this changing modern townscape also advocate for contemplating the university's works of art as the fantastic 'dwellers' of Villanueva's architecture.

As the architect did not originally make the art to go with his architecture, the integration of art and architecture project, instead, "takes shape gradually as the construction of the different buildings in the university campus went ahead, maturing along with Villanueva's architecture."⁴ So Villanueva called progressively for the remarkable team of national and international artists that were to collaborate with him in the composition of the different



architectural spaces. These works come from multiple traditions and artistic universes: the sculptures by Laurens, Arp, Pevsner and Lobo; the murals by Léger, Vasarely, Mateo Manaure, Pascual Navarro, Oswaldo Vigas and Armando Barrios; the “Clouds” by Calder and his other mobiles and sculptures; the stained glass window by Léger, the high-relief mural by Wilfredo Lam, the works by Arp and by Sophie Tauber, the art déco ceramic murals and the sculptures made in Cumarebo stone by Francisco Narváez; the facade polychromies by Mateo Manaure; the work by Jesús Soto and the murals and stained glasses by Alejandro Otero, Victor Valera, Alirio Oramas, Miguel Arroyo and Braulio Salazar. The works of arts marked singularly with their idiosyncratic presences Villanueva’s modern scenario.

Some of these works of art would perform in the modern campus traditionally, as sculptures and friezes or wall ornaments did in the traditional city; others would be a part of a classical synthesis with the architecture and are thus inscribed within the architectural frame. The rest, as in Aula Magna’s ceiling, participate in the creation of a genuine and total work of art. But there are also interesting moments when Villanueva’s own designs start mingling and being influenced by the ideas, the shapes or the aesthetics present in some of the art installed in the campus (or elsewhere in his memory). This might happen in a whole building or in an episode of a building. Then his architecture would shift into a more sculpturally or graphically or compositionally-influenced expression... that of an architecture haunted by art.

The resulting university campus can therefore be perceived as a vast architectural canvas, a grey – *béton brut* grey – background on which sparkle the dazzling vegetation and the uniqueness of the multiple art and ar-

chitecture integration cases, which constantly lighten up like fireworks. The austere but bold poetics of Villanueva’s personal architectural language, with its magnificent structural forms in concrete – those winged marquees, sculptural ramps and columns, those monumental planes and roofs, those concrete embroideries, those airy staircases, and – with its almost mute and rational and functional surfaces—the modern grey ceramic tiles of the floor, the classical grey stone pavements, the Venetian glass mosaic-covered walls in bright colors, the rhythmic glass facades, act as a perfect backdrop for art, which repeatedly shows up either to counteract with the architecture... or to become architecture itself.

The fertile ‘contamination’ or cross-pollination spreads throughout the whole university place. This is why the experience of visiting the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas is one for discovering, for guessing and for being surprised with the many unexpected presences of all kinds that ‘dwell’ in the modern campus. The presence of art is thus strong and magical, to say the less. The academic environment is magnetized by its epiphany. The artistic *œuvres* turn into powerful anchors for the architectural space, and, like all magical presences, they easily root and linger in our memory.

Promenade

Since I was a student I have experienced the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas like a place perennially filled with people of all ages. People who go there to work and study every day, constantly moving from faculty to faculty, from one place to the other. People that walk, sit around on the floors, on the ramps, under the covered passages and in the open staircases—students’ long-time favorite collective lounges –, attend cultural and academic events or relax on the green grass lawns. The campus has been a lively place since the 1950s, and a most than successful gathering place.

But the feeling for me – and for many – is that it remains always ideally empty, shimmering stunningly under the blue sky, as in the photographs of its opening day. The reason is that beyond the everyday fuzz, Villanueva’s monumental effort of the integration of the arts in his architectural masterpiece is suspended in the air like a charm. The campus is witch crafted. Beyond being populated by its users, it is fiercely inhabited by its works of art, which maintain a dynamic dialogue with the architecture, transmitting to everyone the unequivocal sense of being in an outstanding place, like no other one on earth. A place under the spell of art.

Despite the decay and all the domestic activity, to traverse the campus is to plunge into a long dream, to enter in a sublime voyage gently assaulted by memorable ap-

Figure 1. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva**, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1944–1970.

Aerial view. Photographer unknown, February 1954.
Archives of Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Daily News.

Figure 2. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva**, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1944–1970.

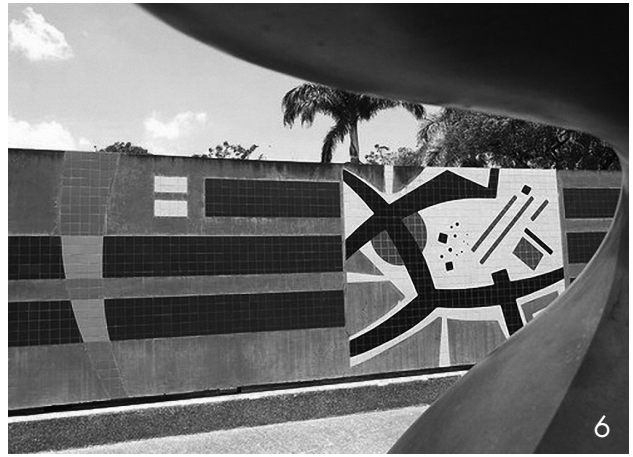
Aerial view. Photographer unknown, c. 1950.
Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

Figure 3. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva**, Plaza del Rectorado, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1952–1953.

Photographer unknown, c. 1950.
Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

Fig. 6. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva** architect, **Baltasar Lobo** sculptor, **Mateo Manaure** artist, *Biblioteca Central and Campus*, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1952–1953.

Photographer unknown, 1950s.



pearances. Departing from the solemn Plaza del Rectorado, the colorful murals by Armando Barrios and Oswaldo Vigas enlighten and encompass the side volumes of the plaza, like writings on the walls. Close by, on a ground floor wall, an abstract André Bloc's mural unexpectedly awaits the visitor with its "lively tones and dynamic composition."⁵

The main doorway to the Universidad Central de Venezuela's unparalleled Plaza Cubierta, practiced on the base of the Rectorado Building under an expressionist concrete marquee, marks the beginning of a journey of listening to the many dialogues posed by Villanueva and the artists. To begin with, right after the entrance, in the first floor of this building a "big mural composition by painter Héctor Poleo, a symbolic, figurative fresco" depicting "the academic character of the university," is placed at the rear of the ample rector's office as a traditional applied art.⁶ In this interior space, the fresco, in spite of its air of classicism, is a reminder of the great artistic modern operation conveyed outside in the rest of the university.

Right below, in the Plaza Cubierta, three curved double-faced murals by Fernand Léger and by Victor Vasarely (the "Bimural", the see-through "Homage to Malevitch", and one by Pascual Navarro), and one single-side mural by Mateo Manaure, all done with colored glass mosaics, are sunken in light, catching the eye within the vast shaded 'foyer' displayed between the Aula Magna, the Paraninfo and the Sala de Conciertos, and adding movement to the covered plaza. These murals counteract through space with two remarkable pieces of sculpture: Henri Laurens's "Amphion" and Jean Arp's "Pastor de Nubes". Both sculptures, which in turn are contoured by the edge of the horizontal concrete roof, lyrically stand in the Plaza

Cubierta as its dynamic protagonists, acting as pivots for the whole spatial precinct.

The wide surfaces of the brilliant mosaic walls and the defined silhouettes of the two bronze abstract sculptures add vigor and electrify the plaza's chiaroscuro. But the Plaza Cubierta, with all its power, is but a prelude to the monumental art-architecture-sculpture organism that waits in the Aula Magna. In collaboration with sculptor Alexander Calder and acoustics engineers Boly Beranek and Newman, Villanueva modulated the space, artistically and acoustically, transforming "the usual rectilinear perspective into a spherical form very much in line with the aquatic landscape metaphor he and Calder had in mind."⁷ The integration of art and architecture reaches here its greatest peak. The combination of the warm-colored acoustic clouds with the punctual lightning of the ceiling "transforms the auditorium into a universe of strange planets that nuances the whole ambiance with radiant sunrises."⁸ Everything in it, the architectural form, the structural solution and the functionality, makes for the creation of a new conception of space. Therefore, a new synthesis of the arts is proclaimed here, where the "shared view is much bigger than architecture or sculpture alone."⁹ Needless is to add how unforgettable is the plastic experience derived from attending in this most beautiful of places a symphonic concert, a piano solo or graduation day.

But the artistic entourage of the paradigmatic Aula Magna goes further on. More to the south, having passed by the many doors of the auditorium, among cylindrical columns, additional layers of murals make their appearance. One, done by Mateo Manaure, covers the external rear facade of the Paraninfo and thus becomes the centerpiece of the great lawn outside the Plaza Cubierta. Another mural by Venezuelan artist Carlos González-Bogen is decoratively displayed with its abstract-geometric composition between the second and the third doors of the auditorium. Plus, after another one-sided abstract composition by Pascual Navarro, located under an opening of the continuous flat concrete roof, is set the 'metallic element' of Vasarely, a kinetic work in aluminum called "Positive-Negative", which with its geometric vibration plays with the long eastern screen-facade that Villanueva made out of concrete hollow bricks. To the west, in a small courtyard, an Antoine Pevsner bronze sculpture on a cylindrical pedestal called "30 Degrees Dynamism" accompanies a ceramic work by Vasarely called "Sophia", placed on the facade of a cooling concrete tower.

As perforations and transparencies and optical operations with light are celebrated along the way to the Biblioteca Central, having left behind yet another colorful mosaic mural by Mateo Manaure, there is a still a grand

Fig. 5. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva** architect, **Alejandro Otero** artist, Faculty of Architecture building, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1954-1957. Photographer unknown, 1950s. Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

Fig. 6. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva**, **Jean Arp** sculptor, **Mateo Manaure** artist, Plaza Cubierta, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1952-1953. Photographer unknown, 1950s. Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

Fig. 7. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva** architect, **Fernand Léger** artist, **Henri Laurens** sculptor, Plaza Cubierta, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1952-1953. Photographer unknown, 1950s. Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

Fig. 8. **Carlos Raúl Villanueva** architect, **Jean Arp** sculptor. Plaza Cubierta, *Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas*, 1952-1953. Photographer unknown, 1950s. Archives of Fundación de la Memoria Urbana, Caracas.

luminal discovery to be experienced in the library. The library's perennial silence helps to magnify the quality of the encounter with Fernand Léger's two-stories-high stained glass. This magnificent abstract work in blue, red, yellow, green, white and black is duplicated by its reflection on the granite floor, and is the witness and companion in the same room to a Villanueva's free-standing stair, this time performing itself as another sculpture of the campus collection. Having trespassed and unveiled this quiet—yet magna—introduction, lecture and research are easier subjects.

What is known as the central administrative-cultural complex ends at the footsteps of the tower of the Biblioteca Central. From here on, "the different towers and single blocks of each school or faculty, together with the recurrent elements that are repeated with variations, like the free-plan ground floors, the decomposition in bodies and parts, the lattice brickwork enclosures, the brise-soleil and eaves, the transparencies in staircases and ramps" treasure their own chapters of art and architecture integrations.¹⁰

The list of works – and therefore, of appearances – is very large. There is no Football Stadium without

Narváez's "El Atleta"; the sculpture "Maternity" by Baltazar Lobo rules over the main lawn of the campus and over its composition of architectural masses; without the mural by Alejandro Otero, the Library of the Faculty of Humanities would be dull; the stadium's light pots are echoed in the risen arms of the Monument to María Lionza; Jean Arp's mural in the School of Art is a part of its concrete pergola-covered garden.

I can attest what it meant to be received every day by Alejandro Otero's blue murals placed on the east and west facades of the classrooms tower in the Architecture School, or attend classes in design workshops where it was enough to direct our gaze to the walls to find the compositions of the best artists in the country that filled that school with their works, thanks to Carlos Raúl Villanueva. I can also tell what it is like to study under Calder's white "Ráfaga de nieve" mobile that hangs over the reading room of the Architecture Library, and how his other colorful mobile sculpture—in continuous movement all over the school's ground floor over the years—is almost an old friend who can join hands every time you pass by him in the Exhibition Hall of the Faculty. This experience is repeated every day.

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3. Hannia Gómez, "Soto, ciudad y arquitectura," in *Soto a gran escala* (Caracas: Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, MACCSI, 2003).
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5. Antonio Granados Valdés, "Guía de Obras de Arte de la Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas," in *Punto 59, La Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas* (Caracas: Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1977): 80–108.
6. Granados Valdés, "Guía de Obras de Arte de la Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas," in *Punto 59*: 88.
7. Carlos Brillembourg, "Architecture and Sculpture: Villanueva and Calder's Aula Magna," in *Latin American Architecture 1929–1960: Contemporary Reflections* (New York: the Monacelli Press, 2004): 69.

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The Integration of the Arts

By Carlos Raúl Villanueva

THE arts bear witness to the cultural meaning of each period; we can discover the features that marked a historic individuality thanks to them. The more they demonstrate the union of concept or formal participation between them, the more clearly the social axis around which the man/culture duality revolves unfolds itself. The presence of this axis favours the agglutination of artistic expression. What is more, the unity of human content is fertile and a necessary condition so that the total integration flourishes. Architecture, painting, sculpture and technique combine around a common aim, around a collective purpose. The coming together of objectives facilitates the plastic synthesis.

At the moment, within this synthesis, due to its adherence to functional themes, architecture holds the responsibility for first defining the generalities, for sketching, right from the start, the directives of sculpture within which plastic events will take form.

Architecture, with the help of technique, organises the space. It can exist on its own, with its single organism, isolated and autonomous, without the collaboration of the other arts, such as in certain Romanesque churches or in the austere vertical architecture of Mies van der Rohe.

At other times, different plastic expression prevails. Sometimes it is sculpture that predominates in the formal play, in the volumetric balance and focuses the main interest of the composition on itself. As in the case of the architecture of India or in the impressive pre-Columbian constructions, sculptural-type plastic art substitutes architecture. In other words, due to the metaphysical characteristics of the vital and religious approach of these people, architecture organically conceived as a closed space, as an internal space, is superseded in favour of a monumental conception of plastic art as an external event, aimed more at the praising or mystical valuation of a life that is transcendental and external to man, than at the pragmatic recognition of human actions. On other occasions, it is painting which ostensibly marks the space and the content of architecture. In these cases, the theme and the form with which this content is treated surpass the value of the walls that receive them in importance, in vigour, in

overbearing isolation. These pictorial themes are therefore worthwhile per se, independently of the architectural space in which they are found. What is more, it is them that give the characteristic stamp to this environment. The example of this is the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo, in which the pictorial values are evidently superior to the architectural space and totally indifferent or neutral with regard to them.

When the world of plastic arts is impregnated by a single concept, when it is dealt with by a single philosophy, when a single vision enriches its components, the arts coexist in the same terrain (often in contact with them), but they do not necessarily tie in to the total merger. The integrating effort is not necessary. Total union is not necessary, either as an intention or as a consequence of joint work. Nevertheless, these works that flourished in a single period, sheltered by a single sentiment, show a unity of constant form in a careful analysis.

This is the result of what has been called "spirit of the times" and is also the product of the cultural contacts and mixtures that have been more or less frequent, in keeping with the greater or lesser ease of communication and transmission of culture. In the photos I will show you below, the persistence of certain shapes that are born in cultural fields that are very far removed from each other will be clearly noticeable. They show the permeability of the various artistic events and the extremely important influence that the same technique, with its rigorous approach dictated by function, has had on artistic vision.

There are moments of crisis when the arts separate and each one proceeds, looking for its individual way. Even if they deal with the same themes, the languages are different and at times extremely individualised. This happens when it is necessary to reconstruct a language, overcoming a syntax and a grammar that have been worn out by use and that no longer correspond to the new human contents. At these moments, there is a unity of proposals concentrated in the search for an elemental plastic art (sometimes starting from nothing), which leads to the elaboration of original, new and suitable terms along new paths. At these times, the features that make up the

internal structure of each artistic approach must become separated, be analysed, even be sterilised (if necessary), so that after a long analytical job, the basis of a more specific instruction can be laid, of a more far-reaching, conclusive and deep narration, in which the relationship between content and form is more explicit and ties together the two terms with more cohesion. The crisis that occurred during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century gave rise to a search for cleanliness of language that could serve to clarify the above. In fact, by heightening the contradictions between the new technique and the old decoration, between the new social controversy and the old forms, the 20th-century man, who was born with his eye set on the immense possibilities and transformations offered by machinery, went back to elaborating the basic features of his language, cleanly separating each of them from artistic expressions. It was only later, when this language had already been elaborated, that the need and, therefore, the possibility of going back to integrating these dispersed features was announced.

Why is artistic integration, at the moment, proposed by architects and by painters and sculptors as one of the most important aims, as one of the most immediate objectives to be achieved?

Why does the painter go to the architect and ask him to give him the opportunity to work with him in the field of architecture?

Why does the architect feel the need to call on painters so that their colour makes his architectural surfaces vibrate?

The reason, in our opinion, stems from the fact that the architect, on the one hand, wishes to look more deeply into the meaning of his architecture; seeks a greater enriching of the plastic values of it, through a more controlled, wise and careful use of the instruments which have traditionally been those that are typical of the painter: colours, lines and shapes.

On the other hand, the painter and sculptor have just come out of one personalised, individualised tradition, to go into another one which announces human intervention as a symbol of social adherence, of human and collective kindness, as a mark of responsibility. What painting or sculpture stop offering as a value of communication (above all if they are released from individual arbitrariness) is transformed into an effort to try to reincorporate art into society through a rapprochement, a more functional relationship that is more direct and more necessary. Introducing pictorial or sculptural work into the architectural context currently means showing a clear desire to take on social responsibilities.

Is it necessary to repeat that the contemporary artist can no longer create for himself in a personal world

whose comprehension is circumscribed to a limited number of people or that floats in the sterile isolation of individual action?

Well, it is precisely as a reaction to all there is that the artist approaches the architect and offers his collaboration. This is a call so that his plastic vision is allowed to take on another meaning and social transcendence. This attempt to collaborate is not carried out before resolving a wide range of problems. It is clear that a collaboration between artists, for the purpose of integration, can have no consequence without a team spirit, without solidarity in the work and companionship. In the same way, it is necessary that painters and sculptors should have a more or less clear idea of the way in which the architect works, of his possibilities as an artist and of his determining features as a technician. The spatial vision that is typical of the architect must be understood and used by the painter. In the same way, the architect will have to take into account the particular medium with which the painter or the sculptor work. Whether on surfaces or in volumes, he must respect their method of creation. There is a substantial difference between an integrating piece of work and an attempt at decoration. Decoration, in our times, is considered as a surface preparation, as something that is superimposed and as such, useless and even hostile for architectural purposes. On the other hand, integration is the product, not only of the understanding of the common proposals, but also of the necessary subordination between the different expressions. It is the creation of a new architectural-sculptural-pictorial organism, in which the smallest indecision is not noticed, in which no crack between the various expressions can be found. What is necessary of each of these plastic valuations must be irremediably evident.

Colour represents an immense energy for the architect. It is, to him, a medium as powerful as the plan and the section to determine a space. As Léger said, "the craving for colour is a natural necessity just as for water and fire". There was an enormous scandal, more than a century ago when the archaeologist Hittford discovered a Hellenic temple in Sicily with traces of polychrome on its pediments. In fact, the upper parts of Greek temples were painted in bright, pure colours. We also know that the Egyptians painted the relieves on walls, with the aim of highlighting and making the parts of the temple which were required to be accentuated more visible. The Romans seem to have been the first to have left materials, marble or stone, without any polychromatic decoration, reserving the pleasure of their frescoes for stucco. In mediæval times, cathedrals also had examples of polychrome. Notre Dame in Paris had its tympani painted in gold and bright colours. Its sculptures were noticeable as they

were painted in black, red and bright colours. During the Renaissance, internal spaces left behind the vibrations of colour to acquire their geometric rigour of white surfaces. However in the Baroque period they made the most of all the resources of paint to maximise their attempts at distortion and optical illusion. Baroque domes, in fact, with their vertical perspective, undo the measurable space, project the enormous, voluptuously decorated masses, the thicker material that boils on the walls and on the base of the internal space, towards the sky.

Colour also has its use as an instrument for ordering, rectifying, specifying or valuing volumes and surfaces, accentuating frames, confirming spaces. However, used in this way, it is just an instrument like any other used by the architect, to establish a more immediate communication between his work and the man who will use it.

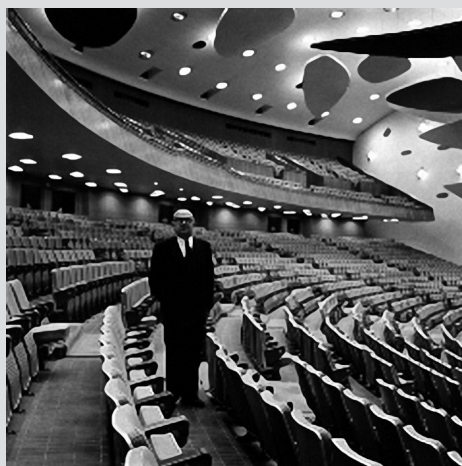
For today's architect, construction materials have a character of their own and require to be used in keeping with this character, respecting it and giving it value. This is why it is confirmed that every material has a texture

and colour of its own that should be used, preserving the inherent properties of its organic constitution. The artist who does the integration work must also know how to understand and respect the character of these materials, because by doing so he will manage to capture the true sense of what we call need in integration.

There is no synthesis without discipline. There is no synthesis without enthusiasm. There is no synthesis without faith in human values.

It would be a good idea to remember with Michel Ragon that, in the same way that lions should not be kept in zoos, paintings and sculptures should not be imprisoned in museums.

The natural environment for wild animals is the jungle. The natural environment for artistic work is squares, gardens, public buildings, factories, airports: all the places where man perceives man as a companion, as an associate, as a helping hand, as hope and not as the withered flower of isolation and indifference.



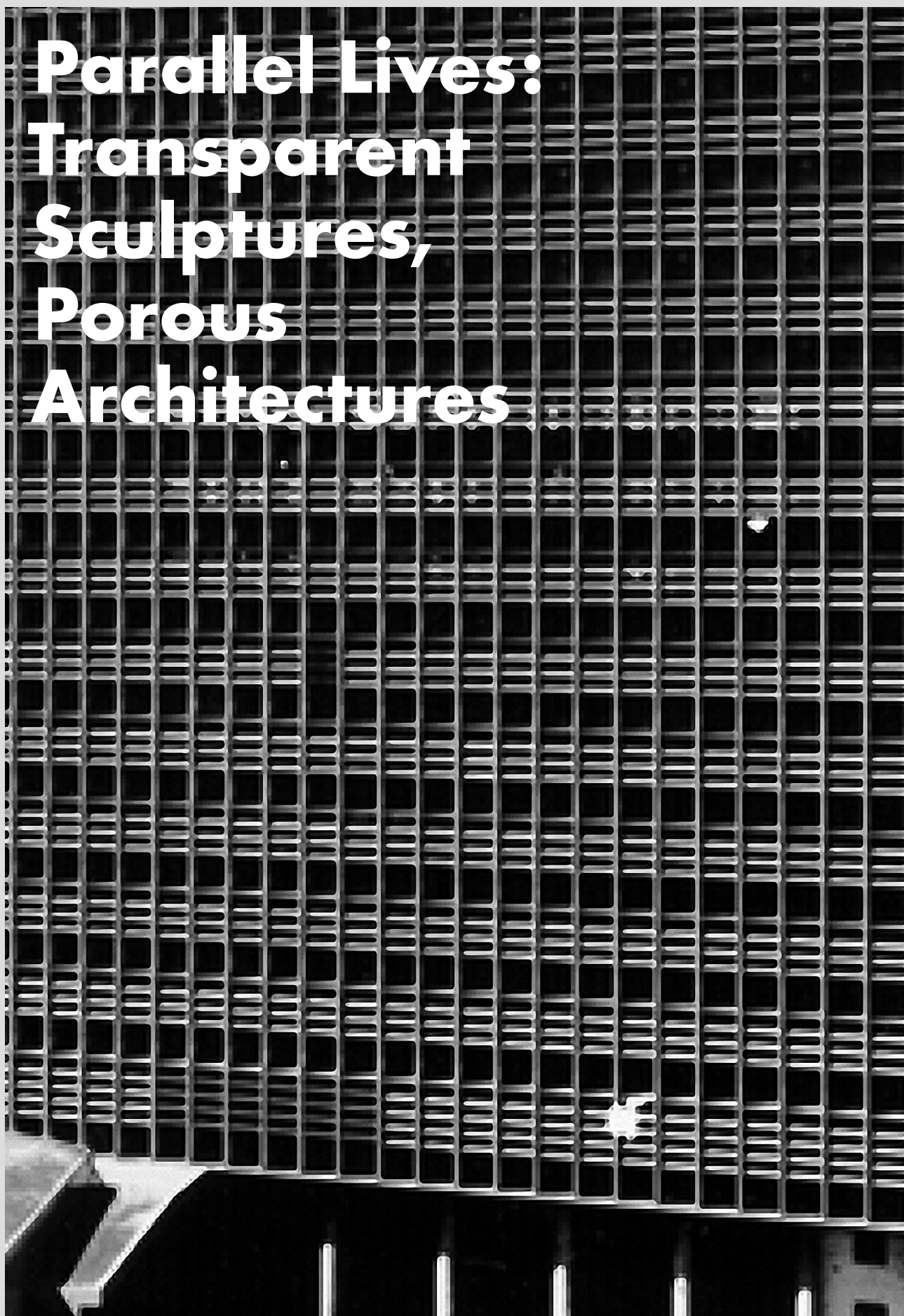
Carlos Raúl Villanueva in the University of Caracas Aula Magna, 1967
Photo Paolo Gasparini
(Fundación Villanueva Collection)

Villanueva was born in the city of London on May 30, 1900. In 1922, following the footsteps of his brother Marcel, Carlos Raúl was admitted to the Second Class of the Department of Architecture of the École des Beaux-Arts and entered the workshop of Gabriel Héraud. In 1925 he entered the First Class of the Department of Architecture and worked closely with León Joseph Madeline. During that time he collaborated on a project for a *Hôtel d'ambassade à construire dans un pays d'Extrême Orient* with another student of Héraud's workshop, Roger-Leopold Hummel, which won the Second prize of the Grand Prix de Rome in 1928. On June 6 of the same year, he received his Architecture degree and traveled for the first time to Venezuela and the United States where he joined the architectural firm Guilbert and Betelle with his brother in Newark, New Jersey. Yet in 1929 Villanueva returned to Venezuela and started working in the Ministry of Public Works as Director of Buildings and Ornamental Constructions. After gaining some experience in France and the United States,

Villanueva arrives in Venezuela full of enthusiasm and ideas; in particular, thanks to the influence of his close friend Auguste Perret. His first important commission came in 1935 with the project to build the Museum of Fine Arts of Caracas. This project allowed him to create a space for the exhibition of art, one of his most important passions. Already at this time his devotion to the artistic vanguards of the century could be seen in his library, where his large collection of books on architecture was complemented by those on art. It was also during this time that he met the sculptor Francisco Narváez with whom he collaborated in the Museum of Fine Arts as well as in a series of other important projects like the "Natural Science Museum" (1936-1939) and the "Gran Colombia School" (1939-1942) which became Villanueva's first attempt to bring into fruition the guiding principle of career: the synthesis of the arts. The buildings also showed Villanueva's application of some of the most defining ideas of modern architecture like the simplification of form and the importance given to functionality.

Parallel Lives: Transparent Sculptures, Porous Architectures

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The text registers and discusses the affinities between the transparency of a branch of modern sculpture and the characteristic porosity of Brazilian modern architecture, placed in the broader context of the exchange between architecture, painting, sculpture and construction in the twentieth century.

By Carlos Eduardo Comas

HENRY-Russell Hitchcock presents “abstract painting of the twentieth century which has influenced the development of modern architecture,” second, “contemporary abstract painting and sculpture of potential value to contemporary architects” in *Painting Toward Architecture* (1948).¹ For Hitchcock, even the presumably imitative architectural forms like the Egyptian pyramid or the Greek column have a degree of geometric abstraction that distances them from nature, while abstract art is a twentieth century creation. Modern painters and sculptors reject copying natural forms just as modern architects reject the reuse of historic architectural motifs. Architecture and painting stimulate each other.

On the one hand, Hitchcock links abstraction with the recovery of architectural values in the pictorial composition of synthetic cubism and parallel movements. On the other hand, he shows the affinities of Oud, Rietveld and Mies with neoplasticism; associates Gropius and the Bauhaus to Kandinsky, Klee and Feininger; details the links between Le Corbusier the architect and the purist painter who wants to go beyond cubism. He recognizes that abstract art does not assist architects in their structural problems, but reiterates its importance as a plastic research. He concludes:

*The visual forms of a new architecture . . . were . . . implicit . . . in the work of various precursors before the abstract art began. But these forms remained generally invisible . . . unrealized and merely immanent, until the catalytic contact with the experiments of the advanced artists of a quarter century ago brought them to crystallization.*²

Hitchcock notes that the influence of painting on architecture decreases in the 1930s, while interest in figuration grows among artists, but he connects Arp's abstract surrealism to the free curves of Alvar Aalto and the Brazilian school, specially those of Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx. In the plans of Aalto and Niemeyer, the free flowing curve is a “melodic counterpoint to the regular rhythms of skeleton construction, has become a powerful vehicle of architectural expression.”³ Burle Marx's gardens seem to translate abstract biomorphism directly, like the eighteenth century English park reflects the classical

landscapes of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain.

Hitchcock distinguishes the suggestions of basic form that modern architects received from painting and sculpture from the collaboration between architects, painters and sculptors that is exemplified by Candido Portinari's azulejo murals or Jacques Lipchitz's Prometheus for the Ministry of Education Building in Rio, designed by Lúcio Costa with Niemeyer, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Jorge Moreira, Carlos Leão and Ernani Vasconcellos. He welcomes the complementation of rigorously geometrical architecture by figurative or loosely delineated sculptures and murals. Sculpture gets an individualized assessment:

*Lipchitz's work in Brazil, Rivera's and Noguchi's reliefs in the liner Argentina, and Calder's mobile in the Terrace-Plaza, suggest that later experiments of modern sculptors with voids, with linear elements in space, and with motion, can provide more satisfactory adjuncts to modern buildings. The transparent or fluttering planes and the materialized lines of force in this new work are peculiarly consonant with new building methods and sympathetic to the basic plastic expression of modern architecture.*⁴

The later experiments that Hitchcock refers to are those of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in the 1950s. Hitchcock does not register Lipchitz's “transparent sculptures” or their debt to earlier Alexandr Archipenko work. Archipenko is the one who introduced the hole as a device to relate plans on the opposite sides of a sculpture at torso height.⁵ He had thus expanded the range of voids in sculpture, traditionally restricted to the articulation of members among themselves and with the body or base. Lipchitz was a member of *L'Esprit Nouveau* staff and voids appear in his work after he occupies the house-studio designed for him by Le Corbusier (1925).⁶ Commenting on the work of Lipchitz, Hitchcock says that the massive forms of traditional sculpture rarely match the fluid spaces and light volumes of modern architecture.⁷ Presumably, Mies's Barcelona Pavilion is an exception, given the convincing contrast between its orthogonality and the roundness of the female nude by Kolbe in its enclosed patio. Commenting on the work of Moore, Hitchcock reiterates that its plastic shapes are complementary rather



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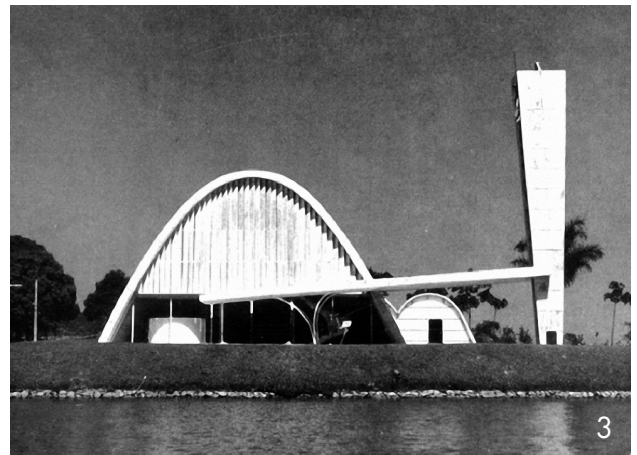


Figure 1. **Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Jorge Moreira, Ernani Vaconcellos, Carlos Leão**, Ministry of Education Building, Rio de Janeiro, 1936–1945
Photo from CPDOC, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro.

Figure 2. **Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Jorge Moreira, Ernani Vaconcellos, Carlos Leão**, Ministry of Education Building, Rio de Janeiro, 1936–1945
Photo by Marcos Almeida 2004

Figure 3. **Oscar Niemeyer**, St. Francis Chapel, Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, 1942–1946.
Photo from F. S. Lincoln, 1939. © Brazil Representation to the New York World's Fair, 1939
H. K. Publishing, USA.

than similar to those of modern architecture.⁸ He misses the affinity between the “transparency” of a branch of modern sculpture and the “porosity” of Brazilian modern architecture. It is a characteristic quality that stems from the reiterated use of a variant of the void between two solids arrangement, in which the intermediary element is a hole that reveals the depth of the built volume and generally is found at its base, including public or semi-public routes across it.⁹

Porosity is present in almost all the prominent works of the 1936–1945 period. In the Brazilian Press Association Building by Mauricio and Milton Roberto, a vehicular route is incorporated to the hole, an open hall of trapezoidal plan between two stores with wide street frontages; the elevators at the rear stand next to the narrow passage leading to the parking area in the block’s internal courtyard. In the Ministry of Education Building, the hole is a rectangular hypostyle portico between two north and south esplanades and two east and west hallways; the granite pavement unifies portico and esplanades. In the Brazilian Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair of 1939, by Costa and Niemeyer, the route rises to the piano nobile: a curved ramp to one side and a straight staircase on the opposite side lead to a terrace between the main exhibition gallery and auditorium; the hole turns into a loggia that comes alive with the curves of the auditorium and the slab that roofs part of its rectangular plan. On the ground floor, the pores multiply as screens and passages alternate. In Niemeyer’s Ouro Preto Grand Hotel, the climate is at once austere, rustic, bustling. Rectangular in plan and stepped in section, flanked by one block where the restaurant and its terrace are superimposed to the kitchen and another where reception is superimposed to a game room, the hole is a majestic portico–terrace along the access esplanade and an intimate verandah along the hillside opposite; a hollow screen divides the two sections. In all cases, columns and pillars of diverse sections and materials add to the excitement. In Costa’s modest and primitive Nova Friburgo Park Hotel, the hole is a verandah open to the park view and reduced by a wooden screen at the side of the entrance, which is in turn associated with a sequence of aligned holes (entrance door, window behind reception desk, verandah). At the Pampulha Lake complex by Niemeyer, the ground floor at the Yacht Club replicates the multiplication of screens and passages at the Brazilian Pavilion’s ground floor. At the dance hall to one side, the hole is a terrace covered by a sinuous slab linking the lounge to the bandstand and developing lengthwise between the forecourt and a parapet by the lake. At the chapel to the other side, the hole is an asymmetrical narthex or portal, defined by an inclined marquee that links the vaulted church nave to the

bell tower. In Rio’s Santos Dumont Airport designed by the Roberto brothers, the hole is the lobby, rectangular, airy and majestic, open to the street, glazed on the air-field side and crossed by a colonnaded gallery.

The hole distinguishes significant projects too. Reidy re-elaborates the ground floor of the Ministry of Education Building at the Rio de Janeiro Town Hall; his bar in a public square anticipates the Pampulha Dance Hall. Superimposed holes appear in Niemeyer’s design for the Henrique Xavier townhouse. At his Pampulha Hotel, the hole moves to the second floor, under the apartments’ slab, and gives a street view to the roof garden of a base that expands towards the lake. His Yacht Club in Botafogo is a grander version of the Pampulha Yacht Club.

In each of these examples, the floor planes defined by pavement and/or vegetation are an active element of composition, related to the building proper as base and sculpture in the same or similar material. The impression of porosity would weaken without a limited ground. The resulting transparency is a framed immediate transparency, distinct from both the literal, mediate transparency and the phenomenal transparency analyzed by Colin Rowe.¹⁰

The influence of sculpture on Brazilian modern architecture cannot be proved, although the Costa group was familiar with the Lipchitz “transparent” through *L’Esprit nouveau* and Le Corbusier’s *Œuvre complète*, where one of them can be seen in Madame de Mandrot weekend house’s garden.¹¹ The same applies to the influence of Arp’s curves on Aalto and Niemeyer. Hitchcock is careful and notes that, if later “abstract art such as Arp’s helped to ease and broaden the expressive possibilities of modern architecture, there are probably other sources than Arp for Aalto and Niemeyer.”¹² In the case of Niemeyer and Burle Marx, they certainly include the curves in the picturesque garden diffused in Brazil by Grandjean de Montigny in 1820 and Auguste Glazou in 1860; by the end of the century, amoeboid beds and ponds were ordinary elements of the central square in every small town of the country.¹³ By the way, the expression “picturesque garden” recalls the debt to painting of this English invention. Painting is clearly a reference in the design of circuit parks punctuated by follies such as Stowe and Stourhead, but the landscapes of Poussin and Claude are in turn tributaries of classical architecture. Interaction between the different arts can resemble a game of ricochets. The sources of Arp’s amoeboid boards probably include the same landscaping features that impact Niemeyer and Burle Marx.¹⁴

The idea of an exchange between architecture and painting in the 1920s is supported by the dispute between Perret and Le Corbusier, which the former attacks

as "form maker".¹⁵ The interest of the Brazilian modern architect in the integration of visual arts to public works appears both in the Ministry of Education Building and the New York Pavilion as at Pampulha. That said, the Brazilian articulation of architecture and sculpture is probably subliminal, and precedents can be found in the modern architectural repertoire. Gropius's Bauhaus and Melnikov's Russian Pavilion at the Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris (1925), are buildings pierced by public routes. Le Corbusier proposed huge holes in the suburban housing of his Contemporary City (1922). At least two examples come from the distant past, in case Roman triumphal arches and bridges are dismissed. Mansart's Grand Trianon has two wings joined by an open hypostyle gallery, whose floor extends on both sides as platforms accessible by stairs. The Propylaeum is a hypostyle portico that mediates between distinct planes.



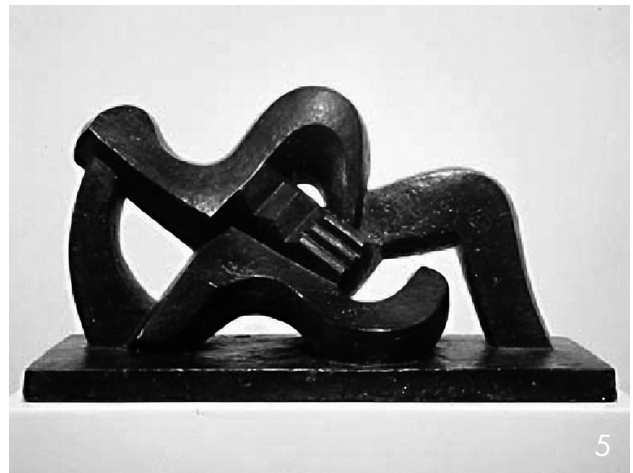
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Not everything is then influence of an art over another, but their reciprocal stimulation seems undeniable, subordination to architecture included (as postulates the older tradition) or not (as proposed by the increasing autonomy of each art in bourgeois society). Whether in parallel or sequence, plastic research in architecture, painting and sculpture can operate independently but converge on purpose without a conscious notion of convergence, possibly the by-product of some common sentiment, the "spirit of the age". So, the relationship of modern architecture and abstract painting may be interpreted in terms of reference, according to chronology, or, a posteriori, in terms of confirmation. In the preface to Hitchcock's essay, Alfred Barr, director of New York's Museum of Modern Art, notes that many factors influence architectural form,

but adds that painting was not among them before the twentieth century. This is a half truth given both eighteenth century English circuit parks and nineteenth century French reading rooms: the paintings of Pompeii depicting an imaginary architecture count among the sources of Henri Labrouste for the slender iron structures in his libraries.

Admittedly, however, the importance of painting and sculpture to architecture increases in the twentieth century, in direct proportion to their autonomy in the face of architecture. In large measure, that happens because the search for inspiration in forms outside the conventional territory of architecture becomes commonplace. Abstract art becomes a mine for the avant-garde architects in the same way and at the same time as civil engineering works, utilitarian buildings and industrial artifacts.

As an alternative to the reuse of historic motifs that Hitchcock emphasizes, the role of abstract art is similar to that played by silos, factories, bridges, sheds, skyscrapers, ocean liners, airplanes, automobiles and the like. Construction, industry and avant-garde art combined to support the formal simplification and minimization of the material elements of architecture, the repudiation of ornament and a centrifugal composition where balanced asymmetry replaces hieratic symmetry and hierarchical centralization. Neither does Hitchcock notice that the generic strategy is the same used by the architects of eclecticism. A representation involves the reiteration of formal



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Figure 4. **Alexander Archipenko** *Struggle*, bronze cast 7/8, 1914 (Ukraine 1887-1964, active in France and the US) Milwaukee Art Museum, photo by Larry Sanders.

Figure 5. **Jacques Lipchitz** *Reclining Woman with Guitar*, bronze, 1928. © Estate of Jacques Lipchitz, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York.

Figure 6. *Archer*, bronze, **Henry Moore**, 1964-1965, New National Gallery, Berlin.



relevant precedents. The uses of the Gothic style as expression of national identity (in France and England, for example) or Christian religiousness (more or less everywhere) were justified by the association of this style with the founding of the nation or the age of faith. The characterization of nation or religiousness involves the recollection of their emblematic figures. The modern architect's concern with the expression of the *zeitgeist* is explicit and can be equated to concern with the characterization of the age, involving the recollection of its emblematic figures. Part of the dispute between Le Corbusier and Perret regards the latter's refusal to characterize the modern age through transient machinist and/or atectonic motifs. For Perret, there was no reason to displace concepts, looking beyond the disciplinary tradition. Structural rationality and classically inspired compositional rigor were enough.¹⁶

However, the dispute stays in the family. Convinced that all architecture is always construction, but not every construction is architecture, therefore aware of the traditional definition of architecture as qualified building, Le Corbusier founds the theory of modern architecture on a flat slab structure of the Dom-ino type: the skeleton

that endures more than the flesh. The architecturization of forms that are foreign to the discipline's erudite repertoire is a strategy that signals transience and enlivens the permanent ordering mainstay. At the limit, the formula even accepts Perret's structural rationalism and the external display of the skeleton in the façade that it mandates.

For Brazilian modern architects in the 1930s and 1940s, architecture is still qualified construction. A Dom-ino type structure is its foundation, but porosity helps to distinguish their work from that of Le Corbusier. Nothing illustrates it so well as a comparison between the base of the Ministry of Education, built according to the design of Costa and his team as a void between two solids, and the base of the Ministry proposed as a central solid between two hollow ends by the Franco-Swiss architect for another site.

Combining fully subtractive composition procedures with a limited ground, porosity implies pushing an archetypal scheme to its limits, and thus connotes continuity within rupture. Part of the formal diversification aiming to overcome the limitations of the international style as defined in 1932 by Johnson, Hitchcock and Barr,¹⁷ porosity enriches the disciplinary repertoire. It does not involve a





Figures 6 and 7. **Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer,**
Brazilian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1939,
New York, 1938-1939.
Photos from F. S. Lincoln, 1939. © Brazil Representation to the
New York World's Fair, 1939
H. K. Publishing, USA.

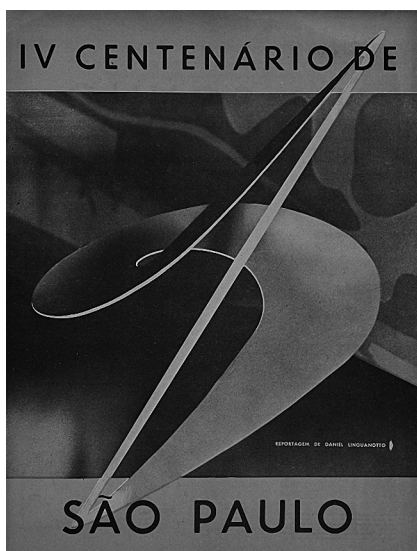


Figure 9. **Oscar Niemeyer**, *Sculpture for Ibirapuera Park*, São Paulo, 1954.

Photo from *Fantasia Brasileira: o balé do IV Centenário* (São Paulo: SESC, 1998).

denial of flatness, but its manipulation in order to gain texture, thickness, depth, relief; in short sculptural qualities. These are not inherently Brazilian but are certainly appropriate to a climate that allows the interpenetration of indoors and outdoors all year round. After all, sculpture is much closer to architecture than painting, even though sculpture has no commitment to inhabitation.

The parallel lives of these porous architectures and transparent sculptures have gone unnoticed, because an interpretation that reduces Brazilian efforts to national or regional modernism still prevails. However, after 1950, as Brazilian modern architecture becomes controversially identified with the work of Niemeyer and examples of porosity decrease, comments on its sculptural qualities increase. Their recognition informs the criticisms that classify Brazilian and/or Niemeyerian modern as baroque, whether praising its plastic triumphs or chastising its supposedly formalist penchant.

In fact, the supports of Niemeyer then gain weight, branch out and become biomorphic. The planes that curve defining volumes are no longer limited to the roof. Incursions of the architect in the realm of pure sculpture are inaugurated with a large but airy piece marking the entrance of Ibirapuera Park, reminiscent of the work of José de Rivera illustrated in *Painting Toward Architecture*. Niemeyer is often compared to Aleijadinho, the most famous Brazilian architect and sculptor of the baroque period. It should be noted that the "architecturing toward sculpture" trend is international in the 1950s, involving at least Le Corbusier, Aalto and Eero Saarinen. At the same

time, the complementation of modern monumental projects by sculpture of heroic proportions becomes commonplace. Henry Moore, Grand Prix at the 1953 São Paulo Biennial, is the author of *Reclining Figure* (1957–1958) in front of Breuer's Unesco headquarters in Paris, a project that was selected by a committee of which Lúcio Costa was a member. Barbara Hepworth, Grand Prix at the 1959 São Paulo Biennial, is the author of *Singular Form* (1964) in front of the ONU headquarters in New York, a project in which Niemeyer's input was decisive.

Part of the inattention to the exchange between sculpture and modern architecture might have to do with the inferior status of sculpture in relation to painting. In *The World as Sculpture*, James Hall argues that sculpture was the poor cousin among the arts from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, requiring more physical effort for its making and assessment. While painters might aspire to be gentlemen, sculptors were considered as manual workers rather than creative geniuses, copyists rather than original artists. Hall thinks that sculpture becomes paradigmatic in the visual arts in early twentieth century.¹⁸ Its subordination to painting by Hitchcock suggests that recognition of this phenomenon is far more recent. Either way, the current prestige of sculpture is undeniable and archisculpture is a common word, after many nods by architects to minimalism and land art in the 1990s.¹⁹ Contrary to Robert Venturi's wishes, "ducks" seem to have won over "decorated sheds" by a mile, defended as memorable exceptions featuring extraordinary structures amid repetitive—and boring—boxes of skeleton structures.²⁰ Given such a situation, the Brazilian endeavor recalled in these notes might have far more than historical interest and even suggest different approaches to present day difficulties.

Notes

1. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Painting Toward Architecture* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948).
2. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 54.
3. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 102.
4. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 52. Cincinatti's Terrace-Plaza Hotel was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.
5. Representative pieces by Archipenko are *The Struggle* (1914), bronze, Milwaukee Art Museum, and *Woman Combing her Hair* (1915), bronze, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Moore only explores the hole in his third phase (1931–1939). See Herbert Read, *The Work of Henry Moore* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 60–62.

6. See Alan G. Wilkinson, *The Sculpture of Jacques Lipchitz: a Catalogue Raisonné. Volume 1: The Paris Years 1913–1940* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).
7. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 106.
8. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 108.
9. Classical references for Brazilian modern architecture are Philip Goodwin and George Kidder-Smith, *Brazil Builds* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943) and Henrique Mindlin, *Modern Architecture in Brazil* (Rio de Janeiro, Amsterdam: Colibris, 1956). For a detailed analysis and more complete iconographical reference, see Carlos Eduardo Comas, *Précisions brésiliennes sur un état passé de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme modernes d'après les projets exemplaires de Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, MAM Roberto, Affonso Reidy, Jorge Moreira & cie., 1936–45* (PhD dissertation, Université de Paris-VIII, 2002). There is a Portuguese translation by the author—*Precisões brasileiras*—at www.lume.ufrgs.br/handle/10183/10898. For a comparison between different Ministry of Education building designs, see Carlos Eduardo Comas, "Modern Architecture, Brazilian Corollary," *AA Files* 36 (1998). For an overview, see Carlos Eduardo Comas, "Report from Brazil," in Jean-François Lejeune (ed.), *Cruelty and Utopia: Cities and Landscapes of Latin America* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005).
10. Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal," in *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* (Cambridge: the MIT Press, 1976), 159–183.
11. Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Willy Boesiger (eds.), *Œuvre Complète 1929–1934* (Zurich: H. Girsberger, 1935), 62. For the commission of the Lipchitz sculpture for the Ministry of Education building, see Mauricio Lissovsky and Paulo Sá, *Colunas da Educação* (Rio de Janeiro: Minc/IPHAN; Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, 1996), 277–297.
12. Hitchcock, *Painting*, 102.
13. French architect Grandjean de Montigny, Prix de Rome, came to Brazil in 1817 and was the first director of the Course of Architecture at the Academia Imperial de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro. French engineer and landscape architect Auguste Glazou came to Brazil in 1858 to be responsible for the parks and gardens of the Brazilian Imperial House.
14. Carola Giedion-Welcker somehow confirms (or anticipates) the author's location of the sources of biomorphism in the picturesque garden, when she compares Arp's sculpture with snow-laden pebbles in a Swiss mountain river or, very specifically, with the Glacier mill from the nineteenth century "Gletschergarten" in Lucerne, according to Stanislaus von Moos in an email to the author, February 10, 2009.
15. See AAVV, *Encyclopédie Perret* (Paris: Éditions du Patrimoine, 2002), chapters 11 ("Environnement architectural") and 12 ("Critique et débats"). Also Peter Collins, *La Splendeur du béton* (Paris: Hazan, 1995), 290 (column 2), translation of *Concrete* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), last chapter ("Le maître"), specially page 524, commenting on the Mondrian manifesto on the affinities between modern painting and architectural conception published in *L'Architecture vivante* (1925).
16. See Alan Colquhoun, "Displacement of concepts in Le Corbusier," in *Essays on Architectural Criticism* (Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1981).
17. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: Norton, 1966 [1932]).
18. James Hall, *The World as Sculpture* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999).
19. See Markus Bruderlin (ed.), *Archisculpture* (Ostfildern: Hatje Kanz, 2004).
20. For the comparison between "ducks" and "decorated sheds," see Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1972).
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Carlos Eduardo Comas

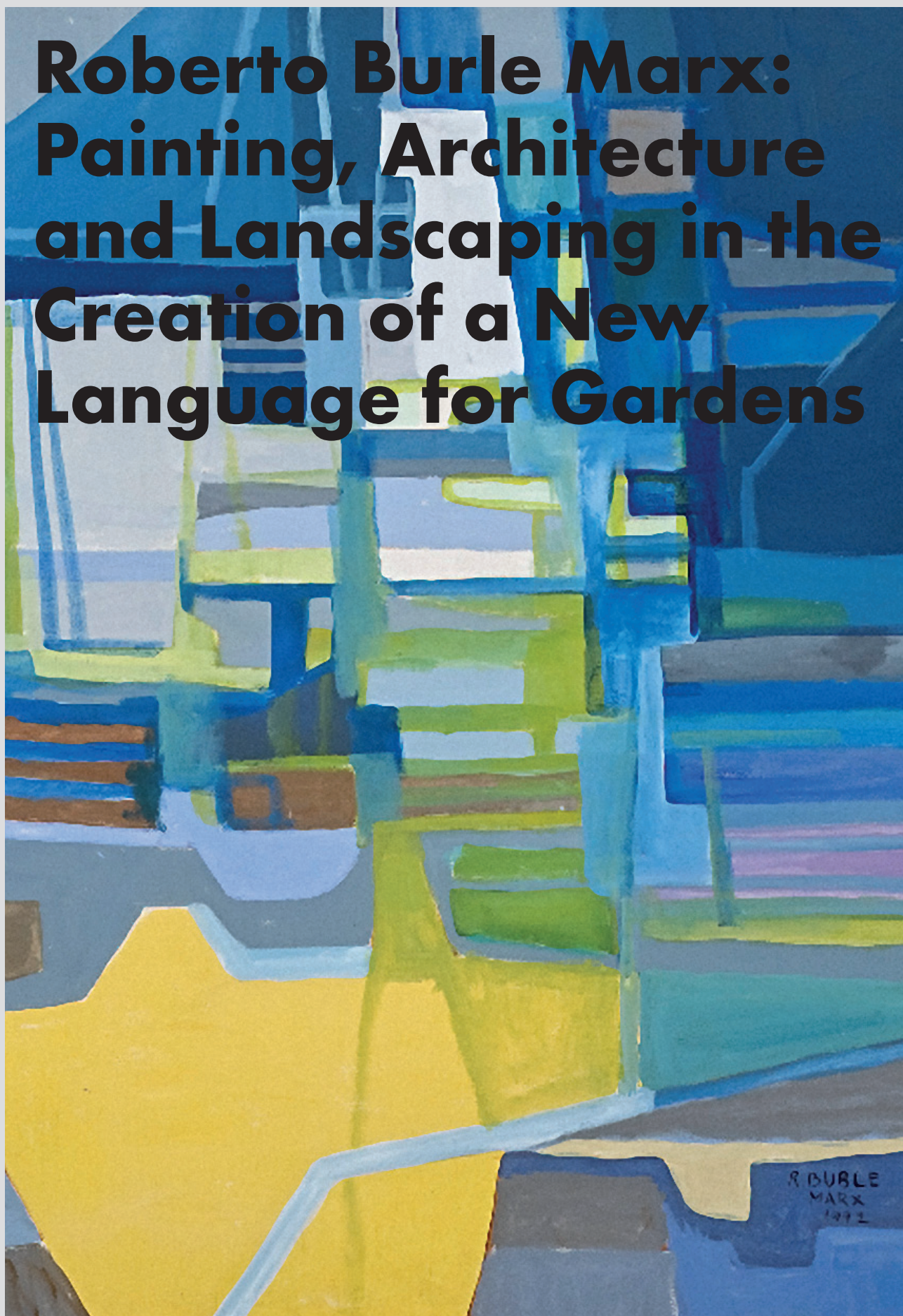
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Roberto Burle Marx: Painting, Architecture and Landscaping in the Creation of a New Language for Gardens

66



Painting, architecture and landscaping have never been so well incorporated in one person as in Roberto Burle Marx. His painter skills enabled Roberto Burle Marx to apply deep thorough pictorial principles to the landscape, thus avoiding other approaches made by pioneers who literally transposed cubist or abstract art, which almost resulted in caricatures. His botanical knowledge allowed him to discover new species in regard to their individual beauty and to their proper integration in ecological environments, which provided adequate choices of harmonious systems in terms of their aesthetics and their good survival in the new garden habitat.

By Lauro Cavalcanti

PAINTING, architecture and landscaping have never been so well incorporated in one person as in Roberto Burle Marx. Intended as a total artwork, modern architecture aimed to integrate structural support and visual appearance, organize both internal and external spaces and act upon urban planning and urban design. Within this process, the garden began to draw nearer or even merge with the building and art lost its façade decorative function, as it either had sculptural physical presence or acted as a source of inspiration for the organization of gardens.

His painter skills enabled Roberto Burle Marx to apply deep thorough pictorial principles to the landscape, thus avoiding other approaches made by pioneers who literally transposed cubist or abstract art, which almost resulted in caricatures. His botanical knowledge allowed him to discover new species in regard to their individual beauty and to their proper integration in ecological environments, which provided adequate choices of harmonious systems in terms of their aesthetics and their good survival in the new garden habitat.

The mastering of architectural space was an essential feature of his work, since it enabled him to establish a dialogue between buildings' forms, spaces and volumes, which could make the garden echo, harmonize, contrast, or even, when inferior in quality, surpass and outshine architecture itself.¹

At the turn of the twentieth century, the importation of intellectual models and styles took place in every artistic field across the countries of South America. As far as landscaping is concerned, this practice became very serious as the imported elements faded or did not adapt to Brazil's climate. As a consequence, a two-fold strategy was needed: to break up with the rigid models of mainly French Fine Arts School and reduce or abolish exogenous species.

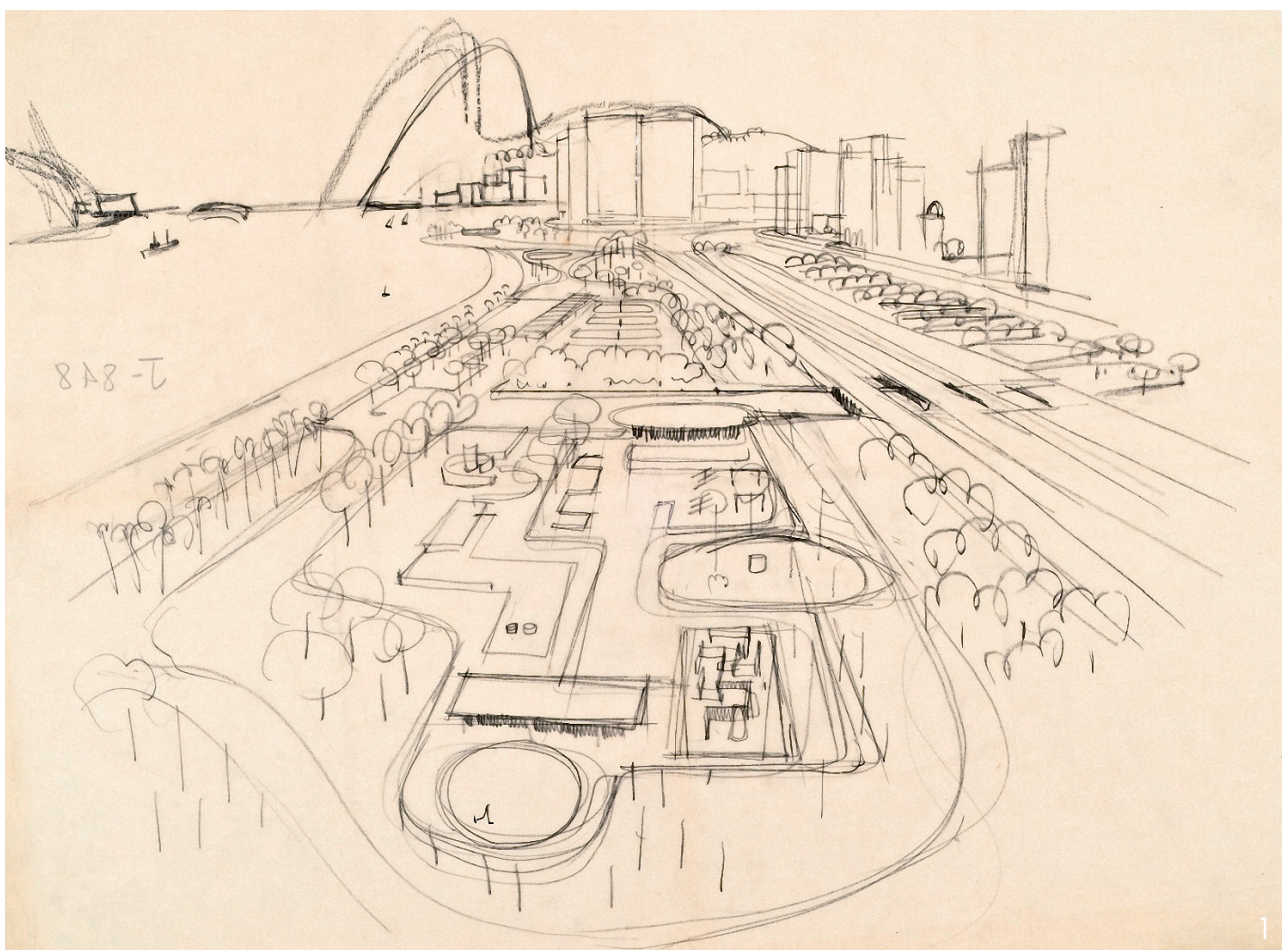
Like many other twentieth century landscapers of different nationalities, the creator of Aterro do Flamengo rehabilitated native plants and put them to noble use. Burle Marx knew how to accomplish this without adopting an

exaggerated nationalist stance. In order to escape this chauvinistic trap, he took use of his intellectual sophistication, of his admiration for universality driven by abstractionism and last but not the least, he invested in the growth of the scope of his work by leading botanical research expeditions around tropical and subtropical areas of the planet.

One of the weaknesses of modern architecture was its inability to cope with the inevitable effects of the flow of time in its accomplishments. Pure and ideal works almost always age very badly. Whereas *patina* and small flaws provide strength and density to historicist styles, in modern buildings they stain smooth surfaces and therefore reveal modernism's pretensions of obtaining timeless and definitive accomplishments. Burle Marx's botanical knowledge aided his landscaping, specifically in the choosing of the proper plants, in guaranteeing a good climate adaptation and in precisely anticipating their volumes, colors and textures throughout their lifetime. As far as more fragile and perishable specimens were concerned, being familiar with them helped him predict the moment to replant. Thus, time was not his enemy, but rather a constant ally. The landscaper used to say that his function was simply to initiate work in the garden, as "time finishes the idea."²

Artists of peripheral nations tend to, in most cases, simply translate and deploy visual thinking already developed in the Northern Hemisphere, or engage in a compulsory regionalism, as exoticism is the only way they may obtain international awareness and interest. Burle Marx was able to avoid both of these traps. Along with his enormous personal qualities, how could we explain this rare phenomenon?

Nothing in Brazil's origins or its elite aversion towards native specimens, suggested that the country would give birth to the man who deployed twentieth century landscaping worldwide. It was of great value to Burle Marx to have had a family education, where he learnt French, German and Pernambucan cultures with common-sense and sophistication. Besides this, he had a favorable so-



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cial and economical situation and a good network of social contacts. Above all, he belonged to a generation that strived, in various fields, to build a contemporary culture that would not deny world's cultural singularities.

The 'new' architecture was part of Brazil's broad cultural vanguard movement of the first half of the twentieth century, which distanced itself from folklore and offered cosmopolitan versions of 'Brazilness'. Based on his *Anthropophagic Manifesto*, metaphorically speaking, Oswald de Andrade wanted the European culture to be devoured by our native organism, taking advantage of its virtues and discarding its obsolete or inadequate characteristics: "Brazilians and of our time."³

The vegetable kingdom was not free from discrimination. At bourgeois houses, there was a clear distinction between gardens and backyards. In the former case, usually located between the building and the street, 'noble' specimens such as roses, cypresses, pines, begonias and azaleas were predominately planted between geometrical carved hedges, in the form of French topiary. It was unthinkable to use local plants, even if those from temperate climates were wilted due to their poor adaptation to

our hot and humid climate. Out of sight from passers-by and most ceremonial guests, the backyards had mostly fruit trees and native shrubs. In one of these backyards, at the foot of Pedra do Leme, young Roberto cultivated his first flowerbeds by planting bromeliads and other creeping plants which he collected during his strolls on the trails that shored the sea and bordered the hill. His discovery of native vegetation was concomitant with the discovery of the ocean, as described by the landscaper: "It was in Rio that I felt the sea for the first time . . . the smell of sand. An enchantment for me, the sea."⁴

Due to his numerous journeys, Burle Marx's life was rich in revelations and stories: his move from São Paulo to Rio as a boy allowed him to have his first tropical nature experience. In addition, his trip to Germany consolidated his fondness for Brazilian specimens as he gazed at them at the greenhouse of the Botanical Garden of Berlin, where he painted outdoors.

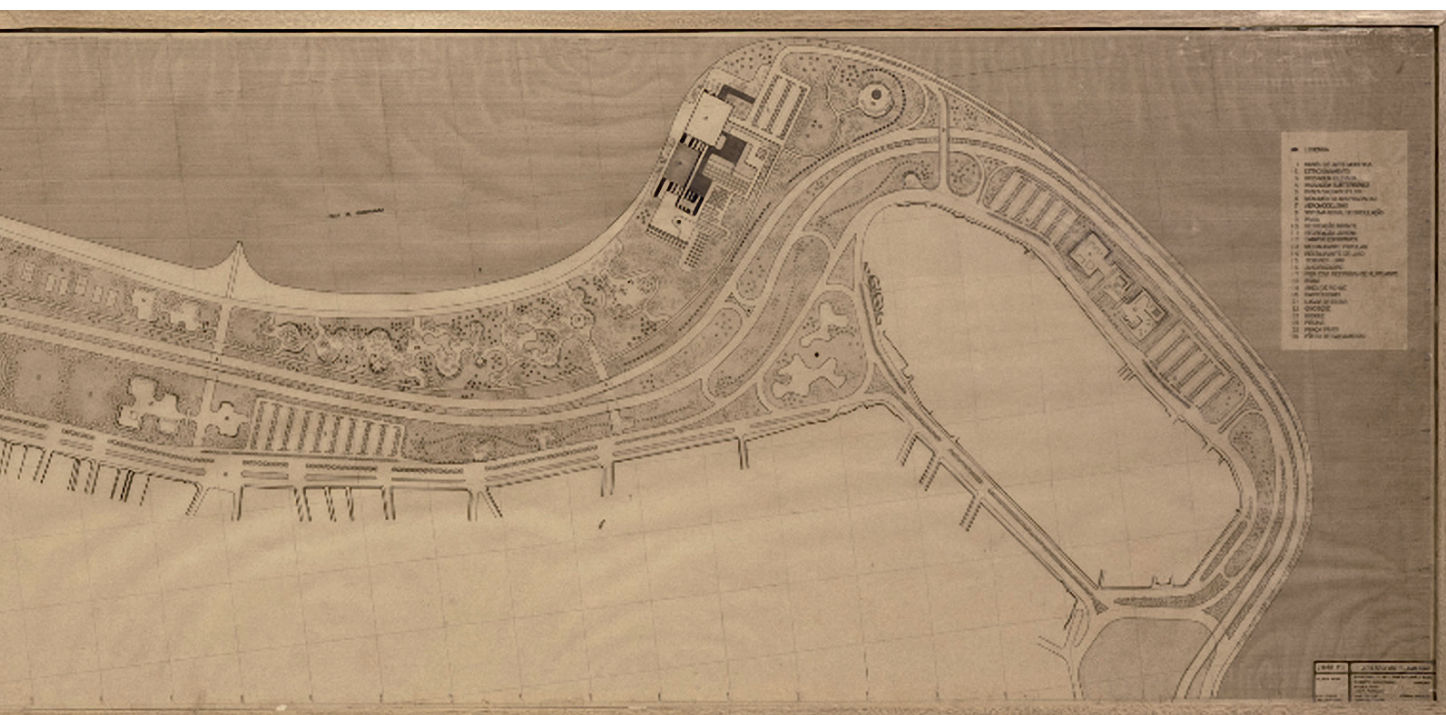
Upon returning to Brazil in 1932, Roberto moved to Recife and in his family's propriety he began trying to plant native specimens. In 1937, he took up permanent residence in Rio de Janeiro, where he executed a series of abstract gardens, which were to become modern movement 'classics'.

In 1938, the design of the plaza in front of Santos Dumont airport (1937-1944), built by the Roberto Brothers, gave Burle Marx the opportunity to develop the first modern public artwork. Rocks, water and trees from different places across Brazil were used. The plaza has not one

Figure 1. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Park of Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, 1961. General perspective view. 50 x 70 cm.

Figure 2. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Park of Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, 1961. General plan.

Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda. Photo by Cesar Barreto.



straight line: it was designed based on two sinuous parallel paths, which defined three major plant 'islands'.

In the central part, a large lake with Amazon aquatic vegetation contains a small island and three small equally rounded hills. From the long and undulating benches, which run along the bed line, one could spot the pilotis of the terminal and behind it, the great monumental glass window, the airstrip and Guanabara Bay. Critic Henry-Russell Hitchcock referred to the site as the "most beautiful airport in the world."⁵

Burle Marx's reputation largely surpassed the strict realm of his professional field from the moment he designed the gardens for the Ministry of Education and Health (1937-1943). A vertical building of fourteen stories high, suspended by pilasters, with glass façades on the south side and brise-soleil on the north side, enables the public to cross the ground and experience the geometric and abstract shapes of the garden as a large public square, where boundaries between public and private areas faded.

In this project, he had the opportunity to work with the most renowned personalities of the new architecture, such as Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy and Jorge Moreira. Alongside Costa and Niemeyer, Burle Marx contributed to confer our own modernism with a specific peculiarity, the introduction of curves to Le Corbusier's initial proposal. Here, these sinuous lines, which would become one of the main characteristics of Brazilian modernism, experimentally appear in subsidiary elements of construction: furniture, screens, rugs, murals and gardens. Later on, curves definitely materialize in the church of Pampulha and establish themselves in the

stupendous work of Oscar Niemeyer. During the construction of the Ministry of Education and Health building, Burle Marx had a sort of an informal post-graduation in painting, as Portinari's frescoes assistant, and in landscaping, with the guidance of Lúcio Costa.⁶

A close examination of his three proposals for the Ministry's garden reveal the slow and debated process that took place until reaching the brilliant final result: the first project, requested presumably by Le Corbusier, was devised to have aligned palm trees on the ground floor and well tidy squared long beds on the garden-terrace; in the second sketch, already supervised by Lúcio Costa, the first rounded shapes appear, although not so charming as the ones contained in the third built project; here sinuous shapes acquire definitive form, where natives specimens are spread along a vast pattern of different shades of green, red and yellow. By possessing bright hues, different from those found in a royal garden, Roberto's palette possess, by itself, the intrinsic value of a work of art in the best tradition of informal abstractionism.

Following Gestalt principles, Roberto's drawings of gardens at the time did not have a separation between figure and background; they interchange, depending on the way we look at them. One may perceive the colored surface that demarcates the planted areas or privilege to view the bending blank space, which defines the several existing pathways. In the former case, abstract irregular shapes like amoebas are made visible. On the other hand, when focusing on the paths, the impression one gets is that of a liquid that melted and found a twisted way through the obstructing obstacles.

When flying over the South American continent, Le



Corbusier was very impressed by the winding river routes and their estuaries. In his book, named *Précisions*, the author of *Le Poème de l'angle droit* described that vision as a metaphor to express the need to substitute the lingering natural order by another rational straight, fast and pure order. After the master's return to the Old Continent, Valerie Frasier made a conjecture about how the landscaper had despised drawings that depicted aligned palm trees upon flat soil.⁷ As a sweet revenge, based on the information contained in *Précisions*, he argued: "with Burle Marx's gardens, Brazil has recovered its own flora and topography in order to embrace the contradictions of the barbarian, however ours."

Besides his geographical journeys, one other kind of voyage was crucial for Roberto Burle Marx's professional trajectory: the shifting of painting principles to the discipline of garden composition. As a painter, drawer, engraver, sculptor, ceramicist, scenographer, musician, jeweler, and of course landscaper, Marx was a complete artist. Within this polyhedral humanism, his painter and landscaper sides remained especially inseparable. His status as a painter helped him transplant logics and forms of artistic vanguard into gardens, therefore molding a unique and modern aesthetic of nature's plastic organization. Although today our concept of painting is very broad, it is still impressive to witness the contemporaneity of his words: "I decided to use the natural topography as a surface for composition and nature's elements—minerals, vegetables—as materials to plastically organize, similar to what a painter does when using a canvas, paint and brushes."⁸ Besides the sinuousness of the elements, one of his major contributions was to use continuous splotches of color, therefore substituting the existing miscellaneous colored flowerbeds and gardens.

Despite the visual harmony that permeates his work, it would be misleading to regard his landscaping as a simple translation of his painting. Firstly, it is important to stress that in the 1930s and 1940s, while beautiful figures prevailed in his canvas, abstractionism had already influenced his terraces and public squares projects. Secondly, his painting theory concepts would be worthless if it were not for his deep botanical knowledge of species.

Figure 3. **Roberto Burle Marx**, project for the terrace garden. **Oscar Niemeyer, Lúcio Costa, Affonso Reidy** and team, consultation by Le Corbusier, Ministry of Education and Health, Rio de Janeiro, 1938. Gouache on paper, 52 x 105.5 cm. Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda.

Figure 4. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Untitled, 1992. Acrylic on canvas, 132.5 x 134 cm. Collection Jardim Botânico do Rio de Janeiro. Photos by Cesar Barreto.



To understand soil adaptation, climate, odor, volume and appearance during the various stages of vegetal specimens' existence is crucial to create the unstable and yet permanent landscape compositions. No pictorial expression could replace the feeling of walking along the various tones, textures, noises, lights and shadows of plants, stones and waters of Burle Marx's gardens.

Painting and landscaping are a continuous flux in Roberto's art, without one diminishing the other: "Each specialty calls for a specific technique and a means of expression. As a result, I struggle a lot: I do not wish to make a painting that resembles a garden. However, there is no doubt in my mind that painting and all its artistic problems have influenced my own concept of art. During my life, I have strived not to confine myself to one formula. I hate formulas. I love principles."⁹

The resounding success of the landscaper contributed to eclipse, in a sense, his abstract vigorous painting. However, an examination of his overall visual artwork, which was assembled at his commemorating hundredth anniversary exhibition, corrected this distortion and made it clear that he was in fact an important figure in Brazilian art: his scattered brushstrokes sometimes generously and amply spread across the surface and define colored areas; at other times, his grand gestures contrast with detailed sections within large shapes. Both series of engravings and black and white drawings demonstrate that the quality of his work does not solely reside in the excellence of his vibrant chromatic palette. In some of his 1950s works, it is clear that constructivism was beginning to take its first steps until it became the mainstream of national art. Rigid geometry was not surely his favorite means of expres-



Figure 5. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo, 1953 (partially done).

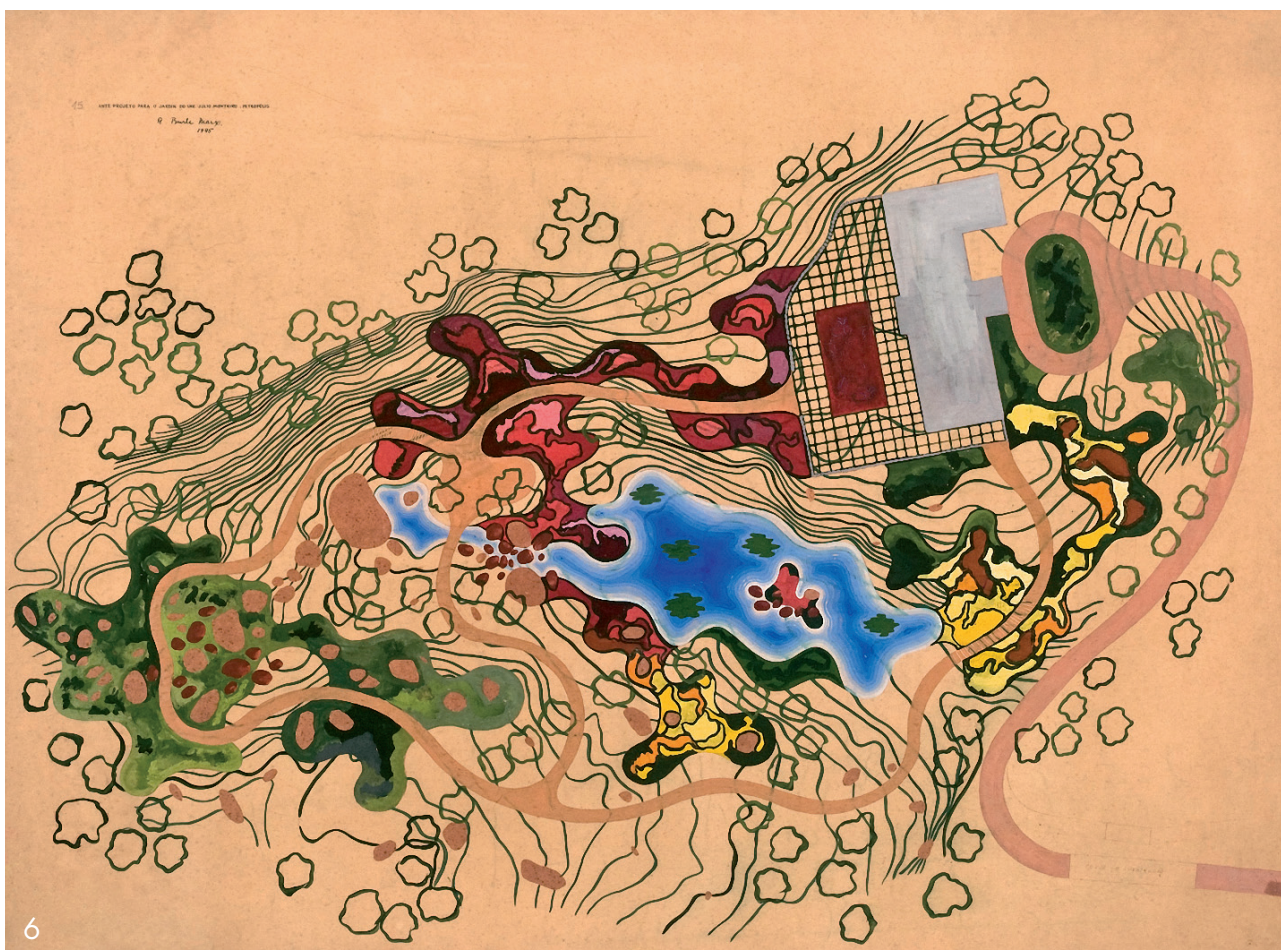
Plan. Automotive painting on Eucatex, 122 x 150 cm.
Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda.

Figure 6. **Roberto Burle Marx**, country house for Odette and Julio Monteiro, 1948. Project. Gouache.

Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda. Photos by Cesar Barreto.

sion. As far as containment is concerned, Roberto used to say that it was fundamental to a painter to know when to stop and recognize a finished work. However, he also believed that this idea should not translate in being afraid to be daring. With a rich personality, he would rather risk being excessive than to stop due to fear or shyness. Especially in landscaping, this boldness was framed by a careful selection and exclusion of elements: "we must have the courage to reject elements that seem beautiful but do not bring the desired outcome when associated with others. An apprentice tends to use everything he is familiar with. As a result, he will create a cluster of plants and not a garden, a work of art."¹⁰

Two aspects were central to Roberto Burle Marx's success: his botanical knowledge and his management of an entire garden as a single aesthetic element. These two qualities are inseparable throughout his work: his ecological knowledge allowed him not only to predict the growth of specimens, but above all, to choose cohesive sets of plants that unfold and dialogue harmoniously between themselves, with others sets and with minerals and water. By also being organized according to other aesthetic criteria such as mass, volume texture and color, this sys-



tem forms an indivisible whole. As el-Dahdah observed: "What Burle Marx proposes in his work is what the French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson once referred as *continuous multiplicities*, which are shaped by several temporal heterogeneous forces and cannot be divided into constituents."¹¹

In Burle Marx's definition, landscaping was a planned organization of the natural elements: a human cultural intervention in the existing world. An action analogous with the actions of the Neolithic man: "to change the topographic nature in order for human existence to adapt individually and collectively, functionally and pleurably."¹² By being aware of economic issues but averse to reductionisms which ignored the symbolic dimension, Burle Marx argued that landscaping should attend to "an aesthetic need which is neither luxury nor waste, but an absolute human life need, without which civilization itself would lose its aesthetic reason."¹³

The garden is neither a mirror nor a copy of nature, since it acts differently and independently from Man's concepts. For the author of Parque do Flamengo, the planned garden should establish a constant mediation with the landscape so as to produce echoes, contrasts

or even havens like microclimates, when needed within a city or a hostile environment. Not only plants were used to craft a garden: stones, lakes, streams, waterfalls, animal life, constructions in the shape of panels, granite gables, sculptures and stone Portuguese pavements.

Although a great innovator, he despised his work to be criticized, as above all, he valued originality: "My own philosophical concept of constructed landscape is based on the historical direction of all eras, recognizing in each period, the expression of aesthetic thought which manifests in other art forms. In this sense, my work reflects modernity and the moment in time of its creation, however it never loses sight of the reasons of tradition, which are valid and required."¹⁴

With rare judgment, Burle Marx understood that garden compositions were lagged when compared with the aesthetic principles of the new paintings. He established a unique dialogue between both disciplines and uses the horizontal organization of abstract painting as a starting point for the layout of gardens species.



Figure 7. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Painted tissues, 1980s-1990s.
 Show "Burle Marx: 100 years, the permanence of the instable" at Paço Imperial.
 Collection Janete Costa (longest tapestry) and
 Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda (other tapestries).
 Photo by Cesar Barreto.

Notes

1. Burle Marx lived with several architects of the first modern generation, had Costa as his mentor and studied architecture for one year.
2. Apud Rosana Vaccarino, "Correspondência de tempo e instabilidade dos Jardins", na página 161 do livro *Roberto Burle Marx 100 anos: a permanência do instável*, organizado por Lauro Cavalcanti e Farès el-Dahdah (Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2009).
3. "Manifesto da poesia do pau-brasil". Em Oswald de Andrade. *Do pau-brasil à antropofagia e às utopias. Obras Completas 6* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1972, p. 10).
4. Trecho retirado de depoimento de Roberto Burle Marx a Soraia Cals para o filme: *Eu, Roberto Burle Marx*. Direção geral: Tamara Leftel; coordenação e reportagens: Soraia Cals, 1989.
5. Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *Latin American Architecture since 1945* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955, p. 35).
6. He was also an assistant of Alberto Guignard and a student of Mario de Andrade, in the carioca season of the author of *Macunaíma*.
7. "Canibalizando Le Corbusier: os jardins do MES de Burle Marx," in Cavalcanti and el-Dahdah, *Roberto Burle Marx 100 anos*.
8. "Conceitos de composição em paisagismo," in Cavalcanti and el-Dahdah, *Roberto Burle Marx 100 anos*, 77.
9. Interview with Susy Melo, published in the exhibition catalog *43 anos de pintura*, curated by Lélia Coelho Frota in the Museu de Arte da Pampulha.
10. "Jardins residenciais," in José Tabacow (ed.), *Arte&Paisagem conferências escolhidas* (São Paulo: Studio Nobel, 1984), 103.
11. "Paisagens instáveis," in Cavalcanti and el-Dahdah, *Roberto Burle Marx 100 anos*, 110.
12. "Conceitos de composição em paisagismo," in Cavalcanti and el-Dahdah, *Roberto Burle Marx 100 anos*, 78.
13. Idem.
14. Idem, 77-78.

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Lauro Cavalcanti

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Figure 8. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Tapestries, c. 1970.
The largest is 26 x 3.3 meters, the other on the left is 2.75 x 5 meters.
Show "Burle Marx: 100 years, the permanence of the instable" at Paço Imperial.
Collection Burle Marx & Cia Ltda.
Photo by Cesar Barreto.

Art, Architecture and Public Space in New York, 1950 – 1970

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In the decades after World War II there was much discussion about the need for collaboration between the architect and artist either as embodied in one or as distinctly different creative talents working closely but creatively independently together. Many saw little actual collaboration and questioned the relationship artistically or saw art as a cover for otherwise bland architecture. However, architects like Wallace K. Harrison, Gordon Bunshaft, and others worked regularly with artists like Josef Albers, Isamu Noguchi, Gyorgy Kepes or Richard Lippold. While many of those art installations remain today, they are under constant pressure because of real estate changes, renovations or simply neglect.

By Theodore Prudon

THE two decades directly after World War II in New York City saw a great deal of interaction, theoretically and practically, between architects and artists. The work of many modern artists was incorporated in corporate office buildings, office complexes and public spaces constructed during that time period. What the precise working relationships were and the reason why these artworks were incorporated was a subject of some discussion then and, to some extent, remains so today. Whatever those discussions were, many are still *in situ* and in good condition but are not always fully appreciated or recognized by those owning the building or those walking past. As a practice art continues to be incorporated today and, probably, some of the same questions and dilemmas remain.

Artist and architect

One of the principal points of discussions in the 1940s and 1950s was about what the relationship between architects and artists should be and what the different creative responsibilities ought to be. In the theoretical discussions about art and architecture then the dialogue was frequently found to refer to earlier times when the skills were not separated (i.e. the architect/artist was one and the same person) or, if separate, the work process of the participants was seen as more integrated and collaborative. Art and architecture from the past was held up as the aesthetic and collaborative ideal that was to be achieved in the present time between architect and artist. In the dialogues the work of the architect/artist was seen as exemplified by such Renaissance or Mannerist sculptors like Michelangelo (1475–1564) and Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570) and the painter Giulio Romano (1499–1564). (figures 1, 2).¹ In terms of collaboration the building of the cathedrals was touted as the desired example or in the words of Walter Gropius (1883–1969): “True collaboration must start from scratch, the members of the group stimulating each other, conceiving the idea in mutual exchange as the builders of the old cathedrals

who were living at the site devoting their life to the task.”²

It is important to note that earlier distinctions between the architecture, arts or science disciplines were less formalized and crossovers between architecture and various other disciplines—not just design—were quite common. For instance, Christopher Wren (1632–1723), the architect of St. Paul’s Cathedral was trained as an astronomer and mathematician and William Thornton (1759–1828), the winner of the competition for the design of the US Capitol Building in Washington DC was trained as a physician before turning to architecture as his *métier*.

With the emergence of architecture as a more established discipline and the introduction of formal education and the establishment of licensing and registration requirements, the interdisciplinary crossovers become more difficult and less frequent. The impact of the professionalization is acknowledged in the literature and is reflected in the argument that the realities of practice and the complexity of architecture has necessitated a (technical) specialization beyond architecture as simply a visual or sculptural art. However, in spite of the emergence of architecture as a formalized discipline, which is only of recent vintage and in most countries dates from the nineteenth century, the examples of earlier periods are continued to be referred to but are probably only of limited value in reality. It is the inherent conflict between the desire for the relationships of the past and the realities of twentieth century practice that permeates the discussions.

In the early postwar years the consensus among architects and artists—while working together—seems to have been that little or no real collaboration existed nor that any true integration had taken place.³ The question as to what that collaboration or integration ought to be was never very clear and different points of view were offered. Walter Gropius in his essay “*The Curse of Conformity*” argues for the artist to be a full member of the design and creative production team. In his work in the Graduate Center at Harvard and later in the former PanAm Building (now MetLife Building) it would appear that artists



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Figure 1. **Giulio Romano**, Palazzo Te, Mantua, 1524-1534. Designed by Romano (1499-1546) for Federico II Gonzaga. Photo by Paolo Boni.

Figure 2. **Giulio Romano**, portrait of Alexander the Great. Private collection and copyright reserved.

Figure 3. **Gordon Bunshaft** (SOM), IBM Headquarters, Armonk, 1964. The north interior court and its sculptures named *Garden of the Future* is the work of Isamu Noguchi. Photo by Theodore Prudon.

Figure 4. **Gordon Bunshaft** (SOM), IBM Headquarters, Armonk, 1964. The design of the south interior court and its sculptures named *Garden of the Past* is the work of Isamu Noguchi. Photo by Theodore Prudon.



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were brought into the design process early but that the commissions had probably little influence on the actual design or layout of the spaces.⁴ In the discussion with other architects and artists Gropius still, extensively, quotes, Jean Gorin's *La Synthèse des arts majeurs est-elle possible?*: "Del Marie said in 1952 that the question was no longer one of ornamental polychromy, something decorative, something fundamentally sensory, which would harmonize with the styles of the centuries, but rather one of an architectural polychromy, sprung from the newest evolutions of painting and architecture, a modern polychromy, characterized by rationalism, the flagrant sign of our period. Architectural polychromy was not to be considered as an adjunct to architecture, to be more or less necessary at will; it could not let the color stand in a secondary position vis-à-vis the plan. Indeed, it did not relate to the plan but rather to space. It was not enough to put plaques of color on asbestos cement. The synthesis of the arts cannot consist in putting sculpture and painting in appropriate architectural locations or even natural ones, even when they are very appropriate, because that is, when all is said and done, nothing but the program of a museum. We believe that the true synthesis of the arts is to be found in the architectural work itself and commences from the first stages of the conception."⁵

The relationship between architect and artist in the creation of corporate and public spaces was interpreted differently, as is to be expected, by the three participating groups: architects, artists and general public. For instance, Ada-Louise Huxtable (b. 1921), the former architecture critic of *The New York Times*, argued that the incorporation of modern art into modern architecture was only intended to soften the austerity and blandness of modern buildings.⁶ Furthermore, in defining the role of the architect, she referred back to history and quotes Vitruvius: "Almost 2,000 years ago, Vitruvius said of the architect, 'It is by his judgment that all the work done by the other art is put to the test'."⁷

With regards to the position of the architect Peter Blake (1920–2006) expressed a somewhat similar point of view. He dismissed the Renaissance and Mannerist periods as precedent because those periods were 'autocratic' and no longer applicable. He also argued that because the structure—what he called point supported making a conceptual distinction between modern frame architecture and historic load bearing masonry construction—had become so important that the boundaries had to be set by the architect but he did advocate leaving as much freedom to the artists as possible while acknowledging that the divergence of opinions was a result of our democratic not autocratic society.⁸ Gropius once again, facing the realities of practice, agreed with that definition of the role

of the architect: "If architects should have deluded themselves and others into believing that they hold positions of autocratic leadership, they cannot be living in the world-know. Anybody who has undertaken to steer a client toward architectural solutions which would transcend the merely practical and economical approach knows that he will have his hands full without trying to add proposals for collaboration with painters and sculptors."⁹

Opinions among the artists are more diverse but did not necessarily appreciate the dominating role of the architect. Whether the display of their art was more important than the limitations placed on their work as some did suggest, some artists did not agree and did not their creativity limited in any form.¹⁰ According to Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988) the sculptors Henri Moore (1898–1986) and David Smith (1906–1965) did not want to accept any limitations, unlike himself who sought to work with the architect.¹¹ In his own words: "I have taken another attitude in that, as I think everything is relative in size and it's all a question of relative scale, I have come to feel that sculpture can only be of significance to architecture and to the space of human environment as something conclusive in relation to that space."

But even Noguchi towards the end of his life expressed his frustration with architects and began to echo some of the earlier criticism of art in public spaces: "To say that my work has been a collaborative effort is not, however, quite correct. I think that what most architects want from a sculptor is an embellishment, not exactly a collaboration with each making his own separate contributions."¹²

The sculptor Richard Lippold (1915–2002) went even a step further in that he sought the public, the spectator as the third collaborator in the execution: "A finished building with its sculpture, painting and other 'adornments', stands most successfully when it is 'incomplete', waiting like a poem, to be read. If the picture presented to the user is so complete as to exclude him, to be looked at from a distance, every detail of space, scale, and equipment so complete in itself that it substitutes for the man who would enter, then I believe that a true collaboration of 'three' has failed."¹³

Whatever their individual points of view, it would seem that a number of architects developed good working relationships with a number of artists and to whom they returned frequently when commissioning a work of art or installation in a particular location. In some instances those collaborations appeared to be more than a simple commission. Noguchi in particular seemed to have developed close collaborations with architects like Gordon Bunshaft (1909–1990) and Wallace K. Harrison (1895–1981), both of whom were modern art collectors and aficionados in their own right.¹⁴

In this period art, in the corporate and institutional context, was displayed in three ways: one, as sculpture in front of buildings on plazas and in gardens; two, as a sculptural application inside either freestanding or attached to walls or ceilings; and three, as paintings or murals applied to walls or even ceilings.

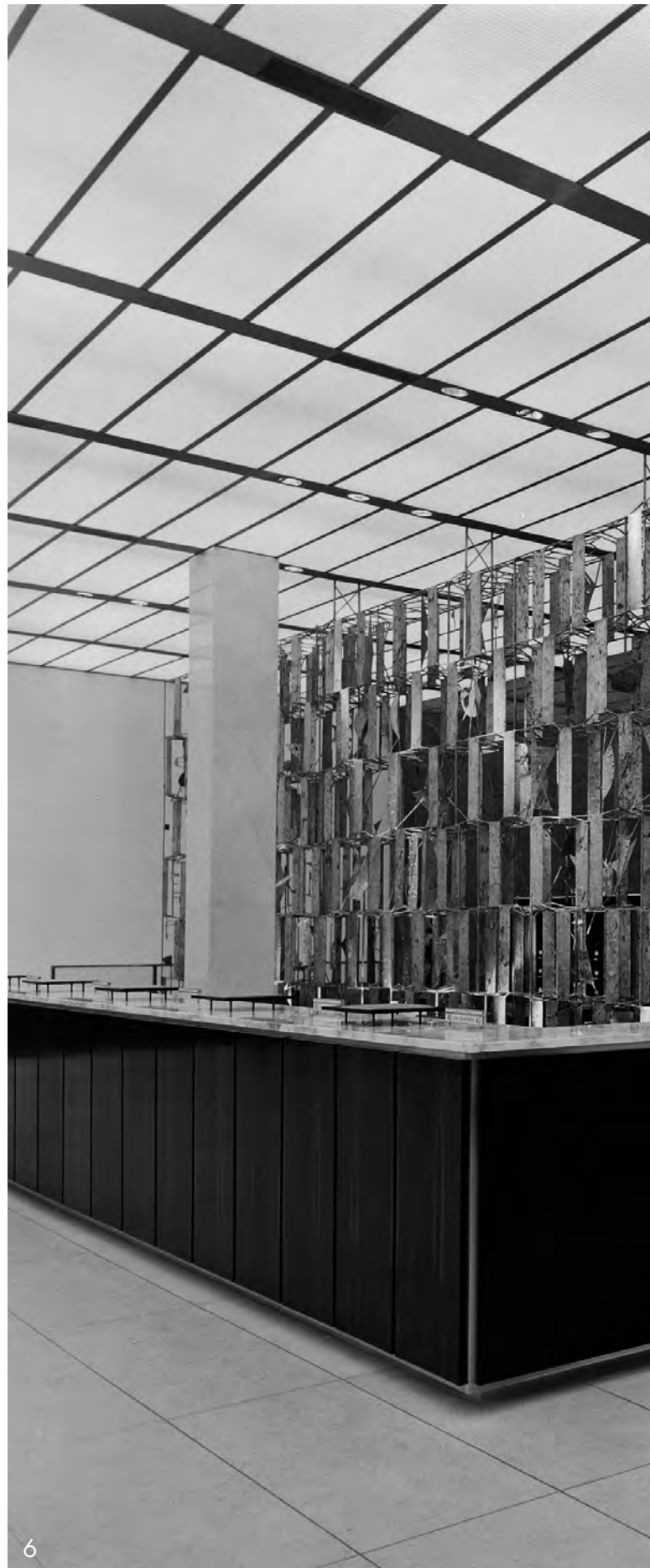
The use of sculpture in both plazas and gardens was quite widespread and in many locations appears to remain largely intact. For instance, Noguchi worked all across the United States and his work with Gordon Bunshaft of SOM in the interior courts of the original IBM Headquarters in Armonk is both sculpture and landscape (figures 3, 4)¹⁵ or the installation sunken in the plaza of the Chase Manhattan Building in lower Manhattan.¹⁶ In a few instances, in the corporate suburban settings, the entire surroundings of corporate facilities were turned into a sculpture park. However, the future of some of these complexes is in question as the business, the role and the position of the American corporation in society has substantially changed.¹⁷

In Manhattan itself many of the corporate buildings received lobbies and other spaces with art work installed mostly on walls. As noted the few architects designing these buildings seemed to have been working mostly with the same group of abstract artists, among them: Josef Albers (1888–1976), Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988),



Figure 5. **Gordon Bunshaft** (SOM), branch bank (formerly Manufacturers Trust and most recently Chase), New York, 1954. In the second floor banking hall a screen designed by **Harry Bertoia** is partially visible from the street. Photo by Theodore Prudon.

Figure 6. **Gordon Bunshaft** (SOM), branch bank (formerly Manufacturers Trust and most recently Chase), New York, 1954. The screen as installed originally by **Harry Bertoia** separated the bank's customers from the bank's officers. Photo by Ezra Stoller © Esto.







Harry Bertoià (1915–1978), Richard Lippold (1915–2002) and Gyorgy Kepes (1909–1989).

The former Manufacturer's Trust Company branch bank, 510 Fifth Avenue, designed by Gordon Bunshaft and completed in 1954, housed until recently a branch of Chase bank and was, at the time, considered an innovation in banking design.¹⁸ The metal and glass curtain wall made the entire interior transparent and the main vault was directly on the street and was opened daily for everyone to see (figure 5). This was in direct contrast to earlier banking design that with its heavy stone façades and metal grates symbolized the safety of the bank and its deposits. In the interior on the second floor the public banking hall was separated from the office space at the western end of the floor by one of Harry Bertoià's distinctive metal screens (figure 6). The screen, made of steel fused on the surface with bronze, copper and nickel, does remain and is partially visible from the street.¹⁹ However, the bank no longer occupies the building and the space at the end of 2009 was offered for lease as a "big box retail opportunity" making it unclear what will be the fate of the interior in general and the screen in particular.²⁰

The Tishman Building at 666 Fifth Avenue, designed by the corporate firm of Carson & Lundin and completed

in 1957, has in its lobby a wall installation by Isamu Noguchi called the "Waterfall" and a ceiling installation in the elevator lobbies with undulating white metal scrims that recall the rippling effect of water that was also intended to run on the ridged glass wall behind the vertical stainless steel scrims of the "Waterfall" in the main lobby (figures 7, 8).²¹ The original building plan had an arcade coming from Fifth Avenue towards the entrance and elevator core. The "Waterfall" was the focal point over the full width of that arcade and visible from Fifth Avenue. Both elements of the sculptural installation are in place but in a 1990s renovation, the arcade to Fifth Avenue was closed and converted to retail, a very valuable commodity on the avenue.²² The building is now only entered from the side streets, which has changed how the sculpture is approached and seen (obliquely rather than frontal when entering the building) and thus experienced differently. This installation is also different than many of the others in that it is not a mere installation but attempts to shape the entire environment suggesting a closer working relationship than an assignment to just fill the assigned space as was so often suggested for the work of these artists.

The Time Life Building on Avenue of the Americas, designed by Wallace Harrison then of the firm Harrison & Abramowitz & Harris, contains in its lobby the work of the major modern artists, Fritz Glarner (1899–1972) and Josef Albers (1888–1976). In the east corridor is a mural by Glarner, titled "Relational Painting #88", and in the west corridor is a low relief by Albers named "Portals". Both artworks are located on the wall of the core, which determined the dimensions of each from the very beginning. Glarner had initially prepared a *maquette* of his design for the two-story interior of the Time Inc. Reception Center but a reduced version was installed in the lobby.²³ The multi-colored geometric mural remains. Harrison had known Albers since the 1930s and worked with him also on the white marble relief titled "Two Constellations" in the lobby of the Corning Glass Works Building on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. "Portals" in its geometry is reminiscent of the studies "Homage to the Square" and is made from strips and plates of nickel, and beige and white Carrara glass with the intent, according to Albers's own words, to "create a surface of receding squares, which, in two dimensions, gives a sense of depth to the wall."²⁴ The two other elements distinctive in this lobby are the floor with its swirling terrazzo pattern, most likely inspired by Brazilian examples, and the dark maroon ceiling made of glass tiles and incorporating the lighting. In the renovation of the lobby of the building the murals remained and the ceiling was carefully restored.²⁵

Probably one of the most interesting cases is presented



Figure 7. **Carson & Lundin**, office building, New York, 666 Fifth Avenue, 1957. A wall installation designed by **Isamu Noguchi** (c. 1956–1958) and titled *Waterfall* faced the Fifth Avenue entrance originally. The sculpture remains in the same location but, because the original entrance was converted into retail, the sculpture is seen somewhat than intended by **Noguchi**.

Figure 8. **Carson & Lundin**, office building, New York, 666 Fifth Avenue, 1957. The sculpture named *Waterfall* is accompanied by a ceiling design, also by **Isamu Noguchi** (c. 1956–1958), suggesting the movement of water. The ceiling remains in its original location.

Photos from The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York.



Figure 9. **Emory Roth & Sons** (architects of record), in collaboration with **Walter Gropius** and **Pietro Belluschi** (design consultants), former PanAm Building (now MetLife Building), New York, 1963. The mural *Manhattan*, designed by **Josef Albers**, shown here in its original location over the escalators into Grand Central Terminal, was removed in a 2002 lobby renovation and placed in storage, where it remains awaiting restoration and reinstallation in an appropriate location. Photo © The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation.

by the artwork in the former PanAm Building, now MetLife Building. A well-documented history of the collaboration between the architects of record Emory Roth & Sons with Walter Gropius and Pietro Belluschi (1899–1994) as design consultants is particularly of interest because it addresses the participation of several major artists.²⁶ Josef Albers, Richard Lippold and Gyorgy Kepes were invited as early as December 1960 to participate, almost three



years before the building was completed in 1963. Albers created a large mural named "Manhattan" over the escalators into Grand Central Terminal (figure 9), Richard Lippold did one of his wire sculptures in the Vanderbilt Street lobby and Gyorgy Kepes designed aluminum screens around the information desk. Upon completion the building itself was greatly disliked by the general public.²⁷ As a result since 1963 the lobby spaces have seen

two renovations, first in 1987 when the modernist décor was substantially changed into what could be best called neo-Egyptian and a subsequent renovation in 2002 that removed the 1987 additions and returned a more modernist architectural vocabulary.

With the 2002 renovation the Albers mural was dismantled by the building owners with the stated intent of creating more light access in that end of the building. The

mural has remained in storage with the intent of being reinstalled in some other location or to serve as a model for a reconstructed version elsewhere. This outcome was by no means satisfactory.²⁸ On the other hand the Richard Lippold sculpture has remained in its prominent location in the Vanderbilt Avenue lobby and was carefully restored.²⁹

From the few examples reviewed it would seem that most of the artwork has survived reasonably well in the different locations so far in spite of real estate and management pressures. The preservation issues, however, remain quite complex as some of the case studies demonstrate not only because of the difficulty in maintaining and restoring the actual artwork but also in respecting its original intent and context. Where the removal of the Albers mural in Grand Central raises the question of how

important the location is if the artwork is to be considered site specific and not just a 'painting on the wall', the reorientation of the lobby entrances at 666 Fifth Avenue maintains the sculpture but changes its experience entirely.

Not surprisingly the debate about the integration of the arts into architecture continues unabated in the next generation of architects and focuses today not as much on the collaborative aspect but more on individuals seeing themselves as both architects and artists and claiming that earlier tradition. Michael Graves (b. 1934), Frank Gehry (b. 1929), Frank Stella (b. 1936) and others make that point when discussing their work.³⁰ Or in the words of Graves: "No one ever would have thought to ask Raphael if he were a painter or a sculptor or an architect. I don't make a great distinction between those aspects of my work."³¹

Notes

1. Reference to the work of these early artists is made in about all the publications and articles from the postwar period dealing with the collaboration or the perceived lack thereof between architects and artists.
2. See the article documenting a conversation (arranged by John E. Burchard) between Pietro Belluschi, Harry Bertoia, Reg Butler, Eduardo Chillida, Jimmy Ernst, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Richard Lippold, Walter Netsch, Irene Rice Pereira, José Luis Sert, "Views on Art and Architecture: A Conversation," *Daedalus*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (1960): 73.
3. The architects and artists Pietro Belluschi, Harry Bertoia, Reg Butler, Eduardo Chillida, Jimmy Ernst, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Richard Lippold, Walter Netsch, Irene Rice Pereira, José Luis Sert extensively discuss the relationship between architect and artists, all expressing a great of dissatisfaction. See "Views on Art and Architecture: A Conversation": 62-73.
4. As quoted in Meredith L. Clausen, *The PanAm Building and the Shattering of the Modernist Dream* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 141. Clausen also refers to a New York Times' article that marvels at how much leeway the artists were given in the design of murals and sculptures. The book is a comprehensive study of how the building came about, its significance and the subsequent perceptions.
5. See "Views on Art and Architecture: A Conversation": 62-73. For the text of the quote Gropius refers to his own mimeographed copy.
6. See Ada-Louise Huxtable, "Art with Architecture: New Terms of an Old Alliance," *New York Times* (September 13, 1959).
7. Ibid. As also quoted in Clausen, *The PanAm Building*, 142.
8. See Peter Blake, "Architecture: Plain or Fancy?", *Design Quarterly* (Walker Art Center) 30 (1954): 23-27. This is one of the few publications at the time that makes a direct reference to the work of Le Corbusier. He illustrates his article with images of the rooftop of the Unité d'habitation in Marseilles.
9. See "Views on Art and Architecture: A Conversation": 73.
10. See the introduction by Henry-Russell Hitchcock in *SOM Architecture of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill 1950-1962* (New York,

Washington: Frederick Praeger, 1963), 13 where he suggests that most independent painters rather see their work on the walls of public spaces than in closed private collections.

11. See Isamu Noguchi, "The Sculptor and the Architect," *Studio International* 176 (1968): 18-22. He writes that Moore and Smith "despise" architects but he himself is different, which he believes was the result of his work with Martha Graham for whom he designed a number of stage sets.
12. As quoted in Elizabeth Dean Hermann, "La collaborazione di Wallace K. Harrison e Isamu Noguchi," *Casabella* 66, 701 (June 2002). On pages 106-107 is the English summary of the article.
13. See "Views on Art and Architecture: A Conversation": 70.
14. With Bunshaft Noguchi did work on a substantial number of commissions, ranging from an installation in the Lever House courtyard (not executed) to the courtyards of Chase Manhattan, Connecticut General and IBM. For an overview of his landscape and courtyard designs, see Martin Friedman, "Noguchi's Imaginary Landscapes," *Design Quarterly* (Walker Art Center) 106/107 (1978): 1-3-99. With Harrison his collaboration had started with work in Rockefeller Center. See Victoria Newhouse, *Wallace K. Harrison, architect* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1989), 154-159. It is interesting to note that the book mentions Noguchi only once. Harrison and Noguchi worked closely on two houses for William A.M. Burden, one in Westchester and one in North Harbor, Maine. See Dean Hermann, "La collaborazione di Wallace K. Harrison e Isamu Noguchi," 56-67. In the house in Maine Noguchi was deeply involved in shaping the space to capture the reflections of light and movement of the water, a theme that was also present in other work including the Waterfall in the Tishman Building and the various fountains he designed. However, it appears that in the literature Harrison got the entire credit for the design of the house and Noguchi was only recognized for some pieces of furniture. The house in North Harbor burned down but was reconstructed recently resembling as closely as possible the original. See Heinrich Hermann, "'Sea Change': re-creation as preservation, coast of Maine," *Int/AR: Interventions/Adaptive Use* 1 (Autumn 2009).

15. See "IBM Headquarters Building [Armonk, N.Y.]," *Arts and Architecture* 82 (1965): 34–35. The courtyards are described in the article as: "The two gardens are heavy with symbolism. According to Noguchi, the south garden's naturalist setting of trees and rocks represent man's past; the north garden symbolizes man's future in science and space. The abstract bronze sculpture balanced precariously in defiance of gravity in the center of the north garden, represents the intertwining of genes linking man to his past. Both gardens are 70 x 165'."
16. The installation is described as: "Set in a glass-walled well 16 ft below the plaza level, the 'water garden', as Noguchi calls it, consists of a 60-ft diameter pool, fountain, sinuously patterned paving of granite cubes, and seven basalt rocks selected from the bottom of the Uji River in Japan. Noguchi has placed these rocks atop rises in the topography of the composition, recalling the traditional Japanese garden creations of the seas, islands, and mountains in miniature." See "A Lung for New York's Financial District," *Progressive Architecture* 45 (1964): 214–215. Because the sculpture is below the level of the plaza, it is only visually accessible from that level but can also be seen from the branch bank and lobby on the level below the plaza.
17. For an overview of some of those suburban locations, see, for instance, David W. Dunlap, "The Office as Architectural Touchstone," *New York Times* (March 2, 2008).
18. See "Modern architecture breaks through the glass barrier," *Architectural Forum* 101, 12 (December 1954): 104.
19. For a description of the screen and its construction, see "Metal Sculpture-Harry Bertoia," *Arts and Architecture* 72, 1 (January 1952): 18–19.
20. The building is designated a New York City Landmark.
21. For a description of the original installation, see "Unusual Design For Office Lobby: Sculptor to Do Layout for Entrance to Skyscraper at 666 Fifth Avenue," *New York Times* (January 15, 1956) or Glenn Fowler, "Work of Noted Artists Graces Office Building Lobbies," *New York Times* (August 17, 1958).
22. There was some question at the time whether the sculpture would be changed. See David W. Dunlap, "50's Tower to Be Fitted for 90's Retail," *New York Times* (October 15, 1997).
23. See NYC Landmark Preservation Commission Designation Report, Designation List 338, LP 2119, 6, which states: "To convince Luce that a work of art would be preferable, 'art loving Wally Harrison' built a scale model of the reception center to illustrate various solutions: When all was quiet, the overhead lights were dimmed, the lights in the model went up and Voila! – there all glowing in all its pristine glory was Mr. Glarner's sketch." In this context it is interesting to note the increased use of models and mockups for corporate presentations of designs and design concepts, see Alexandra Lange, "This Year's Model: Representing Modernism to the Post-war American Corporation," *Journal of Design History* 19, 3 (2006): 233–255.
24. As quoted in NYC Landmark Preservation Commission Designation Report, Designation List 338, LP 2119, 6.
25. See David Dunlap, "Press 'L' for Landmark; Time & Life Lobby, a 50's Gem, Awaits Recognition," *New York Times* (June 17, 2002).
26. For a discussion of the selection, interaction and collaboration between the owner, architect and artists, see Clausen, *The PanAm Building*, 141–153.
27. See Richard David Story, "The Buildings New Yorkers Love to Hate," *New York Magazine* (June 15, 1987): 32. The PanAm Building was number one.
28. Carol Vogel, "A Familiar Mural Finds Itself Without a Wall," *New York Times* (July 9, 2001).
29. Eve M. Kahn, "Wired: Preserving the Installations of Richard Lippold," *New York Times* (January 9, 2009).
30. See, for instance, Richard Lacayo, "Frank Stella: The Artist as Architect," *Time* (July 17, 2007) or Benjamin Genocchio, "Architect as Artist," *New York Times* (November 23, 2008), where the writer comments: "I get the feeling that with these sketches, not to mention museum exhibitions, he has an eye on posterity, self-consciously creating a paper trail that reinforces for the viewer the idea of art and individual artistry as the basis of his buildings."
31. See Marilyn Bethany, "Design: The Architect as Artist," *New York Times* (April 25, 1982).

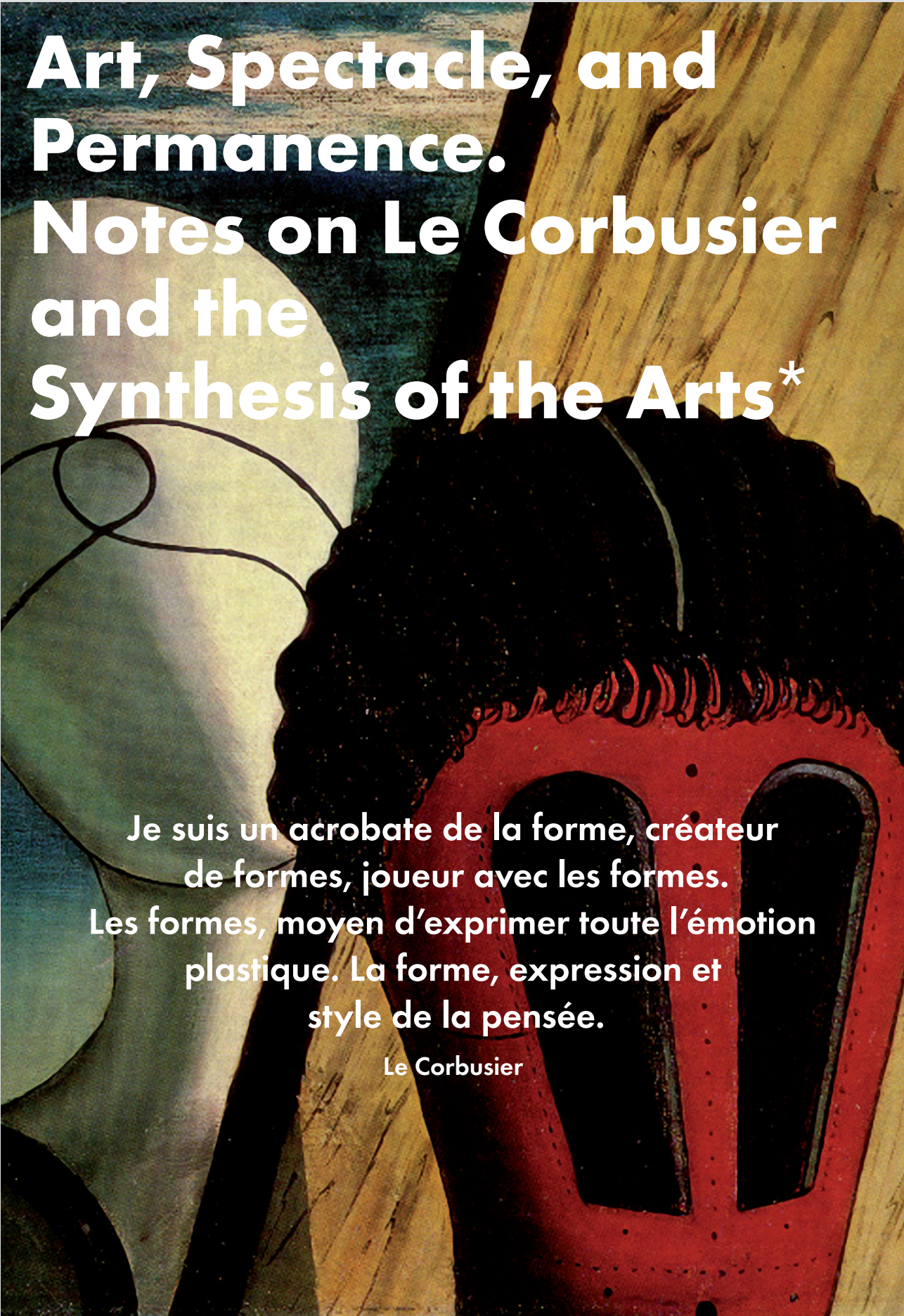
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Art, Spectacle, and Permanence. Notes on Le Corbusier and the Synthesis of the Arts*

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**Je suis un acrobate de la forme, créateur
de formes, joueur avec les formes.
Les formes, moyen d'exprimer toute l'émotion
plastique. La forme, expression et
style de la pensée.**

Le Corbusier

In the light of contemporary architecture, last century's emblematic 'artist-architect' may appear at once disquietingly prophetic and almost surrealistically antiquarian. This essay explores the hypothesis that Le Corbusier's ultimate passion was the museum, and his ultimate dream that of being assigned a key place in the history of art. Though this may sound simple enough—perhaps trivial—it may help re-organizing a very well-known (but also partly unknown) body of knowledge on the master and to understand better the paradox of the continuing presence in current architectural discussions.

By Stanislaus von Moos

THE trend towards the spectacularization of architecture and design as "art" has become a key aspect of today's visual culture. In the light of this situation the architecture of Le Corbusier presents an irritating paradox: depending on one's own prejudice (and on the work under examination) the built legacy of the last century's emblematic 'artist-architect' may appear at once disquietingly prophetic and almost surrealistically antiquarian.

Even an uncompromisingly 'contemporary' work like Saint-Pierre in Firminy, completed by José Oubrière, a former assistant, forty years after Le Corbusier's death, confirms this condition (figure 2). At first sight, the solid truncated cone in gray concrete that emerges from a quadrangular base, encircled by a ramp that leads up to an abstract *propylon*, strikes the visitor not as a "church" but as a distinctly aesthetic artifice — a piece of *archi-sculpture*. As architecture, the building refers to a typological genealogy that is distinctly more Corbusean than religious: while the key idea of the project goes back, ultimately, to an early idea for a church in Le Tremblay, near Paris (1929), the more immediate references are secular. Among them, the Assembly Building at Chandigarh, whose Upper Chamber in the form of a cooling tower and whose Lower Chamber in the form of an inclined pyramid appear to be combined in the Firminy cone, is the most obvious reference.

Further implied in the space and its astral symbolism (circular wholes in the east façade evoke the constellation of Orion) are archetypal reminiscences of tomb and chimney that more than anything else evoke Aldo Rossi's universe, even though the metamorphic (almost "blob") shape of the cone as such suggests a will to break loose from such Mediterranean predicaments of "permanence".

The story of the project can be summarized by saying that the building was designed as a church, yet built as an annex to a museum — in fact, as a branch of the *Musée d'Art Contemporain* in Saint-Étienne. The transaction as such has been described elsewhere and is perhaps of only circumstantial interest. Yet its deeper cultural significance lingers just skin-deep beneath the surface. Si-

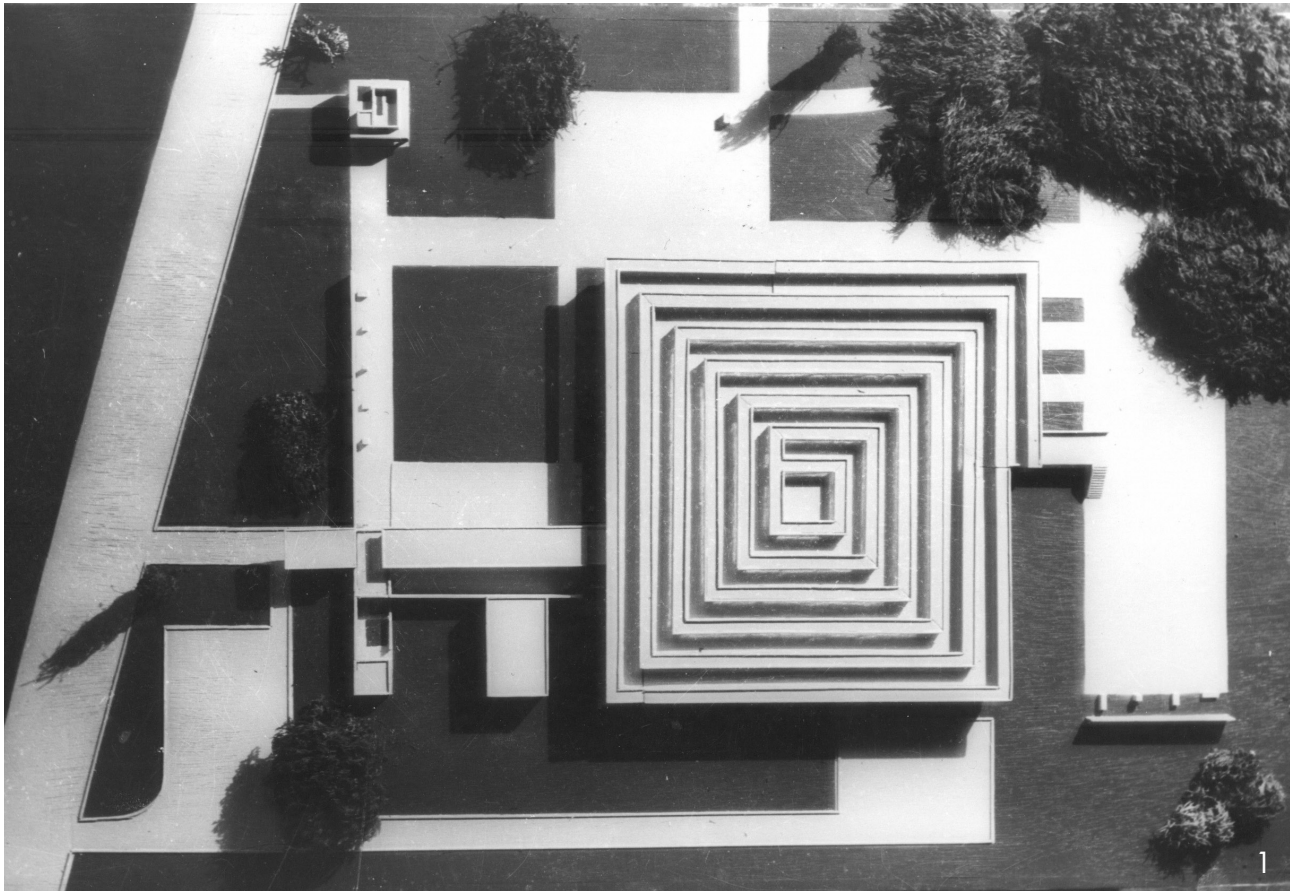
lently but irrevocably, the project's original vocation as a religious shrine has been redefined in terms of a secular religion — the cult of the museum, if not, ultimately, of tourism. At some distance of the entrance, Oubrière has created a pit made of concentrically arranged beams. Is it a coincidence that this piece of garden sculpture in the shape of an inverted ziggurat with its concentric steps recalls the spiraling 'enfilade' of the *musée à croissance illimitée* that, like "our life on earth . . . never returns upon itself" (figure 1). In fact, a few steps away, the spiral of the access ramp begins as part of a *continuum* of shifting surfaces engaged in an up — and inward — movement that is, ultimately, the spatial key idea of the project.

Only slightly modified, the form of the pit could thus be a fitting "logo", both for the morphology of the 'church' as such, its destination as a museum, and for Le Corbusier's second nature as a museum architect. But in the end, the symbolism might even apply to the *œuvre* at large and the process by which it has become part, in recent decades, of a frenzy business of preservation, restoration, display and even reconstruction — in fact nothing so much as another potential "museum of unlimited growth".

Exhibition architect?

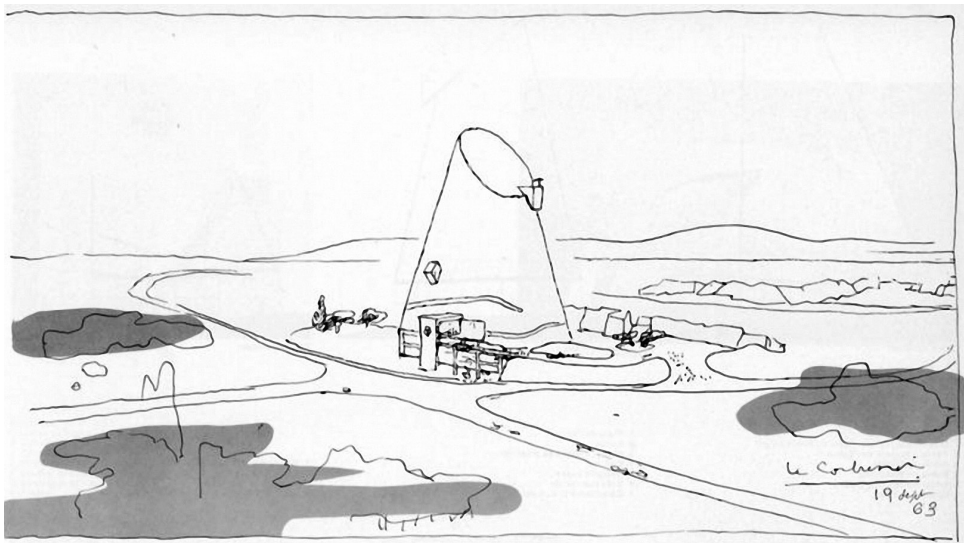
The term "exhibition artist" has become a useful tool towards an understanding of the cultural dynamics of modern art. It highlights the competitive structure of the art market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its salons, galleries and museums, and suggests that competition, scandal and media scoops have become constituent factors of what we call the "system" of modern art. Though not totally absent in the world of pre-modern court patronage, this system has drawn the artist into a whirlpool of increasingly demanding expectations of self-exposure. It forced him into the posture of the harlequin. It made him become an acrobat.

In his chapter on "Grandville or the World Exhibitions" (in *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*) Walter Benjamin describes the structures and transparent surfaces of these cathedrals of nineteenth century industrialism and



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Figure 1. **Le Corbusier** and **Pierre Jeanneret**, *Musée à croissance illimitée*, Philippeville Algeria, 1939. Model of the project. Photo from Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

Figure 2. **Le Corbusier**, Saint-Pierre Church at Firminy, France, 1963.

Figure 3. **Le Corbusier**, "Here academism says: No!" Illustration from Le Corbusier, *La Ville radieuse* (1934).

Figure 4. **Le Corbusier** and **Pierre Jeanneret**, Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau, Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1925. Photo from Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

capitalism and the ways both the *towuhaboho* of consumer goods and their architectural envelopes have shaped the age's 'exhibition mentality'. Speaking of 'modern architecture', an interest in the world fairs has been part of its mythology for more than seventy-five years. In *Bauen in Frankreich*, the first among Sigfried Giedion's seminal books on modern architecture (and one of Benjamin's source texts), the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, is presented as an immediate predecessor to the modern architecture of the 1920s.

The idea that these "pilgrimage sanctuaries of the fetish merchandise" are a prime workshop of architectural modernity has since remained an *idée fixe* in modernist historiography. Though Le Corbusier has often used the Eiffel Tower as a combined logo of the spirit of modernity and of Paris (figure 3), his work has never really been placed in this context. And yet, even a superficial glance at his work reveals that fairs have been the stage for some of his most extravagant projects. Whenever commissions for fair pavilions came along, they forced him to re-define the rules of the game. However he was not alone in this respect. Bruno Taut had built a glass pavilion and

Walter Gropius a model factory at the Werkbund Exhibition in Cologne, in 1914 (which Le Corbusier incidentally visited as a student), and Mies consumed the mystical union of "exhibitionism" and modern architecture with the Barcelona Pavilion at the World's Fair of 1929. Yet no less than the Barcelona Pavilion, the first among Le Corbusier's exhibition buildings, the *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau* at the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris, 1925 is a signal building for modern architecture altogether (figure 4). A similar claim can be made for the *Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux* which was built at the Paris World's Fair, 1937, and thus coincides in time and place with the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic. Not by coincidence, it was another world's fair, Brussels International Exhibition of 1958, that provoked a singularly extravagant variation of long forgotten themes of architectural expressionism, anticipating the neo-expressionist fantasies of the 1990s. As with the *Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux*, the Fair once again served as a trigger for a phenomenal display of imagery: what had been previously stored as a *musée imaginaire* in books was turned into spectacle. By the time the Philips Pavilion opened, Le Corbusier (assisted



by the composer Yannis Xenakis) had redefined the program in such a way as to appear as the sole author of the operation, filling the aluminum-clad “stomach”-building with an audio-visual spectacle that mixes atomic age science-fiction with the existential anxieties of naked man (figure 5).



Grand Tourism, Museum, and Mass Culture

Beatriz Colomina has reminded us that modern architecture was first of all a giant media operation — like war. And that, perhaps, Le Corbusier’s *Œuvre complète* is more real as a series of books (as a “*boîte-en-valise*,” to evoke Duchamp), than as a reality in space and time. Decades earlier, Marshall McLuhan had insisted that, following the dynamic of the “Gutenberg Galaxy,” a ‘new’ medium has no choice but to begin its life cycle by incorporating the form and the contents of the previous one.¹ If McLuhan is right, Le Corbusier’s energy as a mass-multiplicator of concepts and forms, was all the more formidable as it was based on an almost boundless live-stock of raw materials pertaining to traditional “art.”

It is proverbial that young Charles-Édouard Jeanneret despised architects and cherished the idea of becoming a painter, thoroughly frustrated by the master’s verdict “just draw, that’s enough.” Gaining familiarity with the universe of ‘art’ had been the prime incentive behind the Grand Tour, the series of voyages undertaken during the formative years (1907–1917). When Le Corbusier visited Florence and Venice in 1907, at the age 20, he not merely experienced as an observer the birth pangs of the by now universal trend towards subjecting art, industry, and ultimately even religion to the logic of tourism, spec-

tacle, and entertainment. As a visitor to these sites, as a collector of objects and postcards, as a commentator of the things seen, he was part of this process — unwillingly, but ingeniously. In such a way, he practiced tourism as an authentic art form, producing sketches, watercolors and photographs of the sites and of museums visited along the way that could easily fill a small museum — and that in fact filled many of his books.

In a McLuhan-ite sense, this stock of imagery only waited to be channeled into other media, architecture being just one of them. Anyone might have predicted that once Jeanneret had ran into Amédée Ozenfant, a painter and a notorious art critic and publicist, the two would found a magazine — which is exactly what happened a few months afterwards. The result was probably the most far-reaching re-conceptualization of architecture and life style as a media operation that was ever undertaken.

L’Esprit Nouveau and Life-Style Marketing

With the concept of the “ready made”, i.e. by redefining art as a question of context and display, and thus, ultimately, as a technique of *exhibition*, Marcel Duchamp can be said to have subverted the aesthetic culture of his time. *L’Esprit Nouveau* had no such radicalism on its mind, yet it knew how to exploit the paradigm pragmatically as an editorial technique and how to re-insert it into the everyday. Browsing through the title pages of Le Corbusier’s articles in *L’Esprit Nouveau*, one is first of all confronted with materials that echo earlier fascinations with industry, folklore, and high art. Amplified by techniques of journalistic abstraction, slapstick, and slang, these images both exploit, serve and parody the everyday of the marketplace. Critics were driven crazy by the visual jargon of these demonstrations.

The House as Museum

Given the *Esprit Nouveau*’s interest in art and in the culture of museums, it comes as no surprise that Le Corbusier’s first important commission in Paris was literally an exhibition building — in fact a home defined as a private museum. As if by chance, this building — i.e. the *Maison La Roche-Jeanneret* (1923–1924) — today is the home of the institution that preserves and also promotes Le Corbusier’s heritage, the *Fondation Le Corbusier* (figure 6). Thus it is both an exhibit and an archive, a museum and a library as well as an art gallery. Only its original purpose as a house fell by the wayside.

Once La Roche had agreed to let Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret design a house for his collection (which itself had been partly gathered by Le Corbusier and Ozenfant), the ambition was obviously to arrive at something more than a neutral envelope. In fact, with the La



Figure 5. **Le Corbusier**, "Poème électronique", Philips Pavilion, Brussels World Fair, 1958.

Figure 6. **Le Corbusier** and **Pierre Jeanneret**, La Roche House, Paris, 1923-1924. View of the gallery wing with paintings by **Ozenfant**, **Picasso** and **Gris** from Raoul La Roche's collection. Photo by Fred Boissonas (Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris).

Figure 7. **Fernand Léger**, "Le Profile" as presented on a wall in Le Corbusier's apartment at Rue Nungesser-et-Coli, c. 1934.

Figure 8. **Giorgio De Chirico**, "Two Masks", oil on canvas, 1916. Private Collection.

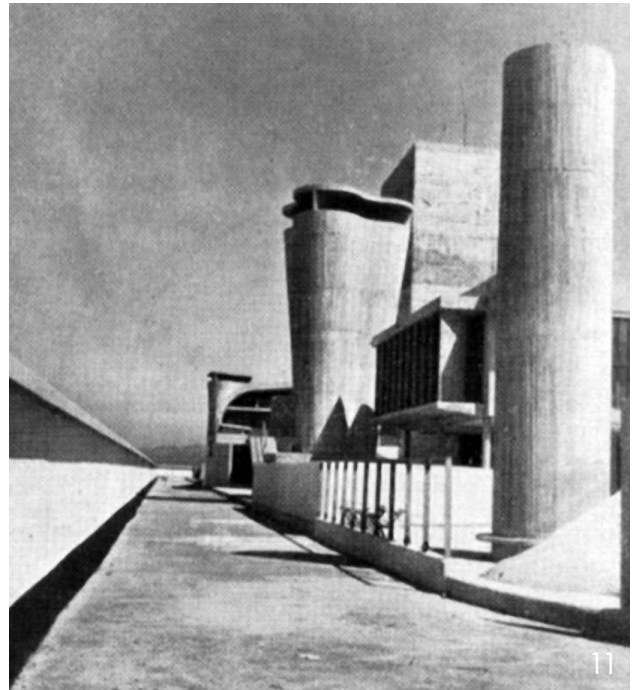
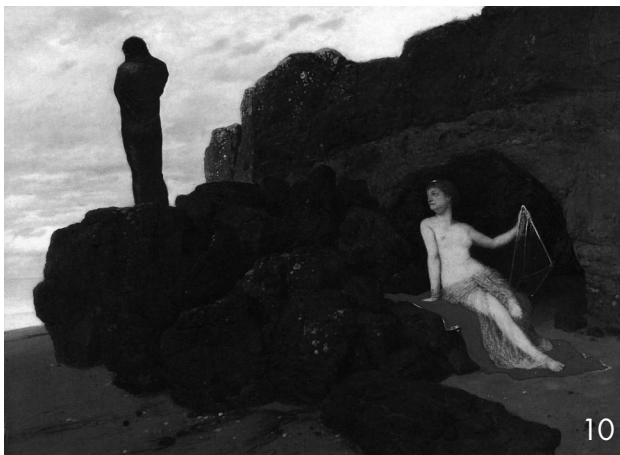


Figure 9. **Le Corbusier** and **Pierre Jeanneret**, Plan Obus for Algiers, 1931–1932.

Original model photograph. Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

Figure 10. **Arnold Böcklin**, *Odysseus and Calypso*, 1883. Kunstmuseum Basel.

Figure 11. **Le Corbusier**, Unité d'Habitation, Marseilles, 1947–1953. Roof garden.

Photo by Lucien Hervé; Fondation Le Corbusier, Paris.

Roche House a complicated process of trans-disciplinary cross-pollinations, adaptations and incorporations began to infiltrate Le Corbusier's work as an architect, a process that involved painting as well as sculpture, and that reached considerably beyond the morphological code of purism. In an often quoted letter to his architect, La Roche later described the resulting dilemma, a predicament which could be said to have remained at the heart of museum architecture ever since:

Remember the origin of my undertaking: 'La Roche, when one owns as superb a collection of art as yours, one must build a house which is worthy of it.' And my answer: 'Very well, Jeanneret, build me that house.' But, what has happened? The house once finished was so beautiful that when I saw it, I cried out to myself. 'It's almost a crime to put paintings in it.' I put them in anyway. Could I have done anything but? Do I not have certain obligations to my painters, of whom you are one, by the way?

And he continues:

I ordered a 'framework for my collection.' You made me a 'poem of walls'. Which of the two of us has been the most to blame?

The Select-and-Arrange principle

The La Roche House can be said to have freed the painter in the architect. The morphological analogies between an early floor plan for the La Roche House, drawn in 1923, and a painting like *"Nature morte verticale"*, done at about the same time, meet the eye. The nature of its program, the scale, the complicated situation at the end of a cul-de-sac allowed the entire project to be defined in consonance with pictorial themes that range from his own practice as a purist painter to the geometries of *De Stijl*. In its double nature as a fair installation and as part of a virtual *immeuble villa*, the *Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau*, in turn, is essentially a box (built 1925). No way to make it look like a guitar! Here, the dialogue

between the arts needed to be organized in terms of a different, and, as it turned out, a more aggressive code. The selection of Léger's "Le Balustre" is no coincidence. In "Le Balustre", Léger has made the tension between object and frame, fragment and organic whole, exhibit and exhibition space the subject of his art. It is the "exhibition value" of the object shown that counts, not its formal complicity with the architectural envelope. Thus exhibited on the empty wall like a quote, "Le Balustre" is an architectural impresa.

Arthur Rüegg has shown how Le Corbusier used the houses and apartments he lived in as a testing ground for the relative techniques of object display.² More often than not, however, privacy and publicity overlap or even programmatically coincide – such as when La Roche or the Steins invite the photographer to their house. Or when the architect himself uses his newly built studio space at Rue Nungesser-et-Coli as a showroom for "les arts dits primitifs dans la maison d'aujourd'hui."³ To select and arrange the art in terms of harmony and contrast, order and surprise is the core of Le Corbusier's installation art. It is also the curatorial principle of composition that connects the world of the painted still life to that of the lived-in home (figure 7).

Synthesis...

'Synthesis' is a key concept in Le Corbusier's system of ideas. The term appears in the opening sentence of the introduction to the first issue of *L'Esprit Nouveau*: "There exists a new spirit: it is a spirit of construction and synthesis guided by a clear concept." "Synthesis" here stands for a way of thinking and, by implication, the spirit of an entire era – and not primarily for the idea of the total work of art, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, comprising painting and sculpture under the aegis of architecture. However, these meanings change over time, revealing entirely different intellectual and visual paradigms, some of them pertaining to Le Corbusier's formative years, including his roots in architectural transcendentalism. If, as Le Corbusier so often suggests in his work as well as in his writing, the task is to bring the physical environment of modern society in harmony with the eternal and universal laws of nature; then the problem is to identify and organize these laws in a way that would make them applicable to all design problems. This Ruskinian project would later lead Le Corbusier into areas of Gestalt psychology, mathematics and the theory of proportions. And it would ultimately culminate in the Modulor system.

It is interesting to note that by the time Le Corbusier's year-long theoretical speculation on systems of proportion was finally codified in the *Modulor* (published 1948), the terms "synthesis" and "unity" were again directed to-

ward the visual arts. In lectures given from 1935 onwards "synthesis" meant bringing together painting and sculpture under the aegis of architecture. Yet, rubbing shoulders with other artists was not Le Corbusier's primary interest. Rather, it was the dialogue with his own various selves, i.e. the possible transfers, transactions, reciprocal invigorations and compensations among the artistic practices he had engaged in himself what fascinated most. The process as such had begun with purism. By 1928 already, in Rio, and later with the Plan Obus for Algiers, the "synthesis" by inter-textual resonance had begun to involve urbanism (figure 9). The 1938 exhibition at the Kunsthaus in Zurich had provided the first museum survey of the "Œuvre plastique".

The placement of a giant mural called "Femme et Coquillage" at the end of the architect's studio at 35 Rue de Sèvres, in 1948, was thus a mere consecration of a trend that had indeed begun two decades earlier. From now on, the morphological transactions between architecture, painting and sculpture can be considered as Le Corbusier's trade mark, so that in the fourth volume of the *Œuvre complète*, covering the war years (1938–1946), painting and sculpture are for the first time included as part of the work.

...and Cannibalism

A large collection of statements and programmatic utterances have paved the way ever since:

Il n'y a pas de sculpteurs seuls, peintres seuls, d'architectes seuls. L'événement plastique s'accomplit dans une forme une au service de la poésie.

Or:

Je suis un acrobate de la forme, créateur de formes, joueur avec les formes. Les formes, moyen d'exprimer toute l'émotion plastique. La forme, expression et style de la pensée. (1953).

And, developing further the theme of the acrobat:

Un acrobate n'est pas un pantin. Il consacre son existence à une activité par laquelle, en danger de mort permanent, il réalise des gestes hors série, aux limites de la difficulté, et dans la rigueur de l'exactitude, de la ponctualité... quitte à se rompre le cou, à se briser les os, à s'assommer.⁴ (1958)

Oscillating between shop-talk and poetic metaphor, such statements refer to varying situations and interests and therefore resist a kind of rationalization that would make them applicable as recipes. Their purpose, primarily, is to elevate and to mystify.

Architecture, autobiography, myth

The roof terrace of the Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles and the Ronchamp Chapel illustrate best what was at stake. The long pre-history of the Unité d'Habitation in utopian thought includes the archetype of the monastery as re-defined by Charles Fourier in the early nineteenth century. We do not know if Le Corbusier was familiar with the bird's eye view of Phalanstère proposed by Victor Considérant in 1841 that defines the roof of the "palais socétaire dédié à l'humanité" as a wide-open terrace. It is hardly a coincidence, however, that the Unité follows an analogous agenda: the number of inhabitants – approximately 1,600 – and the principle of the *rue galerie* located half way up the building appear to be directly taken over from Fourier.

Of course, what strikes more than the analogy of the program is the formal difference between the two projects. Compared to Considérant's vision of a totally empty surface defined solely by its parapet, Le Corbusier's concept looks confused. Much of that effect results from the structural and functional possibilities of a slab-shaped, multistory reinforced concrete housing block. Inevitably, the battery of ventilation shafts and elevator tower take up a considerable part of the roof space. Since the program further demanded a concrete box containing a kindergarten, a small labyrinth and a pool for the children as well as a *gymnasium* and a small open-air stage, the overall effect could only be messy.

Yet this "mess" is arguably one of the most moving sites of modern architecture (figure 11). Architecture, one would assume, is no medium for autobiographical reflection. The shape of a ventilation shaft, the casing of an elevator engine, a *gymnasium* or a child care center should be pretty much determined by their functions. None such appears to be the case here. Why do the ventilation towers emerge from box-shaped *podiums* in a way that makes them look like pieces of sculpture standing on their bases? Why do the conical ventilator shafts look like trunks of trees turned upside down, ending with a small slid from where one might ultimately get the panorama view that the parapet forbids us to take (or should one read them as gigantic false legs, as leftovers from an encounter of mythical *manichini* that have long disappeared)?

Seen genealogically, the prime reference for the ventilator shafts is most likely the curious periscope on the Beistégui roof terrace (all the more so, since the high walls that cut away the foreground also refer to that project). As to the *gymnasium* with its structurally 'unnecessary' keel. An archaizing reference to the high tech romanticism of the Ocean Liner which is in many ways the conceptual key to the Unité? A memory of the fishermen's barges at

Arcachon, or of the ship that carried Ulysses, perhaps Le Corbusier's alter ego, across the Aegean sea, cut to half and turned turtle? At the edge of the architectural still life of the roof terrace stands a single chimney, 'fluted' with the profile of narrow shuttering boards and thus defined as an archaic column.

Gratuitous speculations? Le Corbusier's antiquarian interests are well known. No less than 29 (twenty-nine!) illustrations showing the Parthenon had been included in *Vers une architecture* (1923). In 1955, he began working on a cycle of illustrations for the *Iliad*, taking a paperback edition of the *Iliad* with illustrations by John Flaxman as a point of departure. Subsequently, some of the drawings were erased or at least partly covered and made invisible by his own representations of the events sung by Homer. "Not a single sign of life. Homer is assassinated," is all he has to say of Flaxman's drawings.

The first page depicts the muse who sings the anger of Achilles. In Flaxman's work, the muse sits politely, wrapped up in her *peplos*, across from the blind Homer who is playing the lyre, as she is too. But Homer sits at the feet of a grave stele, designated by its helmet as that of Achilles. Le Corbusier shows the muse naked, her thighs open, crouching on a big rock and singing her lamentation with her head thrown back. The yellow stone on which she sits relates to self-portraits that depict Le Corbusier as a rock.

Whereas here he appears to identify with Achilles, elsewhere in the *Iliad* the architect turns to Sarpedon, Zeus's son. Flaxman shows the dead hero being returned above the clouds to his homeland by Hypnos and Thanatos, the gods of Sleep and Death. Alluding to some academic honors just received in New York, Le Corbusier notes: "1961, 30 April + return from N York, Gold Medal + Dr.H.C., Human letters." In such way, Homer is chosen as the platform for a reckoning with neoclassicism while also offering a somewhat self-indulgent perspective upon his own destiny as a hero of modernity.

At the moment when the dissolution and re-arrangement of ancient disciplinary boundaries that used to define painting and sculpture in their relation to architecture has become an accepted fact, the sculpture garden on the roof terrace of the Unité sends out a disquieting message, both highly personal and potentially universal. "Born in furor" (as Gérard Monnier aptly put it),⁵ the building seems imbued with archaic myths, restituted through the force of desire and destiny: storm is in the air, and a smell of blood and vengeance – not unlike in many of Arnold Böcklin's paintings (and what would the *pittura metafisica* be without Böcklin? (figures 8, 10) Yet, even though the bio-morphic geometries of the roof terrace still reverberate with ancient memories, there is obviously

no simple key to decipher them. Barge, column, stage, the organoid form of a tree trunk that embodies a memory of human form: like in Le Corbusier's painting, it is the layering of forms as such, their 'automatic' interaction in time and space, "devoid of any visible link" that creates the mystery and the crude poetry of the situation.

What arguably strikes even more from a present viewpoint than the richness and complexity of the interdisciplinary transactions and resonances displayed in the Unité and – perhaps even more so in the Ronchamp Chapel – is the fact that they so clearly stop short of the post-modern "blob". Even compared to the architectural dreams of expressionism, the "free style" of Notre-Dame-du-Haut remains controlled by a set of criteria that define it as

distinctly architectural: i.e. grounded in notions like wall, window, roof, and symmetry. The Chapel as a whole may echo the sculpture of Gabo and Pevsner, and its south façade does look distinctly Mondrianesque. Yet, the specificity of the artistic disciplines involved is respected: architecture (in its dialog with the hill and as revealed by the hovering roof), painting (the stained glass, the enamel door), sculpture (the crucifix, the seventeenth-century Madonna): everything is emphasized as belonging to the tradition of its genre. Were his performance not tied in such a way to archetypal notions of 'earthwork' and 'roofwork', e.g. to established, indeed Semperian categories of the art of building, the geste hors série might have cost the acrobat's neck.

*Revised version of a talk given at the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid, in 2009. I am grateful to Horacio Torrent for his editorial suggestions regarding the present essay, and to the Residencia de Estudiantes for the occasion to reconsider some earlier ideas on Le Corbusier and the 'Synthesis of the Arts', and in particular those exposed with the necessary bibliographical references in *Le Corbusier. Elements of a Synthesis*, revised and enlarged edition (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009), 264–321; and in my introduction to Alexander von Vegesack and Mateo Kries (eds.), *Le Corbusier. The Art of Architecture* (exhibition catalog), (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2007), 61–99. Among recent studies of the 'Synthesis of the Arts' in general see in particular Joan Ockman, "A Plastic Epic: The Synthesis of the Arts Discourse in France in the Mid-Twentieth Century," in Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Esa Laaksonen (eds.), *Architecture + Art: New Visions, New Strategies* (Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Academy, 2007), 30:61; and Romy Golan, *Muralnomad. The Paradox of Wall-Painting, Europe, 1927–1965* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009). For the broader implications of the 'exhibitionary syndrome' in terms of twentieth century architecture see Beatriz Colomina, "The Exhibitionist House," in Richard Koshalek and Elizabeth A.T. Smith (eds.), *At the End of the Century: One Hundred Years of Architecture* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 126–165.

Notes

- 1 Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1962).
- 2 In an essay published in Alexander von Vegesack and Mateo Kries (eds.), *Le Corbusier: The Art of Architecture* (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2007).
- 3 "So-called primitive arts in the house of today."
- 4 Le Corbusier, *Textes et Planches* (Paris: Vincent Fréal, 1960).
- 5 Gérard Monnier, *Les Unités d'habitation en France* (Paris: Belin, 2002).

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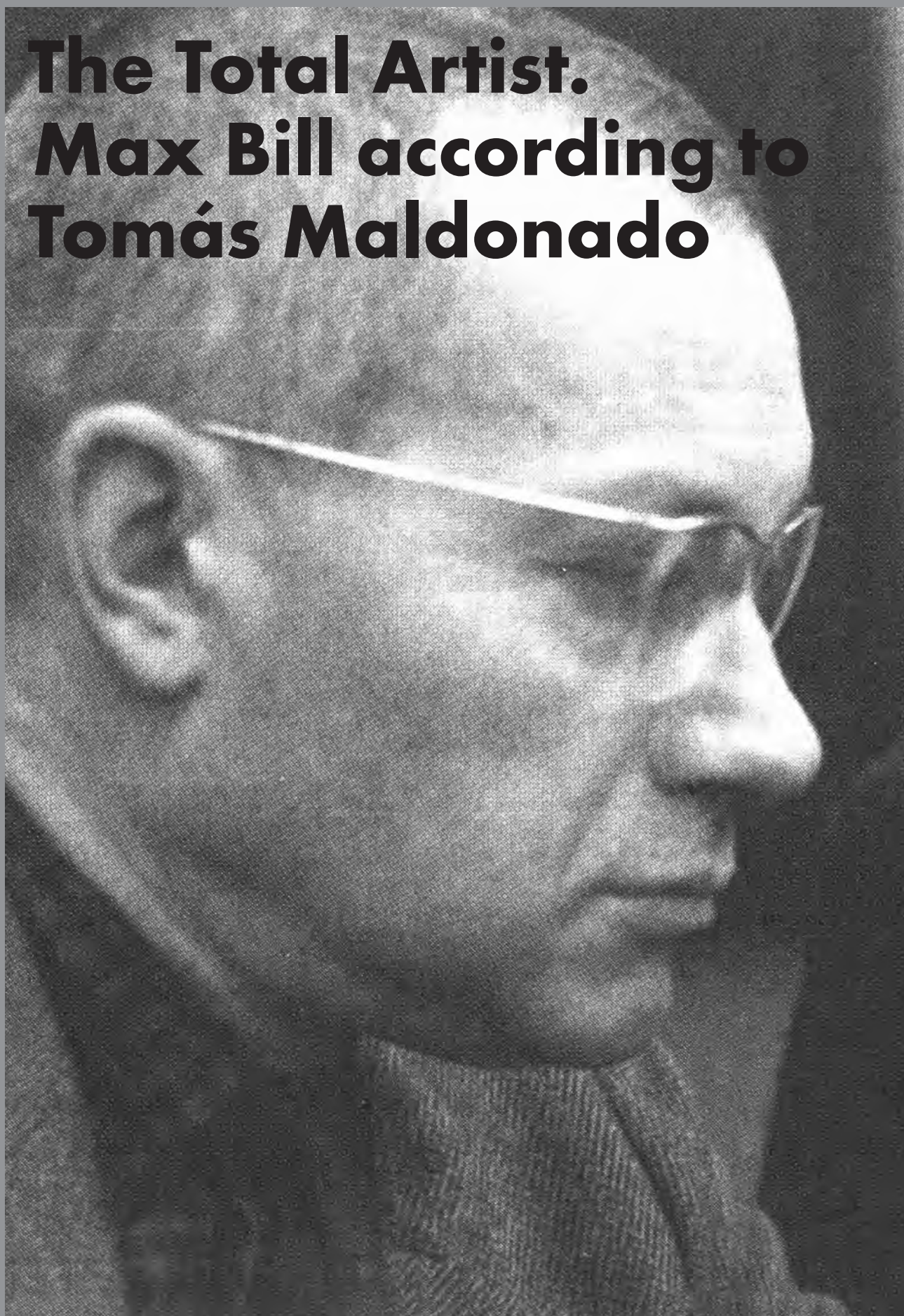
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Stanislaus von Moos

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The Total Artist. Max Bill according to Tomás Maldonado



Max Bill was an important reference in the field of art and architecture in Latin America. Unlike the synthesis of the arts, Max Bill was proposing a program based on “concrete art” and the idea of gute form, which sought to provide a common principle to the built environment that would guarantee its formal quality and harmony. This point was central to the reception of his ideas in Argentina. It was largely Tomás Maldonado who introduced these ideas. He presented Max Bill as a “total artist”, a sort of premonition of the “man of the future”, endowed with a capacity of coherence that would allow the synthesis not of the arts, but that of the artistic product with mass production.

By Alejandro Gabriel Crispiani

MAX BILL was by all means a key reference for Latin American art and architecture, particularly for the South American scene of the second post-war. Bill represented a different type of modern culture, at least as to that considered and spread amongst countries such as Chile, Argentina or Uruguay since the late 1930s. Far from resembling the cutting edge and provocative character of Vicente Huidobro, or the messianic figure of Joaquín Torres García, Max Bill would stand as an artist that, while deeply rooted with the avant-garde – by means of a work that clearly outstood its limits – at the same time embodied a more mature and constructive way of dealing with concrete reality. This was a fairly critical position to have towards the processes of mass culture already manifested in those years, but also confident of a capacity to address and transform these processes throughout an enlightening and inspiring practice. Thus the Academy and its conservative counterparts in art and culture ceased to be a problem to Max Bill: this was no longer the powerful opponent to fight against to as shown in the founding texts of Le Corbusier, which interestingly were still read and considered as diagnosis of the present in the 1940s and 1950s.

The ugliness and ultimately the immorality that threatens the world today actually finds its origin on that same technique exalted back in the early 1920s by avant-garde groups. Consequently, Max Bill considered this mechanization and modernization to be threatened of being completely torn apart from its nature.¹ The war on consumption, as already seen in the nineteenth century, would overtake on form as one of its premises. From then on it ceased to be a question of historical style, but, on the contrary, nourishing in its own particular way from the genealogies of form created by avant-garde groups. Finally, these forms had stemmed with the process of accelerated and universal technological progress that undoubtedly preceded all purchase goods, at the cost of it becoming stale and losing its authenticity. The battlefield of art and architecture was located elsewhere then, and

the Swiss Werkbund was quite aware of this. Therefore it was crucial to cut back to this original stream of modern forms, not yet exhausted nor stopped while still flowing throughout the modern world but that at the same time demanded to be recognized and nurtured. This was not at all about a call to arms or a revival of heroic agendas, but establishing a direction with bold clarity and also a deeper reflection upon these matters, without false expectations nor falling in the trap of a revolutionary horizon that would come to resolve all matters yet unsolved on various portions of knowledge and the know how that converges on the built environment: art, design in its multiple versions, architecture and urbanism. All things considered, it was clear that a sole modern drive was not enough to confront these fields.

This position and way of understanding the situation is clearly explicit in one of the most important theoretical works of Max Bill, *Form. A Balance Sheet of Trends in mid-Century Design*² published in 1952. The book (in his own words: “primarily a picture book laying no claim of completeness”³) is a sort of compendium of the images used in the exhibition “Die Gute Form” organized by Bill for the Swiss Werkbund in 1949, plus some extra material. Some of his texts complement these photographs. The book illustrates a certain quality, a quality of form. Form is always considered “good”, not being held to a specific epoch nor found exclusively on human made objects. This is related to an idea of perfection, of adjustment and simplicity exposed to sight perception. It can be found on all that is visible and does not depend on any production system. It is found on all scales: on pyrite crystals or in a city project. Most notably, on Bill’s book a very large number of designers and architects can be found, but he is the only artist. In fact, it is precisely Bill’s work which traces the narrative path of the book. As the book wanders throughout the many design fields it addresses, Bill’s work emerges in between. Therefore, his production stays immersed in a broader and collective body of work, but hardly or never anonymous. His paintings and sculptures

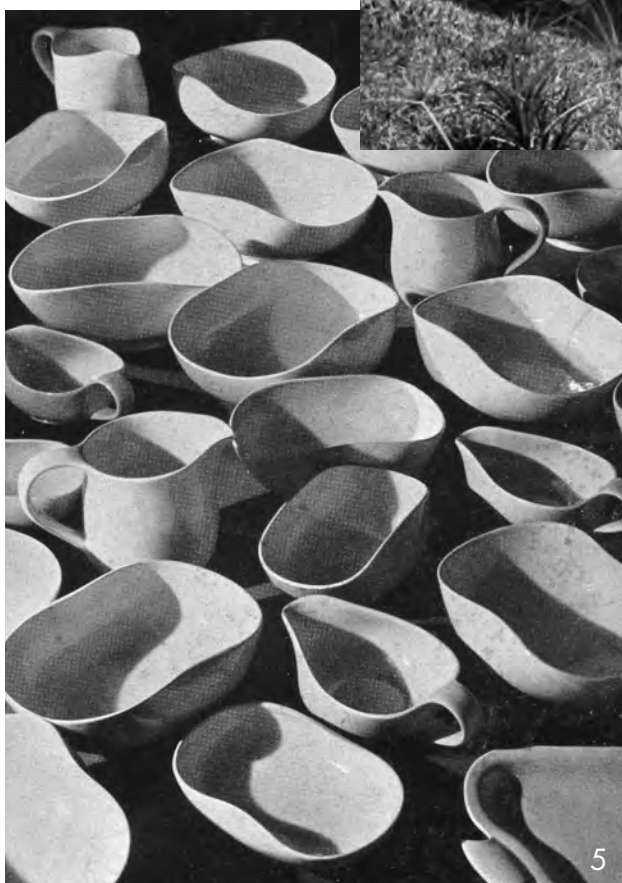
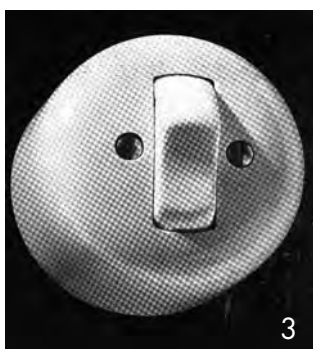
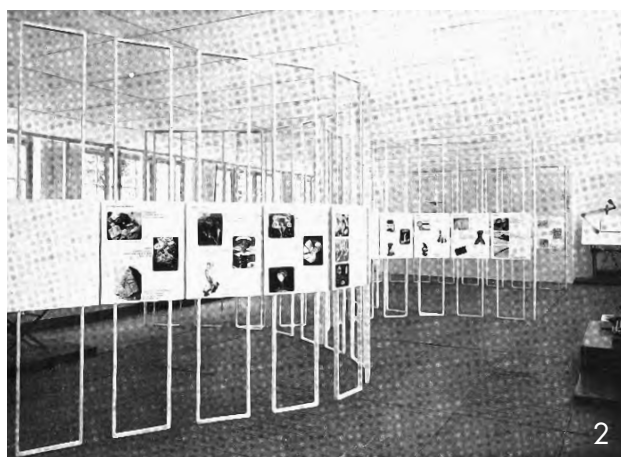
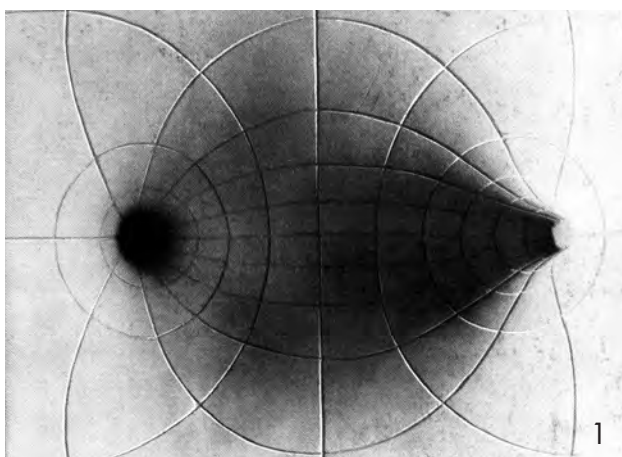


Figure 1. Model of a mathematical formula
Photo from E.A. Einiger, Zürich; from Max Bill, *Form*.
A Balance Sheet of mid-Twentieth Century Trend in Design
(Basel: Verlag Karl Werner, 1952), 25.

Figure 2. **Max Bill** Pavilion for the Exhibition "Die Gute Form",
Basel, 1949.
Photo by Ernst Scheidegger, Zürich; from Tomás Maldonado,
Max Bill (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1955), 110.

Figure 3. **Adolf Feller**, Light switch
Photo Hugo Herdeg; from Bill, *Form*, 43.

Figure 4. **Roberto Burle Marx**, Corner of a garden.
Photo by Marcel Gautherot; from Bill, *Form*, 110.

Figure 5. **Wilhem Käge** (AB Gustavsbergs Fabriker),
Household crockery. From Bill, *Form*, 59.

follow this lead alongside multiple images of nature that also appear in the book.

Amongst the huge variety of objects on display, there is a clear intention to show that this quality of form allows infinite ways to materialize itself and as such it is not predictable. It involves a deep understanding of the meaning of the object (whether a work of art or a utilitarian object) as well as an economic principle of maximum efficiency with the lowest means. Whereas technification would have opened up new ways to reach these forms, there is no guarantee of accomplishment given the possibility of distortion. Both art and modern architecture can also get lost, for this is not about ascribing to a particular program or another, but to point out an accurate location of this course of form towards the half of the twentieth century.

It is in the early 1950s when Max Bill travels to Brazil and a small fraction of this visit is portrayed in *Form*: an image of the gardens of Burle Marx and a photograph of the Ministry of Education building in Rio. But perhaps the most interesting thing to note is that *Form* is surely the background from which Bill constructs criticism of the Brazilian modernism he personally encountered at that time. To address this, the book does not speak of “isms” or schools or movements. Instead, it shows particular works from all fields of human production and individual authors. Bill is not interested in the Brazilian modernism but in the particular works of architecture that he criticizes in his discourse. Even if exceptionally having a better regard for some cases, like Reidy’s Pedregulho housing unit, what finally resonates is a quite negative perception of several of the emblematic works that belonged to the Brazilian group in those years, such as Oscar Niemeyer’s Pampulha projects or the Guinle buildings of Lúcio Costa. Precisely what Pampulha is criticized for is its “love of form for the sake of form itself,”⁴ which in the case of architecture is not only unjustifiable but also a simplification, even though those forms fed a certain saga that belonged to modernist ideology. This corresponds with Niemeyer’s “exaggerated individualism”⁵ one that seems to correspond to another era: the Portinari murals on several of his works and particularly the Ministry of Education of Rio, expose a relationship between architecture and painting belonging to a distant past. In the era of mass production the painting needs not to be confused with a wall nor the arts needs to use architecture in order to influence and intervene the immediate built environment.

This critique and the subsequent controversy with Costa does not stem so much from Bill’s role as mentor of the *Gute Form* but from his status of an iconic modern artist, a position to which Brazilian institutions themselves had taken part on. Indeed, the meta-European projection of Max Bill was largely on behalf of the São Paulo Biennial

of 1950, when his work “Tripartite Unity” received one of the major awards. The solo exhibition devoted to Bill’s work in the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo in 1951 and his visit to Brazil at the time, established his relevance in the visual arts across the continent. Certainly, this has become the best-known and studied episode of Bill’s link with South America, among a much more complex and diversified chain of events that covered many different aspects of his activity, both as a theorist and as an artist. Basically it could be said that Max Bill emerged as the first painter and sculptor – within his relations towards the artistic milieu of Brazil – that promoted an art that contained a form of science, and this was *concrete art* (Giulio Carlo Argan referred years later to Max Bill as “the last representative of art as a European science”⁶). Bill aspired to reach, such as science itself, the whole human environment and thus allowed to perform critique and judgment regarding architecture. In this context and on that particular debate, Max Bill *the designer* either of graphic artwork or industrial objects did not meet these ends with the same amount of strength as Max Bill *the artist*. That part of his work and thought – intended to be directly measured against the forces of massive technology – failed to fully emerge even if doubtlessly characterized him as a personality within the field of art.

Max Bill was also an important reference in the 1940s and 1950s in Argentina. There, the reception of his ideas and works followed a quite particular route. By 1947 four groups whose intentions revolved around concrete art had already established in Buenos Aires. At first, these groups were attached in one movement created in 1944 but over the years it ripped into several separate ones. These groups were the Concrete Art Invention Association (Asociación Arte Concreto Invención) to which Tomás Maldonado and other artists belonged; the *Madí* group, led by Carmelo Arden Quin; the *Madínemisor* group, headed by Gyula Kósice; and Perceptism (*Perceptismo*), whose leading figure was Raúl Lozza. At that time the intention of the four groups was not to make *concrete art* but fully and finally overcoming it on the basis of a new category: *invention*, which was explored by all four groups in their work and their theoretical formulations. The *inventionism* that all these groups professed one way or another would consist on improving concrete art in their own terms. This would come to pass by removing those elements that, according to the militant Marxism that lied at the very foundation of *inventionism*, would be regarded as contradictions. For example, in the case of painting, the main found contradiction was to maintain the traditional frame, orthogonal in most cases. Breaking away from the picture frame meant the end of the illusory idea of painting as a window, supposing a reinvention

by fixing the attention on the piece which regulates the relations between what happens inside the canvas and the reality that surrounds it concretely. As such, it was expected that this would allow new plastic forms to trace a completely different system of relations towards the other objects that populate the reality of the human environment.

The revolution of modern art was, in fact, incomplete: it had to go beyond concrete art and invent a way of painting or artwork tuned freely with technical objects. Also, the political dimension bared upon any work of art should be clarified and made explicit from its form. For their alleged ability to release or to promote the creative capacity of those who get in touch with them, inventionist works were somewhat designed as revolutionary instruments that, if properly used, would provide for the struggle for a classless society, without work divisions. They were also regarded as the result of rigorous intellectual work, verifiable and imaginative at the same time; just as science was, it was to be a collective work of elucidation, subject to the development of clearly stated problems from each of the different areas of art. As in science, the resolution of a plastic problem in painting for example, would necessarily imply the emergence of new problems, so that the evolution chain would render as endless. Therefore each individual work would not possibly be understood by itself, and instead, without exception, as belonging within a larger series of work.

The first experiments focused around the *trimmed picture frame*, in which the shape of the frame should correspond to the internal motif portrayed in the canvas. In later experiments within the Concrete Art Invention Association, this reached an expression called “coplanar”, in which forms had been released from the canvas into space, building a unit both from a certain underlying grid and harmonizing colors according to a principle of apparently measurable equivalence derived from mathematical formulas.

This is how *inventionism* appears in many ways as an exacerbation, sometimes quite extreme, of many of the tenets of concrete art. This was joined by an aggressive avant-garde attitude, provocative and frontal, as perhaps not known before in Argentina. On the other hand, there was a profound and unusual interplay between Marxist philosophy and visual abstraction. But the lifespan of the group was short, for towards the end of 1947 and coinciding with their virtual expulsion of the Argentine Communist Party, the artists of Concrete Art Invention Association (Tomás Maldonado among them), began to retreat from the inventionist experience, considering it exhausted, abandoning their previous *discoveries* and returning to the traditional picture. In other words, re-entering the concrete art scene and specifically becoming

more interested in the Swiss group, although certainly this was not their only reference.

In between this upheaval is when Tomás Maldonado travels to Europe in 1948, as so many Argentine artists did once the war came to an end. It is there where he meets Max Bill, among many other artists, due to the recommendation by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, who was living in Argentina in those years. This contact with Swiss artists and particularly the direct knowledge and contact with the complete works of Bill – not only as an artist but also as an industrial and graphic designer – somehow confirms the direction already taken by Maldonado and his companions when abandoning the avant-garde position. From there, it also appeared a search for a more mature and effective link between art and technology, without giving all up to Marxist convictions, which acquired a different tone in writings among these years, becoming much less evident.

Unsurprisingly, Tomás Maldonado is generally considered to be the first to refer to and theorize systematically about modern design in Argentina. Indeed, from 1948 until his departure to the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm on the year 1954, industrial design was considered by Maldonado as the necessary counterpart of the arts, the area where its true meaning is embodied and concrete art would then be the only instance to ensure an organic relationship with it. According to his own words “the artist of the future must reach for new horizons of creation, entering the world of mass production of objects, objects of everyday and popular use, that in short, constitute the most immediate reality of modern man.”⁷ This is the way Maldonado typically addresses the problem of form of the technical object, taking art as standpoint. Even if retreated from these bold convictions in later years, the thought of industrial design as a mandatory field of action for artists, allowed Maldonado to renew his commitment towards abstraction without contradicting its original transformative nature. If art should be judged by its ability to access the technical form, no other approach would ensure this as effectively as concrete art, considered by Maldonado the more consistent expression of geometric abstraction. But if art must transform and acquire its meaning from industrial objects, these in turn would be also transformed by art, and consequently would raise their status beyond mere commodity. Thereby the industry actually validates concrete art and vice versa.

But this was supposed to be only the most significant segment of a major renovation; that would require reconfiguring all relationships between the disciplines of form. It would be necessary to reestablish new relationships between objects, now driven by mass production. This would have no relation to either the integration of the arts

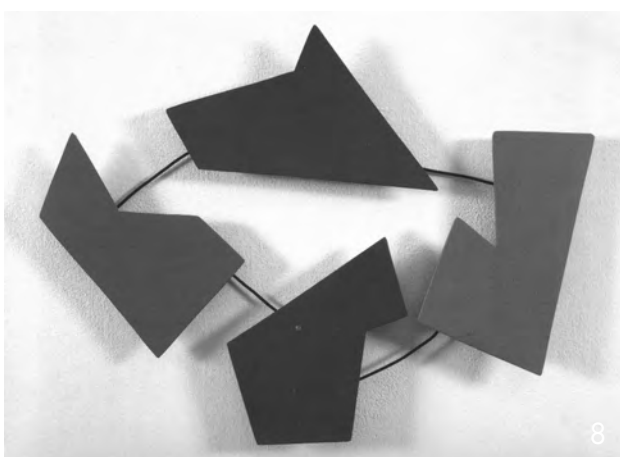
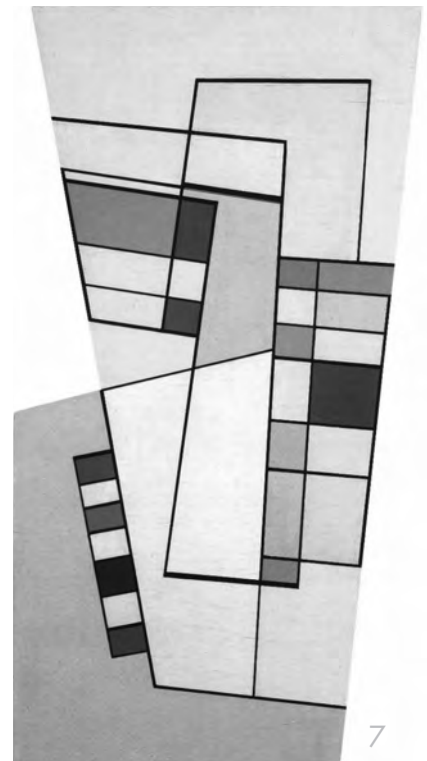
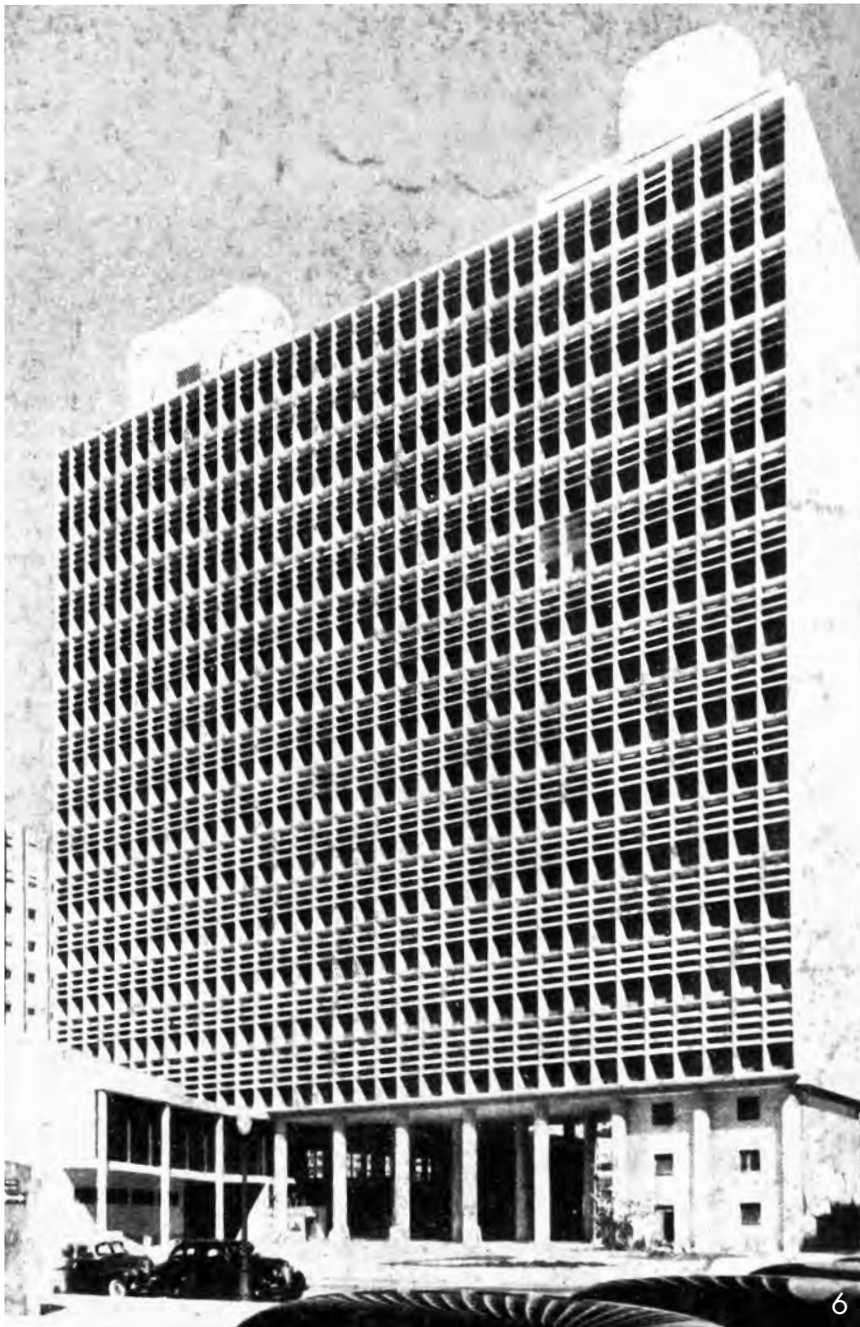
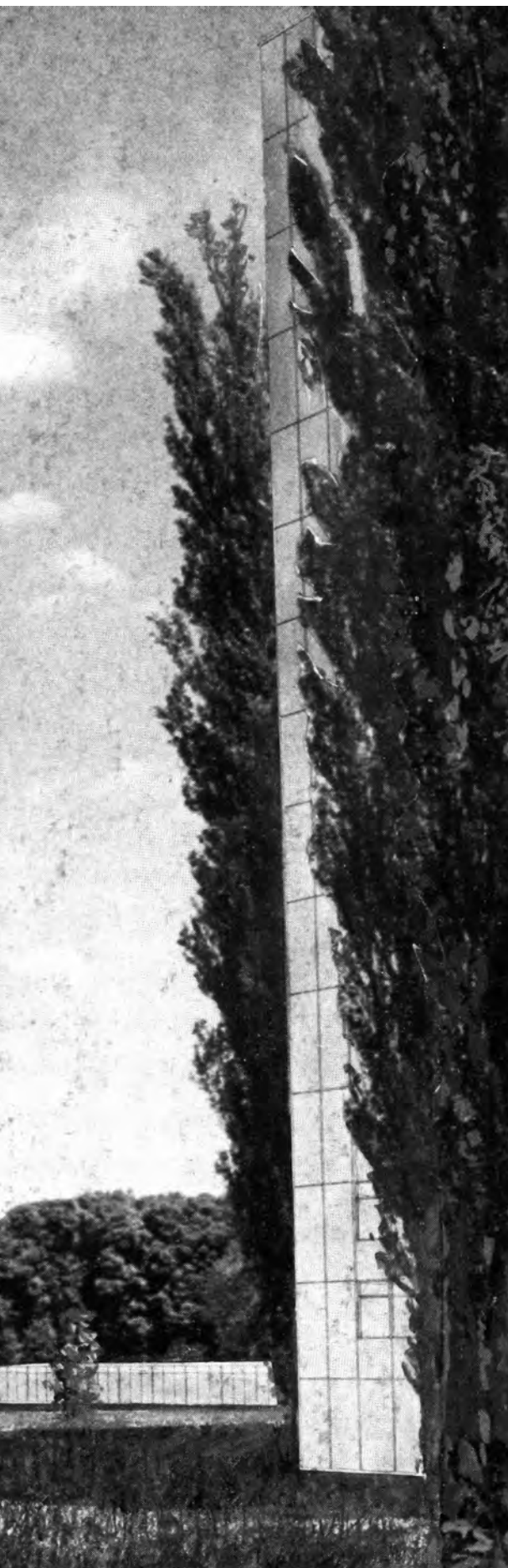


Figure 6. **Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Carlos Leão, Jorge Moreira, Le Corbusier,** Brazilian Ministry of Public Health and Education. Photo by G.E. Kidder Smith, New York; from Bill, *Form*, 145.

Figure 7. **Carmelo Arden Quinn, Trío 2, 1951.** Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection.

Figure 8. **Raúl Lozza, Relief, 1945.** Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection.

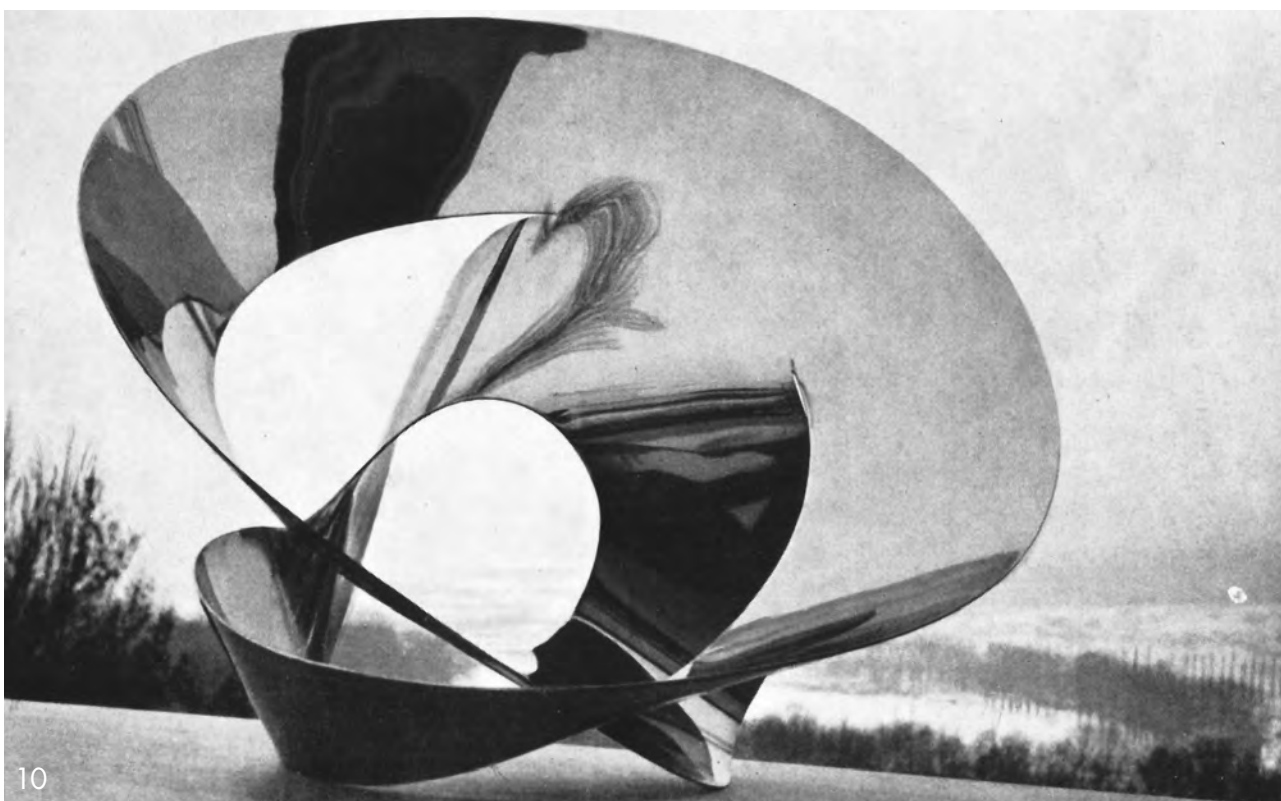




(such as the case in the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas around that time), nor the artistic synthesis (in the manner of *De Stijl*) and much less with the idea of total artwork. The kind of architecture that meets this agenda would be one that is recognizably built upon those objects of mass production and thus acting accordingly. This is not to be confused with the idea that architecture should submit to these objects. According to Maldonado, one should think in the terms of a new totality, not aiming mainly to the building or its construction such as the in case of the *Bauhaus*. Other than that, this new totality would compromise a complexity that cannot be reached by one single project or individual object. For Maldonado, this was embodied in a concrete person: "painter, sculptor, architect and graphic designer, Max Bill is the modern type of *total artist*, and anticipation of the *total man* we must still seek to conquer."⁸

True to a certain Marxism of humanist approach, Maldonado attributed to Max Bill the same feature he ascribed to his own inventionist paintings: the ability to ultimately prefigure a possible future with no labor division in which the people's creative capacity would not be restricted by the barriers that it allegedly imposes: a time when according to Marx's famous quote, "there would be no painters, but people who paint" among many other activities. The modern total artist that provides glimpses to this future has surpassed the old triad of Fine Arts, painting, sculpture and architecture, to enter the field of mass production. These old artistic activities would not disappear, but instead reloaded with new meaning, its divisions still regarded as important. The appearance of the object of mass production and circulation does not obliterate them, but rather consists in a deep regeneration. For example, it has allowed the arts to sweep off all relics regarding false representation and naturalism, providing a focus on the specific elements and issues of the tools of the discipline itself (such as the relationship between colors, planes and surfaces in the case of painting). So, as mentioned before, these arts would return to the technologically processed object that would ensemble, for the first time, a virtuous circle in the built realm of humankind. However, according to the interpretation of Maldonado, this convergence should not be looked after in the physical world, but in people. Perhaps it actually should be sought first in the individual person, Max Bill or *the modern artist*, the ultimate embodiment of the generic individual of the future. The visual and design arts converge on the creative capacity of humankind, yet the modern world continues to mutilate it. Therefore if this world appears as chaotic and

Figure 9. **Max Bill**, Project for a Housing Unit, 1949. From Maldonado, *Max Bill* 100



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Figure 10. **Max Bill**, *Extensible Table*, 1949-1950.
Photo by Hans Fisler, Zürich; from Tomás Maldonado, *Max Bill* (Buenos Aires, Nueva Visión, 1955), 126.

Figure 11. **Max Bill**, *Construction based on two circular rings*, 1947-1948.
Photo by Max Bill and Binia Bill; from Maldonado, *Max Bill*, 93.

Figure 12. **Max Bill**, *Rings*, 1936-1944.
Photo by Max Bill and Binia Bill; from Maldonado, *Max Bill*, 131.



Max Bill and Tomás Maldonado,
Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, December 1956.
Photo by Hans Conrad; from René Spitz, *Hfg Ulm. The View Behind the Foreground*,
(Stuttgart, London: Axel Menges, 2002), 200.

hectic as it is, this is definitely due to its lack of creativity, not to excess.

Tomás Maldonado is the author of the first monograph devoted to *Max Bill*, a book simply entitled *Max Bill* and was published by Nueva Visión in 1955. The book consists of several essays, but above all it is a collection of images that illustrate the production of Max Bill. In countless ways, from the square format and choice of typography, to its conception as a whole, the book is obviously inspired in *Form*. Moreover, it is actually targeted on *Form*, based on individuation: the form sequences are not based on a chosen family of forms, but rather on the person that originates them, obviously Max Bill. In the book of Maldonado converges the designer of rings, lamps, posters, or typewriters, with the architect, the sculptor and the painter. There are no obvious formal features to link one activity to another. Tomás Maldonado speaks of a “will of consistency” in relation to Bill, which refers of course to the “will to form” of Alois Riegl.⁹ The “will of

coherence”, contrary to the “will to form” lies not in a determinate group or time span, but rather a personal will. One might think that it is the reflection of a new individuality. Or else that the mutual feedback of the visual arts and industrial objects proposed by Maldonado might have produced a new idea of individual artist, committed to all areas regarding the problem and foreseeing a collective future. This is quite the opposite of the old individualism, that “exaggerated individualism” in which Max Bill portrays Oscar Niemeyer. The *Max Bill* Tomás Maldonado builds in his book stands in opposition to this image: the artist no longer belongs to a restricted area of action, but to all and this means a commitment to all. The artist is then committed to all objects and as such with all people. Unlike the great genius artist, an old expression of individualism, bearer of mysterious a gift or knowledge, the new total artist is no less individual or no less genius, but involves the transmission of its knowledge to everyone and everybody in everybody.

Notes

1. As seen among other texts of Max Bill: “Form and art”, in *Form. Eine Bilanz über Formentwicklung um die Mitte des XX Jahrhunderts* (Basel: Verlag Karl Werner, 1952), 7.
2. Bill, *Form. Eine Bilanz*, 5.
3. Bill, *Form. Eine Bilanz*, 5.
4. Max Bill’s interview in *Tribuna da empresa* (Rio de Janeiro, June 16, 1953). As recorded in *Nuestra Arquitectura* 294 (January 1954): 6–7.
5. Ibid.
6. Giulio Carlo Argan, *El arte moderno* (Madrid: Akal, 1992), 45.
7. Tomás Maldonado, “Diseño industrial y sociedad”, *Boletín del Centro de Estudiantes de Arquitectura* 2 (Buenos Aires: October–November 1949).
8. Tomás Maldonado, “Max Bill”, in *Max Bill* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Nueva Visión, 1955), 7.
9. Maldonado, *Max Bill*.

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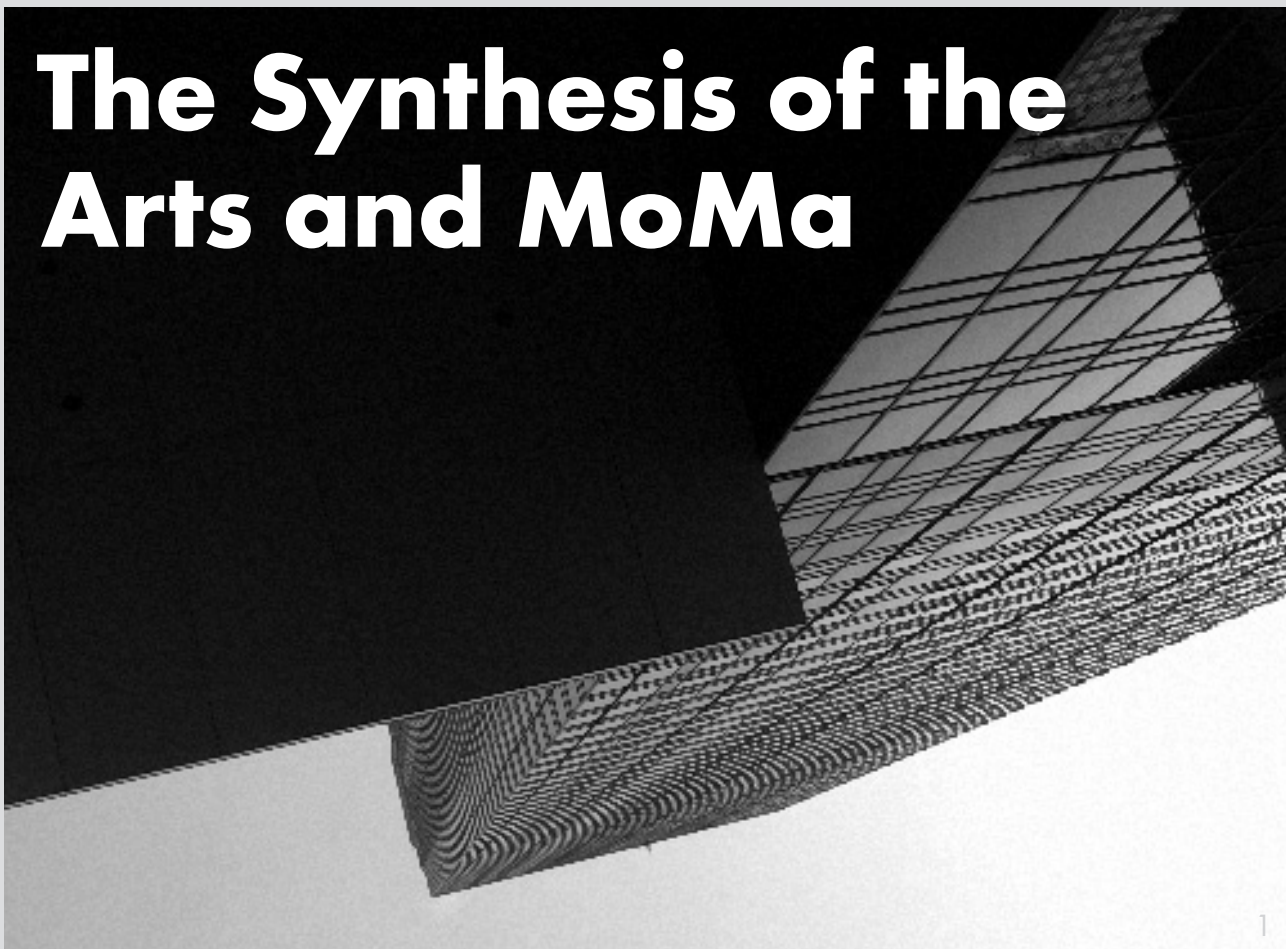
Maldonado, Tomás. *Escritos pre-ulmianos*. Buenos Aires: Infinito, 1997.

Rigotti, Ana María. *Brasil deceives*, Block 3, December 1999 (Buenos Aires, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella).

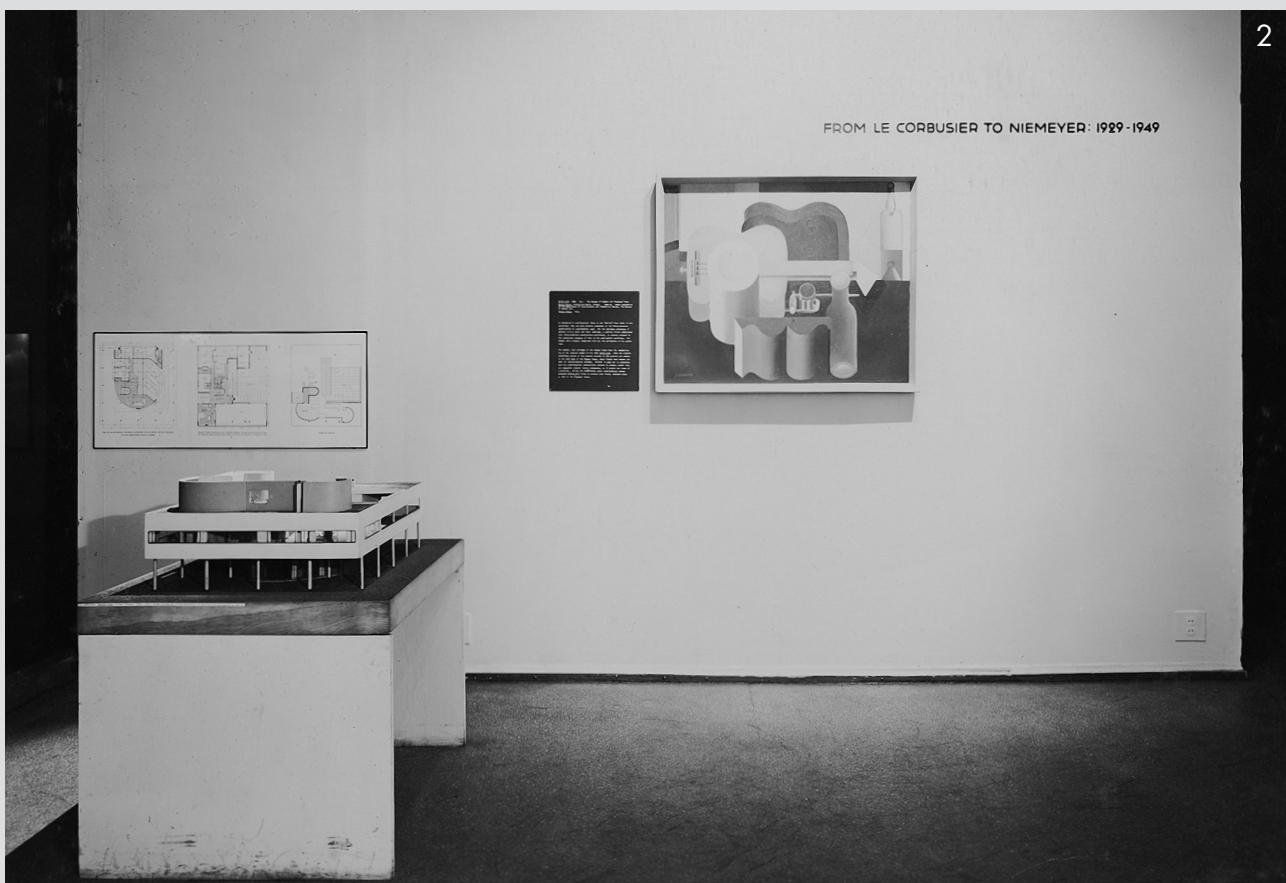
Alejandro Gabriel Crispiani

Is doctor in Human and Social Sciences, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2009. Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urban Studies of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, he is in charge of the Centro de Información y Documentación of the same Faculty. His field of research is modern art, design and architecture in Latin America.

The Synthesis of the Arts and MoMa



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1948–49 were key years for the reaction of the Museum of Modern Art's newly amalgamated Department of Architecture and Design to respond to the rising discourse on the "Synthesis of the Arts." The response was indirect and took the form of MoMA assessing the progress of modern architecture that it had been describing and forecasting for fifteen years. The exhibition "From Le Corbusier to Niemeyer, 1929–1949" was part of a larger assessment of the fate of the international style and of the interaction between abstraction in painting and sculpture and in architectural design, a theme laid out by Alfred Barr and Hitchcock in the 1948 book *Painting Toward Architecture*. Niemeyer's unbuilt Treamine House, designed with Roberto Burle Marx, was upheld as a synthesis not only of the arts but of the movements coalescing towards a postwar abstract consensus.

By Barry Bergdoll

THE concept of "synthesis of the arts," launched most succinctly in the United States by the seminal appeal in 1943 of Sigfried Giedion, Josep Lluís Sert, and Fernand Léger for a "new monumentality" as the basis of the renewal of civic life had only indirect echoes in the exhibition programs of the Museum of Modern Art. The museum participated fully in the spirit of the years 1943–1945, when many sought to engage design talents towards building a new world even as the destruction was accelerating in the multiple arenas of a nearly global conflict. In 1944 alone MoMA sponsored a symposium and lecture series on problems of "Postwar Planning" and a circulating exhibition on community planning. But the theme of the synthesis of the arts, *per se*, was not taken up directly. No doubt, this can be attributed to the fact that for MoMA the interaction of all forms of modern visual expression had been part of its mission and agenda from its first framing by the young art historian Alfred Barr, and for architecture by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. A synthesis of the arts, in the terms of these historian/critic/curators would be not simply collaboration on a single building project but the fulfillment of a historical understanding of the dialectical development of the avant-garde. In his twin monumental surveys presented in 1936 "Cubism and Abstract Art" and "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" Barr juxtaposed works of architecture and furniture design with paintings and sculptures to suggest that the two dominant strains of modern visual practice resonated in all media. In the famed flow chart of artistic movements on the cover of *Cubism and Abstract*

Art, Barr already proposed the emergence of a unified "modern architecture" around 1925 out of the artistic influences of three movements: Parisian purism, Dutch *De Stijl*, and the German Bauhaus (figure 4).

In the late 1940s, with the political conflict resolved and an exhibition already staged entitled "A Home for the United Nations: Must We Repeat the Geneva Fiasco?" (1946), MoMA returned to forging a new unity against any fragmentation of architecture in both its internal dialogues and its interaction with the other arts. 1948–1949 were the key years. Johnson, and along side him Hitchcock, returned to an active role in shaping the museum's agenda, the Departments of Architecture and Industrial Arts were consolidated into the Department of Architecture and Design, and in a seminal gathering of international architects MoMA posed a question it planned to answer: "What is Happening to Modern Architecture?" A first response was sketched that year in a book published by Hitchcock with a preface by Barr: *Painting Toward Architecture*, and followed up quickly in an exhibition: "From Le Corbusier to Niemeyer: 1929–1949."

In the book Hitchcock's task was to present the works of a singular collection of abstract art by a manufacturer of modern architectural lighting, the Miller Company of Connecticut. Theirs was an early example of the corporate collections which became frequent in the postwar years, this one "assembled to illustrate with original examples abstract painting of the twentieth century which has influenced the development of modern architecture" and "contemporary painting and sculpture of potential value to contemporary architects."¹ In the MoMA exhibition the focus and denouement would be a single work of architecture, a house commissioned by the company's president Burton Tremaine and his wife Emily Hall Tremaine, curator of the corporate collection. Ultimately to remain a project and today largely forgotten, the house was to be a second home for the couple at Santa Barbara on the California coast, and was undertaken, sig-

Figure 1 View from the MoMA garden.

Figure 2 Installation view of the exhibition "From Le Corbusier to Niemeyer: 1929–1949." February 15, 1949 through April 17, 1949. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photo by Soichi Sunami

nificantly, as a collaboration between Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx, in a direct invitation to import to North America the synthesis of the arts that had famously emerged in Brazil a decade earlier.

Painting Toward Architecture accompanied a circulating exhibition of the Miller Company's collection and included photographs of the planned house, which the Tremaines viewed both as a private commission and a contribution to the future direction of American architecture. Barr explained, in his preface, with remarkably willful oversight of the early Renaissance, that "it is only in the twentieth century that painting, and to some extent sculpture have influenced architecture," a sentiment echoed by Hitchcock who claims the artists and architects "were often focused in the 1920s and even later toward the establishment of such a synthesis. They were consciously seeking a twentieth century style that should embrace all the visual arts in one single frame of reference."² Both viewed the moment as ripe to effect a needed synthesis between what he saw as the separate traditions of the Bauhaus, whose clear position of the theoretic relationship between painting and architecture is "now very influential as this country tends toward a systematic study of design in all fields,"³ and the less clearly stated, but more lyrical position of Le Corbusier. When it comes to effecting a relationship between functionalist geometric abstraction and what he calls "abstract surrealism," which "played a not unimportant part in loosening the mechanical rigidity of modern architecture in the 1930s"⁴ next to the work of Alvar Aalto one must look to the Brazilians for guidance. Philip Goodwin had laid the groundwork for MoMA's celebration of Brazilian modernism as a school for a new unity of the arts in his influential "Brazil Builds" exhibition of 1943. Five years later Hitchcock celebrates in particular Niemeyer and Burle Marx with making a spatial art out of the exploration of Arp in sculpture and Miró in painting. He fêtes the line of integration opened with the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro, Léger's church façade at Assy in France, and most the just completed Terrace-Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Skidmore, Owings & Merrill joined forces with Miró and Calder. The influence here will be mutual Hitchcock concludes, admiring especially Calder's mobiles since, "Perhaps it is the borderline fields between sculpture and painting, in which American abstract artists have of late been particularly active and inventive, that offer the most rewarding possibilities for collaboration between architects and artists."⁵ In order for modern architecture to develop, without falling into the dangers of a new academicism, Hitchcock concludes that the catalytic role played by artist's exploration of abstraction must remain a stimulus.

Over the course of the 1930s and 1940s MoMA had

regularly staged exhibitions on a single work thought to mark a historical road mark in the progress of modern architecture. Hitchcock's hero Frank Lloyd Wright for instance was celebrated with exhibitions on Fallingwater (1938) and on Taliesin West (1947). In 1949 the honor shifted to the Brazilian masters just commissioned by the Tremaines. Johnson, recently returned to head the department at MoMA, charged his newly hired curator of architecture Peter Blake with conceiving a show that would visualize Barr and Hitchcock's hypotheses in *Painting Toward Architecture* and celebrate the ambitions of the Tremaines' future house in Santa Barbara, which was also to be celebrated in an article in the influential Los Angeles magazine *Art + Architecture*. "This house," the show wall text explained "represents today's final synthesis of two important stylistic trends: the strict mechanical formalism of Le Corbusier and the cubist-constructivist movement, and the organic shapes and free-form fantasy of the tradition of Miró and Arp" (figures 2, 3). The juxtaposition of Le Corbusier's 1920 still life with the Villa Savoye model that had been at the museum since the seminal 1932 show promoting the international style had been made over and over again in MoMA's galleries. But, the juxtaposition of Miró and Arp with Niemeyer and Burle Marx was intended to represent a whole new state in the dialogue among the arts and the threshold of a new synthesis, as explained in the press release: "The Tremaine House . . . represents today's final architectural synthesis of three two important twentieth century stylistic trends: the formalistic geometry of Le Corbusier, and the free-form anthropomorphic shapes of Arp."⁶

At MoMA the synthesis of the arts went beyond a new collaborative paradigm to the threshold in the epoch development of modern architecture as the project of the age.

Notes

1. Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Painting Toward Architecture* (New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1948), 5 (title page). 2 Ibid, 9, 36–38. 3 Ibid, 38. 4 Ibid, 40. 5 Ibid, 52. 6 Ada Louise Huxtable, draft of press release (February 8, 1949, MoMA Archives, Exhibition 400).
2. Ibid, 9, 36–38.
3. Ibid, 38.
4. Ibid, 40.
5. Ibid, 52.
6. Ada Louise Huxtable, draft of press release (February 8, 1949, MoMA Archives, Exhibition 400).

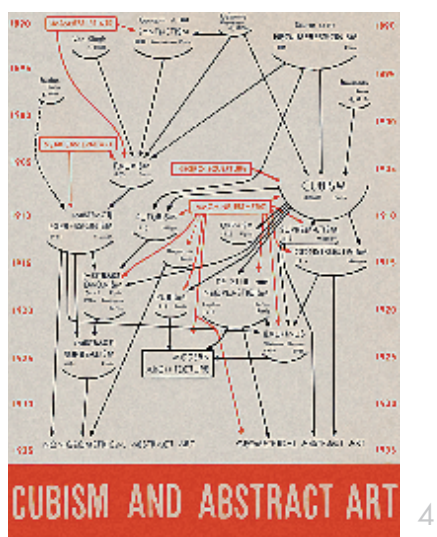
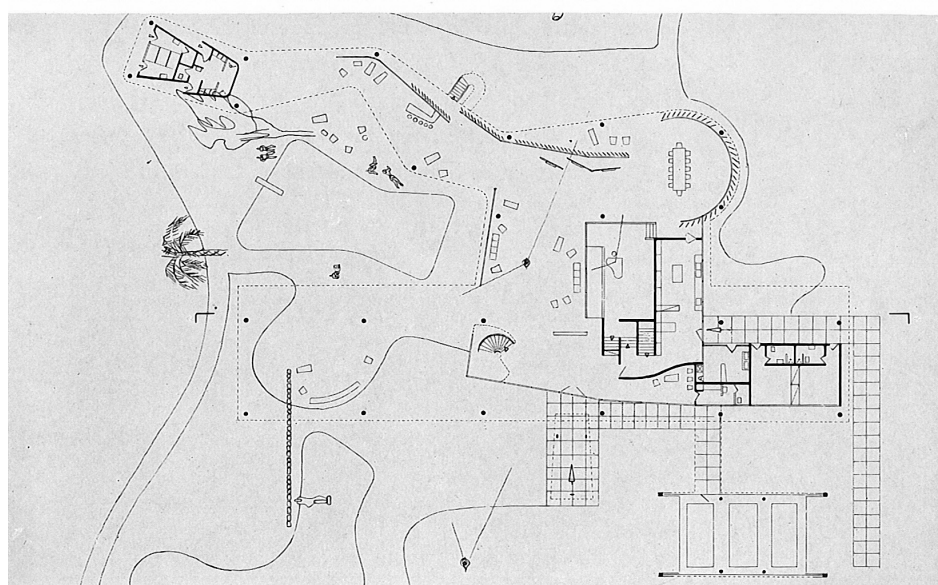


Figure 3 **Oscar Niemeyer** and **Roberto Burle-Marx** project for House and Garden, Montecito, California 1948.

Figure 4 Cover of *Cubism and Abstract Art* by **Alfred Barr**, showing artistic movements of the Modernism, 1936.

Barry Bergdoll

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He is author or editor of numerous publications including, *Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity* (winner of the 2010 Award for Outstanding Exhibition Catalogue, Association of Art Museum Curators); *Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling* (2008); *Mies in Berlin* (2001); *Karl Friedrich Schinkel: An Architecture for Prussia* (1994); *Léon Vaudoyer: Historicism in the Age of Industry* (1994); and *European Architecture 1750-1890*, in the Oxford History of Art series (2001). He served as President of the Society of Architectural Historians from 2006 to 2008. Among the recent exhibitions he has organized are "Rising Currents: Projects for New York's Waterfront" at MoMA (through October 11, 2010); "Bauhaus 1919-1933: Workshops for Modernity" at MoMA (2009-10); "Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling" at MoMA (2008); "Mies in Berlin" at MoMA (2001), with Terence Riley.

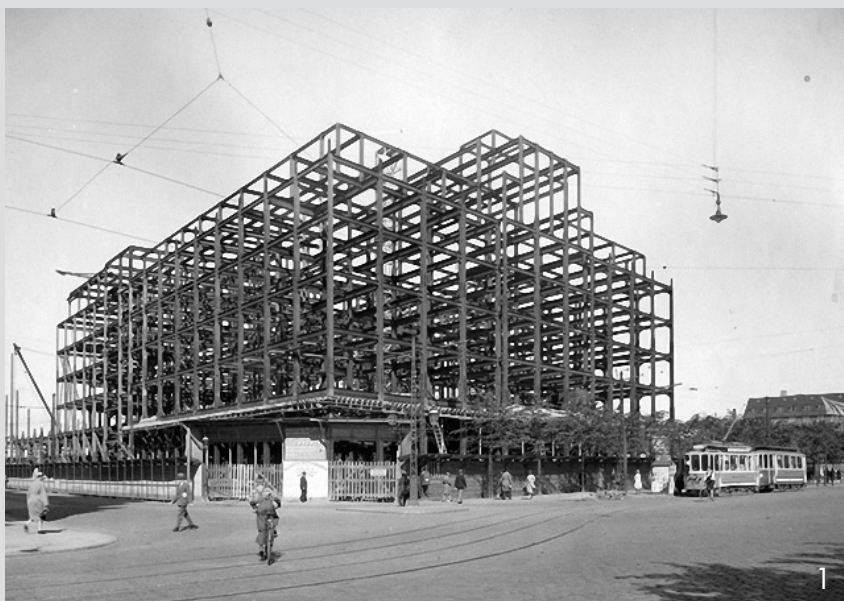
Vesterport – Metal and Structure

By Ola Wedeburnn

THE British metallurgist Cyril Stanley Smith emphasized the interdependence of science and art. His research and reflections on the sense of materiality is a lifelong experience where *A Search for Structure* is the noteworthy title of a book of essays published in 1992. Smith emphasizes the value of practical experience and the experience of sense as an engagement with matter. He certainly makes an impact when it comes to the concern for matter and material, referring to structure as

aesthetics as well as technology and to objects of art as well as to science. No doubt this point of view is valid also when it comes to studying architecture and practical, social and philosophical possibilities of matter.

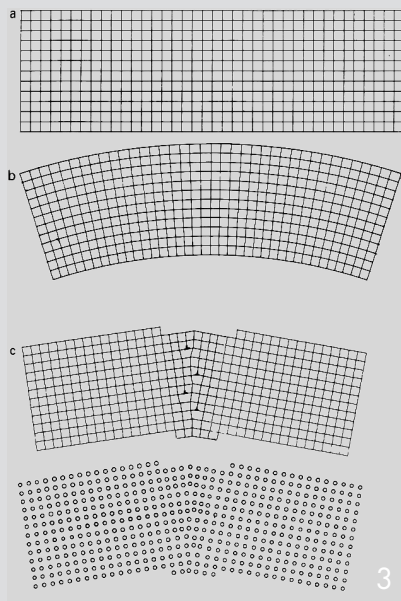
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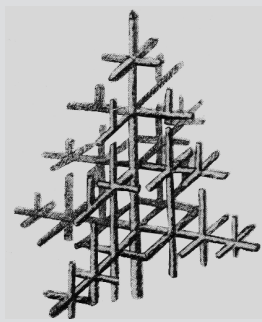
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Metal is often considered as a source for an *Art of Structure*, as a concept of iron and steel from the distribution of space to the construction of diagrammatic forces of bridges and the structural precision of skyscrapers. Architecture of metal becomes a visual art as cladding of metal like aluminium sheets that cover the Chrysler Building structure, and as car structures swept in metal sheets.

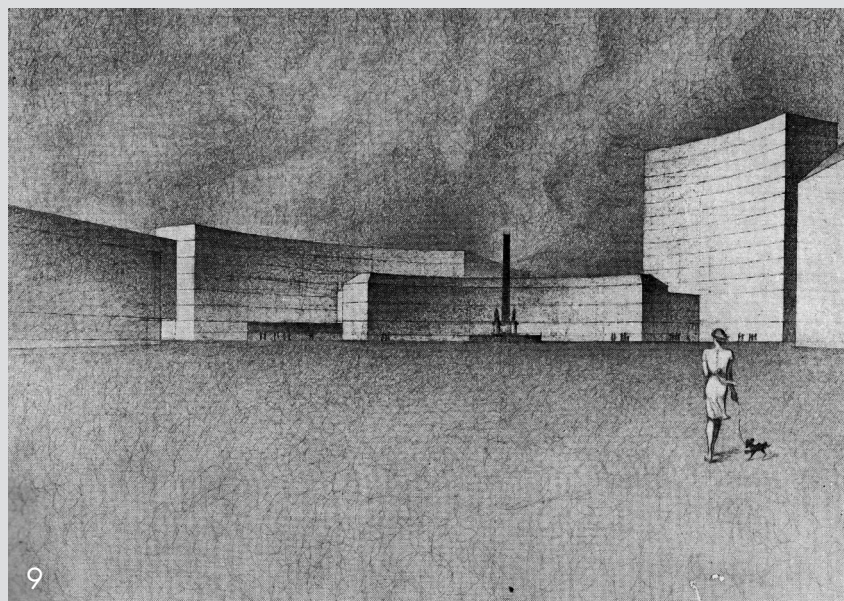
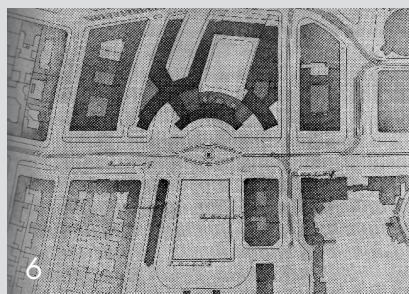
Vesterport

The office building *Vesterport* was built in a new won area in the neighbourhood of the central station of Copenhagen. The site was the west gate of the former city

wall, where an obelisk celebrating liberty had been raised in the 18th century. This became – and still is – the most dynamic spot in the city, close to the town hall and the amusement park named Tivoli.

The skylines of many European cities like Copenhagen are characterized by the punctured sky of weathered copper towers of churches and town halls.

This is a reason for the design of *Vesterport* as a copper-covered ziggurat and skyscraper, with a stepped tower, balconies and a neon-light banana of *FYFFES* at the very peak. The copper façade underlines the structure of the building. And the light and neon advertisement of the façade use the combination of metal structure and cover that makes the façade an elaborate interface of climate and communication.



HE British metallurgist Cyril Stanley Smith emphasized the interdependence of science and art. His research and reflections on the sense of materiality is a lifelong experience where *A Search for Structure* is the noteworthy title of a book of essays published in 1992. Smith emphasizes the value of practical experience and the experience of sense as an engagement with matter. He certainly makes an impact when it comes to the concern for matter and material, referring to structure as aesthetics as well as technology and to objects of art as well as to science. No doubt this point of view is valid also when it comes to studying architecture and practical, social and philosophical possibilities of matter.

From this point of view scale and time is relative. Matter and meaning are open to changing views, visions and structures. When it comes to matters of architecture, metal is well known as cladding, brackets such as hinges, hooks, locks, handles and monumental doors. The traditional metal of architecture is a material of objects such as casted columns and ornamental details, and only in a modern context metal is an idea of architecture.

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Introducing the Modern

Vesterport might be considered as the first major modern building in Copenhagen. Both technically, aesthetically as socially it introduces modern architecture in the



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city. Technically, by the use of wrought iron, prefabricated industrial building parts such as steel framed prefabricated windows. Aesthetically, by a functional architecture with no ornaments, a rational structural grid of plan and a façade designed with an advanced use of neon-light advertisement. Socially, the program of the building introduced a flexible system to rent offices of different size, providing central services of secretariats, conference facilities and more. The building integrated with the social life of the city with elegant shops facing indoor streets and elevator lobbies that took the visitor to fashionable restaurants like the roof top Ritz with long balconies facing the main.

The site of *Vesterport* is developed as part of a veritable downtown in relation to the station and around *The Liberty Memorial*. As an arrival point to Copenhagen the station is the most dynamic node of the city. This is the gate for the main road from western Denmark, by train the airport is only 12 minutes away, and the bridge to the city of Malmö in Sweden can be reached in less than a half an hour.

This is a conscious scenario where *Vesterport* is counterbalanced with the *SAS Hotel* and the *Liberty Memorial* is the central character. Still, *Vesterport* is a landmark in itself, shaped as an almost crystalline character deriving from the original construction with pyramidal shape, the steel grid and structure referring to the character of metal. Thus the structure adapts to the site with an almost dynamic elasticity. The iron construction reflects the rationality of mechanic precision and speed. It is a challenge to traditional building technology. It introduces another sensibility of the city. Steel structure makes both social and technical changes a reality. It is a concept of an inhabited structure rather than a programmed building. This is possible because of the radical and renewed adaption to production and process, of construction, of material engineering. Metal architecture and the structure of steel is a challenge to construction regulations and to properties of production. The concept of structure introduces a sense of relativity of building. Instead of traditional walls it involves elements of statics that challenge the conventional

Figure 1. Construction of the Vesterport, City Archive of Copenhagen Museum

Figure 2. Completion of the Vesterport construction, City Archive of Copenhagen Museum

Figure 3. Plan schemes

Figure 4. 3D drawing of metal structures from *A Search for Structures* by Cyril Stanley Smit

Figure 5. Photo of metal structures from *A Search for Structures* by Cyril Stanley Smit

Figure 6. Location plan drawing by IB Lunding, from the *City Architect*, 1956

Figure 7. Detail of entrance neon sign

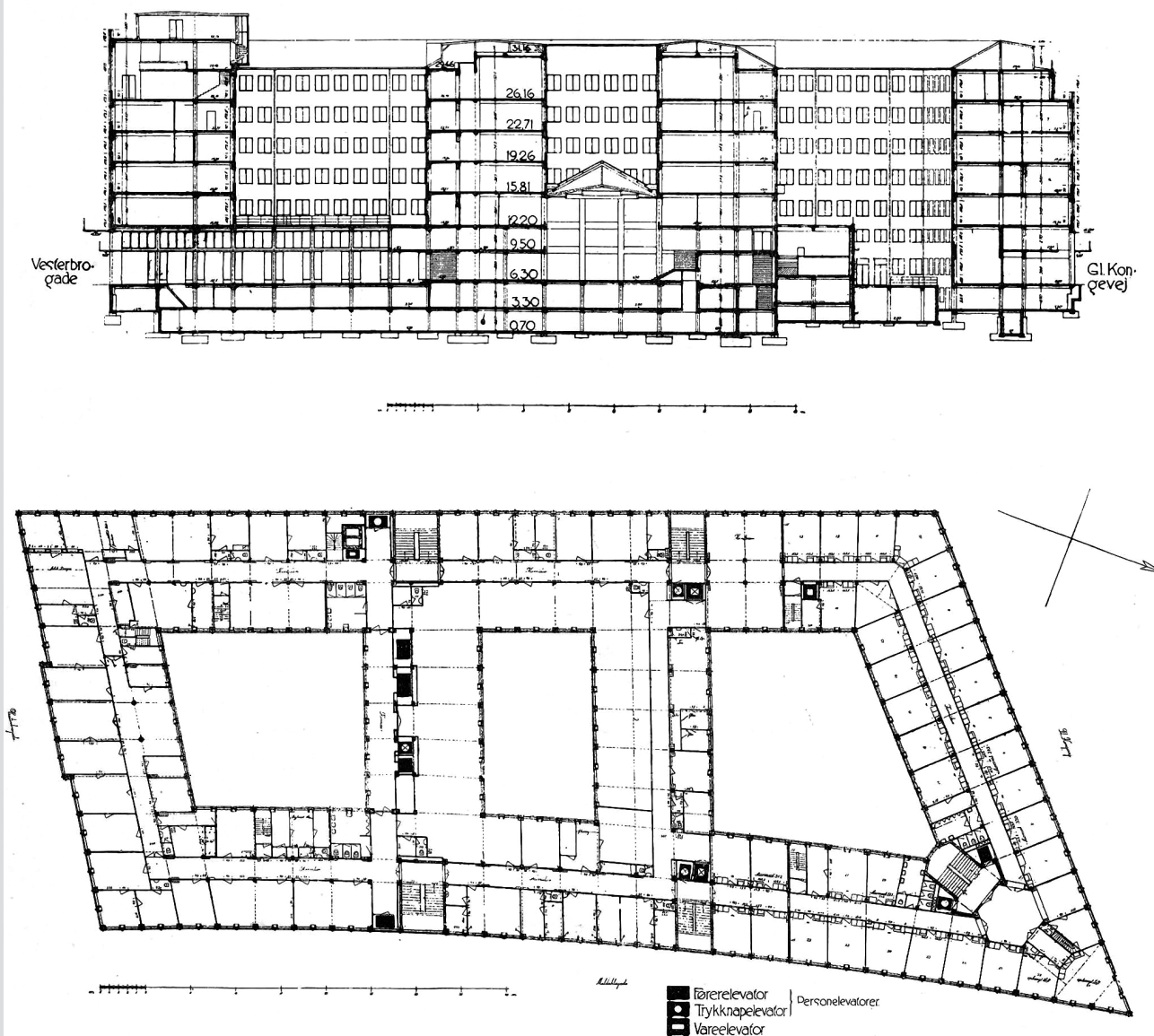
Figure 8. Weathered copper clad facade with original steel framed windows from Critall

Figure 9. Perspective seen from Central Station. Drawing by Ib Lunding, from the *City Architect*, 1956

Figure 10. Contemporary photo with The Liberty Memorial

Figure 11. Roof neon sign detail

Figure 12. Plan and section of Vesterport



Dennis Sharp



Imagine the romantic English country side, a sweet little church and beautiful weather. It was here, encased in tradition, that in sadness we brought prof. Dennis Sharp (1933) to his grave. It was as if the Modernist showed us Kant's point of view that if neither reason nor experience can explain the existence of God, faith might fill the vacuum. This is part of the poem Dennis selected for the service:

"God of concrete, God of steel,
God of piston and of wheel
God of pylon, God of steam,
God of girder and of beam...

Lord of science, Lord of art
God of map and graph and chart
Lord of physics and research
Word of bible, faith in church
Lord of sequence and design
All the world of truth is thine"

Dennis died on the 6th May after a serious illness that bothered him for several years. He leaves behind his wife Yasmin, his daughter Melani, his son Deen and many friends all over the world. He was a universal man: architect, scholar, critic, writer, teacher, bookseller, cook and walking encyclopedia. He collaborated with architects like Santiago de Calatrava. His books *Modern Architecture and Expression* (1966) and *20th century architecture – a visual history* (1972) became classics. He made exhi-

bitions, was the editor of the magazine *World Architecture*, he was professor at the Open University and for the development of **docomomo** he was of vital importance.

In 1990 we first met when Dennis came to the founding conference of **docomomo** in Eindhoven. He formed part of the strong UK delegation my friend Christopher Dean brought in his slipstream: Catherine Cooke, John Allen, Sherban Cantacuzino, Martin Pawley, James Dunnet and Peter Palumbo a.o. The latter came by private helicopter just to present his support to our initiative. From this first beginning Dennis put his heart into **docomomo**.

It is difficult to find photos in our archive where he is not smiling. One of the best is where he participates in the tango competition at the 4th international **docomomo** conference in Sliac, Slovakia. Forever young, hat on, arm stretched forward, big smile, he flies out of the picture. Here is the Modernist at heart. "While I breathe, I hope" was a motto he used.

The very first words he presented in his paper to his new **docomomo** friends at our founding Conference were: "Finding a definition for modern architecture is difficult enough. The cultural evaluation of it is even more problematic. Modernism is an attitude of mind; around view;... "Later he wrote: "Modernity that gives root to the Modern Movement is a cultural mode, a form of civilization which permeated the world from the West, opposed to the idea of "tradition", that is to say all earlier traditions, and is unswervingly dedicated to fundamental economic and social transformation". And: "Modern Architecture kept persistently to its aim of revolutionizing Modern Life".

While debating criteria for the international selection of the key Modern Movement buildings world wide, it was Dennis who – after length deliberations concluded: "Modern Architecture should essentially be seen as socially, technically and aesthetically innovative". And it is this definition of Modern Movement Architecture that we have used ever since.

His contributions to **docomomo** were plenty and important. He assisted with the original text of the **docomomo** constitution and the Eindhoven statement in 1990. For years he was a crucial member of the international specialist committee on registers. Together with Catherine Cooke he edited the book: *Modern Movement in Architecture; selections from the Docomomo Registers*. Through the articles he wrote, papers he presented and his contributions to debates he kept us on our toes. His network of friends over the world was instrumental in establishing new contacts. It is through Dennis that for example the formation of **docomomo** Japan came about, now one of our most active national working parties.

Also nationally he was a catalyst. He was chairman of **docomomo** UK for many years and his beloved shop

was a beehive for debate in London.

Dennis, on behalf of all the **docomomo** community I thank you for your intellectual contribution, your loyalty and enthusiasm. Let us be inspired forever by your exam-

ple: "While I breathe, I hope".

Hubert-Jan Henket
Honorary president of **docomomo**

Dennis Sharp in commemoration

From about 1995 on, Dennis Sharp has participated as an active member in the International Specialist Committee on Registers. With his exhaustive knowledge, incredible energy and far reaching network, he has enriched the committee in an invaluable manner. He was always on the move, had seen the most recent exhibitions or read an important publication or produced one himself. More importantly, together with Catherine Cooke he has edited the so-called 'Black book' on Modern Movement Architecture with selections from the Docomomo registers in 2000, a labourious task for which we are still very much indebted to both of the editors. Before that, he had contributed substantially to the advisory report on the World Heritage List and the Modern Movement (1997) by his broad overview. The committee will remember as well, with great joy and respect, how well he had organised the annual meeting and the international registers seminar on the Postwar Modern House (2006)

in conjunction with visits to the great exhibition on the Modern Movement in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the specially opened private houses. Dennis was always present and had always special stories to tell and witty comments on what we saw or discussed.

He shared his knowledge in a very open manner and he was an attentive listener during our working sessions as well. When we organised our last annual meeting in Oviedo, we knew that he was, to our deep regret, already too ill to come over to Spain. But none of us could know in April, that he would pass away so soon afterwards. The sad news reached us in May.

We will miss Dennis deeply and we would like to commemorate him here with great respect and gratefulness for all his work and his enthusiast involvement.

Panayotis Tournikiotis, chair ISC/Registers
Marieke Kuipers, vice-chair ISC/Registers

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Dennis Sharp and the History of Modern Architecture

Commitment was the watchword of the life and work of Dennis Sharp, the famous architect, professor, curator, editor, historian and architecture critic. His life began in England, on November 30 1933, and came to an end in the same country almost eight decades later, on May 6 2010. His career was marked by constant activity, both in the academic field, where he was a prolific author and renowned professor, and in the realm of architecture and its conservation. The range of activities to which he devoted himself clearly reveals this man's deep-rooted passion, and we shall always recall the clarity of his ideas and the eloquence of his words.

Having completed his architecture studies at the Architectural Association, London, and graduated in history at Liverpool University, he became Leverhulme Fellow in Architecture at the latter institution and held a chair between 1963 and 1968. He also taught at the AA, where

he was head of the Art and History Department between 1969 and 1982, a position he combined with teaching work in a number of university institutes both in England and abroad, notably at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, and the Académie Internationale d'Architecture, in Sofia. At the same time, he was Editor General of the Architectural Association, being responsible for *AA Quarterly* and *AA Papers*. Later he was appointed Editor of *World Architecture* and, more recently, as an example of his endeavours to disseminate architecture, he took charge of the Art Book publishing house, characterised by an entirely new approach to the world of architecture.

The publication of his first books was a crucial event, as these works became indispensable to the study of 20th-century architecture: *Modern Architecture and Expressionism*, 1966; *A Visual History of 20th-Century Architecture*, 1972; *Form and Function: A Source Book*

for the *History of Architecture & Design 1890–1939*, 1975; and *Sources of Modern Architecture: A Critical Bibliography*, 1967. Subsequently he focused on individual architects and movements in works such as *Santiago Calatrava*, 1992; *Kisho Kurokawa: From the Age of the Machine to the Age of Life*, 1998; *The Rationalists and the Anti-Rationalists*, 2000; *Eco Architecture–Eco cities*, 2002; *Bauhaus: Dessau*, 2002; and *Connell Ward and Lucas*, 2008, among many others.

Turning now to other aspects of his career, Sharp was a regular and impassioned contributor to international forums. In 1979 he participated in the first international meeting, held in Barcelona, of the International Committee of Architectural Critics, CICA, an organisation of which he was Chairman. He also organised several symposiums at the UIA congresses as well as instituting and coordinating the CICA Book Awards. Similarly, he

collaborated with Docomomo from its very beginnings, organising the Docomomo UK work team of which he was joint-chair at the time of his demise. Furthermore, he was a member of the International Specialist Committee on Register, the endeavours of which are described in the edition he prepared together with Catherine Cooke of *The Modern Movement in Architecture: Selections from the Docomomo Registers*, 2000.

By virtue of Sharp's constant presence in the different fields of world architecture, and his affable, generous personality, invariably sustained by rectitude and passionate defence of the twentieth-century heritage, his death was a considerable shock to his friends and very sad news for his colleagues and numerous readers and students.

Louise Noelle, chair **docomomo** Mexico

Farewell to the master's discipline Eliana Cárdenas

It is more common for disciples to write memories of their old masters than it is for a master to bear the hard news of the death of one of his disciples. It is painful and sad to face and deal with the death of Eliana Cárdenas, the leading historian of architecture in Cuba. Having been invited to deliver lectures throughout the month of February at various universities in Spain – including one in Barcelona, recently announced in the website *Vitruvius* – she suffered an irreparable brain haemorrhage in Madrid, where she died on the 14th of March.

Eliana and I had worked together for 40 years, not only teaching history of architecture, but also conducting research work on Havana. In 1967, when the architecture course began, the school was undergoing a period of technocratic dogmatism. It had been "occupied" by the Ministry of Construction, who banned cultural and theoretical teaching on the grounds that 1970 was meant to be the year of the "10 million harvest" and therefore, the country should focus on this task and not allow intellectual ramblings. However, a group of teachers – Mario Coyula, Luis Lapidus, Emilio Escobar, Fernando Salinas, Roberto Gottardi and I – tried to fight and assure continuity in the teaching of cultural courses, which were resumed in 1970 after an unsuccessful "harvest". At that time, we had the support of some students such as Eliana Cárdenas, who became one of the main protagonists of this struggle. Not only due to her passion for architecture – taken as a cultural phenomenon – but also because she was one of the few students who were interested in

poetry, literature, music and art, a quality that remained constant throughout her life. Her poems were published in Cuba and in Latin American magazines.

Following the discovery of Eliana's talent, in 1972 I invited her to join the research team that I supervised – *Grupo de Investigación de Historia de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo (GIHAU)* – in order to develop a survey on Old Havana and conduct research on the city's historical evolution. These findings were afterwards materialized in a book called *La Habana. Transformación urbana en Cuba*, published in Spain by Gustavo Gili, in 1974. However, as graduated students were obliged to work away from Havana for two years, Eliana took up residence in the country's second city, Santiago de Cuba, where the School of Architecture had just been created. There she began to teach history of architecture and up until 1977, when she returned to Havana, she also worked as an adviser on Bayamo's and Guantánamo's city rehabilitation plans.

Upon returning to Havana, she was immediately invited to teach history of architecture at the Faculty, and together we created the university course of Theory and Criticism of Architecture, which was never well understood by students and consequently did not last long. However, we managed to write a book regarding our "marxist-semiology" vision, which achieved great success in Latin America, as our architectural analysis methodology was applied both in Ecuador – where the book was also published – and in Bolivia. In fact, even today Bolivian tu-

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tors continue to embrace our architectural critical vision. Eliana later continued to further deepen the subject and in 1998, Guanajuato's School of Architecture, in Mexico, published her book named *Problemas de teoria de la arquitectura*. In addition, she continued her literary studies, especially focused on interpreting the work of José Martí, which led to the winning of several national and international awards: in Cuba, she received the "Prêmio 13 de Março" (1980) from the Universidad de Havana and the "Prêmio Ensaio "Razón de Ser" (1996) from the Alejo Carpentier Foundation; in Mexico, the "Prêmio Plural de Ensaio" (1981).

It is not possible, within this brief essay, to address and list all the significant contributions that Eliana made to Cuban architecture. She fought all her life for the cultural significance of architecture and for the appreciation of the built heritage, whilst immersed in an adverse environment, full of misunderstandings and contempt for architecture as an art form, restrained by technocratic lobbies in a system where the economy has become the core value when assessing the construction of new buildings. In every event, every seminar and in all the various positions she held in the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, Docomomo, ICOMOS, Havana's Heritage Committee and in Havana's Faculty of Architecture, she always advocated the pursuit of a national identity in Cuban architecture by applying innovation and creativity in new construction works.

Having a poor health and a humble life with modest living conditions, she had to endure a harsh everyday reality. As such, what we have to admire in Eliana was her fighting spirit, her optimism and her enthusiasm to undertake every project with all necessary sacrifices, thus mirroring the spirit of the Cuban Revolution. Almost by herself and during many years, she edited the magazine *Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, which belonged to the Faculty of Architecture of Havana. Leaving her family and personal life in Cuba, she also spent two years lecturing in

Eliana Cárdenas



Angola and developing studies on Theory and History of Architecture at the University "Agostinho Neto", in Luanda.

Of late, she was in the process of writing her second PhD, and together we would write a general history of Cuban architecture, from the beginnings until today. In addition, shortly before leaving Havana, she handed in a book with a collection of my own writings about the Caribbeans, which had a long and detailed prologue from her. The death of Eliana will create a great void in the history and criticism of Cuban architecture, which will not be filled so soon. The task of all of us who worked and shared our lives with her is to gather and publish her critical writing, so that her effort, her struggle, her enthusiasm and her ideals may contribute to the education of future generations of Cubans architects.

Roberto Segre

2010 **docomomo** ISC Registers
Seminar in Gijón
The Factory, The Paradigm Of Modernity
Date: 14–17 April 2010
Location: Gijón, Spain

Objective

The aim of the International Seminar is to reflect on the influence of technology on the emergence of modern-movement architecture and on the new view that would lead to change in the interpretations of all artistic experiences.



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Francis Bacon (1561–1626) initiated a line of thought which was inevitably destined to develop: that of the world of science as the object of philosophical reflection. At the same time, scientific and technical progress would consolidate, in practice, a new change in the interpretative values of Western culture.

In opposition to the world of nature that of the device would become consolidated, governed by the laws of technology, which would develop fully inside new architectural artifacts practically unknown until the nineteenth century. The factory, as a new architectural type, had come into being.

It would be in the factory, as a new expression of construction, that architecture developed one of the most specific manifestations of modernity, quickly travelling the distance that separated the steam engine from full industrialization.

And not only architects, but also painters, sculptors, photographers and composers found in the world of technology and its container, the factory, a motive of inspiration and reflection on the scope of their respective artistic experiences. The film world, too, became trapped by its irrepressible lure, as Charles Chaplin ironically expressed in "Modern Times".

In the construction of the factory new building tech-

niques were developed as the expression of its utilitarian needs as well as of materials that had recently become available. Poets devoted many hours to its interpretation, while painters and sculptors modeled forms and used hitherto unknown expressive resources in an attempt to decipher the symbolism of technology.

The fascination that the factory generated has reached the present day. Its past splendor, now largely reduced to ruins, continues to attract our eye: having become thoroughly obsolete, factories nonetheless tell us not only of our past but also of some of the most meaningful concerns of our present. We project our gaze onto their ruins with deep nostalgia, melancholy and uncertainty, to the point where we are prepared to prolong their existence beyond their original use, now expired, to discover their new possibilities as leisure and cultural premises.

Reflect on your past reality and its potential for the future is thus the goal of the convening of this International Seminar. To order the Seminar, specifying the intent of lectures and conferences and taking into account the place of its conclusion, it is proposed to organize the whole of the work from a sectoral perspective. These take into account not only individual buildings but also its territorial integration, an issue that we consider crucial in order to assess both its architectural merits as intervention operations on them can be made. In this sense, we propose to confine the work, in addition to general reflections on, two specific productive sectors: coal-steel and Energy (thermal and hydro).

2010 **docomomo** ISC Technology

Seminar in Tokyo
Metal in Modern Movement
Date: 14–16 May 2010
Location: Tokyo, Japan

Objective

The Technology Seminar held in Tokyo, Japan, focused on the use of Metal in Modern Movement architecture. In particular, the **docomomo** International Specialist Committee on Technology (ISC-T) collaborated with the National Specialist Committee (NSC) in Japan to focus on a seminar that discussed the use of metal and steel structures in Modern Movement Architecture. In particular, presentation of topics which focused on the repair methods, skills and craftsmanship towards the conservation of these structures was encouraged. It is important to note that metal and steel have also been used in Japan as a material which responds well to seismic events while simultaneously forming a unique construction that is part of the



modern experience. On the basis of this background, we were able to have a lively discussion on the use of Metal in Modern Movement Architecture from all over the world!

docomomo International is a non-profit organization initiated in 1988 by professor, architect Hubert-Jan Henket, and architect Wessel de Jonge. The primary role of **docomomo** International is to educate and exchange ideas relating to the documentation, history and technology of conservation, for the protection and safeguard of modern movement heritage. As one of the five working specialist committees dedicated to this mission, the **docomomo** International Specialist Committee on Technology was organized in 2000. In a joint effort and close collaboration, the national chapter of **docomomo** Japan NSC Technology hosted an international seminar on the use of Metal in Modern Movement architecture in Tokyo, Japan.

International Competition for Image — Modelling of XX Century Architecture

The Jury: Louise Cox, UIA President — Ana Tostões, docomomo International Chair — Laurent Praden, Autodesk — Bertrand Lemoine, Direction du Grand Paris (GNP) — Michel Florenzano, MAP Laboratory (CNRS)

A New Representation of the Architectural Heritage

The International Union of Architects (UIA) announces the results of the international competition inviting architecture students to create image based models of significant works of the 20th century from around the world. Students could choose to represent any architectural realisation built between 1901 and 2000. Their architectural descriptions could be designed as panoramic images or image based models of the building in its current state.

The jury met on 17 June 2010, to examine the 52

projects submitted. Chaired by **docomomo** President Ana Tostões, the jury also included UIA President Louise Cox, Director of the Grand Paris international workshop Bertrand Lemoine, Director of the UMR 694 MAP-Gamsau lab at the CNRS Michel Florenzano, and Director of the Autodesk product Laurent Praden.

A UIA grand prize was awarded to Salvatore Corso, student at the Aldo Rossi faculty of architecture in Bologna, Italy, for the image based model of Casa del Balilla, in Forlì, Italy, built between 1933 and 1935 by architect Cesare Valle. His representation is an accurate reproduction of the original architectural vocabulary of this edifice in danger.

A **docomomo** prize was attributed to Alexandre Van Dongen-Vogels, student at the Superior Institute of Architecture in La Cambre, Belgium, for the image based model of the Brussels-Ukkel Glass House, built in 1935 by Paul-Amaury Michel. The jury applauded the quality and coherence of his model.

An honourable mention was awarded to a group of students led by Daniele Rossi from Italy's Camerino University for their image based model of a set of social facilities built during the fascist period in various Italian cities.

A UIA grand prize together with a **docomomo** prize were awarded to Fabio Freitas, Jonas Abreu da Silva and Olivier Lauppi from the Federal University at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the description in panoramic images of the Rio Modern Art Museum built in 1954 by Affonso Eduardo Reidy. This project received the jury's unanimous praise for its understanding and reading of spaces and volumes and for the visual restitution of the entire architectural complex.

Three honourable mentions were awarded to panoramic image descriptions:

- Chenyuan Qian, (Tianjin University, China), for the restoration of the Juer hutongs in Beijing.
- Xin Ma and Xiaoyu Lang, (Tianjin University, China) for Tiananmen Square in Beijing.
- Yuriy Kuvshinov and Anastasia Marukhna (Moscow Institute of Architecture, Russia) for their reproduction of the Narkomfin collective housing complex built between 1928 and 1930 in Moscow by Moisei Ginzburg.



docomomo International Specialist Committees

**International Specialist
Committee on Registers (ISC/R)**
Annual meeting ISC/Registers,
Oviedo (Spain), April 18, 2010

After the 4th International registers seminar *The Factory, Paradigm of Modernity*, organized by **docomomo** Iberia in the Faculty of Geology, University of Oviedo, April 14–17, 2010.

Three ISC/R members attended the annual meeting: Panayotis Tournikiotis, chair, Marieke Kuipers, vice-chair, Susana Landrove, director of **docomomo** Iberia. Celestino Garcia Braña was excused and left Oviedo the day before. Inge Bertels, secretary could not come and has informed the committee that she is willing to step down in Mexico. We would like to thank her for all her work. All other members could not come for various reasons. The saddest reason was that Dennis Sharp could not join us for serious health problems.

We have first reviewed the fiches of the 2009–2010 thematic selection on Power that will be presented in Mexico. Argentina, Austria, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Slovakia, Slovenia, UK and USA did submit the whole set; Netherlands, Iberia and Greece only one part, the rest is under way. We will encourage all other working parties to submit their selection before the Mexico conference and remind all of them that they should also present their selection on a poster.

The meeting in Oviedo was necessarily short and so we could not undertake a thorough examination of these fiches. This is raising again the hard work that needs to be done to review and edit fiches before putting them on the website. The whole process will no longer be possible in the years to come, with the only help from the volunteering members of the committee, who are scientifically responsible.

The ISC/R definitely needs a part-time permanent secretary and/or web manager in the **docomomo** International headquarters to coordinate the process of publishing the fiches on the web.

During this meeting, we have also reviewed the whole work done in the ISC/R till 2010 and the future plans with regard to the MoMo registers. In its first period (1992–2000) the **docomomo** ISC/R has focused on the necessary International selection of MoMo buildings that culminated in the publication of the 'black book' in 2000. Maristella Casciato was chair, Marieke Kuipers was secretary and the book published in Rotterdam by O10 was edited by Dennis Sharp and Catherine Cooke.

In its second period (2002–2010), the ISC/R has focused on thematically organized documentation and encouraged national and international seminars and publications related to bi-annual and international conference themes. The themes of this period have been thus far: the Modern House, Education, Industry, Sports, Import/Export, Post-war architecture, Other Modernisms and Power.

With the addition of 'health' to this documentation series, we will close a critical circle that will well describe the MoMo architecture in terms of conceptual typology and understanding innovation. Therefore, Health will be the theme to be proposed in Mexico for the 2011–2012 registers' selection. But this will be the last turn in the cycle of the thematic documentation. We foresee that there should follow in 2012–2014 a two years' period of rethinking, updating, disclosing and reorganizing the collective work that has been done since 2000, in the form of publications and comprehensive websites from every working party and **docomomo** International. During the same period the ISC/R has to

redefine its tasks and duties to improve, expand and update the **docomomo** documentation in the years to come.

The ISC/R archives are and should remain in the Nai, Rotterdam (NL).

The ISC/R reorganization

Panayotis Tournikiotis and Marieke Kuipers are willing to continue as chair and vice-chair in 2010–2012. Susana Landrove is ready to act as secretary during the same period. Other members will continue, with the only exception of Inge Bertels who is stepping down as secretary and leaves the committee. To our deep regret, Dennis Sharp has sadly left the ISC/R. He has passed away on the 6th of May. He has been a committed member of the committee and we will all miss him as a good friend.

Meanwhile, both chairs come to the conclusion that they are not young anymore and that they are increasingly busy in many others tasks. In their view, the ISC/R needs new and committed members to take over the responsibility of the Registers and to redefine the goals of the DO of **docomomo**: MoMo documentation.

Therefore, the ISC/R invites **docomomo** members to apply for joining the committee in 2010 and to be involved in the reorganization process.

Panayotis Tournikiotis and Marieke Kuipers are ready to act in 2012–2014 as co-chairs to a new chair that will be elected in 2012, to help the reorganization process but they will definitely step down in 2014 leaving the committee to the next generation.

Panayotis Tournikiotis, *Chair*
Marieke Kuipers, *Vice-Chair*
Inge Bertels, *Secretary*
docomomo ISC/R

**International Specialist
Committee on
Technology (ISC/T)**
July 2010 Report

Over the past two years, the **docomomo** International Specialist Committee on Technology (ISC/T) has carried out two seminars since the

ISC/R International Seminar, Oviedo,
14-18 April 2010
Exhibition "La arquitectura de la industria,
1925-1965.

Registro **docomomo** Ibérico"
Geology Faculty at the Oviedo University
by architect Ignacio Álvarez Castelao
Sculptures by Rubio Camín and mosaics
and stained-glass by Antonio Suárez

conference *Challenge of Change* in Rotterdam, the Netherlands in 2008. The seminar entitled, *Concrete – Conservation Challenges*, was held in Wrocław, Poland in October 2009 and a second seminar, *Metal in Modern Movement*, was held in recently in Tokyo, Japan in May 2010. Each seminar was well attended with more than 100 people which included international participants and a good number of local participants from **docomomo** Poland and **docomomo** Japan.

Based on discussions from these two seminars, the ISC/T has been in the process of formulating a proposal for a strategy and perspective for the ISC/Technology in the future. The document entitled, *Matter and Time*, includes some of these discussions to date and has been circulated among **docomomo** ISC/T members. The document will be a source for continued discussion at the next ISC/T meeting to be held at the conference *Living the Modern Urbanity* in Mexico City, August 2010.

Matter and Time – Perspective of Technology

During the ISC/T meeting in the Centennial Hall in Wrocław (2009), a debate was raised about the bearing of recent topics related to Technology and the Modern Movement. Ivo Hammer from Austria raised questions about the meaning of technology within the committee and Mariël Polman from the Netherlands requested that a general discussion on the meaning of technology take place within the committee to address more questions by the committee. As well, questions were raised in Tokyo, Japan (2010) about setting an agenda and strategy for the committee



starting with the **docomomo** International Conference in Mexico City 2010.

As we examine the past, technology was key element of the modern movement. Innovation has posed possibilities to give form to new buildings which utilized building crafts representative of different geographic regions from the modern movement. Various perspectives can be identified in the construction of the past and now and, as practitioners and educators, we must identify how conservation interventions can provide solutions to maintain the technology used to construct buildings of the Modern Movement. If we can identify the skills and innovation which were used to construct buildings during modern movement, how do we also now allow and account for change over time of these buildings and the continued use of their systems?

The committee has focused on building physics and building craft to explore many underlying and pedagogical philosophies which relate to the inception of building design and construction. Often, we also ponder architecture as a social and educational framework and, over the years, the work of ISC/T has maintained exploration of unique historical perspectives which focus on the evolution of technology and the applied innovation within the Modern Movement. However, while there is a historic importance in documenting the evolution of technology, there should be a continued emphasis on additional ma-

terial research and case studies, so that the greater body of work by the committee can be used to focus on current relevant and conservation strategies for practitioners. If we are to prolong and sustain the life of Modern Movement buildings then, we must also learn how past technologies were used in a way that be balanced with the regeneration of this heritage for the future. After all, it is through the past research on how technology evolved and was utilized which should enable us on how to maintain and renew architecture of the Modern Movement using comparable technologies of this era which can improve upon the prior innovation.

The ISC/T proposes to continue to build upon the past solid foundation and work of the committee. The ISC/T will turn to practical and rigorous discussions that relate to the construction of the buildings from the past. Our discussion of technology in the Modern Movement architecture will be more than just a historic account – the committee will actively engage and expand broader interests with the working parties and specialist committees of **docomomo**.

Some of the questions which ISC/T proposes to raise and address:

- What is the significance of Modern Movement, as Time, Matter and Idea.
- What does the practice/hands on work with material/technology mean to the committee?

- How do we discover, document and relate to conservation when it comes to technology of Modern Movement?
- How do we successfully document the evolution of technology?
- How is the experience of matter and idea for the architect/conservator shared as common interest?
- How do we engage these questions and others at meetings among ISC/T members, how can we develop a forum for broader discussion of these issues within the context of upcoming coming seminars, and potentially the Journal.
- How does the ISC/T take a more active part in further analysis and study of materials and technology – how can we also apply our base knowledge to broaden our commitment when it comes to advocacy of the committee.
- How do we cooperate with other NGO organisations?

In 2010, the ISC/T proposes a seminar to take place in The Alvar Aalto library in Vyborg in 2011. This seminar will focus on case studies related to analytical studies on the conservation of the library and other relevant examples. The ISC/T committee meeting also proposes a second meeting in 2011 in Brno, Czech Republic which will continue previous discussions on Materiality and what it means to discuss developing perspectives through relevant conservation projects in progress. Dates and further information will follow in short.

The ISC/T is also considering additional publications, as proposed by committee member Jos Tomlow, to develop a *Handbook on Technology*. The details of the publication will be presented in further detail at the upcoming Mexico City conference and will be based on the nearly two hundred papers presented in previous **docomomo** technology seminars over the past two decades.

Respectfully submitted,

Ola Wedeburn Chair,
 Kyle Normandin, Secretary
docomomo ISC/T

International Specialist Committee on Urbanism + Landscape (ISC/U+L)

The activities of the ISC U+L were reviewed at the 2009 annual meeting, held at Edinburgh College of Art on Wednesday 16 September.

These members attended the annual meeting: Miles Glendinning, chair; Ola Uduku; Diane Watters; Jan Haenraets; Jessica Taylor; Ellen Creighton; apologies, Hannah Lewi.

This report presents an updated digest of that material, revised to take account of subsequent developments.

Pilot Fiches/New Town Inventorisation project

This project was carried out by Jessica Taylor, who reported on it at the meeting. The area/sub-area fiches, totalling some 200, had been completed and were awaiting editing. Jessica felt that the project had showed the limits of a manual system: any further detail (eg integrated mapping) would require a digital format.

Suggestions in the follow-up discussion included: (1) inclusion of information on threat should be a priority in any enhancement; (2) choices might have to be made between record- and conservation-orientated inventorisation; (3) the links with North Lanarkshire Council for ECA's Area Conservation module (studying Cumbernauld) could allow heritage-management and policy implications to be tested out.

Pilot 'Tower Block' project on on-line inventorisation and website on mass housing

The 'Tower Block' project (supported by English Heritage), carried out in May-December 2009 with Ellen Creighton as researcher, was intended as a possible template for a digital-based extension of Jessica's manual survey: Ellen gave the meeting an extensive demonstration of the system in action from her wireless laptop. Linked directly to the national English and Scottish archive systems, it involved building up a complex map-based (GIS) database on post-1945 mass housing in Scotland and Northern England, including scanned images of hundreds of sites, and statistical data.

It also involved coping with sharply differing procedures in the two national institutions. Since September 2009, a website to disseminate the information (www.towerblock.org) has been set up in skeleton form, and several hundred sites created, amounting to a significant regional database of mass housing in eastern Scotland and northern England. **docomomo** members are invited to take a look at the pilot website.

The Tower Block survey points to several future possibilities for **docomomo** U + L. Firstly, it might itself act as a digital pilot inventorisation project to follow Jessica's manual pilot project. Secondly, it might open up the way to a wider international survey of mass housing (see (c) below).

Potential international survey of mass housing, and associated contacts in Hong Kong and Singapore on formation of **docomomo** working parties

Initial moves are underway to put together an international survey of mass housing under the auspices of the Committee. Research could be carried forward aided by a research grant, or using volunteer researchers within **docomomo** national groups. As part of preliminary research for this project, Miles had gone on trips to a variety of mass housing centres, including Hong Kong, Singapore, Warsaw, Copenhagen, and Riga (on a lightning day trip from London, hosted by Janis Krastins), to begin establishing the viability of collaborative research and field recording for such a project.

Discussions are underway with EAHN (European Architectural History Network) with a view to collaboration on this subject, possibly focusing on an 'East/West' or 'cold war' analysis of mass housing, and with a view to holding a conference in 2011.

As part of his mass housing research contacts, Miles had established contact with potential **docomomo** groups in China (Shanghai), Hong Kong/Macao and Singapore; these were being followed up and (as at July 2010) the China-Shanghai group seemed likely to put in a formal proposal at the Mexico conference.

Conferences: South City conference

in Edinburgh, 22/23 January 2009, and *Mirror of Modernity*, 1-2 May 2009

The *South City* ISC/U + L Conference on Southern Hemisphere Modernism, held at the University of Edinburgh on January 22-23 2009, had been very successful and an e-journal of the proceedings had just been put together by the **docomomo** Secretariat. Likewise, e-proceedings were published for the joint ISC/U + L and AHSS conference, *Mirror of Modernity*, on 1-2 May 2009: the conference had, in effect, balanced the **docomomo** U + L agenda of a synthesizing international overview with a national case-study drawn from Scotland.

At the *South City* conference, Ola Uduku inaugurated a new '**docomomo** South' forum to help proselytize **docomomo** activities in developing countries where experts might find the costs of attending regular **docomomo** conferences excessive. Subsequent to September 2009, Ola attended the Archiafrika/African Perspectives conference and 'spread the word' further.

Landscape policy review and international cross-comparisons (including Chandigarh links)

Jan Haenraets's Ph.D on MoMo landscape policy was successfully completed and passed in spring 2010, following which Jan now intends to proceed with a planned review of international MoMo landscape conservation policy for U + L. He reported at the September 2009 meeting that he had travelled to India and linked up with committee member Parmeet Bhatt at Chandigarh. Following a tour of Chandigarh, Jan and Parmeet felt there was definite scope for collaboration, especially linking up with Parmeet's research into how change had affected the Chandigarh master plan. Other committee members agreed with Jan that important links between landscapes and urbanism could be drawn from the experience of Chandigarh and other modernist planned cities. This might be the basis of a funded research project or a PhD research topic; it might also develop into an area of interest for an International specialist community looking at other

modernist cities globally.

At the September meeting, Miles suggested that new planned towns and cities might make a very straightforward and valuable ISC U+L 'homework' task in a future year (Hannah Lewi had asked him to emphasize at this meeting the suggestion that ISC U+L might begin contributing to the setting of **docomomo** International homework tasks in the future).

Interim review of Plan of Action 2008-2010

At the September 2009 meeting, it was agreed that the 2008-10 Plan of Action had been effectively implemented. The following emphases were agreed for 2010-12:

Tower Block Project should be developed into a Stage 2 (Digital) Pilot Project on inventorisation for ISC/U + L

Further progress on setting up the international survey of public housing

Further contacts with China, Hong Kong and Singapore aimed at stimulating the setting-up of new **docomomo** working parties.

Proposed landscape policy review (Jan) and joint study on Chandigarh and other new cities (Jan, Parmeet)

Miscellaneous matters reported at the September 2009 meeting:

Miles reported the recent contact from committee member Ahmed el-Hariri regarding the forthcoming Agadir conference in February 2010: the committee agreed that all possible help should be offered, including publicity, and help with any follow-up publication.

Miles also reported on the highly successful concluding conference, *Keeping the Past Public*, that he had attended in Melbourne in February. Partly under a **docomomo** umbrella, it had synthesized the results of a highly diverse nationwide inventory of public buildings.

Miles also passed on a message from Hannah Lewi that there will be a planned special issue of the *Journal of Architecture*, UK coming out of that event on the subject of conserving and documenting public modern places, in 2010. Hannah had also informed Miles of a joint **docomomo**/Icomos Australia conference run in Sydney recently

called *(Un)loved Modern* – with some specifically urban and landscape sessions. Details would be uploaded to the Icomos Australia site shortly: <http://www.aicomos.com/>

Miles Glendinning, *Chair*
docomomo ISC/U+L

International Specialist Committee on Education+Theory (ISC/E+T) 3rd International **docomomo** Workshop: Living the Urban Modernity, Mexico City

The third workshop will take place at the Luis Barragan's Ateliers in Mexico in August 2010, during the 11th **docomomo** conference.

The aim of this workshop is to explore an urban sector of Mexico City that emerged in the city expansion of the 20th Century. The consolidation of this neighborhood began in the 30s and it is a hub of the emerging Modern Movement in Mexico City. Originally facing a semi circular park, several buildings designed by Augusto H. Alvarez, Luis Barragan, Max Cetto and Enrique del Moral, form an architectural ensemble of high quality and great value. Unfortunately, the sector was hit in the 60s by the intrusion of an over-pass; the park was sectioned and the distinctive urban façade suffered this intrusion. The workshop will be focused on searching and creating alternatives for the recovery of the urban quality and accessibility of the site, with the idea of the creation of **docomomo** Mexico headquarters and a Museum of Mexican Modern Architecture.

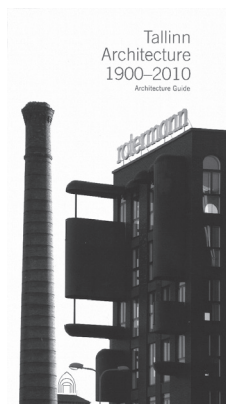
Ricardo Pita, *Chair*
Theodore Prudon, *Professor*
Alejandro Ochoa and Rodolfo Santa María, *Coordinators*
Mexico 2010 Conference Workshop

docomomo ISC/E+T

Tallinn Architecture 1900–2010 Architecture Guide

By AA.VV.

Publisher: The Museum of Estonian Architecture
ISBN: 9789985982884
Language: English
Year: 2010



Tallinn is well-known for its rich medieval heritage but it also hosts a display of impressive modernist architecture. Unlike ordinary tourist guide-books, this book focuses on Tallinn architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries. Architectural quality, as well as being a representative example of a decade or era was the criteria for inclusion in the guide.

The book opens with a short historical overview of Estonian architecture. This is followed by a guide to the city divided into sections where the buildings are grouped and listed according to their location. The numbered entries start in the Old Town and continue in various directions along the main roads – Pärnu Road, Tartu Road and Narva Road leading up to Merivälja, Kalamaja, Kopli, Kakumäe, Mustamäe and Nõmme.

The text is illustrated with mostly new but also some historical photographs. There is an index for architects and for streets so that it is easy to find buildings and establish connections between them.

Karin Hallas-Murula

Director of the Museum of Estonian Architecture

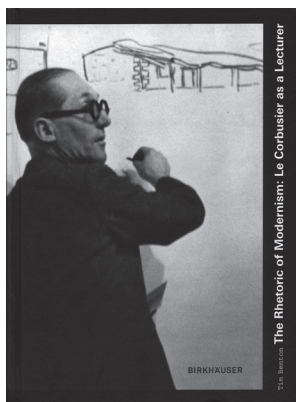
The Rhetoric of Modernism: Le Corbusier as a Lecturer

By Tim Benton

Publisher: Birkhäuser, Basel
ISBN: 978-3-7643-8944-4
Language: English
Year: 2009

The opening paragraph of Tim Benton's most recent book on Le Corbusier shows indisputably that the scholar research on the multifaceted contributions of the Swiss-French master to twentieth-century architectural discourse is far from being accomplished, no matter what his innumerable readers would think of this publication.

Benton states that: "It goes without saying that Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887–1965) was one of the most persuasive architects of the twentieth century, both in theory and practice. The influence he was able to exert on architects and public alike was in part due to his lectures, which he delivered continuously from 1924 until his death 41 years later". Therefore, next to the architect, the urbanist and the artist, next to the polemist and the books' writer, Le Corbusier's public persona enriches himself via another extraordinary medium of communication: the art of lecturing.



1924 doesn't mark the very beginning of Corbu's activity as lecturer, yet the lecture on architecture he delivered in Geneva on February 17 of that year, which he repeated in Lausanne on the next day, became a model he would often return to. The years around that first quarter of the twentieth century identified the future achievements of Le Corbusier's intellectual engagement: in 1923 he published *Vers une Architecture* and in 1925 he put out *Urbanisme*. Together with the books the lectures became a powerful tool indeed for expanding Le Corbusier's appreciative public.

Tim Benton has examined the architect's activity as lecturer under a double perspective, fully clari-

fied by the organization of the book's table of contents. Chapter 1, titled "Le Corbusier's logic" aims to familiarize the readers with the argumentations of the classical rhetoric and relate them to Le Corbusier's exercises as orator. Instead, the other three chapters address systematically two parallel topics – the development of lectures on architecture and lectures on urbanism – before ending with a long chapter that deals exclusively with the lectures Le Corbusier delivered in Buenos Aires, in October 1929.

Chapter 1, being the sine qua non for making the case of "Le Corbusier the orator", shows the vast knowledge and the sophisticated culture of Tim Benton, who masters the classical sources and a wide range of Corbusian quotations with the aim to portray the man in front of his audience. "Was Le Corbusier a good orator?" The answer is that he was capable through the years to develop all kind of means and tools to strength his art of lecturing. In this chapter Benton analyzes several situations, different in time and locations, to show how Le Corbusier improved the use of the three classical argumentations of rhetoric: the logical proof, the ethical proof and the proof of pathos. Take as an example of the first, the feature of syllogism Le Corbusier introduced diffusely in his dialectical reasoning and the use of 'empirical' arguments ('the primary forms are the most beautiful forms because they can easily be read', p. 31) and inductive rhetoric. Another point is how the architect gained authority (auctoritas), dominating the stage via the creative act of drawing during lecturing on the blackboard or better on large sheets of papers. As Benton remarks "He lacked a loud voice or an imposing presence" (p. 35), this means that in front of his audience he was feeling more sure of himself with a piece of charcoal in his hands.

In chapters 2 and 3 Benton analyses in detail the preparatory work for a lecture, looking at the diverse steps of writing and phases of collecting graphic and visual materials. The Lausanne lecture on architecture of 1924 is taken as an example, also because of its critical reception. Needless to say that Le Corbusier, for instance, selected, organized and juxtaposed images with clear intention to shock the public and to stir its emotions.

The lectures about urbanism played an important role in Corbu's battle for the city. His first attempt happened as early as 1923, in Strasbourg. Many of his visionary projects, such as the Voisin Plan, found major echo in his lectures. This is the case of the Brussels lecture in 1926 on "The Urbanism of a big city (Metropolis)" (pp. 105ff).

Finally, the ten lectures Le Corbusier delivered in Buenos Aires between October 3 and 19, 1929 were published the following year under the title

Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme. This book is one of the most seminal publications among the vast Le Corbusier's written production because here the architect was able to reach a brilliant synthesis of his ideas, systematically expressed in drawings that he later reproduced and reinterpreted in different contexts. This is not a surprise. Le Corbusier stays side by side with other artists, such as the musicians, in his practice of borrowing from his own work.

This set of ten professional lectures delivered in Buenos Aires have been already discussed at length, yet what makes this chapter in Benton's book so interesting is that he goes behind the scene, and for each single lecture he looks after the preparatory notes, the meaning of the titles, the orator's visual aesthetic.

Some final remarks. The book is profusely illustrated, images are well printed, and the clear layout of the pages helps the readers to immerge themselves into the depth of this universe of words, voices, audience, public, halls and almost participate in the events. Tim Benton gives the readers all tools to understand the texts of the lectures and their visual corollaries. He analyzes the preparatory notes, the transcriptions, and the changes, adding very useful appendices too, with skill and comprehensible methodology that never become abstract erudition.

I'm an avid reader; therefore I missed a coda where Tim Benton would have discussed architects' art of lecturing, as a genre, from a wider angle. Le Corbusier was not alone in this practice. It is a wish and a request alike.

Maristella Casciato

Professor of History of Architecture at the University of Bologna.

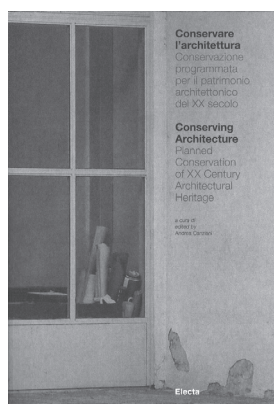
docomomo International
Chair 2002 – 2009

Conserving Architecture Planned Conservation of 20th Century Architectural Heritage Edited by Andrea Canziani

Publisher: Electa, Milano
ISBN 978-88-370-7384-8
Language: Italian
Year: 2009

This book collects important essays on the preventive conservation of the architectural heritage of the 20th century as a challenge for the implementation of an innovative cultural heritage strategy. It brings together the most important

researchers and practitioners of the 20th century heritage conservation, from different parts of the world, dealing with the concept of building upon theoretical reflections and on good practices. As quoted by professor Koen van Balen: "There is an increasing interest for preventive conservation in the field of the built heritage. While the concept has been mentioned in earlier times, those dealing with the conservation of objects have gained more experience with it. It is obvious, as in museums and in storage places it is easier to control the conditions in which those objects are conserved than is the case of controlling the environmental conditions of preservation of historic buildings, archaeological sites, not to speak about historic ensembles as cities. But maybe if we understand "environment" in case of the built fabric in a different way – including the society that lives with and in it, often on a daily basis – we may find the tools to develop preventive conservation also in this field.



The preventive conservation concept and its implementation for architectural conservation is going through a fast evolution, building upon theoretical reflections and on good practices that can be seen in different regions in the world. (...) As holder of the UNESCO chair and initiator with many others of the PRECOMOS network, I am very pleased with this thematic meeting on preventive conservation addressing 20th Century Architectural Heritage. The contributions help to create the body of knowledge to develop proper conservation strategies for those buildings and sites from a preventive conservation perspective. I am confident that the organizers will use the PRECOMOS network to transfer those valuable contributions worldwide."

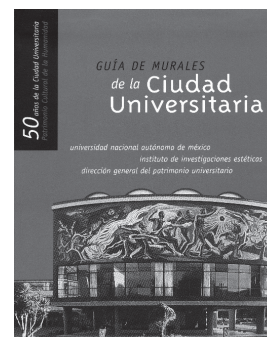
Koen van Balen

Professor Department of Civil Engineering, Leuven

Guía de Murales de la Ciudad Universitaria

By Departamento de Publicaciones de la UNAM

Publisher: UNAM,
Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas/
Dirección General del Patrimonio
Universitario
ISBN: 9789703215409
Language: Spanish
Year: 2008



This guide to the murals of the Ciudad Universitaria was published to orient visitors in their visit to the Mexican University complex, pointing out the murals which are part of the Artistic University Heritage of Mexico. The publication was presented to commemorate the 50 years of the construction of this enclosure which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007.

The guide includes forty-seven murals which were carried out between 1954 and 1999, a witness of the different artistic tendencies and of the cultural context in which they were created. Diverse materials and themes appear both in buildings built at the initial construction of the Ciudad Universitaria and in other spaces around the University area such as the University Cultural Centre.

We can find murals by artists like Diego Rivera, Juan O'Gorman, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Chávez Morado, Rosendo Soto, Francisco Eppens, Arnold Belkin, Carlos Mérida, Manuel Felguérez, Federico Silva, Guillermo Cenicerros, Mauricio Gómez Morín, Patricia Quijano and Lucille Wong among many others.

Every project is described and located in a map which helps the visitor to find his way through the university complex. Special attention is made to the original sketches and drawings which were done to further build the mosaics, reliefs, sculptures and paintings that identify this unique place.

Ivan Blasi

Architect, docomomo International

Il degrado del calcestruzzo nell'architettura del novecento

Edited by Carolina Di Biase

Publisher: Maggioli Editore S.p.A.
ISBN: 978 88 287 5145 5
Language: Italian and English
Year: 2009



Concrete – reinforced or non-reinforced – is, unequivocally, the material of the 20th century, architectural modernity and contemporary construction. As if in celebration of concrete, a large number of works on the subject were published in its last decade. They reveal the invention modern concrete, showing how, through a multitude of patents and systems, through corporate strategies and innovations led by figures such as Nervi, it became so widespread, and how research and testing (Hennebique) and specialist engineering (Freyssinet) came on the scene. The Perret brothers, who loom large in the emergence of a poetic language of concrete, have been reassessed through a fine exhibition and a number of publications, especially the re-edition of Peter Collins' "Concrete". A vector of twentieth-century building, concrete continues to hold great promise in the twenty-first, as the recent exhibition "Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete" at the National Building Museum, Washington (2006) amply showed (to the delight of architects, for whom it is still the material of choice).

But there is a darker side, and several remarkable buildings or entire new towns have demonstrated for us the increasing problems of ageing, decay and vulnerability after just a few years in service – an all the more disagreeable realization in that we had assumed (in spite of evidence to the contrary) concrete to be indestructible.

It is through the disciplines of conservation-restoration that we bridge the gulf between celebrating concrete and despairing at its decline. "Decay of concrete in twentieth century architecture", edited by Carolina di Biase, Professor of Restauro Architettonico at the Facoltà di Architettura e Società, Politecnico di Milano, closes the gap still further, and

for all those involved in conservation of modern and contemporary architecture it provides an essential contribution to the interpretation and diagnosis of concrete, particularly exposed concrete surfaces.

At the core of the book is a lexicon, a specialist glossary based on the solid definitions produced by the American Concrete Institute and the Concrete Society, re-published in the Concrete Repair Manual 2008 and illustrated with examples from Europe, South America and Asia, many of them designed by leading architects like Auguste Perret, Le Corbusier and Santiago Calatrava, to name but a few. This central feature is accompanied by an overview of analytical and diagnostic techniques, both in situ and in laboratorio which enables detailed knowledge on types of decay to be acquired while minimizing destructive testing on the buildings themselves.

An early chapter considers the specific character of and differences between hydraulic binders, production methods and use of cements, from the late nineteenth into the twentieth centuries, with a through study on the physico-chemical properties of concretes and an essay by Francesca Albani on the successes and failures of experimental concrete buildings in the QT8 district of Milan, just after the war and the difficulties they pose for surveyors today.

The third and fourth chapters are centred on case studies. The first of these is Genova's Palazzo dello Sport, built to a design by Franco Sironi, Lorenzo Martinioia, Leo Finzi, and Remo Pagani in the early 1960s, and which serves to illustrate how the knowledge needed to make an intervention is acquired, from bibliographical and archival research through to in situ and laboratory analyses and interpretation of findings. The second is the church of San Borromeo in Milano, by Gio Ponti (1964/67), studied and restored by Daniela Lattanzi of the Direzione Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici della Lombardia, and Politecnico di Milano Professor Luca Bertolini, an expert on decayed concrete, who together have written the essay.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the originality of Prof. Di Biase's important introduction, which sketches out the basis of a history of concrete through its decay, underlining the seriousness of today's problem of dynamiting entire urban areas and showing how the weaknesses of this astonishing artificial stone material have always been studied at close quarters, both by its detractors and by those who praise its undeniable qualities.

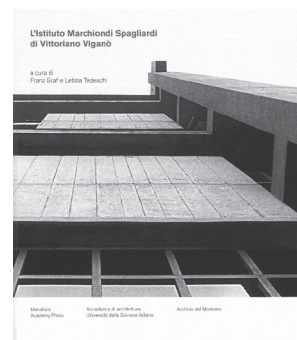
Franz Graf

*Professor Federal Polytechnic School of Lausanne
Architect, **docomomo** Switzerland*

L'Istituto Marchiondi Spagliardi di Vittoriano Viganò

By Franz Graf and Letizia Tedeschi

Publisher: Mendrisio Accademy Press
Accademia di architettura Università della Svizzera italiana
Archivio del Moderno
ISBN: 9788887624434
Language: Italian
Year: 2010



Built in Milan between 1954 and 1958 to provide a home for children in difficulty, the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute by Vittoriano Viganò represents, through its innovative educational program, its "neo-Brutalist" vocabulary and its material nature, a phase of outstanding interest in European architectural research. This volume presents a critical reading of the work by many voices, conducted through the interpretation of previously unpublished materials from the Viganò family, the architect's professional archives, and the archives of the client, of the contractor and other professionals.

With texts by Bruno Reichlin, Letizia Tedeschi, Alberto Grimoldi, Franz Graf, Francesca Albani, Gianni Ottolini, Valeria Farinati, the marvelous sketches and drawings by Vittoriano Viganò and photographs by Ugo La Pietra and Enrico Cano of today's conservation conditions of the building; from competition to project, the book contains all the essential information to deeply connect with the Italian's best work, the Istituto Marchiondi Spagliardi.

As Mario Botta says in his presentation of the book, this publication initiates a new series directed by Bruno Reichlin, and is the final outcome of a long journey started with the arrival, in 1998, of the Vittoriano Viganò fund at the Archivio del Moderno where its study and appreciation was initiated immediately. This was the first step to develop, together with the Accademia di Architettura, a joint program of studies and initiatives to implement the history of modern and contemporary architecture through restitutions and insights, and to stimulate the debate on the restoration and reuse of modern

architecture, through these documents.

"Vittoriano Viganò, brutalist without knowing it?" The title of Bruno Reichlin's essay is tempting enough to start with.

Ivan Blasi

Architect, **docomomo** International

When Modern was Green Life and Work of Landscape Architect Leberecht Migge

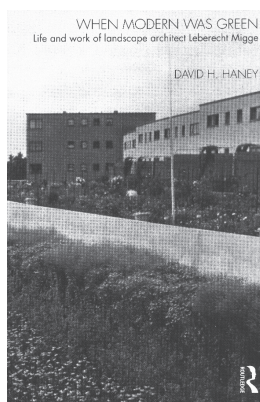
By David H. Haney

Publisher: Routledge, London and
New York

ISBN: 978-0415561396

Language: English

Year: 2010



I ncreasingly vital to contemporary design, "green" or ecological thinking was already anticipated by German modernists in the early twentieth century. At the center of this drive towards an ecological modernism was landscape architect Leberecht Migge (1881-1935).

Migge brilliantly synthesized ideas from across fields such as organic gardening, architecture, and biological theory to create pioneering projects throughout central Europe. He applied "biotechnic" principles to integrally link dwelling and garden, recycling household waste to grow foodstuffs through the use of innovative infrastructure and open space planning.

In collaboration with prominent modernist architects, including Martin Elsaesser, Ernst May, Bruno Taut, and Martin Wagner, he produced some of the most notable works of the period, the mass housing settlements, or Grosssiedlungen, of Frankfurt Main and Berlin. Migge was also a talented garden and park designer, combining green and architectural elements through his "garden-architectonic."

Haney's study fully documents Migge's life and work for the first time, challenging conventional assumptions about modernism and ecological design history.

Ivan Blasi

Architect, **docomomo** International

Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922-1949

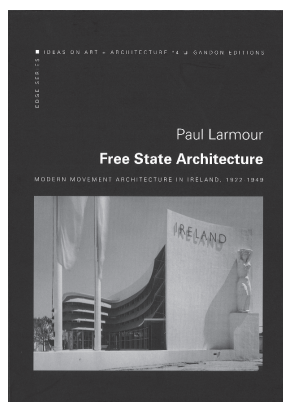
By Paul Larmour

Publisher: Gandon Editions, Edge
Series

ISBN: 978 0948037726

Language: English

Year: 2009



T his new book recounts in detail the formative period of modern architecture in Ireland during the years of the Irish Free State, from its founding in 1922 until the declaration of a republic in 1949. During this period, the various modernization programmes of the fledgling state, from electrification to transportation and health provision, as well as a wide range of other functions, found a ready expression in the architectural forms of the Modern Movement.

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland is particularly proud to support this first book to focus entirely on the modernist strand of Irish architecture. This new book features work produced in the early years of the Irish Free State as it engaged in the process of nation-building, from electrification to transportation and health provision. Although a time of great socio-economic crisis, the early nation-builders, while conservative in many ways, put their faith in the Modern Movement's architectural expression and values for national, social and infrastructural projects. The various modernization

programmes of the fledgling state found a ready expression in the architectural forms of the Modern Movement, and succeeded in breaking with the architectural language of our former colonial masters.

The book's publication, which happens to coincide with that of the Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, is hopefully a beacon of hope in a time when the ongoing process of national development has become increasingly confused and lacking in focus, priority and clarity. By revealing a rich seam of buildings of unsuspected quality and depth from the Free State period, many of which attracted international acclaim in their time, this book is a salutary reminder of the importance of vision (even in economically straitened times), and the critical role good architecture plays in the creation of an egalitarian, healthy and intelligent society.

Seán Ó Laoire

President, Royal Institute of the
Architects of Ireland

Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities

Edited by Jean-François Lejeune and
Michelangelo Sabatino

Publisher: Routledge, London and
New York

ISBN: 978 0415776332978

0415776349

Language: English

Year: 2010



W aves of Mediterraneanism have lapped at the development of modern architecture since the Enlightenment, reshaping its contours often as self-conscious initiatives to redefine or redirect prevailing styles, discourses, or practices.

Like tides, the pull has been in at least two directions – towards radical change and towards a sense of atemporal fullness. Influence has ebbed and flowed. Following Fernand Braudel, the great historian of the Mediterranean between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, one might speak of different time frames of modern Mediterraneanism from the practices of interwar and immediate post-war modernism in the twentieth century studied in the vibrant array of case-studies assembled here by editors and essayists Jean-François Lejeune and Michelangelo Sabatino, to the longer and more complex development of the theme over the two and half centuries of modern architecture's longer durée from the Enlightenment celebration of the historical primacy of the classical replete with the primitive Doric encountered at Paestum to the embrace of a more particularized vernacular in the critical regionalism of the late twentieth century from Hassan Fathy in Egypt in the 1970s to Alvaro Siza in Portugal of the 1990s. The modern movement's polemical and instrumental engagement with the warming waters of the Mediterranean, and with the everyday vernacular on its shores, was, at once, the symptom and the agent of one of the movement's leitmotifs: the attack on inherited academicism, on the hold of Greco-Roman canons for architectural expressionism, and on the inherent historicism that prevailed in so much of the architectural culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One wave of Mediterraneanism thus set out to wipe away traces of preceding ones. (...)

Barry Bergdoll,
*The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of
Architecture & Design. The Museum of
Modern Art*

Le Corbusier.
Elements of a Synthesis
Revised and expanded by Stanislaus
von Moos

Publisher: 010 Publishers, Rotterdam
ISBN: 978 9064506420
Language: English
Year: 2009

The first German edition of this book was written in 1968, just three years after Le Corbusier's death. It was arguably the first and last time that a serious attempt could be made to encompass Le Corbusier's whole career in one volume. The death of the architect allowed a measure of detachment, and the belief in modernism was not yet quite dead. Thus von Moos' title *Elements of a Synthesis* could

be read in terms of both the subject and the book. Furthermore, the distracting documentary riches of the Fondation Le Corbusier had yet to become available. By 1971, when the French edition was published, 'Synthesis', lacking the necessary irony, was replaced by 'myth', complete with citation from Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*. By 1979, and the first English language edition, the original title was allowed back, given the greater respect for Le Corbusier's work in the USA. In each edition, the basic structure of the book remained the same – six essays dealing with Le Corbusier's Swiss period, Purism and *Esprit Nouveau*, the development of Le Corbusier's architectural language, urbanism, monumental architecture and the concluding *Elements of a Synthesis*. A new chapter, 'Variations on a utopian theme, focusing on the *Unité d'Habitation*, was inserted before the urbanism chapter in the American edition of 1979. In each edition, the chapters are titled differently in response to the *Zeitgeist*. 'Eine architektonische Formensprache entsteht' (the origins of an architectural language of form 1968) becomes 'Typology and design method' (1979), 'Die strahlende Stadt' (the radiant city 1968) becomes 'Naissance d'un langage architectural' (1971) and 'Elemente einer Synthese' (1968) became 'le mythe de la ville radieuse' (1971). Despite these flexions to intellectual fashion, the structure and most of the content of the book remained constant for a good reason: it reflects clearly the priorities and intellectual structure of Le Corbusier's own thought and work. It is for this reason that it remains the best introduction to Le Corbusier's work as architect, urbanist, painter and thinker. In the revised edition of 2009, von Moos has added some additional endnotes and a thoughtful postscript to each chapter, which bring the reader up to date. He adds a wry commentary on his 'relative philosophical agnosticism' (p. 9), which I consider to be the secret of the book's longevity.

Von Moos asks 'Why does Max Risselada's *Raumplan* versus *plan libre* Adolf Loos Le Corbusier... represent the key issues in a nutshell? The

reason is that a view of architecture as a system of forms, themes and patterns highlights the fiber by means of which it is bound into the artistic and cultural context of its time ...' (p.132). [...]

As von Moos says in his preface to the 2009 edition of *Elements of a Synthesis*, the most convenient ways to say something new about Le Corbusier are the critical essay, the catalogue entry or the exhibition. [...]

This is not the Le Corbusier of synthesis, utopia, social emancipation or rationalism but an altogether more vulnerable and approachable universe.

Tim Benton
Professor of Art History
Abstract from Journal of Design History
Vol. 22 No. 3, 1999

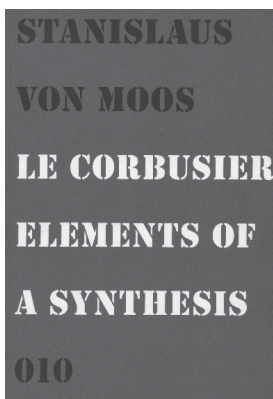
Chandigarh 1956 Le Corbusier and the Promotion of Architectural Modernity

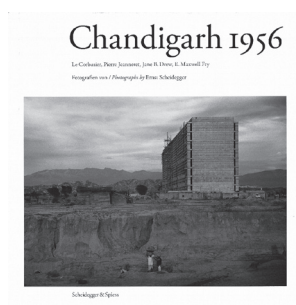
Edited by Stanislaus von Moos
Photographs by Ernst Scheidegger
Texts by Maristella Casciato, Verena
Huber Nievergelt, Stanislaus von
Moos and Ernst Scheidegger

Publisher: Scheidegger and Spiess
ISBN: 9783858812223
Language: English
Year: 2010

Le Corbusier's master plan and buildings for Chandigarh, capital of the Indian state of Punjab, are landmarks of 20th century architecture and urban planning. In the late 1950s, Swiss photographer Ernst Scheidegger conceived a book, *Chandigarh 1956*, illustrated not only with photographs of the growing city he had taken on three trips to Chandigarh, but also with sketches and drawings by Le Corbusier. It was meant to be the initial volume of a series of books but it remained unpublished.

This book is the first to present Scheidegger's images of Chandigarh, including some in colour, together with the facsimile of the mock-up of the proposed book. The essays, from Maristella Casciato and Stanislaus von Moos who is also the book editor, explore the history and importance of Chandigarh, and in particular the contributions made to the project by Le Corbusier's collaborators Pierre Jeanneret, Jane B. Drew and E. Maxwell Fry. An additional essay looks at Scheidegger's specific view of Chandigarh and how the city has been represented in photography in general.





As Arthur Ruegg said in the book *vernissage*, “Maristella Casciato analyses the city, literally, from ‘A to Z’, and the Jeanneret, Fry and Drew work, as well as the Indian one”. She neither forgets to emphasize the importance of women’s work; furthermore, almost half of the city builders were women. Stanislaus von Moos compares the construction site to cities in ruin. He named “ruins in reverse” his essay on these unfinished buildings suggesting past and future.

Scheidegger and his interpreters reveal us the Babylonian construction images and the poetry of the everyday life. The step’s bright light reveals the Capitol ceremonial architecture and sharpens the Super-blocks’ purified buildings.”

It’s a superb book which collects the magic that emanates from the heroic landscape and from its architecture. To quote once again Arthur Ruegg “who can resist visiting the Capitol after the rough poetry of this city should wander to enjoy the magical evening atmosphere at the *Sukhna* Lake, in the enchanted rock garden, and will then be fully convinced: Chandigarh has awakened, lives it, and it works!”

Excerpt from Arthur Ruegg’s
book presentation in Zurich,
19th March 2010

Pride in Modesty: Modernist Architecture and the Vernacular Tradition in Italy

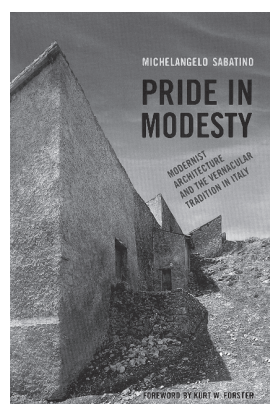
By Michelangelo Sabatino

Publisher: University of Toronto Press
ISBN: 9780802097057

Language: English
Year: 2009

The Extraordinary Role of Ordinary Things

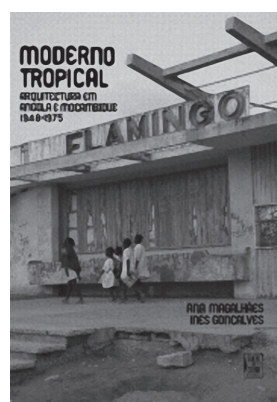
If our ears still ring with the claims of modern art and architecture—claims to rationality, realism, and the public good—it is their peremptory demand to discard time-honored things and ideas that gave



them the lie. Brand-new will make it better, the precision of the machine replace the rule of thumb and the judgment of the eye, but the new all too often makes a poor substitute for the old whose simplicity may recommend it before and after the present moment. The story Sabatino tells with persuasive evidence, brings home what has threatened for a century to slip into the quaint residue of holidays in the countryside or linger in nostalgic recollection. More than an antidote to schematic modernization, the legacy of the primitive proved essential for the very emergence of the modern, which, in its early stages, often sought to “restore building to what it has always been. It may come as a surprise that these are the words of Mies van der Rohe, the man who coldly dispatched anything superfluous until, with the Farnsworth House, he had pared building down to a version of the “hut.” The essentially modern reassumed the guise of its primitive origins. Imbued with “the simplicity of the earliest times,” but made of the stuff of its own industrial age, such a building exposes into nature what Semper discovered at a great remove from it under the glass canopy of the Crystal Palace.

Kurt W. Forster

*The Vincent Scully Visiting Professorship
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Architecture*



Moderno Tropical Arquitetura em Angola e Moçambique 1948–1975

By Ana Magalhães/Inês Gonçalves

Publisher: Tinta da China

ISBN: 9789896710170

Language: Portuguese

Year: 2009

“**M**oderno Tropical” is a lovely book where the nostalgic beauty of African Lusophone cities is expressed with affection and wisdom.

Ana Arez Magalhães undertook this work driven by the desire to research and publicize the magnificent modern heritage of four cities: Luanda and Lobito in Angola; Maputo and Beira in Mozambique. In order to accomplish her aims, the author sought and studied the existing known relationship between the architecture of the “Green Years of the 50s” and the crucial thrust led by the discovery of Brazilian architecture in Portugal. In addition, she tried to understand why many Portuguese architects that belonged to the generation that started to work after the 1st Architecture National Congress (1948) and graduated in Oporto — the only open-minded school at the time — went to work in a new world, where architectural expression could be implemented more freely than ever before. Although most of the work was commissioned by official entities in African colonies, there was a more open, tolerant, broad-minded atmosphere. Architects were willing to innovate, therefore making these countries more prone to accept modern ideals, so often restrained by the regime, generally in big cities. As an example, between 1947 and 1949, the City Palace project design by Francisco Keil do Amaral, which was meant to be erected in Eduardo VII Park, was successively rejected by the Ministry of Public Works. It was never built, although Lisbon’s Mayor, lieutenant colonel Salvação Barreto, supported its construction with energy and conviction. This was one of the many paradoxes of the regime.

Following the widely disseminated works of José Manuel Fernandes and research conducted by António Albuquerque, André Ferreira or even Maria Margarida Quintã, this book offers a historical and nostalgic view of that extraordinary production.

Ana Tostões

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docomomo International Chair