

Pedro Ramírez Vázquez 1919–2013

Requiem for Pedro

By Armando V. Flores Salazar

The news of his death was instantly dispersed, displacing all other issues of national or international interest. When I read the message that Louise Noelle sent to all **docomomo** Mexico members, I accepted it as a plain and sad confirmation of what had happened: “Dear colleagues, this tragic note is to inform about the death of architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez today, April 16. He was one of the most prominent architects of the Modern Movement and his work has been part of our writings”.

The mental mechanism of what we had in common came about and in a disorderly manner I reviewed the analysis and reflection of the meetings, retreats and affinities that built the personal and professional friendship that uniquely brought us together.

His close ties with the city of Monterrey began in 1953 when President Ruiz Cortines assigned him to become the liaison with the Monterrey delegation led by Governor José S. Vivanco and Don Alfonso Reyes—to pursue the procedures to create the *Ciudad Universitaria* of Nuevo Leon. This request was made in correspondence to his duties as Head of Building Conservation of the Ministry of Education of Mexico. In 1954, he was part of the delegation accompanying President Ruiz Cortines in his visit to Nuevo Leon and in the Government Palace he informed on the progress of the studies to achieve this ambitious project. An unfinished cultural and professional service to the city and the region began including his role as President of the jury that selected the winning project for the new *Palacio Municipal* of Monterrey (1975) and the project management of the new Guadalupe Shrine in Colonia Independencia (1981), where he wisely respected the existing sanctuary and the privilege of equipping the new temple with a stone block from Cerro del Tepeyac for the altar.

My impersonal relationship was primarily born from the admiration of his outstanding professional production: National School of Medicine at UNAM; National Anthropology Museum; Basilica of Guadalupe and Azteca Stadium among others.

My personal relationship was born by the common friendship bonds with Ramon V. Salguero, Ernesto G. Gallardo, Eduardo Padilla and Louise Noelle; by being chairs of the National Academies of Architecture in Mexico and Monterrey; for sharing parity as emeritus academics of the National Academy of Architecture and, above all, by the close personal relationship amalgamated in many shared tables; in the book exchange; in working sessions; in verbal and written communication; in his disquisitions on various cultural issues; and among many other things his hypnotic gift of being a masterful conversationalist.

We talked a lot and even more we became silent. We never talked, for instance, of his ‘Magna Solidaridad’ library project for the *Ciudad Universitaria* of Nuevo Leon which in 1997 became the *Biblioteca Magna Universitaria* ‘Raúl Rangel Frías’. Once the design and detailing were in an advanced stage, the project was transferred to Ricardo Legorreta’s office due to a personal dislike between Rector Manuel Silos’ person in charge of the project and the architect’s project chief. The rector solved the problem by suggesting another office to continue the project. Thus the opportunity to have one of his works in the *Ciudad Universitaria*—the academic institution with which he was linked from the outset—vanished.

The chivalry of Don Pedro never allowed speaking of this issue in his subsequent visits to the city. It was in this ongoing dialogue and mutual interests that I gave him to read the manuscript of *Calicanto*, a book that explores the cultural frameworks that underpin regional architecture, including the African context. I knew of his particular interest in this continent due to the museums that he had built there. When we met to speak about it his first emotional and exciting words were: "I wish I had been the author of your book". My grateful and enthusiastic response was: "That

forces you to write the foreword and thereby make it yours as much as it is mine".

Since then friendship turned into brotherhood. His physical absence has created a void that leaves me flat, full of sadness. Living together in *Calicanto* mitigates the feeling a little bit... as well as the possibility of keeping on with the dialogue in the timeless dimension.

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Clorindo Testa 1923–2013

By **docomomo** Argentina

It is with regret and sadness that **docomomo** Argentina informs the international **docomomo** community that architect Clorindo Testa passed away on April 11 2013.



Testa was an architect and urban planner but also a painter whose artistic sensitivity has been always present in the way he conceived architecture.

Born in Naples (Italy), he moved to Argentina with his parents when he was only a few months old and there he attended school. He received his architectural degree at the University of Buenos Aires

and soon after that he worked for the town planning office steered by Jorge Ferrari Hardoy, Antoni Bonet Castellana and Jorge Vivanco, all of them in close contact with Le Corbusier's Modern ideas and the CIAM international conferences.

His built legacy includes the former London and South America Bank (1959, associated with SEBRA), the National Library (1962, with Francisco Bullrich and Alicia Cazzaniga), the Central Navy Hospital (1970, with Héctor Lacarra and Juan Genoud) and the Terrazas building (1975) in Buenos Aires; the Santa Rosa Civic Centre in La Pampa (1956, with Boris Dabinovic, Augusto Gaido and Francisco Rossi); and the beach complex La Perla in Mar del Plata (1985–1990, with Juan Genoud and Osvaldo Álvarez Rojas).

The remarkable conceptual, expressive and material values of his work have received national and international recognition. Clorindo Testa's architecture represents and inspires the evolution of Modern Movement ideas and his most referential buildings have been included in the **docomomo** international register.

Furthermore, most of us will recall him as a kind, enthusiastic and inspiring man, always receptive and patient to explain his vision of architecture to students and colleagues.