

From paid holidays to mass tourism: a typological evolution

BY SUSANA LOBO

in memory of Tiago Freitas (1977–2017)¹

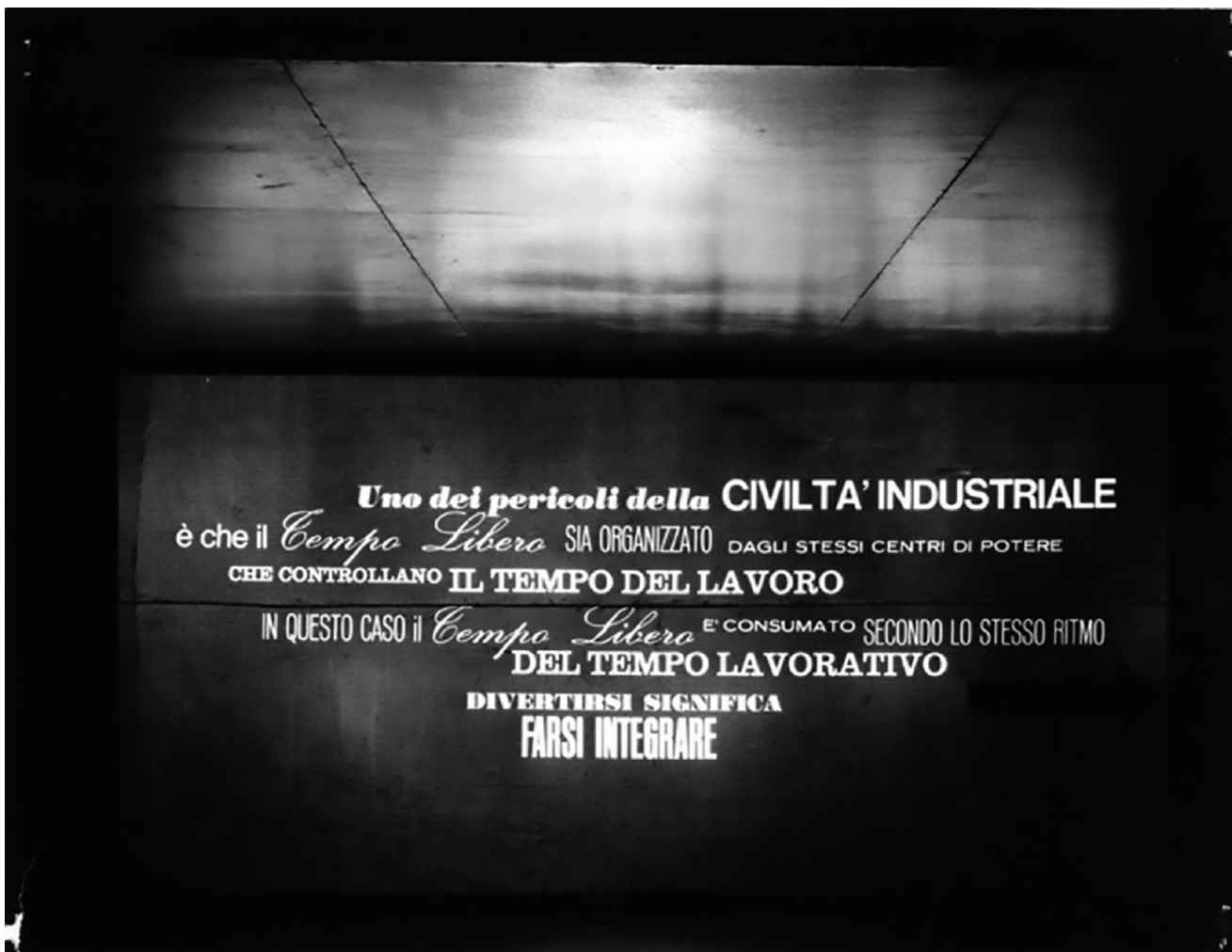
The 1919 ratification of the 48-hour working week by the *Organization Internationale du Travail* [International Labor Organization], created by the signatory countries of the Treaty of Versailles, raises a new challenge to industrialized society: the organization of workers' free time. Divided the day into "three eights" — eight hours of work, eight hours of rest and eight hours of sleep — the social framework of leisure is understood as a moral duty of the state². This issue takes on a never before considered dimension with the attention given to the instrumental use of popular recreation by European totalitarian regimes and its centralization in organisms of a political and ideological character. Leisure, in this context, would work as a privileged area of indoctrination and diffusion of the nationalist rhetoric that supports the construction of fascist dictatorships. But the recognition of the necessity to organize leisure was not restricted to totalitarian states, nor was it an exclusively political and/or social issue. In view of the growing number of urban workers, the contemplation of this "new time" implied the planning of specific spaces and programs that provided direct contact with nature and the practice of activities suitable for rest, fun, physical and mental development, on the assumption that "the environment forms the individual"³.

It is precisely on the consequences of leisure in the design of the functional city that the 5th International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM 5), held in Paris from June 28 to July 2 of 1937, focused. Under the theme *Logis et Loisirs* [Dwelling and Leisure], the congress discussed what was considered to be the "most urgent problem of our time: housing" and "immediately linked to it as inseparable, the notion of leisure"⁴. Leisure, defined in the previous meeting as one of the four functions of modern urbanism, was, until then, understood only as an activity of occupying daily spare time, after work and limited to the use of the green spaces within the city. In CIAM 5, its importance is definitively reasserted, when Le Corbusier (1887–1965), in the conclusion of his intervention, proclaims housing and leisure as essential goods that should be guaranteed as public services, "an obligation of the community for all"⁵. In fact, the choice of the CIAM 5 theme was suggested by Le Corbusier himself based on the agenda of the Popular Front

government⁶ of Léon Blum (1872–1950) elected in 1936 and responsible for the introduction of "paid holidays" in France. This same subject extended to the *Pavillon des Temps Nouveaux: Essai de Musée d'Education Populaire* [Pavilion of the New Times: Essay of the Museum of Popular Education], designed in collaboration with Pierre Jeanneret (1896–1967) for the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* [International Exhibition of Arts and Techniques in Modern Life] that also took place in Paris aside the congress.

As a direct result of the gradual democratization of the right to remunerated leave, the notion of leisure in "modern times" expands to the weekly and annual spheres, including not only rest and sports, but cultural and personal value activities, towards the theories of popular education so dear to the political discourses of the time. In the post-war period, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, proclaimed the right of "every person" to periodic paid holidays. This principle emphasized that leisure, now extended to a generalized middle class, was no longer understood only in its collective dimension but conceived as a personal time, defined "according to individual desires"⁷. A new time that gains autonomy and meaning in the prosperity period of the *Trente Glorieuses* [Glorious Thirty]⁸, progressively replacing work at the basis of all relations in capitalist consumer society. For the French sociologist Joffre Dumazedier (1915–2002) this was the path to a new civilization. One in which mass leisure would be integrated into a cultural democracy sustained by comprehensive education and information policies: *une civilisation du loisir* [a civilization of leisure]⁹. *Loisirs* (translated in Italian as *Tempo Libero*) would also be the theme of the *xiii Triennale di Milano* of 1964, in a controversial exhibition that reported on pop culture and mass consumption practices to question the meaning and value of free time in contemporary society¹⁰.

It is on the subject of free time that this issue of the *docomomo Journal* is focused. More specifically, on summertime leisure. The aim is to establish a typological evolution of the "architectures of the Sun" associated with the emergence and consolidation of a seaside mass tourism in the 20th century. An evolution that can be related to sociologist Erik Cohen's (1932–2014) distinction between non-institutionalized and institutionalized tourist types,



Uno dei pericoli della CIVILTÀ INDUSTRIALE
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 IN QUESTO CASO il *Campo Libero* È CONSUMATO SECONDO LO STESSO RITMO
 DEL TEMPO LAVORATIVO
 DIVERTIRSI SIGNIFICA
FARSI INTEGRARE

01 Triennale di Milano 1964. Corridoio delle didascalie. Sezione Introduttiva a carattere Internazionale. [Corridor of Captions. Introduction Section with an international character]
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ranging from the drifter to the organized mass tourist¹¹, and geographer Richard Butler's (b. 1943) model on a tourist area cycle of evolution¹², divided into six stages of development from exploration to rejuvenation or, in the opposite extreme, decline. Although this assessment is not always straightforward or linear, it reinforces the idea of tourism as a holistic phenomenon of which architecture, as a mechanism that places the tourist experience, is the ultimate material expression.

The summer holiday house is the quintessential type of seaside architecture. Heir of the 19th century "chalet" or "villa", it would know a significant transformation with the formal, spatial and technological advances introduced by the housing experiments of the pioneers of the Modern Movement. Eileen Gray's E.1027 (1926–1929), in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin (Côte d'Azur, France), is one of the most relevant examples of *Existenzminimum* research applied to the design of holiday private accommodation. In the opening essay of the "E.1027 Dossier", Wilfried Wang classifies it as the "prototypical vacation residence", highlighting Eileen Gray's (1878–1976) ground-breaking approach to summer holiday facilities as compact and rich experiences where the designer explores different relational devices to extend and enhance the sense of space.

In "Book Reviews", *Cape Cod Modern: Midcentury Architecture and Community on the Outer Cape* (Metropolis Books, 2014) also gathers a unique set of summer retreats built from 1938 by a group of modern architects, including European *émigrés* Marcel Breuer (1902–1981), Serge Chermayeff (1900–1996) and Olav Hammerström (1906–2002) among others, that combine functional design principles with local building traditions and materials to rehearse new forms of informal living in communion with the natural setting. With the creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore in 1961, administered by the National Park Service, some of these experimental houses were slated for demolition and fell into disrepair until 2007 when architect Peter McMahon (b. 1957) founded The Cape Cod Modern House Trust (CCMHT) with the aim of documenting the history of the more than 100 existing examples and restore some of them.

Like E.1027, these first seaside dwellings correspond to the exploration stage in Richard Butler's model and to Erik Cohen's type of non-institutionalized tourist drifters.

On a different record, Marco Mulazzani introduces an overview of the holiday colonies for children built under the Fascist regime in Italy (1925–1945) to observe that, despite the establishment of specific parameters of the functional organization of these structures, there is no definition

of an architectural typology as such. Instead, the wide-range of layouts and aesthetic solutions, mediating between a more classic or more modern configuration, reflect the complexity of the Italian architectural debate of this period. Defining an initial phase in the construction of holiday facilities, the colonies coincide with the involvement stage of the development of tourist areas and the explorer tourist typology.

In their essay, Mar Loren-Méndez, Daniel Pinzón-Ayala and Roberto Alonso-Jiménez trace the evolution in the Spanish spatial formalization of workers rest by comparing the GATCPAC (Catalonian faction of the Group of Spanish Artists and Technicians for Contemporary Architecture) project for the *Ciutat de Repòs i de Vacances* (1931–1934) with Franco's regime *Ciudades Sindicales de Vacaciones* (1954–1963) to expose the shift in paradigm from the modern urban model of the Second Republic to the self-sufficient, more organic enclosures of the dictatorship. Focusing in particular on the last of these settlements, built in Marbella, they advocate its conservation as a unique example of modern leisure heritage. This case-study of an initial approach to the seaside tourism town typology can be related to Richard Butler's development stage and, according to Erik Cohen, to a change from non-institutionalized to institutionalized tourist types.

In the same categories we also find both the state-run Greek *Xenia* network of tourist accommodation facilities and infrastructure (1950–1967) and the Australian swimming pools from the post-WWII period (1945–1972). Emilia Athanassiou addresses the first of these two cases associating the *Xenia* network with an upgrade in Greece's hotel hospitality industry and with the consolidation of the tourism industry as a structural sector for the country's economy following the Civil War (1946–1949) and the Marshal Plan program (1947–1951). Built by the GNTO (Greek National Tourism Organization), these official structures aimed, on one hand, to set the standard for private initiatives and, on the other, to promote the development of international tourism alongside domestic travel, by establishing modern model tourist facilities spread throughout the country. This was the opportunity for Greek architects to rehearse different spatial and formal approaches to different architectural typologies, in particular the traditional hotel and seaside hotel, located in exceptional historical and/or natural settings, and the American inspired motel, directly related to the main inland road routes. Falling into decay after the 1980s, it is now urgent to reassess the significance of this nation-wide project for Greek culture.

Hannah Lewi also alerts to the need for further documentation and careful conservation of another threatened archetype of modern leisure, in this case in Australia: the swimming pool. Spaces of individual and/or collective shared experiences, normally associated with the memory of summertime laid-back and fun outdoor living, the pools encapsulate a certain idea of freedom, although regulated by somewhat restricted functional requirements and social conventions. Freedom in design experimentation, as a new architectural program, but equally of self-expression, where the swimming body epitomizes the image of health and beauty.

In Portugal, the Balaia Hotel (1964–1968) announces the shift in scale of the tourism phenomenon with the emergence of institutionalized tourism and the generalization of the mass individual tourist. This is the consolidation stage in the evolution of tourist areas. Conceived as a self-contained and self-sufficient facility, this hotel megastructure symbolizes what Mario Gaviria (1938–2018) calls “neocolonialism of quality space”³ with the economic liberalization of the internal market and the incentives to foreign investment. The innovative “turn key” commission would revolutionize the traditional practice of architectural production in Portugal, giving way to the appearance of multidisciplinary office structures in close alignment with capitalist consumer society.

From the other side of Europe, the hotel megastructures of the era of state socialism in Bulgaria and Croatia, analyzed in *Holidays after the fall* edited by Elke Beyer, Anke Hagemann and Michael Zinganel and included in this journal “Book Reviews” section, gives us an overview of the impact of the development of mass seaside tourism in the urbanization of coastal regions in the 1960s and 1970s. Opposite architectural and urban approaches differentiate these two cases: in Bulgaria, with large holiday resorts concentrated in certain locations of the Black Sea coast and designed on an urban scale by the central state and, in Croatia, with the rehearsal of a diverse range of architectural typologies by various architects for local, mostly workers' self-managed, enterprises and scattered along the entire Adriatic coast. The fall of the socialist states in the 1990s and Yugoslavia's disintegration after the war (1991–2001) led to the abandonment or destruction of many of these structures until more recently, when the new boom of international tourism, accelerating the commodification of larger stretches of land for tourism development and the privatization of many of these complexes, has raised the question of the value of modern seaside state socialist leisure architecture as cultural heritage.

At a mass scale, but in this instance for Western capitalist society, the most iconic state intervention in seaside tourism would undoubtedly be the transformation of the French Languedoc-Roussillon region on the Mediterranean into a new coastal resort as an alternative to the Côte d'Azur. The corresponding *Plan d'Urbanisme d'Intérêt Régional* [Urban Plan of Regional Interest] (PUIR, 1962–1964/1969) was designed by the Agency for Architecture and Urbanism (AAU), presided over by Georges Candilis (1913–1995) with Jean Balladur (1924–2002) as general secretary. Proposing a new territorial structure for the whole area, the plan comprised the construction *ex nibilo* of six *Unités Touristiques* supported by a system of twenty new or rehabilitated *Ports de Plaisance*. Placed at each end of this 200 kilometers stretch of coast, *Port Leucate-Barcarès* (1964–1972) and *La Grande-Motte* (1964–1977) were the two first tourist towns to be built, with projects respectively by Georges Candilis and Jean Balladur. In her essay, Izol Marez López analyzes the projects produced by the architects to conclude that these new scenarios for mass tourism development were

ideal places for the materialization of the urban and architectural revision theories of TEAM 10.

As a symbol of the stagnation stage in the evolution of organized mass-market tourism areas, but also of the capacity to stabilize and even rejuvenate certain tourist destinations, Benidorm's photograph by Garrod Kirkwood (winner of the 2019 American Photography Awards) was the choice for the cover of this "Architectures of the Sun" issue of *docomomo Journal*, documenting the ultimate built and social expression of the seaside tourism phenomenon in the 20th century. Still today, Benidorm (Alicante, Spain) remains the "tourist town par excellence"⁴, where, in the end, time, not space, is the essence of the tourist experience⁵.

But holidays were not all about summertime. Also winter resorts played an important role in the construction of the idea of free time leisure. Closing this issue, Henrieta Moravčíková gives us a take on the mass tourism development of the High Tatra Mountains under the Communist Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1948–1990) and in particular on the sports and lodging facilities built to accommodate the World Skiing Championship of 1970 and the FICC'74 international meeting. High quality architectural works of modern architecture, these structures are threatened today by demolition and their replacement by standardized buildings of a questionable "uniform regionalist kitsch".

These and other cases illustrated in this *journal* warn us of the arduous work still to be done in raising public awareness and recognition of modern architecture as collective heritage. A mission that *docomomo* International has exemplarily taken on since 1988. I thank all the guest authors for their collaboration and support in achieving this aim.

Notes

- 1 As a personal note, I would like to dedicate this *docomomo Journal* to my first PhD student Tiago Freitas (1977–2017), in co-supervision with Professor Ana Tostões, whose ground-breaking comprehensive research on Portuguese modern summer houses was prematurely interrupted. This study would have contributed to better define this architectural type and to reassess its pertinence and meaning in contemporary society's holiday practices. Focusing on the seaside residential resorts of Moledo do Minho, Ofir, São Pedro de Muel and Rodízio the study would have been a fundamental instrument in alerting, and pressuring, local administrations to the urgency of creating specific legislation for the protection and conservation of the selected study cases, as exceptional works on their own but, more importantly, as part of a whole. The present legal void in the classification of these urban ensembles in Portugal has allowed the demolition and de-characterization of many of the less known or representative examples of one of the most expressive architectural products of modernity and, with them, the testimonies of a certain life-style.
- 2 Anne-Marie Thiessé, "Organização dos lazeres dos trabalhadores e tempos roubados (1880–1930)", in Alain Corbin, *História dos Tempos Livres: o advento do lazer*, Lisboa, Editorial Teorema, 2001, 366–391.

- 3 "L'ambient forma l'individu", *AC Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*, 25, January–March 1937, 10.
- 4 CIAM, *Logis et Loisirs: 5e Congrès CIAM Paris 1937*, Paris, Editions de l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1937, 6.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 6 Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism (1928–1960)*, Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 2002, 110.
- 7 Alain Corbin, *História dos Tempos Livres: o advento do lazer*, Lisboa, Editorial Teorema, 2001, 457.
- 8 Expression coined by the French sociologist Jean Fourastié (1907–1990) referring to the period of prosperity lived in Europe, between the end of WWII and the Petroleum Crisis of 1973. Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses: ou La Révolution invisible de 1946 a 1975*, Paris, Fayard, 1979.
- 9 Joffre Dumazedier, *Vers une civilisation du loisir?*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1962.
- 10 With an introduction section curated by Vittorio Gregotti (b. 1927) and Umberto Eco (1932–2016) and the contributions of authors such as Aldo Rossi (1931–1997), Gae Aulenti (1927–2012) and Carlo Aymonino (1926–2010), the layout of the display immersed the visitor in an explosion of visual and sound effects that revolutionised the established concept of what should be an architecture and design exhibition, spurring Bruno Zevi's criticism: "Il disfacimento è totale; al vuoto ideologico corrisponde un indirizzo architettonico insensato [...] le visualizzazioni, brillanti, sofisticate e astruse, comunicano il nulla, ingenerando nell'osservatore una sensazione di torpore. Se l'esito del tempo libero sta nel provocare nausea, la rappresentazione è riuscita" [The rupture is total; to the ideological void corresponds a senseless architectural answer [...] the visualizations, brilliant, sophisticated and abstruse, communicate nothingness, giving the observer a sensation of torpor. If the outcome of free time is to cause nausea, the representation is successful]. Bruno Zevi, "XIII Triennale di Milano. Tempo sprecato sul tempo libero", *L'Espresso*, 16 August 1964.
- 11 Erik Cohen, "Towards a Sociology of International Tourism", *Social Research*, Vol. 39, 1, 1972, 164–182.
- 12 Richard Butler, "The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: Implications for management of resources", *The Canadian Geographer*, XXIV, 1, 1980, 5–12.
- 13 Mário Gaviria et. al., *España a Go-Go: Turismo charter y neocolonialismo del espacio*, Madrid, Ediciones Turner, 1974, 275.
- 14 José Miguel Iribas, "Benidorm, instructions for use", in MVRDV, *Costa Iberica: Upbeat to the leisure city*, Barcelona, Actar, 2000, 110.
- 15 José Miguel Iribas, "El turismo no es una industria del espacio, sino del tiempo", *La Opinión A Coruña*, 14 May 2010 [available at <https://www.laopinioncoruna.es/contraportada/2010/05/20/jose-miguel-iribas-turismo-industria-espacio-tiempo/384595.html>].

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