

Community: Building Modern Australia

By Hannah Lewi and David Nichols

Publisher: UNSW Press

ISBN: 978 174223 042 9

Language: English

Year: 2010



Several years ago, during a conference panel discussion, American architectural historian Dell Upton expressed frustration with the use and abuse of the term *community*, remarking that 'every time I hear the word *community* I want to reach for my guns.' His displeasure with the term was based on his perception that too many American academics used the term reflexively, as a synonym for any social phenomenon that they supported. The title of this book, therefore, might give Upton pause. But one of the great virtues of this volume—which consists of several related studies of community building types in Australia—is that its authors do not naturalise the idea, or valorise community as a state of grace. The book's several authors argue that far from being a natural process existing underneath the level of the state, community in Australia's suburbs and towns depended on built infrastructure that was either fully funded or subsidised by governments. In other words the state collaborated with civic groups in the construction of places for community activities and the communal ideal. It was not organic and traditional but rather deliberately constructed and explicitly modern.

For an audience interested principally in understanding architectural developments *Community* is most rewarding not for its explanation of stylistic developments or architectural thinking—though these form strong threads throughout and the book contains an interesting account of modernism in Australia—but for the way in which the authors explain why these community-oriented buildings exist at all: the social rationales and community activity on which their construction was premised. The book also poses some tricky questions about how it might be possible to preserve and revitalise such

community buildings now that many have outlived the time span originally imagined as their useful life and the immediate demands that led to their planning and construction.

The chapters are organized according to building type and, broadly speaking, document places designed to serve the community from "cradle to grave". The chapter sequence is roughly organized to follow from birth through childhood and into maturity, beginning with baby health centres and moving on to discuss kindergartens and local libraries before looking at swimming pools, lawn bowling clubs and civic centres. Taken together they illustrate how the functional orientation of modern architecture was mobilised in a wide range of everyday places that are easily overlooked, but no less significant for their unassuming physical appearance. The book is novel in the Australian context in that it initiates a scholarly investigation into the history of the built environment, setting questions of architectural and planning history alongside those of social and cultural history. In doing so it shares a family resemblance with the work of scholars such as Abigail Van Slyck in North America, who has looked at the expansive Carnegie Library building program and more recently the spatial and social logic of the fabled American summer camp; the work of Hilda Heynen, who has carefully examined the recreational infrastructure of the welfare state in Belgium in the twentieth century; and the great volume of work which was contributed to the 2006 North American conference, 'Preserve and Play'. Likewise, the focus on childhood and social reproduction situates *Community* within the extensive recent literature on the histories and cultural terrain of children, represented most explicitly in the study of the built environment by Marta Gutman's edited volume, *Designing Modern Childhoods*.

But as rich and varied as Gutman's book is, *Community* is a very different kind of collaborative endeavour. Rather than emerging from a conference or from a call for chapters around a designated theme, *Community* is based on a focused collaborative research project in which the authors all participated. In other words, the authors—among them several architectural historians as well as a planning historian and a social historian—did not bring their work together for the purposes of publication, but instead have published the outcomes of their collaborative research. As with any collaboration, there are shortcomings and obvious compromises. Some chapters develop very interesting historical themes that are only partially or weakly linked to architectural concerns. But overall the commitment to locating these highly significant but low key modern buildings within a thoroughly researched political and social context is a strength of the volume. It will enable

much wider understanding of twentieth century architectural strategies at the same time as it gives those interested in architecture and heritage an expanded field in which to consider the diffusion of modernism throughout our everyday environment.

Cameron Logan

Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne

Special Issue of the Journal of Architecture

Volume 15, number 5, October 2010



This review is drawn from the introductory essay of this special issue devoted to 'Keeping the Past Public', guest edited by Hannah Lewi (Chair *docomomo* Australia). The impetus for this issue came from an international symposium, 'Keeping the Past Public: the documentation and conservation of modern places', hosted in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009. Through this forum many challenges surrounding the understanding and preservation of public modern sites regarded of value were raised and explored by international and Australian speakers. Of particular focus was institutional types and sites dedicated to public functions and programs. The themes of the symposium, and the 9 papers in this special issue, accord closely with the aims of *docomomo* and were in part inspired by an emergent theme at the *docomomo* International Conference in Rotterdam, 2008, that interrogated the impacts and after-effects of ideological and social goals respondent to social and political upheaval in the twentieth century, and palpable in public places. Most of the invited speakers to the symposium and paper authors are closely involved with *docomomo* in their respective member countries.

A number of papers in the issue address the need for more comparative thematic analysis of prosaic types such as hospitals, recreation buildings, universities and public housing, and the vexed issues

that surround their conservation. For example the paper 'Designing the Belgian welfare state 1950s to 1970s: social reform, leisure and ideological adherence' by Janina Gosseye and Hilde Heynen examines the how Flemish leisure infrastructure underwent a series of social and architectural transformations after World War II. Comparable to the Belgian case is the paper by David Nichols, Kate Darian-Smith and Hannah Lewi that discusses a cross-disciplinary project that has constructed a significant documentation of Australia's public, modern community buildings and sites between 1920 and 1970. While the paper by Cameron Logan, Philip Goad and Julie Willis examines the complex case of the hospital which reveals the profound coincidence between medical advances and modern architecture in the post-war decades, and questions options for its meaningful conservation today.

Miles Glendinning, in his paper 'The Forgotten Revolution': Northern Ireland's heritage of modern reconstruction', argues that much scholarship about the post-1945 boom years of modern architecture in Western Europe emphasizes its close and positive relationship with the high ideals of post-war reconstruction and the building of the welfare state. His account puts forward an exception in the ambitious reconstruction program associated with the Unionist government of Northern Ireland between 1921-72.

Other papers in the journal issue reflect more directly upon various issues surrounding current approaches to conservation practice, the critical evaluation of heritage listings and assessments in respect of modern public sites. John Allan's article 'Private privilege—public duty' teases out the symposium theme of 'Keeping the Past Public', and what this may mean for conservation practice, but also for the maintenance of public patronage and access. Elaine Harwood's account of English Heritage's initiatives to list and protect significant post-World War II buildings shows how shifting government support has direct bearing on heritage work and priorities. And Julia Gatley's analysis of the heritage identification of modern public housing in New Zealand, also illustrates the instrumental role of various government authorities in documenting and conserving significant housing sites in this country.

These and other papers in this issue offer reflective and international studies that further the scholarship and practice of documenting and conserving modern sites within the public realm.

Details of this issue of the Journal of Architecture can be found at <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/RJAR> (follow links to "online contents")

Hannah Lewi
Chair **docomomo** Australia

Maestros de la arquitectura moderna en la Residencia de Estudiantes

By Salvador Guerrero and AA.VV.
Publisher: Residencia de Estudiantes
ISBN: 9788493747428
Language: Spanish
Year: 2010



Between 1928 and 1934 some of today's critically acclaimed modern architects visited the Casa de Estudiantes in Madrid: Le Corbusier, Erich Mendelsohn, Theo van Doesburg, Walter Gropius, Sigfried Giedion and Edwin Lutyens.

Stanislaus von Moos, Regina Stephan, Jan Molema, Joaquín Medina Warmburg, Sokratis Georgiadis and David Watkin have written essays that are complemented and enriched by historical documents dealing with the lectures that those protagonists of modern architecture held at the Residencia.

Ivan Blasi
Secretary General **docomomo** International

Equipamientos I. Lugares Públicos y nuevos programas, 1925–1965. Registro docomomo Ibérico

By AA.VV.
Publisher: Arquia/temas 30
ISBN: 9788493785734
Language: Spanish
Year: 2010

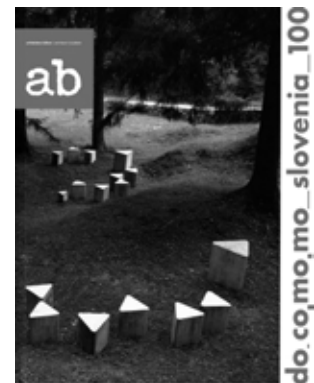
docomomo Iberia organized an exhibition with the same title in Madrid. During the 20th Century, society underwent a modernization process that reached all fields. This transformation was reflected in different built spaces but, above all, in those buildings dealing with health, religion,

civil services and education programs. Each project is superbly presented with a new photographic report and technical data.



docomomo_Slovenia_100

By Natasa Koselj and AA.VV.
Publisher: ab arhitektov bilten/architect's bulletin
ISBN: 9789619229811
Language: Slovenian and English
Year: 2010



docomomo Slovenia organized the exhibition 'docomomo Slovenia_100' and published this monograph that presents 100 selected projects, a critically evaluated register from the perspective of architecture and art history, aiming at the preservation and renovation of architectural heritage. Sources, bibliography and introductory studies by well-known researchers highlight the importance of this publication.

Living and Dying in the Urban Modernity

By Claes Caldenby, Ola Wedebrunn and AA.VV.
Publisher: The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts/School of Architecture
ISBN: 978877830242
Language: English
Year: 2010

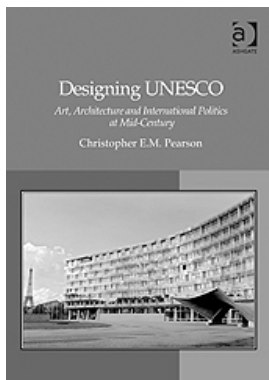


Nordic-Baltic experiences is the subtitle of this publication, the third of a series of joint experiences held by Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. It deals with the 60s and 70s estates and their role in the crisis of modernism, its proclaimed death in the 70s and their possible continued life. The importance of the collaboration between the Nordic and Baltic countries to debate their common urban future under a need of a continuous criticism clearly indicates the strength of joint forces.

Ivan Blasi
Secretary General **docomomo** International

Designing UNESCO: Art, Architecture and International Politics at Mid-Century

by Christopher E.M. Pearson
Publisher: Ashgate
ISBN: 978-0-7546-6783-4
Language: English
Year: 2010



This publication represents the first full-length monograph on the genesis, construction and reception of the Paris headquarters of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The book traces the long and

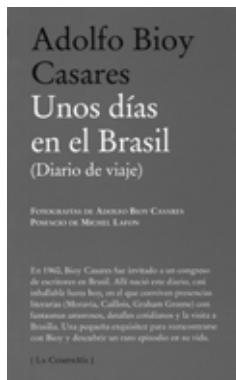
complex birth of UNESCO's permanent seat from its conception in 1950 to its inauguration in 1958, showing how its history constitutes a unique nexus of modernist practices in twentieth-century international politics, art, architecture and criticism. Drawing on a wide range of unpublished archival material and examining critical reception of the building in the local and international press, Christopher Pearson's analysis operates on formal, structural and theoretical levels, revealing many of the largely unspoken assumptions of modern architecture at mid-century and elucidating the conflicted relation between art and science in the post-war period. The volume also throws new light on many of the major architects and artists of the period, among them Breuer, Gropius, Le Corbusier and Eero Saarinen, as well as Picasso, Moore, Miró, Arp, Calder and Noguchi. Designing UNESCO is a compelling and original account of one of the most important, yet under-appreciated, buildings of twentieth-century modernism.

Ashgate Publishers

Unos días en el Brasil (Diario de viaje)

by Adolfo Bioy Casares

Publisher: La Compañía de los Libros and Páginas de Espuma
ISBN: 978-84-8393-071-7
Language: Spanish
Year: 2010



Arquitetura+Arte+Cidade. Um debate internacional

By Roberto Segre, Marlice Azevedo, Renato Gama-Rosa Costa, Inés El-Jaick Andrade Viana & Mosley, Rio de Janiero
ISBN: 8588721635
Language: Portuguese
Year: 2010



As Áfricas de Pancho Guedes

AA.VV.
Sextante Editora. Lisboa
ISBN: 978-989-676-040-3
Language: Portuguese
Year: 2010



This book, together with the exhibition with the same name, brings together the flavor of the journeys, happenings and personal meetings of Pancho Guedes. The so-called plastic arts, popular art, craftsmanship and traditional ceremonial and daily use objects coexist in Pancho Guedes' collection forged during his intense professional life in Mozambique and South Africa.

Brasil: arquiteturas após 1950

María Alice Junqueira Bastos, Ruth Verde Zein
Perspectiva, São Paulo
ISBN: 9788527308915
Language: Portuguese
Year: 2010

This publication could become a reference book in the study and teaching of architecture in Brazil. The Catalan critic and historian Josep Maria Montaner describes it as "an important document because, thanks to its quality, it will become a new



tool for the critical interpretations of contemporary Brazilian architecture and a necessary text because it contributes in giving a new necessary vision on the contemporary Brazilian architecture history which remains imprisoned by prejudices, clichés and images that in general emphasize a presumed and unbeatable Golden Age”.

Perspectiva Publishers

Guia de obras de Oscar Niemeyer. Brasília 50 anos

Silvia Ficher, Andrey Schlee
Câmara dos Deputados, Instituto dos Arquitetos do Brasil, Brasília
ISBN: 978-85-736-5716-6
Language: English, Portuguese, Spanish
Year: 2010



The work of Oscar Niemeyer in Brasilia was born as a result of a genial talent. It is historic because it is a monumental milestone for a great era. Original, since fraught with Brazilianness. So beautiful and simple. Incredible lightness. Inexhaustible creative fecundity. Sublime in every stroke. Surrounding the curve. Generous in the infinity

of space. Visible in the light of so many horizons. Incomplete because it is genuinely human. It has everything to make it be admired. It is a privilege to visit it. Knowing it brings up an indescribable emotion. In this guide the IAB-DF combines information elements that explain the significance and unique architectural coherence of the work of the great master. Release the heart, release the soul and live the experience of beauty in the incomparable aesthetic expression of concrete and the concrete masterpiece considered a World Heritage Site.

Igor Soares Campos
President IAB/DF, 2008-2009

Os primeiros arquitetos modernos. Habitação social no Brasil 1930 – 1950

Paulo Bruna
EDUSP
ISBN: 9788531409523
Portuguese
Year: 2010



Seeking an approach in keeping with contemporary architectural critique, Paulo Bruna extends the vision of Brazilian modern architecture history. Therefore, the author reworks the notions of modern and modernity with the background of the Europe of 1920 to 1930. He then goes back to Brazilian architectural culture, showing that since the beginning of the 1930s, a group of architects and engineers pawned to specify the ideas of the modern movement in a concrete and objective form. The book seeks to show the relation between the creation of the IAPs – Institutes of Retirement and Pensions – in the 1930s and the construction of the big dwelling assemblies in Brazil, influenced by theoretical concepts and constructive approaches associated to the modern movement.

EDUSP Publishers

Zonnestraal Sanatorium The history and restoration of a modern monument

By Paul Meurs and Marie-Thérèse van Thoor (eds.)
ISBN 978 90 5662 696 9
Language: English
Year: 2010



Ever since its completion in 1928, Jan Duiker's Sanatorium 'Zonnestraal' in Hilversum has probably been the most canonical and internationally celebrated example of Modern Movement architecture in The Netherlands. After an extensive restoration of more than thirty years, carried out by the architects Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge, the project is completed. The book *Zonnestraal Sanatorium: The History and Restoration of a Modern Monument* describes the process. The book is richly illustrated with historical visual materials, using plans, sketches and photographs that capture the Zonnestraal of today and yesterday in its full glory. You can order this book at www.naipublishers.nl/zonnestraal

'Splendid new monograph'
The New York Review of Books