

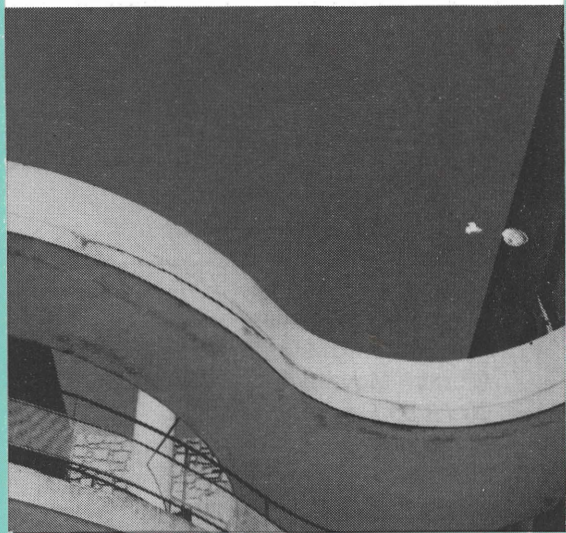
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international working-party for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

Journal

13

June 1995

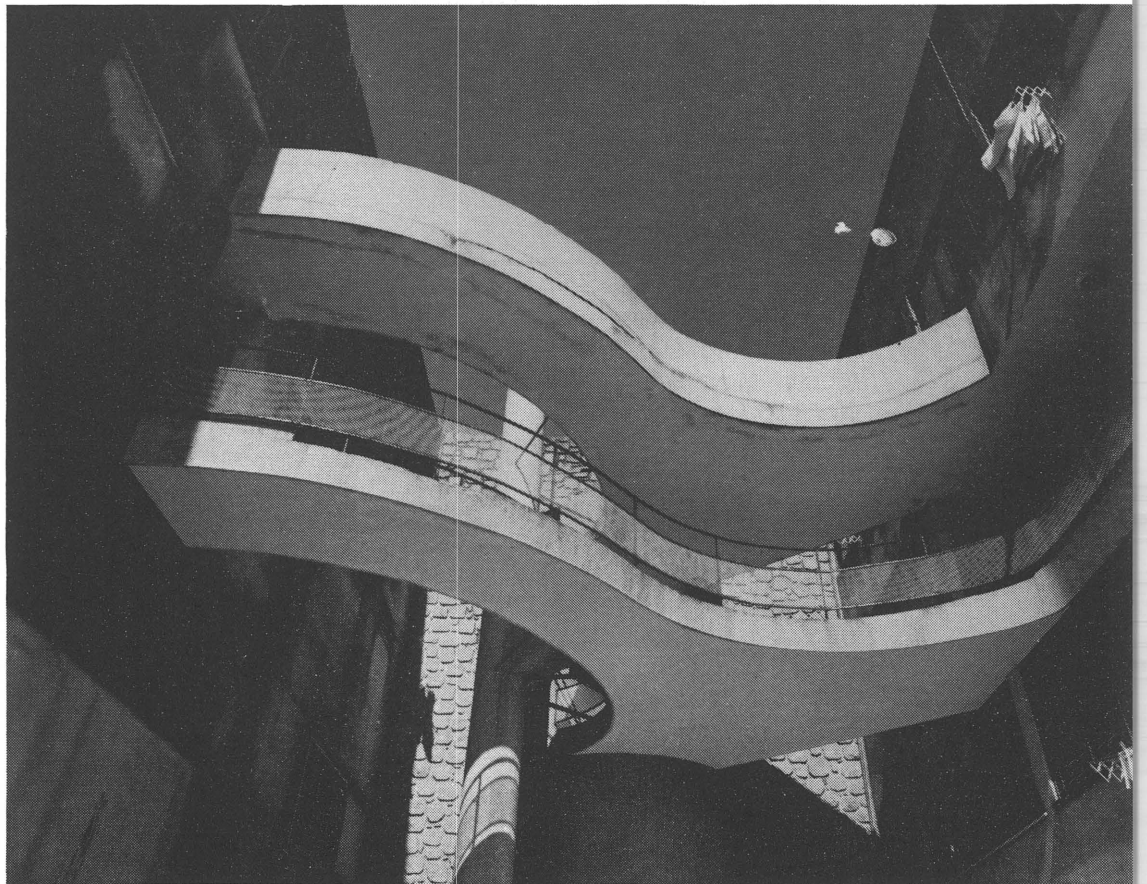


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Latin MoMo in full swing!
Access galleries to *Galeria Nacional* flats by M.M. Roberto in Cataguazes, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1953-55. See pages 28-29.

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COLOPHON

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In the 1920s and 30s the Modern Movement was an important international architectural development. The cultural, economic and technical results of this movement are still noticeable today.

Characteristic of this movement is among others that buildings were designed with a relatively short functional as well as technical life expectancy in mind. Therefore most of these buildings are in a bad condition at present, or they have been altered, sometimes beyond recognition. Due to their social and cultural value it is important to safeguard some of these for the future, in one or another way.

The International Working-party for the Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement

DOCOMOMO was initiated in 1988 by the University of Technology in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, further to a research project on how the preservation of these buildings can be obtained in a coherent and effective way. The foundation of the Working-party is meant to advance an effective inventory, documentation and preservation of the most important Modern Movement buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of that period. The aim of the Working-party is to sustain a network for exchange of experience and know-how and to draw the attention of the general public to the significance of this part of the cultural heritage.

The initiative is directed to:

- those who are involved in policy-making (legislation, financing, management),
- those who are professionally interested in the protection of early modern buildings, sites and neighbourhoods (architects, urban designers, art historians, critics) and
- those who are responsible for their actual restoration (researchers, technical specialists, consultants).

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Special edition on Latin America - Guest edited by Anna Beatriz Galvão

"Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude." -said Gabriel Garcia Marquéz in his lecture after receiving the Nobel Prize in 1982, addressing the continuing solitariness of Latin America. The brilliant cultural diversity of Latin America seems to have been thrown into the shade of the Western world right from the moment that Columbus touched the Carribean coast of Santo Domingo in 1492. In his article, Hugo Segawa demonstrates how Latin America is being described by Western authors not by what it is, but rather by what it *not* is -as a periphery by definition. Yet, the emerging critical discourse on current architecture in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Cuba and Venezuela, among others, makes one curious after the roots of these contemporary developments, that witness a remarkable maturation of Modern Movement conceptions, yet in *variety* of Latin American contexts and increasingly liberating itself from the predominance of West European/North American culture.

Most contributions to this special issue are rather descriptive articles, regarding the history and theory of architecture. This seems to reflect a current situation in the academic world and the preservation institutions, that are actively widening their scope to include Modern Movement heritage -not only to broaden their knowledge but also to arrive at a critical reassessment of its legacy. Still, it should be regretted that, apparently, there is almost no actual restoration of recent heritage being undertaken in Latin American countries as yet, probably due to economical limitations, but nevertheless posing a great threat to the numerous splendid *modern* masterpieces of that continent -like Caracas' University City.

We are proud that so many distinguished Latin American critics and writers, like Roberto Segre, Hugo Segawa, Victor Jiménez and Alberto Sato, have been prepared to contribute to this issue. Yet, to collaborate with so many of our colleagues was more than to address some specific aspects of Latin American architecture and urbanism. It was a great opportunity to promote contacts not only with, but also between these countries, that, in spite of their common colonial legacy and an image of what seems a coherent entity, in fact represent a complexity of cultures, all with their individual political and economical rules, extremely different climates as well as geographical and cultural particularities.

We like to thank Mabel Scarone (Argentina), for her help in conceiving this special issue, as well as Gabriela Lee (Mexico), Maria Fernanda Jaua (Venezuela) and especially Angela West Pedrão (Brazil) for their assistance with translations and many other things, that made this issue of the Journal into a true Latin American effort!

Anna Beatriz Galvão and Wessel de Jonge.

Next Journal - The Image of Modernity

After special editions on down-to-earth themes like Technology, North America and Metal, the next DOCOMOMO Journal will be dedicated to a more conceptual and abstract issue: *the Image of Modernity*. Despite the rather Cartesian interpretation of the Modern Movement in Northwestern Europe and North America, the aesthetic -or even poetic dimension of modernity is evident, yet much harder to assess. How important was the image of modernity in the development and appreciation of modern architecture? Did the *contrast* with previous architecture -in form, space and material- attract so many young and progressive designers, or was it rather a *harmonic* reinterpretation of classic features and proportions that was so appealing to some contemporaries?

Another vital issue is the importance of this image for our interpretation of the Modern Movement. Do we tend to include modern imagery in the DOCOMOMO Registers, rather than conceptually strong examples of its products? And how is this image of influence on our appreciation of current culture: why are cosmetics, cigarettes and skis advertized today by making use of Mondrian's artistic vocabulary -a *modern* image of 50 years ago?

An introductory essay by the Belgian historian Hilde Heynen will be followed by various articles on the role of this *modern* image in visual arts -painting, sculpture, cinema, photography- as well as music, dance and literature.

Journal 14 is scheduled for November 1995. News items with illustrations should be in by October 1st, 1995. Articles with a 4 to 5 page maximum, typewritten with 1,5 spacing (preferably also on floppy disc) with illustrations should be in by September 1st, 1995.

Phone numbers extended

As of October 10, 1995, all national telephone- and fax-numbers in the Netherlands will be extended to 10 digits. For the DOCOMOMO International Secretariat, an additional 2 will be placed before the subscriber's number:

Tel. +31 - 40 - 2 47 24 33

Fax +31 - 40 - 2 45 97 41

Barcelona Conference Proceedings 1994

As of September 1995 The Conference Proceedings of the 3rd International DOCOMOMO Conference are expected to become available. Order now for a full report of the third meeting of the independent and international DOCOMOMO network.

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Letters to DOCOMOMO...

Ural

Dear Sir, The Ural Modern Movement Centre, residing at the Ural Institute for Architecture and Arts, continues locating, describing and recording architectural monuments and is compiling a data base. The centre is preparing an exhibition and a catalogue of the 1920 - 1930s architectural projects which will be on display at the Institute of Design in Minz, Austria, and at the Technical University in Florence, Italy, in September - November 1995. Further the centre is also preparing, together with the Department of Architecture of the *Technische Universität* in Karlsruhe, a catalogue of the Ekaterinenburg Monuments of Modern Movement. In June 1995, the museum of the Ural Institute of Architecture and Arts will be hosting an exhibition dedicated to the work of the Dutch architect Jan Gerko Wiebenga, which has been kindly proposed by Jan Molema, of the Delft University of Technology.

Lyudmilla Tokmeninova, Ekaterinenburg, Russia,
March 1995

Brazil

Meeting architects, historians or researchers in Brazil these days means that sooner or later DOCOMOMO enters the conversation. The Brazilian conference of DOCOMOMO and the works on the register have caught the attention. Because of the continental dimensions of the country, it is impossible to talk about the Modern Movement in Brazil. Instead, there were various regional modern movements. In every state, the mixture of direct contacts with Europe, or influences from the metropolises Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and of local particularities was different. Therefore, the Modern Movement has its own history and a specific architecture in each part of the country.

The Brazilian DOCOMOMO network works. Entering the tiny library of an architecture school, somewhere in the inland of São Paulo gives the pleasant surprise of finding the complete collection of the DOCOMOMO Journal. Teachers in universities up north in Belém, or in Northeastern Natal, just to name two cities, think of ways to make a presentation of modern architecture in their state. Unknown masterpieces are waiting to be documented and published; an essential first step towards recognition. In this process of discoveries, the work of DOCOMOMO Brazil is fundamental. By activating professionals, students and politicians it helps writing some almost forgotten chapters in the architectural history of the nation.

Paul Meurs, Utrecht, The Netherlands, May 1995

Save the Cineac!

by Wessel de Jonge

The former Newsreel-cinema Cineac in Amsterdam (Jan Duiker, 1934) is one of the characteristic pictures to illustrate Holland's cultural heritage in the newly issued passports of the Netherlands. But after the run down theater was sold by MGM to a well known local *entrepreneur*, Caransa, the future of this modern masterpiece is uncertain. As a result of a paragraph in the sales document, the building may no longer be operated as a cinema, in an apparent attempt to protect MGM's business in another cinema just across the street. There are no municipal regulations against any commercial use; only another fast food outlet would probably not get a permit because of the surplus of such businesses in the area. Caransa is said to have entered into negotiations with Planet Hollywood, an American chain of restaurants that are decorated like a film set. The exterior is said to be restored respectfully, but extensive alterations of the interior are obviously inevitable. Architect Cees Dam has been invited to propose interior refurbishments but so far nothing has been made public.

A group of concerned professionals and enthusiasts decided to form the Committee 'Save Duiker's Cineac' some nine months ago. Over 300 original drawings of the building, today in the archives of the Netherlands Architectural Institute in Rotterdam, were studied to find out that all the lost elements of the cinema could easily be reconstructed. So, the strategy of the Committee was focussed on an alternative function. Inspired by similar institutions in London and Paris, a 'Heritage Centre' was proposed for the Cineac, where tourists could be introduced to Amsterdam's cultural and architectural heritage. The proposal was developed in close cooperation with the Amsterdam Architectural Foundation ARCAM, and supported by, among others, DOCOMOMO-NL.

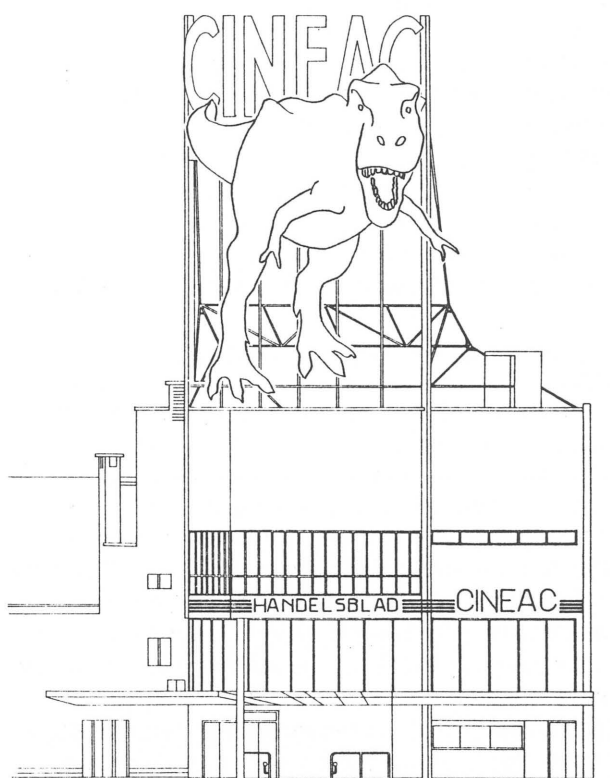
The mayor answered the Committee, that the building was of great concern also to him, but that the municipality had already committed itself to the Planet Hollywood initiative at a time, when an alternative solution was not yet available. The municipality expects the building can be sufficiently respected even if converted into a restaurant. Still, the idea for a heritage centre was well received by the Tourist Board and other municipal institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce, but for them it is less essential to locate the centre in the Cineac. The end of the story could be the establishment of a heritage centre somewhere else.

At the same time, it remains unclear if Planet Hollywood properly committed itself yet to have an Amsterdam branch in the Cineac. Caransa already mentioned to 'seriously consider a heritage centre as an alternative use' in case his American partners

would back out, which indicates that things might be less certain than it appeared at first.

It is appropriate, however, to remain alert about the future of the Cineac. Colleagues in Vancouver, Canada, already experienced the approach of the Hollywood aliens, when confronted with their proposal to convert the city's main library into a shopping centre and, of course, a restaurant. The most remarkable of MoMo buildings of Vancouver (see article on Vancouver, Journal 11, pp. 48-51.), with its balanced massing and outstanding details, is likely to undergo undesirable and irreversible changes. The void connecting the ground floor with the mezzanine level is proposed to be extended over the full height of the building, to make the shops more visible from the street. The restaurant is proposed for the roof, in a structure that looks remarkably unadorned on the drawings. Asked about billboards, that will obviously be put there as a part of their corporate identity, officials claimed that this 'had not been decided yet' -pretty unlikely for such a well organized business! DOCOMOMO members present at the Recent Past conference in Chicago might have seen what consequences a touch down of Planet Hollywood can have for a building: an aquamarine painted warehouse that serves as a pedestal for a giant *King Kong*. It makes one fear for Cineac's original billboard, that made up half of the original structure. Will Duiker's masterpiece end up as a framework for a dinosaur to advertise *Jurassic Park*?

Committee Redt Duikers Cineac : Buiksloterdijk 234, NL-1025 WE Amsterdam, tel: + 31 - 20 - 634 04 98.





Woodland Cemetery

A third 20th Century item on the WHL

The magnificent *Skogskyrkogården* ('Woodland Cemetery') in Stockholm, Sweden, is among the new properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. This decision was made at the 18th session of the World Heritage Committee in Phuket, Thailand, that took place from December 12-17th, 1994. The Committee recognized the cemetery as an 'outstandingly successful example of a designed cultural landscape which blends landform and natural vegetation with architectural features to create a landscape that is ideally suited to its purpose'. The creation of Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz was planned as a competition design in 1915, and took several years to be executed. The Woodland Chapel (1918-1920) is probably the best known of a range of exceptional buildings that is located in Stockholm's South Cemetery. According to the Committee's report, Asplund and Lewerentz's design has 'established a new form of cemetery that has exerted a profound influence on cemetery design throughout the world'.

Preceded by Auschwitz -as a memorial site- and Brasilia, this impressive modern landscape is only the third 20th Century item to be included in the list of cultural properties of 'outstanding universal value'. Up to today, this prestigious selection of cultural heritage does not include any building by Gropius, Le Corbusier, Aalto or any other *modern master*. Nominations for the WHL are evaluated by ICOMOS on a national and international level, before final selection by the World Heritage Committee. A few years back ICOMOS decided to develop a strategy to broaden the scope of the World Heritage Convention (WHC) to recent architectural heritage, despite the fact that not many proposals for the

inclusion of Modern Movement architecture were being submitted by its various national committees yet. At the 1992 DOCOMOMO Conference at the Bauhaus, ICOMOS' director Leo van Nispen invited DOCOMOMO to cooperate in this intellectual development of the WHC, in order to arrive at an effective and, if possible, common strategy. Since the acceptance of this proposal in Barcelona last year, the DOCOMOMO Specialist Committee on Registers ISC/R is actively elaborating proposals for extension of the WHC guidelines, to advance the inclusion of modern structures in the WHL. The inclusion of Woodland Cemetery in the WHL is a boost for the work of the ISC/R as well as for the newly established DOCOMOMO Specialist Committee on Gardens and Landscapes. We will all look forward to visit this outstanding site during the excursion of the 1998 DOCOMOMO Conference in Stockholm.

Yet, with only two modern items on the WHL it is just as obvious that a lot of work needs to be done to have the products of the Modern Movement properly recognized as universal heritage. Just to name one, the cultural historiography of mankind would be incomplete without the Bauhaus! -WDJ.

Marginal protection

by Wessel de Jonge

The Netherlands Department for Conservation (RdMz) produced scientific reports to support the formal designation of 40,000 historic buildings in only eleven years, between 1960 and 1971. Due to a lack of resources at the time, these reports are typically poor as far as information for each item is concerned. For instance, the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam, one of Holland's best known

landmarks, is only described as: 'Built 1877-1885 by P.J.H. Cuypers, mainly in neo-classical style'. DOCOMOMO-NL experienced the annoying and sometimes serious consequences of the limitedness of the official listing documents. For the glorious Gooiland Hotel (Jan Duiker, 1934), with its rich lobbies, café and restaurant and splendid fixtures, the complete interior was left unmentioned, and thus officially unprotected. Only thanks to the respectfulness of the restoration architects most interiors could be saved. A similar situation occurred when DOCOMOMO-NL went to court to prevent complete internal demolition of *Bergpolderflats*, a social housing prototype of 1934. This time the case was lost and the clever design of the compact flats has been replaced by ordinary 1990s apartments, thereby largely losing the building's value as a source for the social history of the Interbellum. Partly due to DOCOMOMO-NL, which through its chairman made the State Committee for Historic Buildings aware of such omissions in many designations, the Council for Cultural Preservation officially suggested to the State Secretary for Culture to rewrite most listing documents some months ago. DOCOMOMO-NL surveys possibilities to help as far as MoMo listings are concerned, since a lack of resources is a continuing problem for RdMz.

These cases illustrate, that even designation of a historic building is no guarantee for sufficient legal protection. This appears even more true for MoMo buildings, due to a limited knowledge of and interest for recent heritage, even in preservationist circles.

Wessel de Jonge is an architect in the Netherlands.

Successful campaign! Villa Muggia listed as a historic site

The remarkable *ensemble* of Villa Muggia, near Bologna, Italy, has recently been designated as a historic site. The Baroque house was refurbished and extended with a modern addition by Bottoni and Pucci in 1939, but was heavily damaged in the War. Just like the Villa, most of the various smaller buildings on the premises are already abandoned for over 50 years. The listing, that as well includes the annexes and hillcrest garden, follows a dramatic campaign that started in 1993 in DOCOMOMO Newsletter 9. A first application for designation was turned down by the Minister of Culture, who denied the historic value of the Villa, and even of Modern Movement architecture in general. DOCOMOMO International immediately sent a formal letter of protest to Rome by fax. Thanks to the persistence of the Bologna Superintendent for Cultural Heritage, Elio Garzillo, the application was reconsidered and finally approved this spring. -WDJ

Events

1st Brazilian DOCOMOMO Seminar

Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
June 12-14, 1995
inquiries: DOCOMOMO Brazil

World Congress on Art Deco III

Brighton and London, United Kingdom
July 1-7, 1995
inquiries: Twentieth Century Society, c/o Pasquito Ltd., 99 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE, United Kingdom, tel. +44-171-387-3154, fax +44-171-388-5535

VII Seminar on Latin American Architecture

São Paulo and São Carlos, SP, Brazil
August 21-25, 1995
inquires: FAU-USP/VII SAL, Rua do Lago 876, Cidade Universitária, 05508-000 São Paulo SP, Brazil

Resins Ancient and Modern

Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom
September 13-14, 1995
inquiries: Margot Wright, Marischal Museum, Marischal College, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB9 1AS, United Kingdom

Gateway II; Managing Urban Change International Conference on Urban Design

University of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland
September 14-15, 1995
inquiries: see DoCoMeMos

Urbanism & Politics

Conference Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bratislava, Slovakia
November 16-19, 1995
inquiries: Slovak Committee of the European Cultural Foundation, Bajkalská 25, 827 18 Bratislava, Slovakia, tel. +42-7-320428 / 2015418, fax +42-7-320428

Restoration 95; conference and exhibition

Hilton & Towers, San Francisco, USA
December 10-12, 1995
inquiries: RAI/EGI Exhibitions, Inc., 10 Tower Office Park, Suite 419, Woburn MA 01801, USA, tel. +1-617-933-6663, fax +1-617-933-8744

Fourth International DOCOMOMO Conference

'Universality and Heterogeneity'
Bratislava and Sliac, Slovakia
September 18-20, 1996
inquiries: see announcement

Social housing in jeopardy

Allen Parkway Village, Houston, USA

by Stephen Fox

For the fourth time in eighteen years, Allen Parkway Village, a 1000-unit low-income public housing complex in Houston, Texas, is facing demolition. Despite the fact that the entire complex, which was built in two phases between 1940 and 1944, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 as a historic district of national significance, the Housing Authority of the City of Houston (the legal owner), the City of Houston municipal government, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (from which the Housing Authority derives almost all of its financial support) have steadily refused to recognize its listed status. It is the Resident Council, representing the 23 households who have held out at the Allen Parkway Village/San Felipe Courts Historic District, which nominated the complex to the National Register and which has fought steadfastly since the early 1980s to have the complex rehabilitated instead of demolished. Allen Parkway Village was listed in the National Register as an example of public housing from the era of *New Deal*. It is especially significant for its modern architectural design, which the Italian architect Aldo Rossi compared to the work of the Dutch architect J.J.P. Oud. The architects who designed Allen Parkway Village were MacKie & Kamrath, the first modernist architects in Houston. Karl Kamrath was a gifted interpreter of the organic architectural tradition of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Allen Parkway Village and, adjacent, Fourth Ward represent the last concentration of low-income African-Americans on the 'good' side of downtown Houston. Once Allen Parkway Village is gone, property values in Fourth Ward will rise, driving out its remaining residents, who are largely renters rather than property owners.

Because of its listing in the National Register and the fact that the construction of some replacement housing on the property will be funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the plans of the Housing Authority are subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Housing Authority maintains that it has initiated the review process with the Texas Historical Commission, the designated State Historical Preservation Office for Texas. Although Section 106 regulations mandate public involvement (especially of affected and interested parties, such as the Resident Council), Lenwood Johnson, president of the Resident Council, has been unable to get the Texas Historical Commission to respond to urgent

inquiries, even though the Housing Authority maintains that it has received approval from the Historical Commission to demolish over 75 percent of the complex. The Texas Historical Commission was instrumental in assisting residents with the controversial listing of Allen Parkway Village. Residents and their supporters suspect that citizen appointees to the board of the Texas Historical Commission have exerted pressure on its staff to facilitate demolition. Although the Texas Historical Commission nominated the site as a State Archeological Landmark in 1993, they tabled it indefinitely in 1994. When the City of Houston adopted its first historic preservation ordinance in 1995, all local districts and individual sites listed in the National Register were automatically designated local landmarks, except Allen Parkway Village, which was stricken from the list to placate the mayor of Houston.

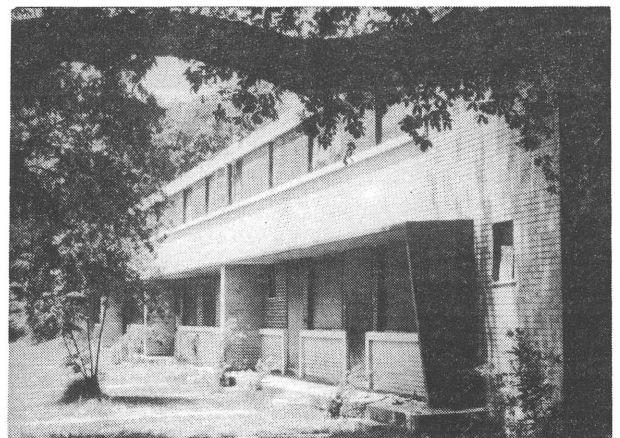
Local and national preservation advocacy organizations have shown a marked disinclination to support preservation of Allen Parkway Village. In contrast, the Society of Architectural Historians, the Modern Architecture Preservation League and the Association of Collegiate schools of Architecture have spoken out publicly in support of preservation and rehabilitation.

The implications of the Allen Parkway Village controversy are profoundly disturbing. They demonstrate how fragile and subject to compromise US preservation laws, public agencies, and private advocacy organizations are when political power and big money confront low-income minority residents, public housing and modern architecture.

Stephen Fox is a fellow of the Anchorage Foundation of Texas.

Send your letter of concern to: Marta Galicki, 2029 Swift Boulevard, 77030 Houston, Texas, USA.

Apartment Building,
Ass. Housing Architects of
Houston (MacKie &
Kamrath), 1940-44.
Photo by Paul Hester.



Universality and Heterogeneity

The Modern Movement and its regional reflections

Fourth International DOCOMOMO Conference, Slovakia Slovak Architects Society, September 18 - 20, 1996

The results of the work done by the international register committees provide evidence for the fact that we are dealing with a much more widespread application of the ideas of this movement on a global scale, than had been previously assumed. Its evolution in individual states and regions was dependant on the social conditions, cultural traditions and the creativity of local architects. Recognition of these facts compels a reappraisal of the myth that this was a universal, international style. Alongside its shared aspects it also displayed those features which have always influenced variation of style - influences of climate, cultural traditions, social characteristics, technical sophistication, materials and so on.

The Fourth International DOCOMOMO Conference has taken as its theme the investigation of this phenomenon in all areas of its work - on the philosophical and architectural/historical levels. Another level of the Conference will be concerned with finalizing the DOCOMOMO International Selection of buildings and sites - an international register of the most significant achievements of the Modern Movement and a proposal for UNESCO's World Heritage List. This work will also involve reference to the main conference theme.

Venue

The medieval centre of Bratislava is dominated by the old castle - residence of Slovakia's president - overlooking the city's beautiful setting on the banks of the river Danube. Only a one hour drive from Vienna International Airport, Slovakia's capital is rapidly extending its significance as a main cultural centre in Central Europe, with excellent connections to Budapest (only 2 hours by boat), Brno, Prague, Poland and Germany.

After the first day of the Conference in Bratislava, participants are invited to the Sliac Spa, up in the wooded hills of the country. This outstanding example of Modern Movement architecture will provide the right atmosphere to explore the spirit of modernity for another two days.

After the conference, an optional two-day tour will bring you deeper into the magnificent High Tatras. Site visits include several modernist mountain resorts and the town of Svit, featuring a range of works by well known architects like Karfik, Krejcar and Bohuslav Fuchs, before taking you back to Piestany and Bratislava, where works by Bellus will be visited.



Programme

September 17 - Bratislava

This day is considered to be a preparatory day for DOCOMOMO members only. Meetings of the various International Specialist Committees will be held. A special Council meeting is scheduled to discuss proposals as put forward by the ISC on Registers. Each working party will have the opportunity to present the essential characteristics of his country or region on a poster and in a panel discussion, that will be open to all participants.

September 18 - Bratislava

The first official day of the Conference will have a common program for all participants and representatives of official institutions. Key notes will serve as the introduction to the main theme: *Universality and Heterogeneity, the Modern Movement and its regional reflections.*

September 19 and 20 - Sliac

Parallel sessions will be held designated to:

- Inventory - criteria of selection, terminology, proposals for the International Selection and WHL.
 - Architectural History - with a particular attention this time on urbanism and landscape architecture.
 - Education - what has survived of the theoretical and practical achievements of Modern Movement architecture in the present education process?
 - Technology - regional peculiarities in maintenance, renovation and reconstruction.
- In the afternoon of September 20th, the Council Meeting will be held. Parallel to this meeting an excursion to Banska Bystrica will be organized.

On Friday evening, the Conference will be concluded in style, with a fabulous 1930s Tango Night - music that was very popular in pre-War Slovakia.

5th DOCOMOMO Conference in Stockholm, Sweden, 1998

In Barcelona, 1994, the Swedish Working party presented their candidacy for the 5th Conference. To allow others to compete as well, a six months period was introduced before putting candidacies to the vote. By then, an interesting and elaborated proposal from Poland was received. The Executive Committee, however, decided to abandon voting procedures, and to accept the Swedish proposal. Main reason for this was to advance a geographic dispersal of our international meetings, rather than gather in East/Central Europe for a third time. Also, time consuming votings would be avoided to allow for a maximum of preparation time for the event.

announcement

In 1998, Stockholm will be the *Cultural Capital of Europe*. A lot of manifestations and cultural events are being planned to celebrate it. In the same year, the new museum of Modern Art and Architecture, designed by Rafael Moneo, will be opened. These are some of the reasons why we thought it would be a great opportunity to host the Fifth International DOCOMOMO Conference in 1998, in Stockholm's newest museum.

Although Sweden will be the host country, the other Nordic countries will be well represented. The issues we want to rise are on the one side the conceptual character of Nordic Architecture and planning from the 1930s upto the 60s, and on the other side the challenge of actually preserving it.

- The first theme is the ideology of the Modern Movement as developed in the Nordic countries, its specific character and backgrounds in local context, tradition, material and needs, addressing its formal, functional and social aspects (social housing is an important subject).
- The problem of actual preservation is a very practical topic -and it is necessary for DOCOMOMO to get more into that- but, on the other hand, it confronts us with issues on a conceptual level. In the context of the current international debate on the intellectual question of *authenticity*, we want to pose the challenge: *what* authenticity should be restored -the physical/material or the conceptual/idea? And how does this inflect functional change?

International DOCOMOMO Conferences have been held in the West of Europe (Eindhoven, 1990), in the South (Barcelona, 1994), and in the East (Dessau, 1992; Bratislava will be in 1996). We now think it is time to come to know the North! Welcome to Stockholm, in 1998.

Eva Rudberg and Marina Botta, on behalf of the Swedish DOCOMOMO Working party.

Solidarity with DOCOMOMO International

from the chairman

If you look at our budget for this year and next year it will be clear to anybody, that our financial situation is not at all glamorous. The research money, which my Ph.D. students earned and which we all put in the original organization of the International Secretariat, has now been spent. My university, as all other universities in the Netherlands, has to cut back dramatically, which means no extra help for our postage, telephone, fax, computers, etc. is available any longer. Crittall Windows, our sponsor for the Journal, has stopped its yearly grant as from the beginning of this year. And last but not least the DOCOMOMO International membership is terribly disappointing. Only 158 people worldwide pay a 100% membership fee, 39 people pay a 40% membership fee and that's it. With this money, we also have to provide services to our colleagues in underprivileged countries, that can't afford financial participation in DOCOMOMO.

I sincerely hope that the International Specialist Committee on Membership and Fees, which we established at the Council meeting in Barcelona last September, consisting of Jorge Gazaneo (Argentina), France Vanlaethem (Québec), and Dennis Sharp (UK), will produce a workable, but above all an effective fee system. As you will remember, the proposals from this Committee will be send to all national/regional working parties before September 1, 1995, for their approval.

But apart from this proposal it is and will remain the responsibility of all of you, who believe in DOCOMOMO, to enroll as a member, to stimulate as many people in your environment to do the same and to stimulate the organization you are working in to become a corporate member. If you don't do this, it is very clear that the party will be over soon, as far as DOCOMOMO International is concerned.

I am sorry to say that I am beginning to become impatient with this situation because I think it makes a mockery of the principle of solidarity which has always been the core of our network. Therefore Wessel de Jonge and I have decided that some drastic changes need to be introduced:

1. If you are not a DOCOMOMO member we will not provide you with the DOCOMOMO services of the International Secretariat any longer as from the 1st of June 1995.
2. If, by January 1st, 1996, the membership of 100% paying members has not been doubled from the 158 of today to 316, and the 40% paying

members from 39 to 78, it means to us that one is not prepared to spend the necessary money on the services and the quality of the services we have provided so far.

This in turn will mean that we will cut back on staff and on the volume of the Journal to suit our actual financial budget. I sincerely hope that this doesn't have to happen since the DOCOMOMO initiative had such a warm reception and so many great successes have been booked by all of us in DOCOMOMO so far.

3. We will propose to the ISC Membership and Fees that participation in a national working party, in any International Specialist Committee or in the DOCOMOMO Council will no longer possible for those who are not a member of DOCOMOMO International.

Dear DOCOMOMO friends,

I hope you will understand that my anger about the dissatisfying membership of DOCOMOMO International so far is not directly related to you, since most of you who read our Journal can only do this because they have paid their membership. Still I sincerely hope that you will appreciate the graveness of the situation and I count on your solidarity to go out and try to get a few future DOCOMOMO International members.

If all of us paying members would only bring about one more new paying member before the 1st of January, we would be able to continue in the way you have learned to know and appreciate us in the last 6 years.

So please go out and take your responsibility, it is all for the future of our recent MoMo heritage and for the effective and interesting exchanges of ideas and friendship which are the flesh and bones of DOCOMOMO.

I count on your solidarity!

Hubert-Jan Henket

Financial account for 1994 and budget for 1995

by Arjan Doolaar

The introduction of the membership fee and the continuing of the sponsorship by Crittall Windows have turned 1994 into a successful year, although the figures are not impressing.

The situation for 1995 however, has become quite worrying, with the omission of a sponsor and a disappointing number of new members.

Stated below is the financial account of 1994, and the estimated budget for 1995; all figures are in US dollars.

1994 Incomes

Sponsoring and gifts	21,856.25
Membership fees	9,782.75
Retail	2,379.61
Interest	<u>554.87</u>
Total	34,573.48

1994 Expenses

Staff	17,500.00
Communication expenses (mail, telephone, travel, etc.)	6,344.38
Printed matters (Journals, brochures, etc.)	2,180.09
Premises	1,389.37
Facilities	<u>1,209.94</u>
Total	28,623.78

A quick addition sum learns that 1994 ended with a surplus of US \$ 5,949.70; for 1995 however, the estimated figures are not at all satisfying:

1995 Incomes

Surplus of 1994	5,949.70
Sponsoring and gifts	0.00
Membership fees (up til April 1, 1995)	10,254.37
Retail	2,500.00
Interest	<u>625.00</u>
Total	19,329.07

1995 Expenses

Staff	45,125.00
Communication expenses (mail, telephone, travel, etc.)	4,000.00
Printed matters (Journals, brochures, etc.)	2,200.00
Premises	1,400.00
Facilities	<u>1,250.00</u>
Total	54,075.00

Because there will not be an international conference in 1995, the communication expenses have been estimated at an amount smaller than that of 1994. The growing expenses of the staff are mainly due to the omission of the research money (see the report of the chairman); the total of all figures lead to an overrunning of the budget with the sum of US \$ 34,645.93.

This alarming figure can only be overcome when new sponsoring organizations are being attracted, as well as new members. If not, the future of DOCOMOMO will become insure.

Arjan Doolaar is the assisant secretary of DOCOMOMO International.

ISC / Education

One of the resolutions passed during the 1994 Council Meeting in Barcelona, was the nomination of Mabel M. Scarone, coordinator of the Argentine Working group, to chair the International Specialist Committee on Education. This appointment was very well received by the authorities of Buenos Aires University that, from the beginning of the activities of DOCOMOMO in Argentina, have been a strong support to both efforts and policies undertaken by local DOCOMOMO members. As an outcome of this situation several meetings were organized by the University of Buenos Aires, at the School of Architecture, so that together with DOCOMOMO Argentina all could benefit from the exchange of views and experiences, including the specialists from the Center for Conservation of Urban and Rural Heritage, who also volunteered to support the ISC in educational programs and special conservation training policies.

A similar schedule is now being organized to gather information, this time on aspects concerned with research on the same subjects. The results of these gatherings will be the basic material for working documents and requests that will be sent out to different DOCOMOMO members in the near future. To further help the ISC/E in this procedure, the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture has also offered the possibility to use *Internet*, which is to be an important linking resource for our future policies on education. For more information, also on taking part in *Internet*, please contact the Argentine DOCOMOMO Working party.

Report by Mabel M. Scarone, chair of the ISC/E.

ISC / Urbanism

The secretariat of the International Specialist Committee on Urbanism has sent to all the DOCOMOMO working parties a questionnaire to identify the DOCOMOMO members, or people indicated by those national groups, with a specific interest in MoMo Urbanism.

In this first moment our aim is to obtain from them a general idea of the themes related to this field and then to propose an effective start for the committee, also regarding its participation in the Fourth International Conference.

The completed questionnaire and other suggestions are expected by July 31th, 1995.

Information on the ISC/Urbanism can be obtained through DOCOMOMO Brazil.

Report by Anna Beatriz Galvão, preliminary chair of the ISC/U.

ISC / Gardens + Landscape

A limited international call, intended to verify possibilities to set up an international section of DOCOMOMO about modern gardens and landscape, received the personal appreciation of a number of distinguished scholars, members of the committee for historical gardens of ICOMOS (Carmen Añón, Spain; Monique Mosser, France), well-known garden historians (Dorothee Imbert, Berkeley, USA; Mirka Benes, Harvard University, USA), public services (*Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten*, Bad Homburg, Germany), teachers involved in university programs concerning the conservation of modern gardens (Judith Roberts, University of York, UK; Nancy J. Volkman, Texas A&M University, USA; Marc Treib, University of California at Berkeley, USA; Sofia Varoli Piazza, University of Viterbo, Italy) and garden & landscape architects (Lodewijk Baljon, Amsterdam, The Netherlands).

In anticipation of further response, these first results seem very encouraging for further elaboration of a set of working documents for the ISC/G+L. Experts on modern landscape and gardens who would be interested to link up with this working group are invited to contact the ISC/G+L at: via Monte Nevoso 20, 00141 Roma, Italy, fax +39-6-86800228.

Report by Franco Panzini, preliminary chair of the ISC/Gardens + Landscape.

ISC / Technology

The initial idea for an ISC/T working programme consisted of two tracks to be followed. The first of these was to try to get hold of original documents and further information on a 1939 CIAM inquiry on facade constructions. The results of the inquiry seemed to have gone lost, likely due to the War, and also the CIAM archives at the ETH Zürich appeared not to include further clues. The ISC/T therefore decided to drop this subject, although it would have been nice to provide a kind of historical backing for our work. We have, however, to face the challenges of the present and the future, with two DOCOMOMO Conferences coming up, that both demand our professional involvement.

The second track of our programme, to map the participation of our members in technological research and hands-on experience with MoMo preservation, is making good progress. A number of inquiry forms has been returned, which will be included in a data-base. There are plans to link up with a similar data-base in North America.

Report by Wessel de Jonge, preliminary chair of the ISC/T.

ISC / Registers

The third DOCOMOMO International conference, held in Barcelona, was an important step in the collective register work. Gérard Monnier, former ISC/R chair, produced a very positive initial assessment. Now all the documents are gathered in Paris, at the Belleville School of Architecture, where they can be consulted. To proceed, it was necessary to specify the general framework for the register project on the basis of the work already submitted. This was the main purpose of the two ISC/R meetings held since September 1994, the first, a special one including invited guests, in Paris, in December 1994.

At the Paris Meeting, some distinctions were introduced in order to organize more efficiently the DOCOMOMO register at an intellectual as well as a practical level. The results of the Paris meetings have been implemented by a more profound discussion in Chicago in April 1995.

Three distinct levels for the selection of buildings and sites have been recognized:

- the local level of the National and/or Regional register (NR),
 - the international level of the International Selection (IS),
 - the global level of the World Heritage List (WHL).
- Each of these selections has different objectives if not a proper methodology.

National and/or Regional Register

The constitution of the NR is the duty of the Wps, who should establish the criteria for selecting the buildings and sites to be considered. At this level the register fiche is a true means to extend the awareness of the MoMo heritage. The NR is an open list; it is a work in progress. The comprehensiveness is the priority in establishing the register. The qualitative aim must be to reach a complete survey of all modern buildings through the work of successive register campaigns.

The goal of the local register is primarily strategic. The register will become useful to assure or to reinforce the protection of MoMo buildings in a country/region. The register is a tool within any national heritage campaign. On an annual basis, the NR list in the format of the Minimum Fiche will be submitted to the ISC/R for general examination and inclusion in DOCOMOMO International archives. On ISC/R recommendations, the NR list will be accepted by the DOCOMOMO International Council. This official support contributes to the esteem of the NR. Moreover it can be useful in the relationships between the Wps and their government or other organizations, in order to implement the preservation activities.

International selection

To establish the International Selection is the priority of the ISC/R. It seems more appropriated to call it an International *Selection* rather than a *Register* because of its representativeness rather

than its comprehensiveness. The aim of the IS is above all scientific. It will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to extend modern architectural historiography, if not to revise it sometimes. Likewise, it has a strategic aim on an international level. It will contribute to highlight MoMo architecture, underlining its social importance and cultural impact.

The IS will be formed after the proposals sent by the Wps. In order to do this, in April 1996, each Wp has to submit a file including:

- a list of buildings and sites selected after the international criteria set by the ISC/R. This list includes major buildings within a country and/or region apart from the nationality of their designer,
- a brief motivation text,
- a complete fiche for each of the buildings and sites proposed.

The fiches already sent to DOCOMOMO, will be included in the IS documentation, unless the ISC/R asks complementary information after detailed evaluation.

During the meeting in Spring 1996, the ISC/R will prepare a preliminary version of the IS, a document that will be submitted for advice to invited scholars. The final IS proposal will be elaborated by the ISC/R in Bratislava, before the Special Council Meeting of September 17, 1996, where it has to be discussed and approved.

Moreover, the program of the Bratislava Conference will include a session dedicated to the register work. To support exchanges about this important aspect, the ISC/R suggests that each Wp should prepare a poster summarizing their national/regional contribution to the IS. A format will be proposed later.

In principle, the IS concerns all the countries and/or regions where MoMo architecture exists. In practice, it is smaller because it is related to the countries and/or regions represented in DOCOMOMO. The issue of buildings in countries where a Wp has not been established yet will be discussed on a general level within a publication which, after Bratislava, will be the next ISC/R objective. Introductory essays will put the collective works and results in an overall international perspective.

World Heritage List

At the Paris Meeting of the ISC/R, the participants have produced a document which contains additions to the 'Operational Guidelines' presently serving the World Heritage Committee for the selection of buildings and sites to be included in the WHL. A final working document with 'guidelines' including new criteria for the evaluation of MoMo buildings and sites will be discussed at the Bratislava Conference and then submitted to ICOMOS.

Bratislava will be an important collective deadline for both the IS and the WHL guidelines.

Report by Maristella Casciato and France Vanlaethem, chairs of the ISC/R.

Authentic Wrightiana?

by Wessel de Jonge

This summer, a grand retrospective of the works of Frank Lloyd Wright is scheduled for the Design Museum in London. Like many of his contemporaries, Wright did not limit his activities to architecture, and he designed a variety of furnitures, wallpapers, lightfittings, textile decorations, china, etcetera. Although it is known that Wright designed almost all of the objects in his personal environment -up to the teaspoons and his wife's dresses- so far these aspects of his talent remained relatively unnoticed. The exhibition in London is intended to make up for that omission and offers an impressive selection of authentic objects by this founding father of the Modern Movement.

The exhibition focuses on Wright's Chicago work from 1887 to 1915 and provides insight into an important period which launched his career and witnessed the development of his Prairie School domestic architecture. The architecture concerned itself with integral decoration, where every detail of the building reflects the design of the whole. Buildings that have since been demolished are also represented, including the Imperial Hotel near Nagoya, which illustrates the Japanese influence on Wright's works during these years. This hotel of 1916 has recently been reconstructed in Japan.

Almost at the same time, across the ocean, in Madison, Wisconsin, the construction of Wright's Monona Terrace Civic Center has been started. Originally planned as the home for the Wisconsin Government, Wright made a first design for the Center in 1938. Now, thirty-five years after his death, the construction of the buildings at Monona Lake will be executed according to Wright's drawings of 1957.

By then, the curved building at the lakeside was intended to be a civic center, and the programme included an auditorium, an exhibition hall, a dance hall, a large roof garden and parking garages at both sides, the forms of which echo the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

The construction of what is eventually to become a Conference Center is supervised by Wright's former assistant Anthony Puttnam. The works, for a total budget of approximately US \$ 67 million, are to be finished by 1997.

Wessel de Jonge is an architect in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago; the Early Years; Design Museum, Shad Thames, London, United Kingdom, from May 4th-September 2nd, 1995.

DOCOMOMO in Chicago

Of the 800 participants at the *Recent Past* Conference, there was quite a number of DOCOMOMO members from Italy, Sweden, Norway, Slovenia, the Netherlands, the UK, and Canada (Québec, Ontario and British Columbia). Many took the opportunity to intensify their contacts with members of the Executive Committee and other DOCOMOMO participants. The International Secretariat advocated DOCOMOMO by giving information on memberships, the 1996 Conference in Bratislava, and DOCOMOMO publications.

American branch

The great atmosphere at the conference also created the right circumstances to establish a new DOCOMOMO branch. DOCOMOMO-US was founded by approximately 25 specialists from the Mid West, the East and the West Coast. Four task groups were formed on Organizational Structure, Register, Publicity, and Membership, each of them with participants from the three geographical regions. The group will be coordinated by Jeff Chusid of the University of Southern California, and enjoys informal support of some established institutions and public bodies all over the US.

Specialists on Registers

Also the ISC on Registers took the chance, to have a series of meetings to elaborate on the guidelines for the DOCOMOMO International Selection of Modern Movement architecture. A draft document resulted from these sessions, that have meanwhile been distributed among the Working parties. Also the World Heritage Convention was evaluated, anticipating the proposals for inclusion of MoMo heritage in the World Heritage List, that will be put to vote in Bratislava in September 1996. -WDJ

A DOCOMOMO delegation's visit to Wright's Ennis-Brown House (1924) in Hollywood. Right to left: Jeff Chusid, University of Southern California, and coordinator of DOCOMOMO-US; Bill Ginell, Getty Conservation Institute; Robert Michels; Mrs. Ginell; Lori Anglin, Getty Conservation Institute; Scott Cunliffe, architect; and Wessel de Jonge, secretary of DOCOMOMO International.

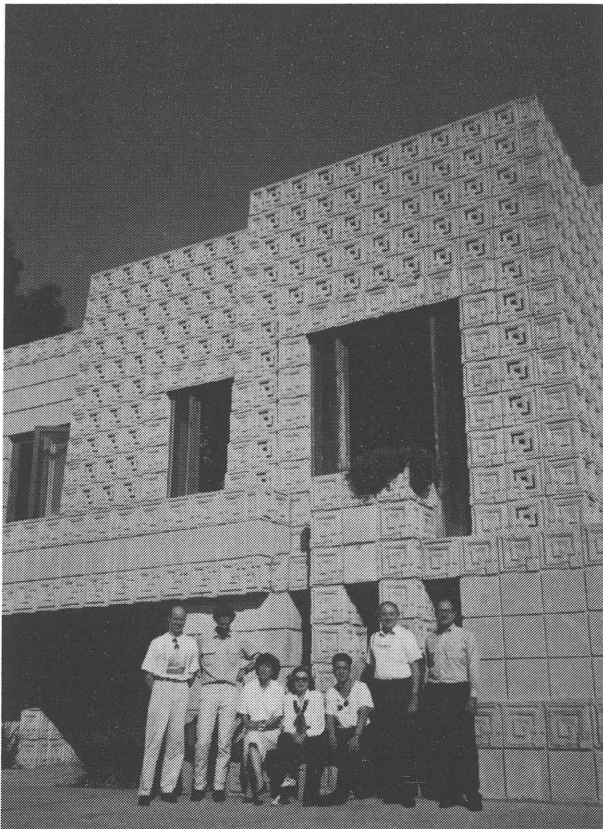
A rite of maturation

Chicago, March 30-April 1, 1995

by Wessel de Jonge

'A groundbreaking three-day conference of vital interest to all preservation officials' read the promising announcement of the *Preserving the Recent Past* conference -and that was exactly what we got! It was big and international, well organized and lively, exciting and inspiring, though putting questions rather than offering solutions. This first comprehensive national conference on recent architectural heritage attracted a baffling amount of around 700 participants from the US and another 100 from abroad.

Just a few days after the conference, Paul Goldberger put a finger on the sore in an article in the New York Times, at the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission: 'New York had always been a city that tore itself down and built itself up relentlessly, with little sense of history; it was an urban frontier, a place that only thinks of a future, and never of a past.' If his words are interpreted in a wider, national context, and if history would be focussed to the 20th Century, Goldberger hit off the great challenge for the mainly North American preservationists, researchers, architects and teachers attending the conference in Chicago.



The American Dream

Still today, it is very fashionable in architectural circles to denounce the skyscrapers of the 1960s as worthless commercial trash -but the Art Deco buildings of the 30s were once called that, too. The New York landmark committee, enforcing a thirty years cut-off period, will soon have to decide on designations of buildings of the same age as the committee itself. This makes the issue of an appropriate time frame for listing again very topical. A fifty year cut-off period, as is common for listing in most countries, seems inappropriate to rapidly decaying modern buildings. Still, a perspective of only thirty to forty years might just not be enough for an unbiased reassessment, as was illustrated by the contrasting observations of Morris Lapidus and Bertrand Goldberg, two grand old men of 20th Century American architecture and honorary speakers to the conference.

Lapidus' presentation was as lively and popular as one could expect from the designer of Miami Beach's *Fountainbleau Hotel* of 1953, a building of sheer joy, where the playful lines of the concrete balconies still remained undecorated. But inside the hotel, Lapidus let it all hang loose and the interiors are a exciting whirl of 'woggles' and false ceilings with indirectly lit 'cheese holes'. The main element in the lobby was a huge 'stairway to nowhere', that only served for an elegant descent into the lobby. His colleagues considered his works 'super kitch' and Lapidus ended last but one in a professional popularity poll in 1974. 'But the people loved it, and, after all, they were my clients!' said the architect of the American Dream with a smile. Apparently referring to Wright's negative qualification of modern architecture as 'boxes', Lapidus distinguished his works from those of his contemporaries by saying that his buildings 'never looked like boxes!' These became the magic words for the rest of the conference and the 93 years old was met with an ovational reception, obviously more inspired by the desire to make up for the 1974 disgrace of this charming man, rather than an objective reassessment of his works in a historic perspective.

If such personal evaluations were to guide us in our appreciation of recent heritage, we wouldn't get very far. As an unintended opposite number, also Goldberg demonstrated his convictions, as different as they were from those of the former speaker. Although rejecting the idea of rebuilding the past, Goldberg advocated to forge a *renaissance* of those elements of modern architecture that remain valuable for today, in particular when they could serve to develop a successful strategy to solve the devastating problems of today's cities. An important contribution to the conference was that Goldberg reached out to identify some criteria for selection, by identifying the witnesses of political, social and scientific changes as most valuable for preservation, thereby stressing the conceptual value of architecture, rather than the physical

aspects. It is remarkable how Goldberg's views still seem to be determined by his *Bauhaus* education in Europe, and how distinct they are from those of many of his American colleagues of the period.

Evaluation of resources

Despite the extensive exchange between the New World and Europe, it still is obvious that North America's heritage of modern architecture is different from that in the Old World in more than just the volume of its production. Already in his opening address, Richard Longstreth demonstrated the uneasiness even in preservationist' circles as regards the question what of the American recent past is valuable -if anything at all- by taking a rather critical view towards the Modern Movement as a starting point. Let's assume that the intention was to give his audience an opportunity to identify their doubts and confusion as regards the recent past, only to mould them for the piece of genuine pep-talk he concluded with. After that, everybody was ready to put their shoulder to the wheel. His analysis of some distinctive elements in American modern architecture was however very valuable to arrive at a better understanding of the conference theme. Longstreth emphasized the role of social change as vital in the development of 20th Century architecture. There is a growing interest in recent heritage in industrial areas and working class districts, and a start to acknowledge that there is both historic and aesthetic value to many buildings that are not *Beaux Arts* palaces of granite and limestone. Recognition of such value, he rightly argued, is not only a matter of appearance and style. A more typical observation was to link the history of modern architecture in North America to the phenomenon of mobility. The immense influence the introduction of automobiles had is apparant in the series of new architectural typologies for roadside structures, such as service stations (lecture by Richard Ryan), motels ('Tourist Cabin Courts on Route 20', lecture by Tania G. Werbizky) and drive-in restaurants (W. Dwayne Jones). That the oldest MacDonald's is a part of American heritage is obvious, but just imagine the amount of similar MacDonalds outlets that have existed over the years to realize, that the question of *authenticity* is put in a new context here.

Goldberg's innovative Marina Towers (1959-1967) in Chicago is a prototype of a compact model for urban living, containing offices, apartments and various other functions. After a split of the property and, consequently, years of neglect, a visionary developer recently decided for a complete rehabilitation of the entire complex.
Photo: Wessel de Jonge.

Another characteristic phenomenon is The American House, a typology that is not comprehensively surveyed as yet. In various lectures, the issue of suburban living was addressed, as were the policies for some kind of preservation of such areas. The social impact of technological developments, like domestic kitchen equipment, and the development of prefabricated homes produced by the distressed post-War metal industry are other remarkable elements in America's recent past. These, and similar *Evaluations of Resources* formed a first track in the conference program, that is vital to get some kind of comprehension of what is the issue here. Recent American heritage is not exclusively linked to buildings or architectural structures, but just as well to certain sites and events, such as the 1950s rally of the Civil Rights Movement ('The Legacy of Civil Rights', by Barbara Tagger). But neither could 'Hittsville USA' (Steven Jones), nor 'Graceland and the Sun Studio' (Claudette Stager), those magic places in the history of popular music, be erased from the record of recent American history.

Strategic defense

A second track in the conference program was that of *Preservation and Reuse Strategies*. The idea that preservation represents an unfair intrusion into individual rights, is likely more appreciated in America than in the Old World. Paradoxically, historic preservation is inherently conservative, yet because it interferes with the free market, it is traditionally been seen as a part of the liberal agenda. 'Organizing the Preservation of Modern Movement architecture' (Diane Wray, of the kindred *Modern Architecture Preservation League* from Denver, Colorado) and 'Raising of Awareness and Funds for Preservation' (Robert Jager) are therefore specific challenges in the US that need a lot of professional dedication to deal with. Case studies on preserving commercial and industrial heritage, the suburban sixties, schoolhouses and landscapes illustrated the many traps on the trail. Quite unusual, at least from a European perspective, are the questions posed with respect to military assets of the Cold War legacy. The preservation of Minuteman II Missile bases and the *Presidio* are of a scale and a character that are probably



unprecedented in the world of preservation. Moreover, the officials of the National Parks Service, in charge of some of these assets as of recently, are obviously better qualified for feeding the bears, then caring for strategic defence resources. In terms of preservation policy, Mary Harding Sadler's presentation on Dulles and National Airports in Washington DC was a surprising success story. For one of the nations main airports, almost immediate and continuous extensions were anticipated in Saarinen's 1962 master plan. By making itself indispensable in terms of professional and active participation in the planning process, the Department of Historic Resources of Richmond, Virginia, became a valued partner in decision making. As a result, Saarinen's original proposals for enlarging Dulles and National Airport could be respected.

2000 types of polyester

A third track in the conference was the *Conservation of 20th Century Materials and Systems*. From a DOCOMOMO point of view, this part of the program was well elaborated, at occasions putting the issue of material preservation in a wider perspective of environmental hazards, energy conservation and international conceptions of historic architecture.

At the level of materials and constructions, the preservation handbooks soon will need to be revised and extended. And if we just think about 'antique plastics' -over two thousand types of only polyester have been identified so far- it might be a better idea to write new handbooks altogether! It might have given a stir among experienced preservationists, to hear about a method for age determination of such a material on the basis of the extent of microscopic cristallization, that reminds of the C-14 method used for prehistoric objects. Enormous resources on historic *modern* materials and constructions became available during the conference, addressing for instance structural applications of metals, various sidings and roofcoverings, cast stone, reinforced and precast concrete, coloured structural glass, glassblocks, porcelain enamel, various wallboards and ceilings, terrazzo floorings, and wood veneers.

Most presentations were of a descriptive nature and identifying the problems of material decay. It is obvious that a lot a work is still to be done, and the growing amount of successful restorations of recent historic architecture will provide the resources for such research and development. In this respect, the half day workshop on curtain walls -presented by sponsor *Wiss, Jenney, Elster Associates*- was an exceptionally informative event, offering both an analysis and conservation strategies for this emblematic feature of modern architecture. Other presentations that offered more hands on experience dealt for instance with concrete repair at Falling Water (Norman Weiss) and the restoration of the Dymaxion House (Christian Overland).

The value of Modernity

Robert Bruegman opened the closing session with an analysis of various conflicting standards for designation in the US. He rightly concluded however, that the real power of the preservation world should be *electoral*, rather than *regulatory*. A main tool to achieve this, is for the preservation world to become an indispensable knowledge base, and the Dulles Airport case showed that this can be an effective strategy indeed.

Bruegman again brought up the issue of the cut-off period, by rightly observing that most modern buildings will not last for fifty years. His plea was to monitor modern buildings already before that age, and it seems that this could become an important task for the fresh DOCOMOMO-US chapter, that has been established during the conference. That preserving the recent past is a controversial issue was illustrated by the remarkable contributions from the two last speakers, the critics Thomas Fisher and Thomas Hine. Both demonstrated a peculiarly blunt approach towards the legacy of the Modern Movement, that could hardly be explained as a boost for the preservation world. Hines' conclusion that the idea of modernity is more important than physical preservation of their products is an academic statement -and not a very topical one- and does no justice to historic continuity. Judging by the enthusiasm amongst the delegates after the closing remarks by moderator Mike Jackson, they were however not too distracted by their remarks.

Move to adulthood

The Recent Past conference has created a fantastic North American forum for professionals who are involved in the preservation of 20th Century architecture. As could have been anticipated for a first conference, the overwhelming amount of information furnished by over 80 speakers was still mostly descriptive rather than providing analysis or solutions. Still, the enormous variety of interesting subjects was highly attractive, and the slight emphasis on the technological aspects has even been quite appealing to DOCOMOMO members. A comprehensive Handbook that was handed out to all participants will allow for some close reading later, and is surely a tremendous source of information in its completeness and appearance -leaving only the problem of excess luggage on our flight home! On a conceptual level, it was remarkable that many lecturers tended to speak in terms of rehabilitation rather than respectful preservation or conservation, when the legacy of the Modern Movement was concerned.

It seems, that the valuable resources that have been tapped during this first conference should provide a basis for a more intellectual approach as regards preservation policies at another occasion. The open minded and spontaneous character of the present event seems a guarantee for some thought provoking sessions in a near future.

According to Paul Goldberger in his New York Times article, the establishment of the Landmarks Commission marked New York's move into adulthood thirty years ago: 'It was a moment when this ferocious and adolescent city first admitted that there were parts of itself worth handing down to future generations. It was a rite of maturation'. The Recent Past Conference might have a similar significance for America's architectural heritage of the 20th Century.

Wessel de Jonge is the secretary of DOCOMOMO International and was a speaker at the Conference.

Paul Goldberger, 'New York, Lost and Found', New York Times, April 9th, 1995.

To how *Recent* should the *Past* be to be *Preserved*?

post script by Hubert-Jan Henket

Although I fully subscribe the very positive review of the *Preserving the Recent Past* Conference by Wessel de Jonge, several key note speakers left some questions with me about the way they approach the Modern Movement, which I want to be mentioned in our Journal.

Both Richard Longstreth in his opening speech as well as Thomas Fisher and Thomas Hine in the closing remarks at the end of the conference, pointed at the Modern Movement as the prime culprit of what has gone wrong in architecture and urbanism in the past three decades. Yet at the same time they called upon their audience to go out and stress the importance of preserving the recent past.

This raises some fundamental questions. How can one stimulate and educate the public at large about the values of the built environment if and when you denounce these at the same time? To how Recent should the Past be for preservationists to arrive at some objective perspective to Preserve it? Ten years, thirty years, fifty years?

The danger of making this period too long though, particularly with respect to 20th Century buildings is that they might have been changed so dramatically in the meantime, that preservation remains just an academic wish.

If the warm reception by the majority of the delegates at the conference for the populist remarks about the Modern Movement by these speakers, is representative for the general opinion, the need for an active DOCOMOMO branch in the US is evident.

Hubert-Jan Henket is the chairman of DOCOMOMO International.



Casa de Renta Reflections on a building type

by Esteban G. Urdampilleta

Ever since Le Corbusier's Villa Radiouse, the Buenos Aires block has been representing the antithesis to modern planning of the city. Every major architectural intervention has been intended to replace the existing urban fabric and design traditions. Housing, places of work, low and high rising buildings, solidarity and clustered buildings are the main ingredients, generally unable to recreate the vitality and architectural variety of the traditional city.

Many Argentine architects, practicing during the 1930s, 40s and 50s, left an impressive legacy: the 'Casa de Renta' -flats to let- a building type.

Rooted in the patio house, it reinforces the urban pattern by completing the perimetric scheme and assuring the visual integrity of the block.

It proposes a new communal heart by recessing rear fronts to approximately a third of its length. Its modernity is expressed through spatial fluidity, new materials and techniques. Necessarily contrasting, it never loses a strong sense of place. This legacy, full of remarkable examples, demands attention where a additional building is planned. It took 30 years to fulfill the notable significance of the building, erected in 1942 by Vladimiro Acosta, a Russian born architect. He enriched his work with a particular gesture: the inner court opening to the street.

Since 1972, when Mario Roberto Alvarez completed the scheme, the courtyard breaks the established rhythm of the street, creating an unexpected gap in the continuous frontage that draws the attention to the original building. Although an urban piece can be detached and appreciated as an independent entity, it enriches

its meaning when it is an integral part of a wider hierarchy. It makes an impact, it is both autonomous and dependent in its context. At the Faculty of Architecture students are encouraged to produce subtle, yet physically distinctive new interventions to continue the historical pattern of organic evolution on the site, reflecting a process of gradual growth and change. Cities grow in time and are a collective product of generations of individuals. They are made 'piece by piece', in 'time: the great builder of the place'.

Esteban G. Urdampilleta is an adjunct professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Buenos Aires.

Left: Vladimiro Acosta's 'Casa de Renta' of 1942 in Buenos Aires, with its inner court opening to the street. Bottom: The Kavanagh Building in Buenos Aires, designed by the architects Sanchez, Lagos and De la Torre, was built between 1933 and 1935. This view shows the building from the corner of Florida Street and San Martín Street.



The Kavanagh Building

Modern architecture in Buenos Aires

by Stella Maris Casal

Designed by the architects Sanchez, Lagos and De la Torre in 1933, and built between 1933 and 1935, the Kavanagh Building in Buenos Aires was the first of its kind in South America. At that time, it was the highest building in the world to be built with a concrete frame, and the first in the world with a central air conditioning system. In 1936, it was given the Municipal Award for Best Facade and for Best Distribution.

The triangular shape of the building site, fully occupied by the ground floor, reflects, when the volume elevates, some resemblance with a ship's prow that gets more slender to the top, as far as legal building restrictions oblige successive set backs. According to the architects, the resulting volume was obtained after an economic and financial evaluation 'to assure the best profit from the investment', but it is evident in the result that compositional aspects were also taken into account, including compositional features to link the first set back of the facade with the top line of the adjacent Plaza Hotel.

Functionally, the building was divided into a basement with commercial facilities, a development of 29 stories high for dwellings -four apartments on each floor, each with an independent and private access- and a top observatory. Technical installations occupy two levels underground and a part of the roof level. Since the very moment it appeared, dominating the Buenos Aires skyline, the Kavanagh Building has become a reference point not only as a landmark but also in terms of a new aesthetic for the city, though not a model that would be imitated. The Kavanagh Building is a unique building, the first modern example of such a scale in the city. It certainly determined and expressed the architectural attitude of the period, and was of great influence in the professional and the public opinion concerning Modern Movement architecture in the years that followed. To make such an enterprise a reality, innovative ideas, outstanding professionals, highly qualified workers and an exceptional client -Mrs. Corina Kavanagh- had to come together and produce one of the best known and appreciated MoMo buildings in Buenos Aires. Maybe this is the main reason why it will soon celebrate its sixtieth anniversary, in a remarkable state of conservation, with each of the 105 individual occupants being conscious of the significance of the building, not only to themselves but to the whole city.

Stella Maris Casal is an architect in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The cultural phenomenon of functionalism

Conference in Zlín, Czech Republic

by Jan Sedlák

On 27 and 28 September 1994 the conference *The Cultural Phenomenon of Functionalism* was held by the State Gallery in Zlín, together with the exhibition *The Culture of Bata's Zlín*. After three years the gallery has again turned its attention to the issue of Zlín's architecture and town planning, this time from the point of view of its relation to other cultural trends and activities in Zlín between the First and Second World War (For commentary on the symposium and the exhibition *The Bata Company - architecture and city planning 1910-1950*, see DOCOMOMO Newsletter 6, November 1991, pp. 14-15).

Among the twenty participants were Judi Loach from the Oxford School of Architecture and the artist Rudolf Fila from the Bratislava Art Academy. Jan Michl, from the Department of Architecture of the Haifa University of Technology, also sent a contribution. The Czech and Slovak DOCOMOMO groups were represented by Elena Szolgayova, Vladimír Slapeta and Jan Sedlák. All the presented speeches will be published in a memorial catalogue, which is now being prepared.

Zlín Art Salon

Zlín's cultural legacy from the 1920s and 1930s was thoroughly outlined by Zdenek Pokluda. Within the framework of Zlín's cultural history he defined two characteristics: traditional middle class culture and the cultural development connected with Bata's industrial influence. These characteristics had sometimes existed in parallel but became also converged or even merged, with an increasing influence of Bata, thanks to the result of industrial production. Its individual areas gradually became independent and started a tradition, which is still of importance today. Particularly in the second half of the 1930s there was a real boom in a wide variety of activities: journalism, literature, publishing, education, enlightenment, science, health care, cinematography, museums, art salons, a zoo, etc. The importance of these activities exceeded their times and the narrow limitations of the borders of the Zlín region.

Especially the artistic fields were evaluated then, in a more detailed manner by means of individual contributions - the Film Studios, the Art School and the Fine Art Salons. The Film Studios (review presented by Jirí Novotný), founded in 1936, were originally involved in advertising but soon started to produce practically all genres of cinematography

and attracted renowned directors, screenplay writers and cameramen. In those days, the Zlín Film Studios posed considerable competition to the Barrandov Studios in Prague. During the Festivals of National Cinematography (1940 and 1941), Zlín became a meeting place for every influential personality involved in Czech cinematography, and also attracted a large audience.

The Art School, the history of which was outlined by painter Vladimír Vasíček, was established in 1939. During the Second World War it practically replaced all the art schools that had been closed by the Nazis. The curriculum of the school was based upon the Bauhaus concept. The tradition of the school is now being continued by both The Zlín Industrial Design Studio (part of the Design and Crafts Academy in Prague) and The Secondary School of Design in Uherské Hradiště. The Zlín Art Salon (reviewed by Ludvík Seveček) was held eleven times between 1936 and 1948; a total of 4441 paintings and sculptures were exhibited there. Only specially invited artists could exhibit their works there, carefully selected so that all the important and influential art trends of that time were represented. The first Salon represented the very first general exhibition of contemporary art in Czechoslovakia. All the exhibited works of art were on sale and the purchases made by the Bata firm later became the basis of the Zlín State Gallery, founded in 1954.

Bata's strict requirements

The key discussion taking place at the conference dealt with architecture and city planning in Zlín during the period between the two World Wars. As opposed to the previous conference the talks did not only concern the facts and research results, but were rather attempting a certain degree of evaluation and interpretation. Jan Sedlák outlined the role and importance of functionalism in Zlín with respect to the history of modern architecture in Czechoslovakia and abroad. Due to certain ideologies and to industrial innovations in Bata's Industries, the architecture of Zlín acquired a very special and unmistakable style which is globally accepted as an absolutely exceptional phenomenon. As a consequence, Bata's architects managed to fulfil the manifesto of the avant-garde. Since 1930, Bata Industries, using exported capital, began to build their own towns, factories and supermarkets abroad. This brought Bata's architecture the fame that only its footwear had enjoyed before. Functionalist Zlín became a working model even before the Athens Charter was formulated. Zlín was visited by the world's leading architects, including, for example, Le Corbusier.

Bata's architecture was much less homogenous in terms of style and meaning as is generally thought. In his paper, Vladimír Slapeta outlined the profile of the architect Miroslav Lorenc (1896-1943) who

worked in the Design Department of Bata's construction company and who later left Bata to found his own design studio, because he did not agree with the strict economical requirements of Bata's architecture. He is the architect of a number of villas and houses of which the conception was rooted in Prague's functionalism and considerably remote from Zlín's standardized constructions. Concerning the architects who identified themselves with the Bata's principles, Ladislava Hornáková spoke of Miroslav Drofa (1908-1984). Pavel Halík concentrated on Zlín's city planning, particularly on one of its leading representatives, Jirí Vozenílek (1909-1986).

Zlín as a town reservation

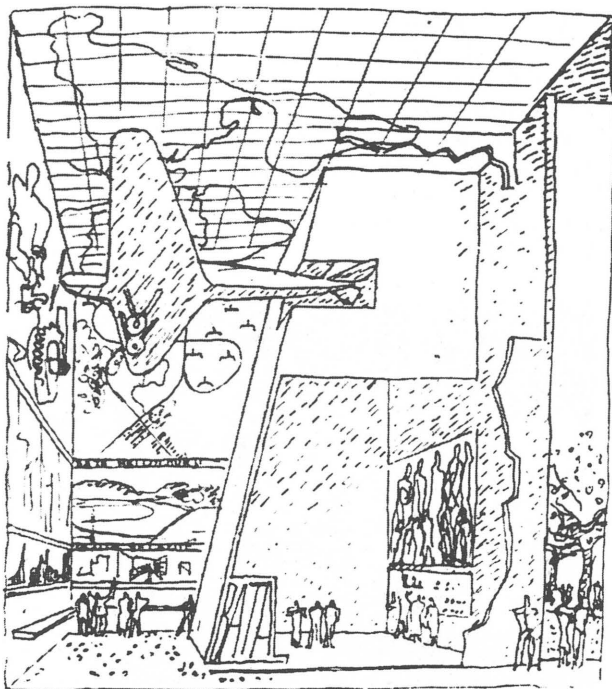
A somewhat more deviated topic was presented by Elena Szolgayova who characterized the solution of the housing problem in Slovakia during the 1920s and 1930s, through the works of the architects Dusan Jurkovic (1868-1947) and Bedrich Weinwurm (1885-1942). Judi Loach from Oxford tried, in her study *Le Corbusier et le végétal*, to track down the moments that were crucial for the innovative conceptions in the work of the famous architect. According to Judi Loach, the most decisive role was played by Le Corbusier's birthplace, La Chaux-de-Fonds,

because of its regular layout since the end of the 18th Century and its natural surroundings. He was also influenced by his travels around Europe where he witnessed poor housing and health conditions. Influenced by what he had seen, Le Corbusier concentrated on three main points in his work: hygiene, respect for traditional family values and the importance of nature.

An important part of the conference was dedicated to the conservation of architectural monuments. Rostislav Svácha revived the request to declare Zlín as a protected area, saying that the method of preserving the buildings employed until now, i.e. as an architectural conservation zone, seems to be insufficient. The conference participants signed a petition demanding the declaration of Zlín as a town reservation, due to its outstanding and rare architecture. Karel Havlis informed the participants of the current city's development plans, which clearly interfere with the interests of conservation and protection activities. To harmonically and functionally combine the current needs and the conservation of the past will clearly take a considerable effort on the part of all the involved specialists.

Jan Sedlák is the secretary of the Czech DOCOMOMO Group.

Right: Vladimír Karfík's office building of the firm Bata in Zlín, 1936-38.
Bottom: Corbusier's scheme for Bata's pavilion at the 1936 World Fair in Paris.



Monument for Columbus in Santo Domingo

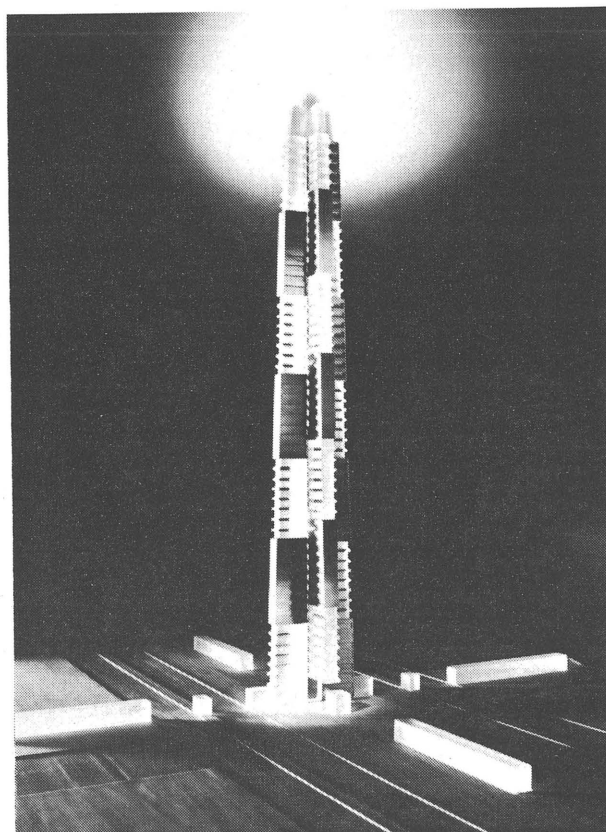
Models as an educational tool

by *Dietrich W. Schmidt*

In September 1994 an exhibition of architectural models was on display at the *Col.legio d'Arquitectes* in Barcelona, Spain, concerning the Soviet entries to the Columbus Memorial competition for Santo Domingo of 1928-29. Of these models, 11 were reconstructed by students of architecture from the University of Stuttgart, Germany.

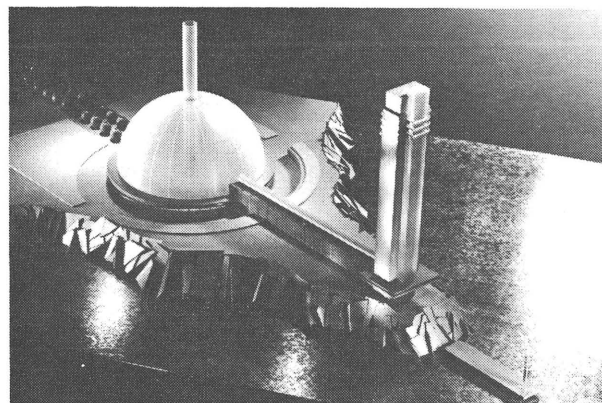
This famous competition of the Pan American Union with 455 entries was characterized by a majority of conventional and traditional designs, and only few proposals showed efforts to use a modern language of architecture. The most striking proposals to memorize the great discoverer of the Americas came from the Soviet avant-garde. The small exhibition gave a cross section of architectural conceptions at the end of the 'Roaring Twenties' in the new Soviet society, including works by Scusev, traditional Leningrad architects like Lansere and Langbard, but also Leonidov's revolutionary constructivism, rationalism (Ladovskij), emotional expressionism (Tarasov and Melnikov) as well as reformatory tendencies in rather conventional forms (Belogrud and Munc) were represented. An interesting observation is that modern Soviet architecture in the first five year-plan (1928-32) emphasized the aspects of usefulness and technology. Architecture was supposed to solve the problems of the society. Most of the buildings were planned for the needs of the people in a mass society. An important achievement of this epoch is to be found in the social efforts for the masses, manifesting in the famous workers' clubs, factory-kitchens, housing estates, office buildings and factories. Responsibility for functionality and the economics of construction characterized the architecture of the avant-garde. Architecture was therefore understood not as the art of representation for the privileged, like in former times, but above all as a thing to be used, being a commodity value rather than an individual art product.

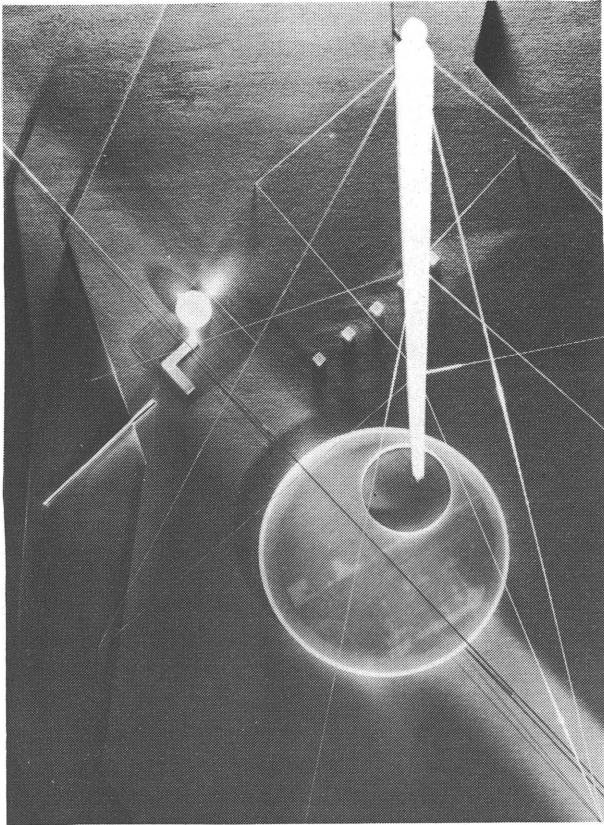
Keeping in mind this social background, the intercourse of the Soviet architects with the task to build a monument for an individual, a building which can hardly be used, turns out a highly interesting discordance. Philosophical reasons, such as idolizing a genius like Lenin or Stalin, are obviously irrelevant here. But adoration of technical sciences, idolization of technological progress and the American industry might have served as alternative inspirations. Such aspects may explain why so many Soviet architects participated in the competition, despite their social convictions mentioned above.



The registration of 59 Soviet architects gives an idea about the enormous interest in this competition. However, more than half of them did not enter their designs, among them well-known Leningrad architects like Jakov G. Chernichov, Aleksandr S. Nikol'skij, Andrej Ol', Noj A. Trockij and the famous Moscow constructivists Moisej J. Ginzburg and the Vesnin brothers. Out of 27 Russian entries, 13 came from Leningrad, 11 from Moscow, two from New York and one from Paris.

Some of the models of the Columbus Memorial, by Nikolaj A. Ladovskij (left), Ivan I. Leonidiv (right) and O.M. Kasjanov (bottom). For Melnikov's entry, see p. 53
Photos: Hans-Joachim Heyer. © University of Stuttgart, Germany.





Reconstructing models

The reconstruction work in Stuttgart was based on Russian material from St. Petersburg and Moscow and supported by Martin Hechinger, a specialist for architectural models at the Stuttgart University. Usually, presentation models are based on a set of complete scale drawings, transforming a fixed two dimensional plan into the third dimension. Unlike the sketch models produced by an architect as a design tool, making presentation models typically requires no design decisions. But if the available historic resources are incomplete, as was the case here, the intellectual work increases accordingly, and still obtains the character of design work. Supposed dimensions are to be verified by various parameters, like comparing proportions, realistic measures of steps and other elements. Sometimes a perspective drawing had to be reconstructed to find out the real size. Redesigning historical structures needs a lot of knowledge about the period, such as technological and theoretical standards, the site and the brief, but also about the architect, his training and design approach. So, to recreate such models means more than simply building them. During the project, a seminar was organized to give an introduction to the architecture of the Soviet avant-garde, and to enable an intellectual analysis of idolizing the genius. Today's discourse on the problematic person of Christopher Columbus -the celebrated discoverer but also an ill-famed conqueror- was discussed in a critical biography.

Dietrich W. Schmidt teaches at the Institute of Architectural History of the University of Stuttgart.

Chronology

- 1852 The historian Del Monte y Tejada makes the proposal to erect a 'statue at the most visible and gorgeous place of America, inviting to memorize him' (=Columbus).
- 1887 In the central park of Santo Domingo a bronze statue of Columbus is erected.
- 1892 400 years after the discovery of America the *Comitato Nazionale Colombiano* is founded and commissioned to plan a 'monument of the immortality of Columbus'.
- 1898 A marble tomb of the Christian conqueror is erected in the cathedral of Santo Domingo.
- 1914 William E. Pulliam initiates a press campaign in the USA for a monumental lighthouse for Columbus.
- 1923 On the 5th Pan American Conference in Santiago de Chile the resolution is passed to erect a monumental lighthouse in order to 'perpetuate the memory of Christopher Columbus'.
- 1927 The provisional committee of the monument proposes an international competition of two phases.
- 1928 Program and rules of the competition are fixed by the Pan American Union on April 4th. The international competition with a budget of US \$ 300.000 is opened on September 1st. The designs have to be received by April 1st in Madrid.
Jury members: Horatio Acosta y Lara (Uruguay, head of jury), Raymond Hood (USA), Eliel Saarinen (Finland).
- 1931 Second phase of the competition in Rio de Janeiro among the ten price winners of Madrid: The British student Joseph L. Gleave (1907-1965) wins the first prize by designing a huge Latin cross symbolizing the christianization of the New World. The building costs are limited up to \$ 1.5 million.
- 1939 Foundation work is started.
- 1950-52 Gleave revises his plans.
- 1986-92 The building is executed by Teófilo Carbonell in the Eastern Park of Santo Domingo. The costs of the building complex, 46 m high and 240 m long, housing six museums, reach \$ 40 million. 146 floodlights of 350 kW at night form a cross in the sky.

Icons in Estonia

A future for a modern style?

by Wessel de Jonge

As a result of an enthusiastic professional exchange between artists and architects from *Den Haag*, the Netherlands, and Estonia's capital Tallinn, an apparently modest exhibition of their works opened last April 12th at The Hague, to be closed only two weeks later. The project as well included a workshop on some local urban issues in The Hague. The rough plywood boards that served as a background to display graphic works, architectural drawings and photographs might be interpreted as to reflect the circumstances in which architects and artists have to work in this young Baltic republic - a society still under reconstruction. Yet, at the same time, this small exhibition indicates that independent Estonia is growing up very fast, that its cultural expressions have matured and should be assessed as full grown works of art and architecture.

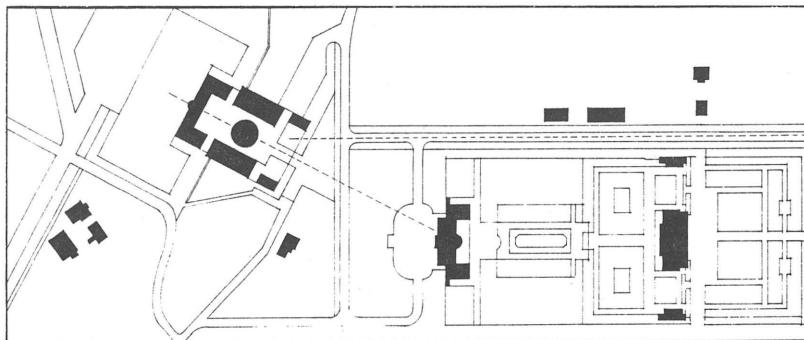
A series of constructivist diagrams by Leonhard Lapin (1947), inspired by Malevich' *architectons*, form an obvious introduction to a range of architectural works from Estonia and the works of a third generation of constructivist artists from The Hague. These graphic studies were made from the 1970s onwards - a quite hopeless period for architects in the then Soviet Republic of Estonia- to keep his creative spirit and imagination alive. Today, the artist and architect Lapin should be acknowledged as a vanguard leader in current Estonian culture and very influential in the development of what became to be known as Estonian *neofunctionalism*.

The presentation of the exhibition is rather humble -the excellent recent guidebook on Tallinn's modern architecture demonstrated a much higher professional standard as regards the quality of photographs for instance.¹ Still, Lapin's statements make clear that the intentions of this initiative are much more ambitious. 'Functionalism was the eminent means for the young Estonian republic to acquire an identity after being liberated from Russian Czarism' says Lapin. 'Mainly therefore, our

architects took the classic moderns as a starting point to develop a national style.' It seems that a similar process is again taking place since Estonia regained its freedom in 1990.

Local interpretation

The struggle for independence that followed World War I produced two milestones that provided a basis for a new architectural tradition in Estonia: the establishment of the Tallinn Polytechnical Institute and, in 1921, of the Estonian Union of Architects. Until then, architects were trained abroad, in Germany, Riga, and St. Petersburg, and most of them were members of the Architects Chamber of Riga, Latvia. Not only were most significant public buildings being designed by foreign architects, also Estonian architects worked in various styles that were adopted from abroad. After independence, these influences were slowly overruled by the new functionalist vocabulary, that, by lack of a genuine architectural tradition, found fertile grounds in the agricultural Estonian society. One might argue that the clear, geometrical aesthetics of functionalism match wonderfully well with the national character of a people that could not refer to a heroic history nor the accessory monuments -there was simply nothing else to relate to but a strong belief in modernity. Yet, the appearance of most functionalist architecture in Estonia is rather different from the internationally well known examples. This is partly due to the use of traditional materials such as brick, timber and limestone. Estonian *limestone functionalism*, some striking examples of which were designed by Herbert Johanson, is a noteworthy local interpretation of international modernism in this respect. But according to Estonian art historian Mart Kalm², also the starting points of functionalism -that the form should reflect the function of a building- were not very strictly followed by Estonian modernists. As he demonstrates for instance with Olev Siinmaa's Beach Pavilion in Pärnu of 1937, their version of functionalism had more to do with aesthetics, composition and conventionalized beauty. Therefore, he argues, functionalism could even more easily fulfill the role as a national style in the first period of independence.



Left: Site for the Estonian Art Museum, competition entry by Emil Urbel, 1994, showing the relation with the U-shaped Presidential Residence.

Right: Toomas Rein's design for a Park Hotel in Jõvi, 1994.

Page 26: Axonometric projection of Peep Jänes's design for a Stockmann's department store, 1995.

Tallinn School

Labelled 'neofunctionalism', and with its strong references to the 'classic' modernism of the country's first period of independence, a strong revival of functionalism in the 1970s was an apparent survival strategy against Soviet oppression. Inspired by Edgar Kuusik, who introduced his students to Estonia's modern heritage, a group of young architects started to renew the aesthetical conceptions in a country that could be characterized as a 'creative vacuum' at that time. The architects Künnapu and Lapin, protagonists of their generation, made clear that this new interpretation was however very different from the first wave of modern architecture in the country: 'It was not a gratuitous return to the starting points of the 1930s; there was a far better understanding of spacial structures and also the possibilities in construction were already much more diverse' says Lapin. The Tallinn School' produced some remarkable architecture in the 1970s and 80s, among others several buildings for the 1980 Olympic Games.

Now, after the Soviet period young architects like Hanno Kreis, Ulo Peil, Raivo Puusepp, Andres Siim and Emil Urbel again demonstrate a great affection for the simplicity and efficiency of modernist architecture. The works of this new generation of Estonian architects is surprisingly fresh and, may be as a result of the growing demand for public and commercial buildings in the young republic, at times quite ambitious. Hanno Kreis and Andres Siim, whose presentation at the Aalto Symposium just a few years back was still very modest, today demonstrate a preference for strong lines and clear volumes. Their winning entry for the *Hansapank* building (1994) for Tallinn, is of a scale that was so far not very common in Estonia, but quite well handled by the architects. Their earlier design for the Nissan Centre in Tallinn (1993), the programme of which will have been much more restricted indeed, lacks the provocative tension apparent in the bank building.

A new style

To design a national art museum in a young state is a great challenge for any architect, and the entries for the Estonian Art Museum competition of

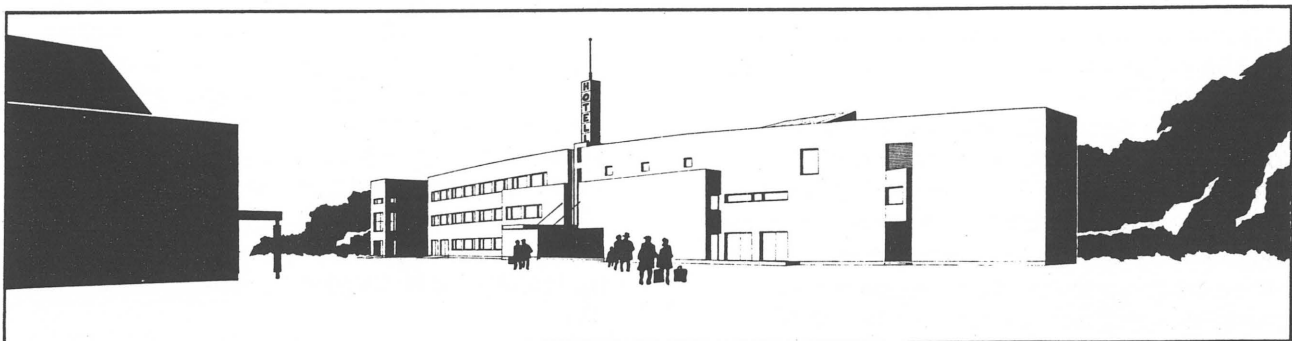
1994 show that this is true for Estonia as well. Both the entry by Raivo Puusepp and Peep Urb as the one by Emil Urbel display a remarkable self confidence. At the same time one gets the feeling that these designs are inspired by formal presuppositions rather than by thoughtful analysis of the programme or references to Estonian architectural traditions, however recent these might be.

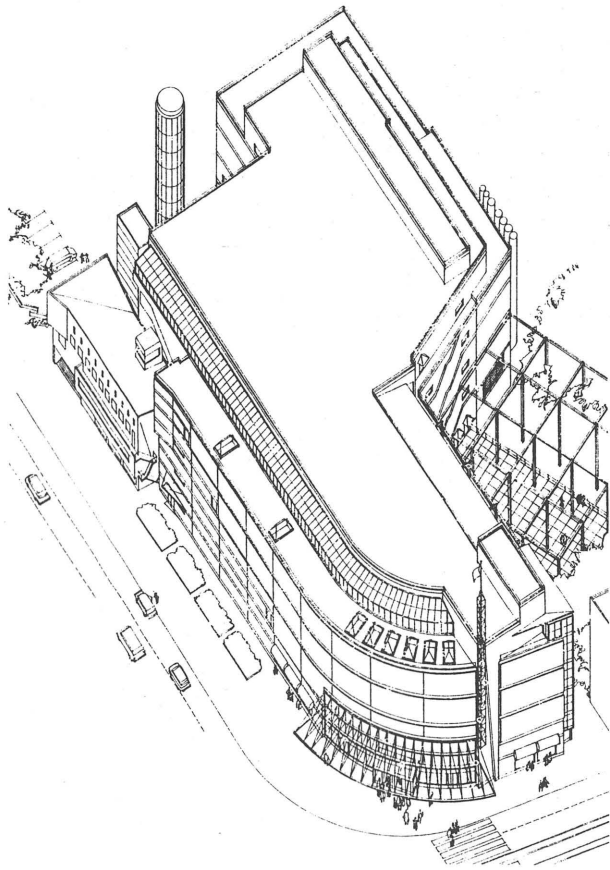
Even more disturbing is that the scale of Urbel's scheme for a building in what looks like Kadriorg Park -the exhibition lacks anything but the most elementary notes- seems not to be very well balanced with that context. The Presidential Residence across the avenue is likely to be thrown into the shade by this extensive complex. The daring volume of the entry by Puusepp and Urb is quite appealing in its expression and it probably is a stronger proposal in that respect. The double curved mass reminds Steven Holl's design for the Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art (1993-94), that will be completed just across the Finnish Gulf in 1997.

It remains unclear if the location for the museum was a choice for the architects to make. If not, and if this fashionable volume is proposed to be erected on that same site in Kadriorg, one should fear for the historic environment of this beautiful park. In that case it would seem appropriate to reconsider if this extensive programme should be realized on that site in the first place.

Much more respectful in its relation with its urban setting is Peep Jänes's design for a Stockmann's department store (1995). The stout volume is subtly articulated and links up with the scale of the adjoining structures, similarly to Stockmann's famous department store in Helsinki, designed by Gullichsen, Kairamo and Vormala ten years ago. Another work that is quite powerful in its relation to its context is a library and cultural centre, designed by Ilmar Jalas for Võru in 1991. This building, represented at the exhibition only with a model, displays a thoughtful balance of masses on a slightly sloped site. The articulated volume of the library stands out against the light filigree of the inviting designed cultural centre.

It seems that these works, although more modest and restrained and certainly less fashionable than





Puusepp and Urb's museum design, represent a more truthful interpretation of the Modern Movement's valuable principles. Altogether it seems still obvious that Estonian *neofunctionalism* in general has more to do with stylistics than with contents. To design a hotel with a uninvitingly curved main facade, massive and only perforated to allow for some small window openings, as Toomas Rein's design for a Park Hotel in Jövi (1994), does not seem to demonstrate a positive appreciation of functional requirements for such a building, despite its attractively articulated backside.

Political statement

Quite rightly, Ida Jager, in her introductory essay to the exhibition's catalogue³, quotes Charles Jencks when saying that, in most countries, functionalism in the 1930s served political purposes in the first place. Lapin's interpretation of Estonian architectural history makes clear that this is not only true for Estonia as well, but that the same intentions again formed a basis for its revival in the 1970s and 80s.

To a certain extent, it seems appropriate to adhere to these starting points even today. 'One can see different directions in Estonian architecture as well, but it seems at the moment that more essential than form stylistics is altogether the way how the architects begin to specify themselves in the changing world, and whereto and how they

proceed' says Karin Hallas, director of the Museum of Estonian Architecture. The question is, 'whether the international commercial architectural clichés will prevail, or the philosophy of *genius loci*, strongly rooted in the past, will remain, or the ideology of critical regionalism will revive.'

The contemporary professional periodicals in Estonia, *Maja* and *Ehituskunst*, again Lapin being the editor in chief of the latter, demonstrate a similar desire to get to the bottom of recent architectural developments in Estonia. This critical approach probably has a much more genuine social relevance than the architectural debate in many other Western countries.

In her closing remarks, Jager rightly observes that the Estonians have a natural passion for the clarity of functionalism and that, even in a time when a first priority is getting rid of the myths of Soviet ideology, the *new icons* of Estonian culture are to be sought within those semantics. One can only hope that contemporary architects in Estonia will remain truthful to the principle qualities of architecture and will avoid to get entangled in the web of international architectural fashions.

Wessel de Jonge is an architect in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Notes:

1. *Tallinn im 20. Jahrhundert*; see Journal 12, p. 24.
2. In his introduction to the exhibition *Functionalism and neofunctionalism in Estonian architecture*.
3. *Contrasten in beeld: neo-functionalistische architectuur uit Estland; constructivistische kunst uit Estland-Nederland*; by Ida Jager, The Hague, 1995.

Modern in Venice

Book on successful restoration

In the historic city of Venice, Italy, a remarkably modern building has recently been restored. The Netherlands Pavilion of the *Biennale* in the *Castelli Gardens*, was designed by the Dutch architect Gerrit Rietveld in 1953-54.

After years of problematic stewardship, the Netherlands Ministry of Culture decided for a complete restoration in 1993. Starting point for the project was the almost complete return to the aesthetic qualities of the original design. Some technical interventions however proved inevitable. Through the DOCOMOMO network, restoration architect Wessel de Jonge found architect Marica Redini as a local executive partner. The successful restoration was completed in May, just in time for the Centennial of the international arts exhibition. At the occasion of the opening, a tri-lingual book -The Most Beautiful Space I Know- will be published by the publishing house 010 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (ISBN 90-6450-238-2). -A.D.



Cacti from *Euclides da Cunha Square*, one of the first gardens designed by Roberto Burle Marx in 1935. Drawing by the artist.

Modern landscape in Brazil

The gardens of Burle Marx (1909-94)

by *Guilherme Mazza Dourado*

On the eve of the Federal Environment Day, Roberto Burle Marx, an energetic defender of the Brazilian flora long before the ecological campaigns, died in June 1994. His passion for nature, especially the Brazilian one, became his existential motivation and his passion for his work and for life his recipe for longevity.

During more than 60 years of professional activity, Burle Marx consolidated himself as one of the most important landscape designers of the 20th Century, with the complete renewal of garden art. Recognized internationally by the critics, he was rendered with several, significant *homages* throughout the years, such as a great retrospective in 1991 organized by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. The harmony and the heat of the tropical landscape, in contrast with the chaos and the cold atmosphere of the contemporary world, was Marx's main theme, and was recreated in hundreds of projects which he carried out all over Brazil, in the Americas and in Europe.

Being an irremediable optimist, he believed in the possibility of balance between man and nature, between civilization and environment. His way of celebrating the beauty of vegetation and his protest against indiscriminate destruction of natural resources was expressed by the design of parks and residential gardens, such as Flamengo Park in Rio de Janeiro, the gardens of the *Odete Monteiro* residence in Correias and the gardens of the *Vargem Grande* farm in Areias.

Harmony

Despite his 84 years of age, the limitations and the discomforts that come with an advanced age never let him down. He was active and worked with great

enthusiasm, accepting new challenges.

His effervescent creativity expressed itself not only through landscaping, but also by painting, drawing, engraving, sculpture and tapestry. With this diverse practice, he enriched his work as a whole: he carried out experiments in paintings and engravings with themes taken from nature, while he organized gardens with the ability of an artist who knows how to balance colors and the proportions of volumes. Roberto Burle Marx was born in São Paulo in 1909, but he settled in Rio de Janeiro. Together with Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer and other architects, he took part in a pioneer group that introduced the Modern Movement in Brazil. In 1935 his first gardens included the *Euclides da Cunha Square* and the *Casa Forte* gardens, both in Recife, in the northeast of Brazil. He questioned the predominant use of exotic plants in landscape design done in the country up to then. From these works on, he began to use and to appraise the Brazilian vegetation in an emphatic way.

Contrast

The emblematic works of modern Brazilian architecture developed between the 1930s and the 1960s would not have been the same without the environment of Burle Marx's gardens. His work gave individual qualities to these buildings, calling attention to the different interpretations of this internationally appreciated architectural movement in various parts of the world, establishing the rich integration of architecture and landscape, of built-in space and domesticated nature.

He often proposed landscape solutions with an abstract design of curved lines to contrast with the construction of the prismatic geometry, which reflected the assimilation of the principles and experiments inherent to modern art. Thus, he designed the gardens of the Ministry of Health and Education, by Lúcio Costa and staff (with technical advice from Le Corbusier) and for the Puericulture Institute, by Jorge Moreira, both in Rio de Janeiro, and the gardens of Oscar Niemeyer's *Itamarati Palace* in Brasília.

Poet of nature

Apart from his originality as a designer and an artist, advocating a breakthrough of landscape models that were then still alien to Brazilian reality, Burle Marx was also very important as a botanist. During scientific expeditions to the interior of Brazil, that were organized to study the flora in its natural environment, he found several species of plants which were unknown to science. He developed specific gardens for each situation, with a series of plants suitable for the property's demands and the climatic and geo-morphologic characteristics of the region.

From 1949 on, he transformed the *Sítio Santo Antônio da Bica* in Rio de Janeiro into his research laboratory and residence, gathering the greatest collection of Brazilian plants ever known (with approximately 3,500 different vegetal species). A few years ago he donated the whole set to the Brazilian Government to ensure its conservation and continuity. However, the state funds were insufficient for the maintenance and the landscape designer had to complement it with his own resources. Today his collaborators are joining their efforts to obtain donations, so that this priceless patrimony can be maintained.

Recreating the exuberance of forms, shapes and colors of the Brazilian vegetation, Burle Marx defined new ways for modern landscaping.

Although the poet of nature is no longer present, he has given us an extensive and valuable resource that belongs to universal culture, extrapolating its own local importance.

Undoubtedly, his greatest lesson was to demonstrate that the binomial *Man-Nature* can be a complete reality, hoping for better days in the 21st Century.

Guilherme Mazza Dourado is an architect and landscape designer in Brazil. Text previously published in Portuguese in Projeto, July 94.

Brazilian Heritage and modern architecture

by *Anna Beatriz Galvão*

The president of the National Institute of Preservation IPHAN, architect Glauco Campello, has contacted DOCOMOMO Brazil to inform us about the last activities of IPHAN in the field of preservation of modern architecture, including its intention to develop other actions to identify and preserve these examples of our cultural heritage. Last December, two important architectural ensembles of the Modern Movement were listed by the IPHAN: the buildings of Pampulha and of Cataguazes, both of them in the central state of Minas Gerais. Both these buildings are masterpieces by Oscar Niemeyer. The Pampulha Park, built in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais' capital) at the beginning of the 1940s, is regarded as an early example of modern architecture applied to a leisure building. Niemeyer also designed and built an artificial lake surrounded by Burle Marx's gardens, the residence of mayor Kubitchek, and several public buildings: a casino (now the Museum of Modern Art), a dance hall, a yacht club and the San Francisco church. All of them were listed by IPHAN in 1994, except the church, which was already legally protected since the 1940s. This Brazilian heritage action represents a first step to protect this important modern ensemble, threatened by the decay of the lake, due to neglect. The small town of Cataguazes was the place of an important Brazilian cultural movement in the 1940s, including cinema, literature, fine arts, etc., which supported some of our most significant modern architects like M.M. Roberto, Oscar Niemeyer, Carlos Leão and Francisco Bolanho.



Left: View of the Dance Hall by Oscar Niemeyer in Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Minas Geiras, 1942. The gardens were designed by Roberto Burle Marx.

Right: Interior of Residence of Francisco Peixoto by Oscar Niemeyer, Cataguazes, Minas Geiras, 1940s.

Most of their buildings, both public and residential, have been completely preserved until now, including the furniture, pictures and murals from Picasso, Miró, Calder, Portinari, Bruno Giorgi, Burle Marx, etc. It is incredible, but these buildings are still unknown, even to Brazilian architects. In the field of restoration, the IPHAN has just begun to recuperate the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro. By an agreement between the Brazilian Petroleum Company PETROBRAS and the Institute, of the best preserved two floors and the front facade of the Ministry, including the roof-garden and the *brise-soleil* structure, are being restored, trying to conserve one of the most outstanding examples of international modern architecture.

A third action of the Brazilian Preservation Institute, coordinated by the architect Cecilia Rodrigues, is the Modern Architecture Register of the State of São Paulo. The first proposal is to discuss the conceptual limits of 'modernity', as well as to define a methodological model that could be followed by the other regional coordinations. This group of São Paulo has already contacted the coordinators of the Brazilian DOCOMOMO Register, who were invited to expose the criteria and methods of their work, trying to establish a future cooperation.

The current administration of the IPHAN has demonstrated a great sensibility towards questions related to Modern Movement architecture, and its importance for the cultural context of a young country like Brazil.

Anna Beatriz Galvão is the coordinator of the Brazilian DOCOMOMO Working party.



Exhibitions

Frank Lloyd Wright in Chicago, the early years

Design Museum, London, United Kingdom
May 4 - September 3, 1995

Lina Bo Bardi; Retrospective

Architektur Zentrum, Vienna, Austria
June 1 - July 16, 1995
Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, Finland
December 12, 1995 - February 4, 1996

Piet Mondriaan 1872-1944

National Gallery of Arts, Washington, USA
June 4 - September 4, 1995
Museum of Modern Arts, New York, USA
October 1, 1995 - January 23, 1996

Het Nieuwe Bouwen in Nederland en Slowakije 1918-1940 / The Modern Movement in the Netherlands and in Slovakia 1918-1940

Comenius Museum, Naarden, The Netherlands
June 16 - September 8, 1995

Townscape Transformations, five interpretations of space in two streets in Helsinki

Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, Finland
August 21 - September 3, 1995

Protect the Modern

Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, Finland
October 4 - December 3, 1995

The New Movement in the Netherlands 1924 - 1936

The Chicago Atheneum, The Museum of Architecture and Design, Chicago, USA
June 13 - September 17, 1995

Architectural projects of the Modern Movement in the Ural 1920s - 30s

Institute of Design, Minz, Austria
Technical University, Florence, Italy
September - November 1995

Jan Gerko Wiebenga 1886-1974

Museum of the Ural Institute of Architecture and Arts, Ekaterinenburg, CIS
June 1995

Dorde Tabakovic

A modern architect in Novi Sad

by *Vladimir Mitrovic*

Dorde Tabakovic (Arad 1897-Novı Sad 1971) is indisputably one of the best architects in Novi Sad and Serbia from the period between the World Wars. He belonged to the leading Serbian architects, who were the first to except the modern, International Style within which they developed their individual architectural styles. Tabakovic came from a respectable Serbian family from Arad (Romania), which had included famous artists for generations. After three years of study at the Budapest University, in an uncertain political situation due to the circumstances that Hungary lost World War I, Tabakovic was forced to continue his studies in Belgrade, where he graduated two years later, in 1922. In the following years he spent some time in Paris, at the studio of Eduard Andre and Jacques Michael. During 1928-29 the Tabakovic family moved from Arad to Novi Sad. Untill World War II, Tabakovic received numerous commissions, from private clients as well as from the government and various associations. Everything he designed and built in the territory of Novi Sad after 1931 has its connection with the modern style in architecture, which had spread over Europe during the preceeding two decades. This style was introduced to the region only a few years before Tabakovic started his professional architectural work, designing interiors, books, scenic designs and painting water colours, as well as teaching at the High School of Fine Arts in Novi Sad.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, particularly in Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana but also in Novi Sad, Sarajevo, Subotica and other cities, domestic architecture flourished at the end of the 1920s and throughout the 1930s. Novi Sad, a newly declared centre of the northern Dunavska Banovina region of Yugoslavia, experienced an economic and cultural revival during the 1930s. The new governmental centre attracted high classed officials as residents, which together with the rich middle class provided stable financial conditions for all kinds of urban architectural development, and especially for housing. Tabakovic, one of the first architects from Novi Sad to make himself acquainted with the International Style, seized the opportunity to boost a succesful career. A short period of professional work, during which he only made a few works in a more traditional way, was just an introduction to a brilliant and sweeping period that lasted more than eight years, in which he built over fifty objects of different volume and purpose in Novi Sad, not including those all over Vojvodina. This obvious overproduction resulted in a number of uninteresting and routinely

designed commercial buildings that were built with no artistic inspiration, though properly constructed in technical terms. Working much and with ease, using his evident inclinations for fine arts, he developed an absolutely original style manifested by being constantly experimenting with facade surfaces, as a steady promotor of new architectural combinations. Functionalism, more specified the International Style, was treated by Tabakovic as an aesthetic and artistic category, rather than a way of designing or a concept for interior arrangements. Tabakovic saw these new forms as an architectural vocabulary consisting of elements that should be moderately and wisely used. Although usually scrimped and restricted by an urban plan that was largely determined by clusters of apartment buildings, most of his work was designed for an urban context.

Besides his most significant works - *Dom Trgovacke Omladine, Jugoslovenski Dnevnik, Sokolski Dom, Klain and Tanurdzic Palaces*- Tabakovic also left a number of smaller objects less known and not well enough researched. Particularly in these works he developed and expressed his inclinations for the fine arts. The influences were numerous, from Le Corbusier to Czechoslovakian functionalism. His work has nothing in common with the very explicit version of modern buildings, as often applied all over Europe, including Yugoslavia, and especially nothing in common with the totalitarian tendencies in architecture that reigned in the countries with a dictorial regime, during the second half of the 1930s; Tabakovic was all too familiar with this, especially with Speer's work in Germany.

Vladimir Mitrovic is a member of the Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Novi Sad. Text translated by Tijana Vukovic; edited.

Building of the *Yugoslav Daily* in Novi Sad, 1932-36.
Photo: Provincial Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments.



Reflections of an Era

P.J. Elling's *white villas* in Hilversum

by Gerard Bulder and Annette Koenders

This year's *Dudok*-prize of the Review Committee of Hilversum, the Netherlands, was awarded to the restoration of an outstanding villa by the architect P.J. Elling. The house is located at the *Joelaan*, a quiet avenue in a pleasant city that is world famous for its Modern Movement heritage.

In most of his works, Elling created a synthesis of experiment, functionality and an aesthetical interpretation of the design task. An interpretation that is based on one of his prime principles: that architecture should reflect the era in which it is created. To establish a new architectural tradition, elaborating on the technical and constructional innovations that had its origins in the 19th Century, was most important for Elling. In the 20th Century, the issue at stake was to create spacial forms, based on new technical possibilities, that, at the same time, would satisfy modern man's sense of form as well as his desire for technical progress.

Career

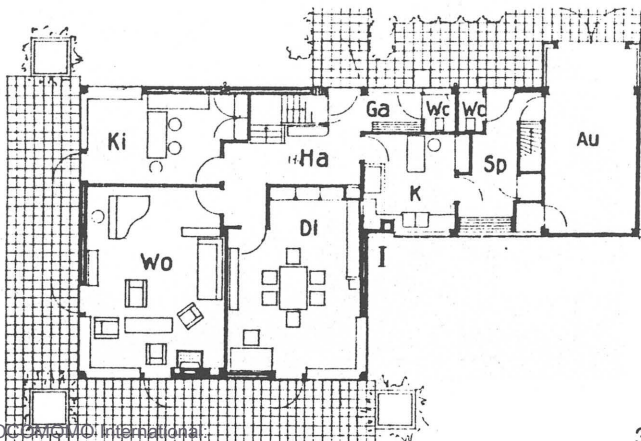
Petrus Johannes Elling (1897-1962) started his career at the studio of K.P.C. de Bazel. After meeting Gerrit Rietveld in 1919, he got in contact with the *moderns*, particularly with J.J.P. Oud and Robert van 't Hoff, both members of *De Stijl*. After a period of reflection, during which he set out for a new course with his friend, the painter Bart van der Leek, he built his first 'white villas' in 1928 and 1929 in Hilversum. Working for Jan Duiker from 1934 until his death in 1936, Elling contributed to the designs of Hotel *Gooiland* in Hilversum and the *Cineac* in Amsterdam. During the War, he worked for W. van Tijen and H.A. Maaskant. Not until 1947 did Elling get involved into larger projects, when the later CIAM chairman Cornelis van Eesteren recommended this young modern architect to Merkelbach and Karsten. Elling became a partner already in 1949 and continued the studio after Ben Merkelbach was appointed as city-architect for

Amsterdam in 1956, until his death in 1962. Main projects in this period are the City Administration Offices (1957) and the Station Postal Buildings (1960), both in Amsterdam. Elling considered social housing nor town planning to be a challenge. As an individualist, he was of the opinion that no essential contribution to architecture could be given if the design process was dominated by fixed sizes and budgets, by mass production and compromises.

Villas and large projects

Elling's villas do not just demonstrate a drive for experimentation, but they just as well provide an understanding of how his design approach developed over time. His works can be classified in three periods: 1928-30, 1934-39 and 1952-62. The first two 'white villas' show a substantial influence of the formal principles of *De Stijl*. The brief was freely elaborated into pure, smooth and plastered volumes in an orthogonal composition. The design was based on the double aim to create both an environment in which one could live a happy and healthy life, and an efficient work place. Although these works show an idealistic design attitude, his villas of the 1930s demonstrate a development into a more practical approach. The great transparency and lucidity still indicate the strong influence of Duiker, but Elling reduced the vulnerability of these light buildings as regards constructions and the use of materials. Instead of a concrete structure a timber joisting was applied, and the plaster was replaced by white painted brickwork. Although the window sashes remained to be made out of steel, the frames were in wood. In the nine villas built by Elling as an independent architect between 1952-1962, the clarity of the ground plan and the facades is sustained, but the massing of cubic volumes was gradually left. The flat roof, of which Elling considered himself one of the first advocates in view of his ideas about formal freedom, made way to the mono-pitched roof and the butterfly shaped roof.

A ground floor plan and two period photos of the front facade of the villa in Hilversum. Photo: Doyer family Archives.



Standardization

The Villa at the *Joelaan* (1929-1930) in Hilversum is one of the most successful examples of such a synthesis created in the 20th Century: referring to *De Stijl* in aesthetical terms, yet in technical terms an experiment of the Modern Movement. A cubic volume with a cantilevered roof accommodates the principal functions. By its height, openness, symmetry and construction with a cavity wall, it distinguishes itself from an additional volume, that has an asymmetrical front, a massive brick wall construction and door furniture of inferior quality. The design for the villa offered Elling a chance to put some of his ideas about materials, construction and standardization into practice in a very principle way. The concrete frame of the villa is unique in the series of houses that Elling designed, and rather remarkable for such a small building. One could argue, that the use of concrete was inspired here by a desire to display modern conceptions of progress rather than by any practical benefit. In the villa, progress manifests itself firstly in new construction conceptions and materials, and secondly in standardized construction parts. Other modern contemporaries had used concrete for similar projects before, such as Robert van 't Hof for *Villa Henny* in 1920. Also Duiker, who put the use new materials and technology at the service of modern architecture more than any other architect, was a great example. The concrete frames that Duiker developed with structural engineer Jan Gerko Wiebenga (1886-1974), among others for Sanatorium *Zonnestraal*, also in Hilversum, was of actual interest at the time. Concrete and steel were the new materials for industrially produced building parts, that preferably had to be produced in standardized measures.

The rectangular lay out of the villa was based on a regular grid of measures, allowing for standardized construction parts. The loadbearing frame consists of concrete columns set at 4.70 m centre to centre. The main volume measures two times 4.70 m square; the secondary volume is only 4.70 m wide and was designed to accommodate servants. In this way, all concrete beams that support the concrete floor slabs could have the same size. The brickwork infill between the structure of columns provides the necessary stability.

Standardization of the steel sashes was achieved by adopting one size of 90 cm for all window frames. The window openings are evenly divided over the facades. The villa, although not symmetric in plan, has a symmetric appearance.

Restoration and repair

In 1993, it was decided that the villa needed to be restored thoroughly. The result of the project, that was completed recently, proves the importance of the enthusiasm of an owner, and his commitment to make well considered choices in coordination with his architect.

After the removal of the window frames and the

plaster it became obvious that Elling had faced some serious problems during construction of the concrete frame in 1930. This was illustrated firstly by the large measure differences in the floor joints which were consecutively poured, secondly by some columns being twisted and thirdly by the insufficient covering on the reinforcement steel. This last defect was especially visible in the slender concrete piers between doors and windows, where the reinforcement steel became visible at the surface and unprotected. During restoration, the bare reinforcement was conserved and the cracks in the concrete have been repaired. The newly plastered facades were treated with a special coating, that matches the original texture and colour of the original chalk based plaster as much as possible, but that can do without the maintenance required for the latter. The choice for this coating was thus based on a practical reinterpretation of Elling's choice of materials. Only during the restoration work it was discovered that the windows were placed too far into the facade. Original drawings, fortunately still available, indicated that the windows were supposed to be placed flush with the facades. Due to the irregularity of the stuccoed planes, that were not flush even with each other, the position of the windows in the facades had to be changed during construction. Yet, in technical terms, the same changes caused for the insufficient functioning of the upper transoms. The owner already faced leakage problems for several years. During restoration, the irregularities in the plastered planes were filled with epoxy plaster, producing an aesthetic result that was even more in line with the original concept. This way, the transom detail could be adjusted according to the original drawings as well, and the windows were placed more at the outside edge of the facade. Unfortunately, the original colour scheme of Van der Leek had disappeared and could not be traced.

Advantages of concrete

Elling must have recognized the problems attached to concrete frames because he did not repeat this experiment. Nevertheless a frame construction offers a lot of advantages when adapting a building to a new function. It is possible to design a flexible



plan to adapt to the present-day way of living, since all the interior walls are just light separations. Originally, the house was designed for a family with three children, a nanny and a maid. The clear distinction between the lush main volume for the family and the modestly detailed additional volume for the servants is outdated. The interior lay out and finishings had already been unrespectfully changed several times. As a result, Elling's furniture had disappeared too. The restoration project included a complete rearrangement of the ground floor lay out, eliminating the distinction between the two wings.

The owner of the villa at the *Joelaan* has always put the historic and architectural value of the house first. The aim of the restoration has primarily been to improve the comfort, to meet current standards. The choice to keep the glazing single and to apply non-isolated sections for window frames however implies a discomfort, that could be solved with installation techniques. Such harmony between the new function and the original design would be a blessing for every historic building. The restoration has upgraded living conditions to such an extent, that this remarkable house can remain part of our cultural heritage for a long time.

Annette Koenders works as an art historian for the municipality of Hilversum. Gerard Bulder is an architect from Amstelveen, the Netherlands and in charge of the restoration. Text edited.

Interior view of the Schunck department store.
Photo: Mantz.



French students study Dutch architect Peutz

by Arjan Doolaar

In 1993, the *École d'Architecture de Paris Belleville* developed a new course which focuses on the Dutch architect F.P.J. Peutz (1896-1974), who is relatively unknown in his own country. Although born in the northern part of the Netherlands, Peutz lived and worked most of his life in the south. In 1920 he started his own office in the city of Heerlen, where two thirds of his buildings are located. Peutz has been called a 'builder of bridges between tradition and modernity', because he was always trying to involve present-day technology and modern ideas in his designs. Living in a catholic area (Peutz designed a number of churches), where tradition was still highly valued, this was not always easy.

Bearing this in mind, professor Daniel Bernstein of *Belleville* made Peutz the subject of his course, in which students are being challenged to re-design one of the architect's buildings while taking the current building requirements in account. However, they should not forget the ideas of Peutz on tradition and modernity either. During the course, the students discovered some interesting aspects in the work of Peutz. For instance, the Monseigneur Schrijnen Retreat House has been constructed in such a way that it resisted the earthquake-shocks which occurred often due to the local mine-industry. After two successful courses, during which several buildings of Peutz were re-designed, the Eindhoven University of Technology joined in as well. After doing some research on the secondary school of 1931 Peutz built in Heerlen, the Dutch students concluded that making a new design would not be such a challenge compared to the results of their French fellow-students. When it was announced that the school would be closed in early 1995, they decided to find a new destination for the school. After opting several possibilities, a children's day nursery came out as the best solution: the building would hardly have to be adjusted and one of society's demands would become fulfilled.

The results of all courses, as well as plans for future courses, were enthusiastically being discussed during a meeting of the French and the Dutch students and their professors in Heerlen, on March 17, 1995. For the majority of them it became the first real-life encounter with the work of Peutz. Visited were, amongst others, the Schunck department store of 1933 (studied by the French students), the secondary school and the Retreat House of 1932, which will be the subject of a future course.

Arjan Doolaar is an art historian in the Netherlands.

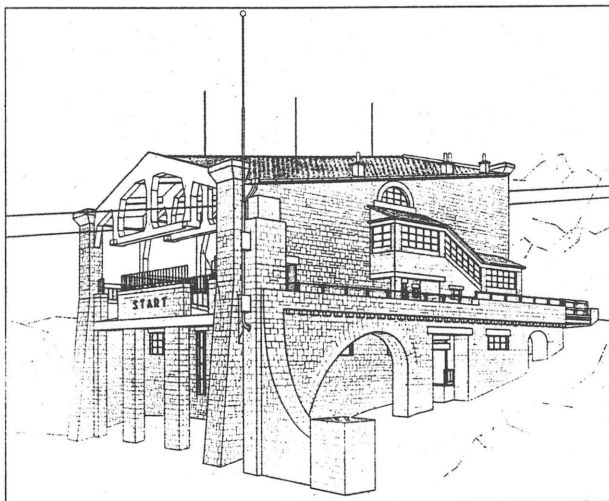
Technical monuments of the Modern Movement

by Stefan Slachta

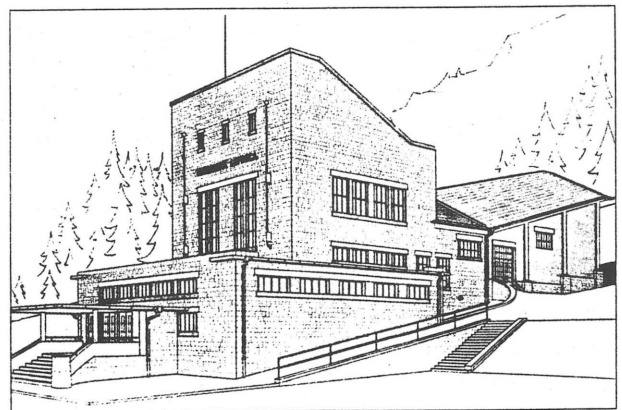
Slovakia, a country rich in many outstanding works of modern architecture of the 1920s and 30s, is actively preparing the Fourth International DOCOMOMO Conference, which will take place in Bratislava in the autumn of 1996. Besides the modern monuments we are also glad to present numerous remarkable examples of engineer works, designed by the principles of the Modern Movement. They represent a high technical level, architectural mastery and a good mutual cooperation between the architects and the engineers.

The traditions of improving technology and the progressiveness of the engineers' works in Slovakia go back a long time. The first cast iron bridge constructions in Hungary, part of which has also been Slovak, were already realized in 1810 and in 1815, across the rivers Cierny and Maly Hron. The construction of the *Art Nouveau* church in Mula pri Roznave (1906-1908, architect I. Megyaszy) is an interesting example from the 20th Century. It is the first building in Hungary completely made of reinforced concrete, including a cupola above the octagonal, which has a diameter of 16.5 meters. Between 1910 and 1912 a reinforced concrete pillar construction and the cupola of the mud basin IRMA has been built in the worldwide known thermal spa Piestany, by the architects Hegedüs and Böhm. Numerous remarkable bridge constructions, dating from the turn of the century, were often not preserved in their original technical condition, for example the 458 m. long bridge in Stúrovo, bridges in Bytca and Komárno, a reinforced concrete bridge with a span of 40 m. in Hronská Kamenica, etc. When Gropius and Mezer built the famous *Faguswerk* in Alfeld an der Leine (1911), an electric power station arose in Bratislava, in the Dynamit-Nobel factory (Firm Pittel & Brausewetter, 1913), which

also had a reinforced concrete construction and an outstanding architecture, including a distinct relation between the interior and the exterior. From the start it was obvious that also the first technical monuments of the Modern Movement were bridge constructions. These works of pioneering engineers have been leading the way to a new aesthetic consciousness, thanks to the new technologies. They presented clear and reliable possibilities of new materials, economical effectiveness and a sense for the modulation of a structural plan, expressing its honesty and truth. In the village Nemsova a reinforced concrete bridge was built in 1921, across the river Vlára. The construction, an upper load bearing arch with 3 spans of respectively 16.5+52.0+16.5 m. and has been designed by the engineer G. Hermann. The largest arch bridge in Czechoslovakia from that time was the bridge across the river Orava in Dlhá. Its full reinforced vault, built in 1922-1925, was 60.92 m. wide. The project was designed by the bridge department of the Ministry of Public Works, but demolished during the War. Remained, although also damaged in war time, is a colonnade bridge for pedestrians across the river Váh in Piestany, a work of Emil Bellus from 1932. It connects the city centre with the spa island and belongs to the most significant works of this architect. The bridge is in the divided middle with an artistic glass wall, which protects pedestrians against the wind. On both sides of the bridge are small shopping facilities. The function of the structural work turns naturally into architectural expression, which again is corresponding with sculptures. It is not only an utilitarian work, it is the presentation of the new ideas of the Modern Movement, a worthy representant of the Slovak register of DOCOMOMO. Another work of Bellus, which already at the time of construction gained European attention, is a fully automatic mill in Trnava designed for 200 carriages of corn, built by the Business Centre of Foods Cooperatives NUPOD in 1936. It is as well the expression of the rational character of Bellus' design, which can be found in many of his works. A clear correspondence between the contents and



Funicular stations (1936-37),
designed by Jurkovic.



chosen architectural form creates a harmonic unity, a counterbalanced composition with a significant aesthetical value.

In Trnava, 1934-1935, another technical work of high architectural quality was created but remained unnoticed: a corn-silo with a capacity of 1000 wagon-loads, designed by M. Svitavsky. It is also an interesting value to the amount of technical monuments of the period between the wars.

The economical development of Slovakia between the wars has been connected with the use of water-power, thanks to the river Váh, which had very good opportunities for the construction of a system of numerous hydro-electric stations. The first one, built in 1932-35, was the Púchov-Dolné Kockovce-Ladce-Tunezice station, with the capacity 92 mil. KWh. a year. The architectural design was the work of the architect Jindrich Merganc. He based his architectural expression and vocabulary on function, on requirements of enlightenment where he came out of structural system. He did not look for monumentality depicting the greatness of a technical act, but with simple architectural means of clear, plane vertical and horizontal forms of windows, he created an elegant, unambiguous and balanced architecture for this engineer work, which has all the signs of the Modern Movement.

Merganc cooperated on projects of other hydro-electric stations, for example with Donovaly. Projects of funicular railway stations on Lomnický štít (2632 M) in High Tatras from 1936-37, designed by the architect Dusan Jurkovic, are worth a special notice. Technical demands and special natural conditions led Jurkovic to his proposal. Though respecting the specific program, his design -in blue Tatra granite- looks like it emerged from the rocky site. Jurkovic integrated to the technical world values soaring from a spiritual atmosphere. It is a great pity for Slovak architecture that stations were changed afterwards without the authors' agreement. Included in the Slovak DOCOMOMO Top Register is a water reservoir-building in Trnava Bucany. Bellus designed the water reservoir in 1941, but it was not finished until 1946. The tower of the water reservoir is 50 m. high and its content is 1200 m³. The tank stands on six columns, which are being held together with concrete rings. This work, despite its plasticity and monumentally, is the evidence of Bellus' extraordinary feeling for the architectural composition of a technical work.

The chosen examples of Slovak architecture proof that the Modern Movement also found its expression in the field of technical and engineering buildings, including designs by the best Slovak architects. They are at the same time the evidence that progress and technical development of Slovakia has been indissolubly connected with modern architecture.

Stefan Slachta is the president of the Slovak Architectural Society, and a member of DOCOMOMO Slovakia. Translation by Rudolf Masny.

Lauritzen: a Danish pioneer

'Vilhelm Lauritzen - a modern architect', by Lisbet Balslev Jørgensen, Jørgen Sestoft and Morten Lund, Copenhagen 1994, 336 pp., colour photographs by Jens Lindhe, ISBN 87-9-85103-0-4.

announcement

Vilhelm Lauritzen (1894-1984) was one of Denmark's Functionalist pioneers, and as a result of growing appreciation for this period in Danish architecture, one of his creations, the Radio Building in Copenhagen of 1945, has just been protected by law. Vilhelm Lauritzen took a scientific and technical approach in his work as a functionalist, always systematic and rational. But he worked with a Scandinavian sensitivity quite different from the firmer, metallic tone of international modernism. This can be seen in his athletically sinuous constructions, in his delicate, varied work with materials that gave the individual sections of the buildings and their furnishings a range of nuances and individuality within a uniform whole.

The first projects described in the book are from the 1920s, and the last from the late 1950s. All are typical of their times in that they encompass everything from the overall concept to the smallest detail. Furniture, curtains, wallpaper, lighting fixtures and building components were designed with the same attention as the load-bearing frame. The book consists of three articles, written by the art historian Lisbet Balslev Jørgensen, the architect and professor Jørgen Sestoft and the architect Morten Lund. It is illustrated throughout with a wealth of sketches, watercolours, historical photographs and new colour photographs taken by the architecture photographer Jens Lindhe.

Danish reviews included the following comments: 'All in all, the book about Vilhelm Lauritzen is a very rich and very beautiful book, a monumental and worthy work about one of the great architects who made modern Danish architecture and design what it was for a very, very long time in the decades after the war. It is a well-deserved homage to great simplicity.' -Torben Weirup in *Berlingske Tidende*.

'In Jens Lindhe's photographs we see the splendid *extra* that characterize the best of Vilhelm Lauritzen's architecture, an *extra* that makes life worth living and is found in all good architecture. A surplus of spirit, of form, mood, rhythm, colours and melody. [...] The large book's illustration material is in all respects unique and superb; it simply cannot be done better.' -Henrik Sten Møller in *Politiken*.

DoCoMeMos

• **Urban management** - The conference 'Gateway II: Managing Urban Change' in Helsinki, on Sept. 14 and 15, 1995, will be dealing with understanding contemporary urban dynamics as well as exemplifying reactions of cities to new economic conditions. It will introduce the Netherlands' and German model of *strategic planning* as a flexible reaction to the traditional master-planning of cities, as well as *Cultural planning*, a British approach to innovation in urban developments.

Keynote speakers are Rem Koolhaas (Holland), Helga Fassbinder (Germany) and Scott Lash, Franco Bianchini and Janice Kirkpatrick (all UK). For information: University of Art and Design UIAH, Conference Secretariat, Hämeentie 135 C, FIN-00560 Helsinki, fax +358-0-7563-0537, e-mail conference.secr@uia.fi.

• **Van Nelle Factory** - At the moment that its endurance has become unsure (see also the report of DOCOMOMO-NL), a beautiful photobook on the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam has been published in Japan. Edited and photographed by Yukio Futagawa, with a text in Japanese and in English by Jeroen Geurts, published by Global Architecture, 73, Tokio 1994, ISBN 4-87140-073-5.

• **Zonnestraal** - Since January, students of the Delft Faculty of Architecture are restoring the former servant's house of Sanatorium 'Zonnestraal' (see p. 7, Journal 11) in Hilversum, the Netherlands. The restoration includes a functional change: the former servant's house will become an exhibition room. Assisted by several experts, the students have been working both as contractors and *fresh hands*. The training practice got a lot of publicity in the press, as well as national television. The works are expected to be officially completed on July 15, 1995.

• **Industrial heritage** - In September 1995, the Council meeting of the National Trust will take place in Manchester, England, in part to celebrate its centenary year. At that occasion, Europa Nostra/IBI Forum will explore the 'Conservation and Preservation of the Industrial Heritage'. For information: Europa Nostra/IBI, Lange Voorhout 35, 2514 EC The Hague, The Netherlands, tel. +31-70-3560333, fax +31-70-3617865.

• **Replacement windows** - Commissioned by the Municipality of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, a comprehensive market survey for window repair and replacement products has been carried out by DOCOMOMO member Wessel de Jonge. The increasing disfigurements of Rotterdam's famous 1930's neighbourhoods due to unprofessional window replacements, are to be mastered by use of the research results. The comprehensive report covers technical, financial and aesthetical data on timber, U-PVC and metal framed windows. Information from: DOCOMOMO International.

Reports

Selected information from the participating countries, received **before October 1st, 1995**, will be published in the next Journal, November 1995.

Argentina: broadening activities

The main activities of the Argentine Working party, following the reports from our members present at the Barcelona meeting, were linked with organizing the Argentine archives and data base for the inventories of MoMo. No less important was the participation during several meetings of various specialists of the Postgraduate Center for the Conservation of Urban and Rural Heritage of the University of Buenos Aires, with whom aspects and problems concerning training and education (see the ISC/E report of Mabel Scarone) were discussed.

The Argentine Working party decided that it is now time to contact other branches in the architectural field such as planning and landscape architecture with the intention to broaden the scope of our activities. The Urban Planning Institute and the Institute of Landscape and Gardens (seat of IFLA in our country) have been approached with respect to this.

We have also been active in reporting our results to the public (newspapers, TV, magazines) as a first step towards a Landmark Program to save 1930s and 40s pioneer buildings in this country. Finally, two proposals for awards have been submitted to be studied by two of our members; one is concerned with adequate preservation cases, the other with original research papers on MoMo architecture. These are visualized as a joint venture with the Architect's & Engineer's Professional Councils, the School of Architecture, the University of Buenos Aires and our local DOCOMOMO Working party.

(Report by coordinator Mabel Scarone)

Brazil: first Brazilian DOCOMOMO Seminar

The first Brazilian DOCOMOMO Seminar will take place between June 12th and 14th, 1995, in Salvador, Bahia. It will be sponsored by governmental offices and the Master Course on Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Bahia. Following the proposition for the Bratislava Conference, the main theme will be Universality and Diversity of the Modern Movement on Architecture and Urbanism in Brazil. We will try to organize our participation and contribution to the international meeting. Through conferences, round tables, posters and study groups, three basic propositions will be investigated during the seminar: the concepts of Modern Movement in architecture and urbanism, preservation of the

Modern Movement, and regional aspects in the Modern Movement. It will be the first time that the Brazilian members of DOCOMOMO will be together to discuss the structure and plans for the future of our working party, as well as the Brazilian DOCOMOMO Register and the ISC on Urbanism. From August 21th to 25th, the 7th Seminar on Latin American Architecture (SAL) will take place at the University of São Paulo. The meeting will gather Latin American architects to discuss our architectural production and will maintain a network between these countries. Members of DOCOMOMO are invited to make an overview of its aims and experiences, during a session (on the 21st, in the afternoon) intended as an exchange of experiences. The participation of the Iberian and the Brazilian DOCOMOMO has already been confirmed. It will be a good opportunity to expand the activities of our organization. For more information, please contact DOCOMOMO Brazil. Besides our contribution to the realization of this Journal, we are also editing an issue of the magazine RUA, in cooperation with the Master Course of Bahia. It will be dedicated to the Modern Movement in architecture and urbanism and will be concluded in July of this year.

(Report by coordinator Anna Beatriz Galvão)

Denmark: second Annual Meeting

On the 28th of January, DOCOMOMO-Denmark held its second annual meeting at *Gammel Dok*, The Danish Architect Center, in Copenhagen. There were more than 60 participants at the meeting.

Among the contributions were subjects like the relations of the authorities to the Modern Movement. The National Forest and Nature Agency, the authority for preservation in Denmark, told the public that dealing with the Modern Movement was a new field of preservation, and that there was not yet sufficient knowledge and experience of preserving architecture of this period. The National Forest and Nature Agency would therefore be happy to cooperate with DOCOMOMO in order to gain and distribute knowledge.

Professor Hans Munk Hansen presented a view of principles of restoration and emphasized that the same principles apply to historical and modern buildings, but that the matter of building technology usually makes a big practical difference.

The main contribution of the day was a silent movie videofilm showing the construction of the Aarhus Townhall by Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller in 1938-42. The film was introduced and commented by Erik Møller who, as an eyewitness, made the Modern Movement a present part of the meeting.

(Report by coordinator Ola Wedebrunn)

Bulgaria: declaration

Today the significance of the Modern Movement is being reconsidered. The historical distance is enough to perceive the artistic achievements of the Modern Movement not only as physical environment but also as a cultural value - as a chronicle of the time and as a memory, which is to be studied and saved carefully from violation and destruction. Arising out of a social-ideological philosophy, the artist's aspiration was to promote democratization of society and extension of human welfare. Today, exactly this modernist spirit, combined with the invariable pursuit of innovation and approval of the architect's role in the social life, is still alive.

By the end of the 1920s and during the 1930s many Bulgarian architects were applying enthusiastically their knowledge, assimilated at the higher schools of West Europe. Entire quarters with multi-storey apartment houses and important public and industrial buildings still show the features created by them. The charm of numerous individual houses, skulked among aggressive urban structures, is still alive. Unfortunately, some buildings are already only a memory and a third has lost its identity. The constant anathematizing of modernism as an expression of decadent inclinations in the 50s also advanced its neglect during the last four decades. At the present period of quick reversals and of powerful building enterprises a number of smaller modernistic pieces are in danger of physical or artistic destruction. For these reasons we are convinced that public awareness of the Modern Movement phenomena in Bulgaria needs to be raised. In the name of this noble cause, we establish a national section of DOCOMOMO that will work for the prestige of the Modern Movement in Bulgaria together with our colleagues in the other European countries.

DOCOMOMO Bulgaria

Germany: change of the board

At our last meeting in Dessau, April 7-8, 1995, Dr. Wolfgang Paul and K.-H. Burmeister stepped back as Chairman and Secretary of DOCOMOMO-Germany. After already having informed the members in Bernau and after a vote, new board members were chosen: Winfried Brenne in Berlin takes over the chair, Prof. Bertholdt Burkhardt and Prof. Dr. Hartwig Schmidt will be vice-chairmen and Ulrich Borgert will be secretary. The new address is listed on page 39-41.

(Report by former secretary K.-H. Burmeister)

Sweden: conference on MoMo's of the 1950s

The Swedish DOCOMOMO working party arranges together with the Swedish Museum of Architecture and the Swedish National Board of Antiquities a conference and excursions in Stockholm on Swedish Modern Movement buildings from the 1950s on Friday October the 13th (conference) and Saturday October the 14th (excursion by bus).

We are going to deal with qualities and problems of the buildings of the 1950s and mainly concentrate on Swedish examples. We will meet in Årsta centrum, one of the first Swedish Community centers, from 1954. The lectures and guiding will be in Swedish (except for one or two invited lecturers in English). Preservationists, architects and others interested are welcome. Costs are about 1000 Swedish crowns (around US \$ 135.--) for both days, including lunch.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact the Swedish DOCOMOMO Working party.

(Report by coordinator Eva Rudberg)

The Netherlands: Van Nelle Factory at risk!

The decision to close the famous Van Nelle Factory by Brinkman and Van der Vlugt in Rotterdam (1930) came as a shock last January. The owner, Sara Lee/DE Ltd decided to stop the production of coffee and tobacco in Rotterdam by 1998. This would mean an enormous threat to this important 'icon' of the Modern Movement. Although the company's workers have filed an official protest against this decision, which would mean a loss of employment for about 200 people, the efforts to keep the Rotterdam division of the company open is not given much chance. The final decision about the close-down will be taken in the course of this year.

Together with Sara Lee and the City of Rotterdam,

the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Netherlands DOCOMOMO Foundation will help to try and find a new and proper use for the building and its surroundings. This will not be an easy task; the building has been designed as a coffee and tobacco factory, so every other use is in principle more or less abusive to the original architectural concept. Besides, it is situated in an industrial area, that is rather isolated and not easy to redevelop. It will take a great effort from all parties involved to find a balance between the cultural historical value of the building and a sound economically based new function for the area. An international workshop will be held in the course of this year, with participation of architects, planners and policy makers, to generate ideas for the reuse of the Van Nelle complex.

The Netherlands Working party had a plenary meeting last March. The main issue was the preparation of a national conference on the period of Post War Reconstruction (1945-1970). There will also be a contribution of DOCOMOMO-NL to the International Year of the Industrial Heritage 1996. The DOCOMOMO-NL Philosophy Group did not yet meet this year; therefore at this moment no further news on the restoration manifesto in preparation.

(Report by coordinator Rob Docter)

Finland: International Monument Day

The Finnish theme of the ICOMOS International Monument Day on April 18, 1995, was modern architecture. DOCOMOMO Finland is preparing material on the Finnish DOCOMOMO-Selection and an information event for the media is held at the Museum of Finnish Architecture. Material on selected buildings around the country will be tailored to arouse the interest of local media. A small exhibition on the selected MoMo buildings is



Brinkman & Van der Vlugt:
Van Nelle Factory, 1925-31.

arranged simultaneously in the Museum of Finnish Architecture.

(Report by coordinator Timo Tuomi)

USA: new working party

During the conference *Preserving the Recent Past* in Chicago March 30-April 1, a US Chapter of DOCOMOMO has been initiated. Two meetings were held during the conference with participants from across the US as well as international members of DOCOMOMO. There it was decided that because of the size of the US and the regional architectural developments, DOCOMOMO US will have preliminary bases in three geographic regions: the East Coast, (New York), the Midwest (Chicago) and the West Coast (Los Angeles). These regions are not exclusive of others as all of the activities will be conducted jointly until the group is more widely organized.

The University of Southern California Architecture School agreed to act as a conduit for the organization of the mailings, administration and contact point. The first task is to establish DOCOMOMO-US as a not for profit, this will be worked on by a committee for Organizational Structure. Three other committees were established: Membership, Public Relations and the Register with members from each region.

The main issue of discussion was the mission statement of DOCOMOMO as it pertains to US *modern* architecture. The US Modern Movement may be inclusive of other movements that are not a part of European Modern Movement. For the initial stages of the organization the US Working party will use the Eindhoven Statement as a basis for the definition of *modern*, and develop a more detailed definition of American Modern Movement as the organization is more established.

In the past two months the New York based East Coast ad hoc working group has met twice to discuss the general organizational issues and to work on the definition of Modern architecture. Their next steps are to begin to work on lists of significant buildings for the register. They are also requesting the official National Register lists of modern buildings to see what has already been protected as well as the National Park Service's definitions of styles such as Art Moderne, Art Deco, International Style and others which relate to the Modern Movement.

In Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Conservancy's Modern Committee is doing likewise.

The next step for the organization are to expand the number of participants across the US and broaden the base with a membership campaign and publicize the organization so that we can work to preserve those most endangered modern buildings and develop the register list for the US.

(Report by East Coast coordinator Nina Rappoport)

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An unaccomplished modern Utopia

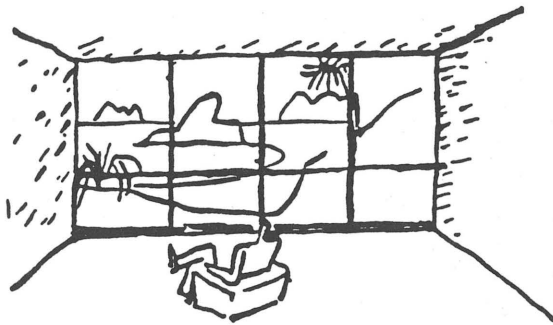
Modern Movement architecture in Latin America

Christopher Columbus crossed the ocean in search of the Orient. He was not only looking for a shorter navigation route. According to his keen imagination, he was also pursuing Paradise. When Columbus landed up for the first time, he could have thought he reached his desired destination. The Italian commander, however, was not in his beloved mythical place: he touched America.

Neither Columbus, nor any native, had in mind what was America. America was 'invented' by Europe. Thomas More settled down Utopia somewhere in South America. He was not alone envisaging something different to that unknown part of the world. For the European sense of the 16th Century, the new land was the promised land.

by Hugo Segawa

Columbus had his visionary ideals, but he actually paved the way to the European conquerors. Henceforth, the mythical paradise was to be fragmented, separated in different regions, each one responding to its colonizer, establishing a Spanish America, a Portuguese America, an Anglo-Saxon America, a Dutch America, a French America, and in a dissimilar meaning, an Afro-America. The 19th and 20th Centuries' immigration waves to the New World reordered its ethnic and cultural cartography.



Why Latin America?

A French dictionary refers to a *Latin America* in opposition to an *Anglo-Saxon America*.¹ No dictionary registers the latter entry, but an American one defines *Latin America* as 'the countries of North America (excepting French-speaking parts of Canada), South America and Central America where French, Spanish and Portuguese are spoken'.² The curious remark on North America unnecessarily extends the entry; it would have been just enough to say 'every country from Mexico below, etc.' Although a Latin culture is inevitably present at Québec, it would not make

sense for anyone to include that province or even Canada as a part of Latin America. But it is not less Latin than Haiti (or its French colonized residue), similarly Latin as the USA territory of Puerto Rico, and certainly more Latin than Belize. What with Guyana, the Bahamas or Trinidad and Tobago, English speaking states, considered Latin American by the Inter-American Development Bank? Is Latin American everything south of the *Rio Grande*? But, as mentioned before, why do those English speaking states, and the Netherlands Antilles or Surinam qualify as 'Latin'? What to do with people with Indian ancestry that speak their mother tongue in Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, etc.? Or the German people in Brazil and Chile, or the Japanese community in Peru and Brazil, or the Italian accent everywhere in America?

No geographic or socio-cultural criteria support a wide range of countries under the Latin American identity. Among the *Americas* (as one could say after the particular conditions all over the continent), the term *Latin America* carries a socioeconomic and geo-political denotation: the countries that are apart from the developed domain, not in the 'center' as wealthy nations, but in the 'periphery' of the industrialized world. Underdeveloped or developing countries with a historical background as sources of raw materials and food suppliers to the occidental economy.

Scopes of modernity

So what is the role of modernity in such context? Is there any sense in speaking of a Modern Movement in architecture in underdeveloped or developing countries?

May I quote Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani from an article published in a previous DOCOMOMO Newsletter³: 'Modernity, we believe, stems from the new society that has emerged since the 19th Century: a mass society confronted with the task

the books on 20th Century architectural history report to the Mexican and Brazilian Modern Movement of the 1930s basically as emanations of European trends. few of these writings take into account the social and political meaning of the works of Villagrán García, Legorreta, O'Gorman, De la Mora and Yañez (housing, schools, hospitals) to the Mexican Revolution. Rarely, these studies demonstrate any awareness of the experiment led by the Brazilian Luiz Nunes in the state of Pernambuco, at the Department of Architecture and Urbanism, designing and building hospitals, schools and other public buildings. Or that Lúcio Costa, the master of Brazilian modern architecture, knew personally Frank Lloyd Wright, read about Gropius, Bauhaus and Soviet modernism, but was truly enchanted with the social range of Le Corbusier's rhetoric - as were Luiz Nunes and probably the Mexicans. The orthodox histories of architecture show more interest to emphasize the influences of Le Corbusier in Latin America than his change of mind after his South American tours; or disregard that in the 1930s. Le Corbusier was much more influential and intellectually appreciated in Latin America than in his own continent, ahead of the 'discovery' of the Swiss-French master all over Europe (and Japan) by young architects and students of the immediate post-World War II generation. It was not by chance that the first vernacular-inspired design by Le Corbusier was the 1930 *Errazuriz House* in Chile; that it was he who recommended Lúcio Costa to use regional granite and not Italian marble at the Ministry of Education and Health building in Rio de Janeiro. These are some curious details, but what was behind the dialogue?

The development of the Modern Movement in Europe from the 1920s was due to the reconstruction aims after World War I. While the efforts of the European architects resulted in an effective policy to reorganize destroyed landscapes and to deal with postWar needs, Latin American architects were embraced in another kind of struggle: the challenge to build a new world, to overcome the material and social necessities in underdeveloped countries, that were in search for ways to increase their self-confidence. The architects in Europe had the task to modernize a destroyed urban structure; the architects in Latin America had the task to modernize a barely urbanized subcontinent. The roots and the scope of the challenge were different, the results were quite distinct, but the desire to change was the same, the utopias among them were close.

Blooming modernities

The New World, away from the battlefields, welcomed scientists and artists who fled Europe, as well as the condition of being an experimental ground for modernity. This is particularly true to Latin America, where the wealthy economic

circumstances triggered some outstanding architecture. While Europe was again a wasted land, engaged in the hard task of reconstruction after World War II, Latin America was constructing an almost virgin territory at the forefront of the Modern Movement. An examination of the modern architectural manifestations in the subcontinent shows the significant presence of European émigrés behind some pioneer buildings or ideas (even before World War II). The concepts grown between the wars in Europe flourished in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, in a different climate and geography and in a distinct culture, Latin American modern architecture bloomed differently.

The chapters on the architecture of the 1945-1970 period in the textbooks (particularly those written in Europe), usually register the late production of the masters of the Modern Movement; the United States panorama, the postWar European reconstruction and housing development and the debate on the Italian scene. Within this traditional scope, Latin American achievements remain almost unmentioned. Some abstract theoretical and circumscribed discussion presented in such books are quite limited as compared to the actual realization in Latin America.

Large ensembles as some university campuses in the 1950s are true monuments of modernity in their own right. Wherever in the world can one appreciate in one site open-air and indoor pieces of art by Wilfredo Lam, Oswaldo Vigas, Pascual Navarro, Mateo Manaure, Alejandro Otero, Victor Valera, Jesus Soto, Jean Arp, Alexander Calder, Henri Laurens, Fernand Léger, Antoine Pevsner, Victor Vasarely, among others? The Venezuelan architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva upheld the ideal of the synthesis of the arts in a monumental scale when he set up the architectonic and artistic principles for the Central University of Venezuela's campus. A different kind of monumentality is presented at the UNAM campus in Mexico City, which spaciousness and integration of art (e.g. murals) can be comprehended only referring to pre-Columbian culture and mid-20th Century Mexican art. The Rio de Janeiro Federal University campus is a one-of-a-kind Le Corbusier/Brazilian architectural blend. All these campuses were not only confines of sciences and arts: they were places of a new modernity in Latin America.

Urban modernities

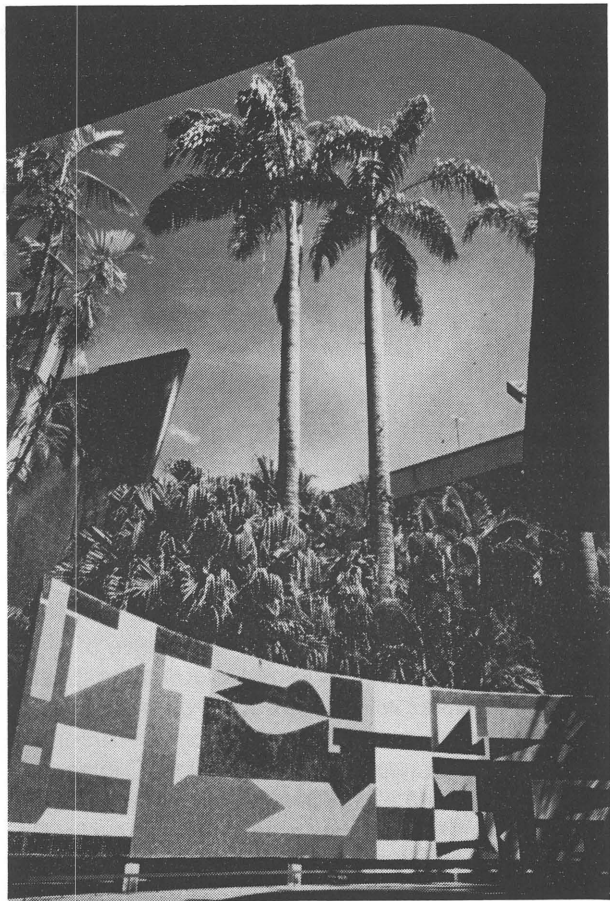
No other cities than Chandigarh and Brasilia equally express the spirit of Modern Movement urbanism; both of them are out of the developed world. The latter is the greatest milestone of the Modern Movement. It is not a well disclosed information that Le Corbusier offered himself to make the master plan of Brasilia, before the competition was won by Lúcio Costa. More unknown is that the Swiss-French master

was bound to plan the reconstruction of Concepción, a city destroyed by an earthquake in 1939 in Chile. The commission was grasped, at last, by a group of young Chilean architects that improved, over a period of twenty years, a mixed proposal to its reconstruction: over the pre-existent urban grid, all the new public or important buildings displayed flat roofs, screen walls, large glass and ribbon windows, discreet (or non) applied decoration, the volume and the regularity of concrete structures. I say 'mixed proposal' for it was not a Corbusier-style *tabula rasa* urbanistic solution that arose from the new plan, but a connivance of the Chilean architects with the traditional urban structure: they were much more engaged in International Style aesthetics concerning the buildings. Would it be a fault in their search of modernity? Is Tel Aviv acclaimed 'an open-air museum of the International Style' for its buildings or for its urban structure? Or perhaps for the architects involved in it, disciples or followers of recognized European masters. Concepción, however, should be 'less' modern because its architects did not have a pedigree as the ones in Palestine. Anyway, in both cases (Chilean and Israeli), the contexts are not attuned to some available interpretations of the Modern Movement or modernity.

Modernity depth

Three cases - and many others, including the vast amount of experiences spread out from the developed world - are unknown by-products in investigation. From a local or regional point of view (the so-called *regionalism*), and now or in a near future we ought to insert them in a more complex comprehension of the phenomenon of modernity. Well, they are 'by-products' while we are not certain of their nature and significance, and we most distinguish 'regional' in a new approach: *regionalism* as something pertinent to a wider range of interconnected phenomena. Everywhere in the world (including in Europe, North America and Japan) the sense of modernity has its peculiarities, each one with a particular time scale, a distinct cadence, unlike vectors behind the modernization scene. So modernity is a diffuse phenomenon: it is change, it is breakthrough, it is progress, it is rejection of the past - and it is failure, as well.

Modernity and Modern Movement architecture in Latin America are already part of an untold story. As in other parts of the world, we will find in Latin America different kinds of modernities in architecture: programmed modernity, pragmatic modernity and even a random modernity. no hierarchic rank is possible among them. It is not reasonable to think on modernity attached to a few hypothetical unerring conditions. Completely different contexts bear no comparison; on the contrary, the differences among them could



Carlos Raúl Villanueva's
University City, Venezuela.

enlighten and magnify the meaning and the range of modernity.

So, Latin America is already an unaccomplished modern Utopia.

Hugo Segawa is a Brazilian architect, who published essays on Brazilian and Latin American contemporary architecture in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, United States and Venezuela. He was the curator of Brazil Recent Architecture, an exhibition at the Deutsches Architektur-Museum, Frankfurt (1994).

Notes:

1. *Le Petit Robert 2: Dictionnaire Universel des Noms Propres*, 1990, s.v. 'Amérique'.
2. *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English language*, 1990, s.v. 'Latin America'.
3. Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, 'Another Modernity', *DOCOMOMO Newsletter*, nº 8, January 1993, 39-41.
4. In English, these terms could be: Modernism, New-Worldism, Indianism.
5. Jean Franco, *La cultura moderna en América Latina*, México: Grijalbo 1983, 15. Translation by the author.
6. Prudente de Moraes, Neto, 'Idéas de hoje: modernismo não é escola; é uma estado de espirito', *Raízes de Sérgio Buarque de Holanda*, edited by Francesco de Assis Barbosa, Rio de Janeiro: Rocco 1988, 71. Translation by the author.

Villanueva: a local genius and *genius loci* University City in Caracas, Venezuela

An non-material aspect, though built and produced, is a key to the University City complex. It is the intermediate space, the twilight or the shadow. The intermediate spaces provided by the covered sidewalks and the open forms of access to the different buildings and groupings in University City, mark a continuity between buildings, between gardens and classrooms, between interior and exterior and dissolve the limits of 'volumes under light'.

by Alberto Sato

The plan to develop a new campus for the Central University of Venezuela and a new General Clinic Hospital for Caracas started in 1942, still without having a site chosen. A coordinating commission of ministerial representatives, amongst whom Carlos Raúl Villanueva as a representative of the Ministry of Public Works, established the hospital program together with a counsel of consultants, amongst them Edgar Martin and Tomas Ponton from Chicago. It was decided to build a Clinical and Public Health Hospital with a capacity of 1000 beds for the University City, after a proposal by Dr. Armando Vegas, and a location was chosen at the 150 hectare (375 acre) *Hacienda Ibarra*, at that time on the outskirts of the city.

The commission spent some time to study this subject in the USA and visited the then recently created University City at Bogotá. The architect Leopoldo Rother, of German origin, was in charge of the master-plan for this university, designing some of the buildings as well.¹ This visit led to the decision to appoint a single professional team for the project, due to the lack of unity observed in the Colombian university campus. The project underwent substantial modifications in its development, that undoubtedly accompany Carlos

Raúl Villanueva's design process from its academic beginnings until he became the most important figure in modern Venezuelan architecture. Initially, and with the hospital as a starting point and reference, the complex is articulated axially, within academical standards and composition forms. The medical disciplines are aligned along this axis, closed at the west with the hospital and at the east with the Rectorate, and confined by a Science complex to the south and a Humanities complex to the north. From this disposition, a central plaza was derived. But, due to the substantial modifications of the complex, this plaza lost importance, while the Rectorate, positioned with its facade northwards, created a new plaza that is predominated by a symbolic clock. Finally, the volumes of the Paraninph, the Aula Magna and the Central Library further define the space into the celebrated *Plaza Cubierta*, built in the stage corresponding to the years 1953-55. In the process corresponding to the first stage of construction, and after completion of the hospital, the site had already occupied 202 hectares (505 acres). The complex has direct urban connections through the hospital and the area of the sports stadia, of an undoubtedly metropolitan scale.



A general view of the Central University Campus, the Aula Magna. All photos (including page 45) by copyright: Enrique Fernández-Shaw and Charlie Riera.

An interpretation

The sensuous experience one appreciates when moving through University City is inexpressible. The texts that explain these emotions seem insufficient, and on occasion take distance of them, or even distract them, as if the rationalization of the aesthetic deed requires to be cooled down, to be 'dispassionated'. They relate to *how* something is, rather than to *what* it is.

Although this article is not the proper occasion to describe this phenomenon, it still serves to signal the limitations of language. Within these limits we construct infinite texts to approximate the transcendence of University City -perhaps Carlos Raúl Villanueva's most important work- and a proposal from another cultural horizon, seemingly impertinent, could enrich its interpretation. University City contains significant examples of modern Venezuelan architecture, but if this fortunate precinct concentrated so many qualities solely by chance, as in any city with good architects, it would be a kind of an architectural museum of refined curatorship. The difference is that its real meaning is in the way these buildings are articulated, responding to unexplainable laws of composition, and that these do not obey simple interpretations of *beaux arts* academic symmetry, even though this had been the first intention and the first stage. In fact, its most spiritual significance is in the complex as such. Its configuration forces to survey which is the structuring element and which its conceptual matrix.

It could be argued that its roots are to be found in Carlos Raúl Villanueva's particular sensibility towards Venezuelan colonial architecture, or towards the academic tradition in managing large complexes, or the climatic conditions, towards the tendencies of international modern architecture, or his own design experience, that is to say, towards as many aspects, either analyzed individually or combined, as points of view that legitimately can

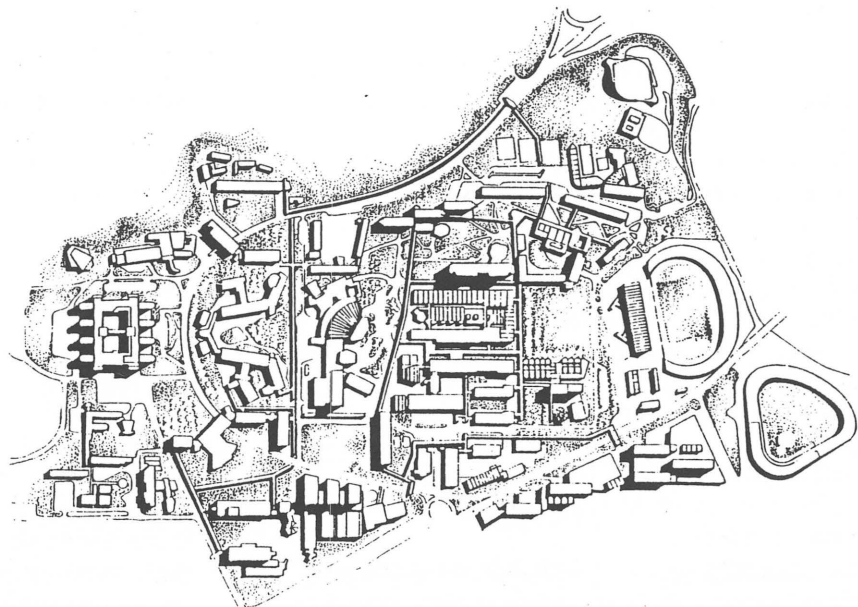
exist. But we can reach a consensus that the covered public spaces achieve a particular significance, and in its analysis some keys to his genius can be found when deciphering its meaning. The particular mode of generating shaded public spaces refers to the creation of intermediary spaces and that this is the conceptual matrix of the work. The circulation areas, as well as the patios, access areas and plazas are covered or partially shaded by overhangs, and barely confined by screened walls. These configurations create new spatial conditions: they are neither outside nor inside, and their continuity throughout the complex does not allow the limits of the architecture to be defined, a quality that is present in detail in each of the buildings.

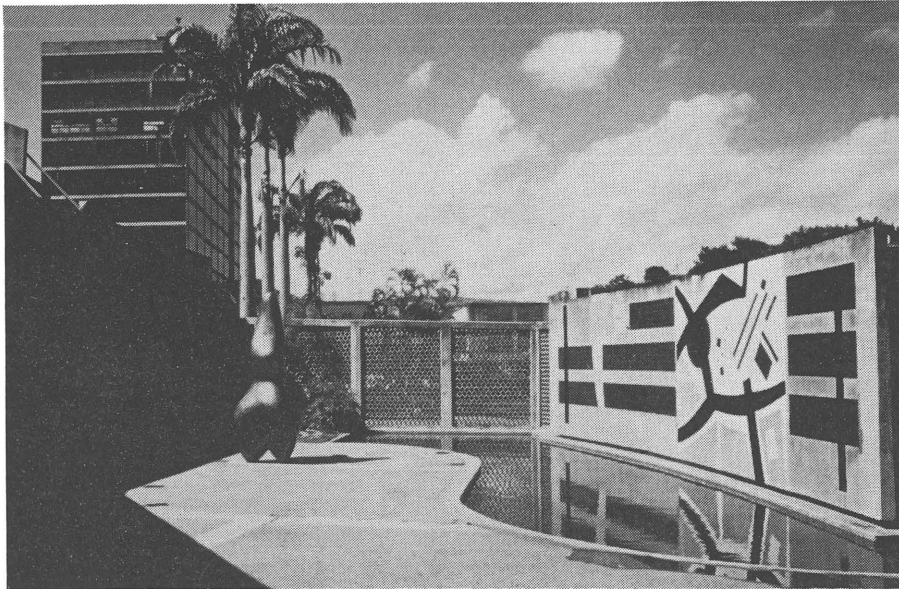
In this way, University City is a totality that repeats its matrix, as also its fractions, in different sizes and complexity. Undoubtedly there are relations between the *Plaza Cubierta* and the Plaza of Ten Thousand Imperial Palms in Le Corbusier's Rio de Janeiro University City project -a vegetable resource that was imported to Brazil by Don Pedro Segundo- or with the covered plaza with reinforced concrete parasols for the Tucumán University. Yet, in the case of University City in Venezuela it is not the technical aspect of the cantilevers that is so striking, since these are actually quite simple, but rather the quality of the space generated: the intermediate space.

Dynamic shadows

This intermediate space is not simply a formal response to the rigors of the climate or the force of the tropical rains: it constitutes in Villanueva a dimension of unsuspected richness. In this respect, Rafael Bergamin advanced: 'As to the "roofed sidewalks",... I am convinced of their usefulness and even of their beauty. In my judgment, no solution exists that can substitute these portals in a tropical city with an extreme

Site plan of the University Campus.





One of the plazas of University City, decorated with the sculpture 'Cloud Shepherd' by Jean Arp and a mural by Mateo Manaure.

climate between the summer sun and the torrential winter rains. The success of the portals at *El Silencio* I think should be sufficient to make this example enter one's eyes... A colonnade composed by a succession or repetition of these same columns is always, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful things in architecture, the light, the play of shadows and transparencies, the repetition of elements is, to my understanding, I repeat, what gives beauty, harmony and even greatness to the architectural complex.²

Sibyl Moholy-Nagy recognized these values in the circulations and covered plazas of University City: '...university life occurs throughout a length of 1428 meters, almost one and a half kilometers, of an uninterrupted covered sidewalk. The same desire to shelter from the implacable tropical sun that was the paramount in the design of Villanueva's homes, determined the imperious necessity of creating shaded communal and leisure areas. As well as the physical and social commodity they represent, these continuous overhangs have a character of access, of arrival...'³

And Juan Pedro Posani stated: 'The optical multiplicity of Villanueva's facades, his density of scale, is essentially given by the frequency with which the structures of solar protection on them are borne, with a repetitive rhythm. These structures are the soul, the final sense, of his volumes.'⁴

In the Western perception of space, shade is a protective occurrence, produced by any element exposed to light, be it a tree, a camel or a building. To paraphrase Le Corbusier, the marvelous play of volumes under light generates these shadows where the events of life take place, outside the spectacle of contemplation. In most cases, human beings avoid the direct light of the sun and the outdoors, much more so when he thinks, reflects or seeks intimacy.

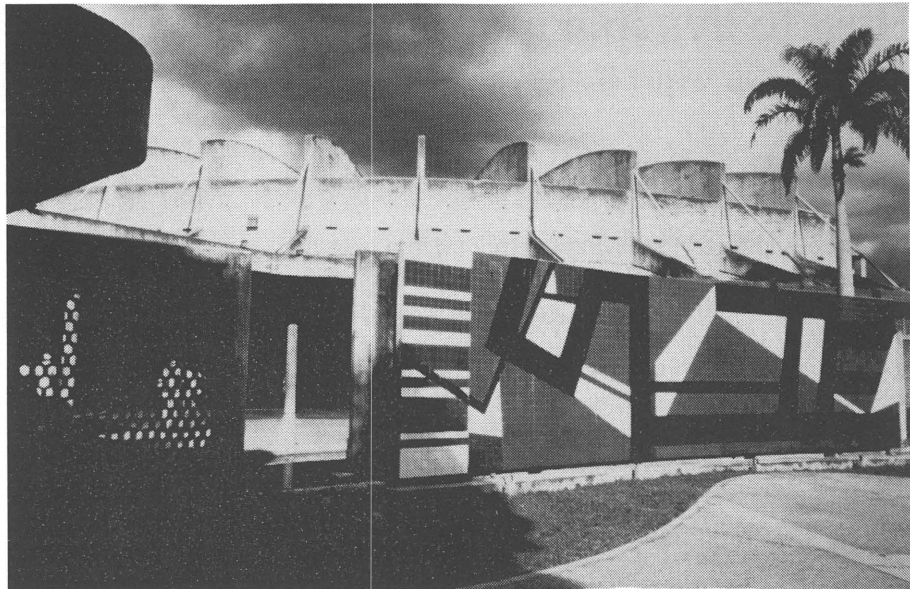
The Japanese sense of architectural space is located in the sphere of human activity carried out

in these places and therefore, without it, there is no notion of architectural space. Thus, where there is activity, there is something akin to the Western notion of architecture; without it, all are simple buildings. The Japanese word *in'ei* designates shade, darkness and *chiaroscuro*. Its richness consists in that it is here that human life's events take place. In these spaces, open or closed, in the extent that the day unfolds, and following to the feelings of their occupant, the dimensions change, governed by the contrasts of *chiaroscuro*: the space can become infinite. Therefore, what counts are not masses and built planes, but the shadows they produce.

Human scale

From this perspective, University City is charged with special value, because its spaces seem designed as an unending search of dynamic shadows. I do not think that Villanueva took particular notice of Japanese culture, but from it, his extraordinary poetic dimension can be explained. Makoto Suzuki felt this conceptual nucleus: 'If there was a beginning to covered space, a monument to it, it would be the apartments of *El Silencio* [...] One can say that the discovery of light and shade, or, said in a wider sense, of climate and nature, during their permanence in Venezuela, are captured in the *El Silencio* development.' In reference to the *Plaza Cubierta* of University City, Suzuki commented that it '...controls the movements and perambulation of people. The sculptures and reliefs placed according to movement and flow, order the movements of light and shade in the space. [...] As "connector", in the sense of joining a space with another one, he advances a step and uses the covered space to weld a space with another one, or combining a space with another one. [...] The transparent wall is the antithesis of the thick colonial wall. [...] This wall allows clear vision and permits the flow of sound and wind through the building. Light passes

The west entrance to the covered *Plaza Cubierta*, decorated with another mural by Mateo Manaure.



through the wall. It becomes diffuse and changes to a soft and weak light. Because of this, it shows the extraordinary effect of the fusion of the spaces. [...] The entire University City plan, in spite of being a very large space, continues to express human scale. The reason for this consistency is due to the philosophy of covered space, which Villanueva continually applied and sought in all his works.⁵ Certainly Suzuki had taken delight in reading Jun'ichiro Tanikazi, who in his essay 'In Praise of Shadows' (*In'ei raisan*) in 1933, expressed the sensorial experiences in the shade of a temple, in the interior of a traditional house, in the intimacy of the toilet. The novelist argued that the beauty of the spaces depended on the variation of the shadows, of strong and weak shadows. The sense of depth and the transparencies whilst traversing a street in Japan -in contrast to the Western corridor-like streets- were supplied by overhangs and translucent walls. The intermediate spaces create incomprehensible reactions and reveal the mysteries of the shadows, that live the solar cycle, move and change intensity and put people in an active and unstable dimension of an intimate and personal outdoors, and a collective and public indoors, where one goes out to the interior and penetrates the exterior. It is a third category of architectural space whose limits are determined by conscience: 'In making for ourselves a place to live, we first spread a parasol to throw a shadow on the earth, and in the pale light of the shadow we put together a house. [...] A light room would no doubt have been more convenient for us, too, than a dark room. The quality that we call beauty, however, must always have grown from the realities of life, and our ancestors, forced to live in dark rooms, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows towards beauty's ends'.⁶ An non-material aspect, though built and produced, is a key to the University City complex. It is the intermediate space, the twilight or the shadow. The intermediate spaces provided by the covered

sidewalks and the open forms of access to the different buildings and groupings in University City, mark a continuity between buildings, between gardens and classrooms, between interior and exterior and dissolve the limits of 'volumes under light'.

Finally, in the *Plaza Cubierta*, this poetic dimension arrives at its highest concentration. It is like a 'black hole' in architecture, four meters high, providing room for people to assemble. This effect is enhanced by an ample corridor, leading to the library, that is a mere three meters high, through which people have to move to reach the plaza. Irregularly formed overhangs, fragments of sky that illuminate the sculptures, lines of light that mark planes of light screened by hollow blocks drawing eternal geometries that compete with an art of a finite time. Then, at the maximal tension, the Aula Magna -hermetic precinct- explodes, opens to the sky, achieving, as Tanikazi said, a state of paradise in the shadows to be found behind the physical presence of the woodwork, in contrast to the didactic qualities of the vaults of the gothic cathedrals that create a clean, intangible 'sky' up above. All of this, I believe, is because at first we have to appreciate the intrinsic quality of architecture, and only secondly the historic, political, social and other values.

Alberto Sato is an architect, a publicist, a critic and a professor of architecture at the Central University of Venezuela; text edited.

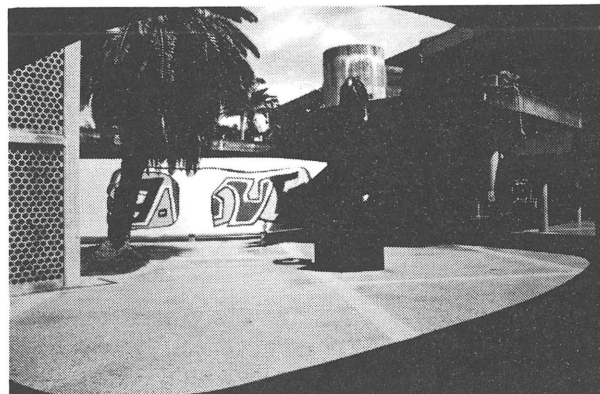
1. See also: Germán Tellez, *Crítica & Imagen*, Bogotá 1978, p. 72; Arango Silvia, *Historia de la Arquitectura en Colombia*, Bogotá 1989, pp. 190 etc.; Hans Rother, *Leopoldo Rother*, Bogotá 1984.
2. *El Nacional*, February 1947.
3. *Carlos Raúl Villanueva y la Arquitectura de Venezuela*, Caracas 1984, p. 88.
4. *Arquitecturas de Villanueva*, Caracas 1978, p. 16.
5. *Revista Punto*, nº 46, 1972, pp. 74 etc.
6. *In Praise of Shadows*, New Haven 1933, pp. 17-18.

How to live in a monument and not die while trying...

by Juan Pedro Posani

It has been proved that living or working in a building or a complex of buildings classified as a national monument is not a slight or an everyday thing. The recent declaration of University City Venezuela as a national monument, corroborated strongly by the corresponding Official Gazette, offers us the opportunity to examine an interesting problem: how to behave inside a monument? If one belongs to the university or is an intellectual, with a strict culture and a crisis-proof conception of the world, to dispose of a physical space in an architectural environment that responds to certain parameters which are not the ordinary and common ones, should constitute a unique experience that makes one reflect before placing a table and a chair, painting a wall or raising a partition.

I have frequently propounded, and certainly with an excess of pretention, the theory that the modern Venezuelan citizen does not distinguish himself in a 'natural' way for his fine architectural perception, for a special care in building or a high quality environment. Contrary to what appears to happen to a Finn, a Dutchman, a Japanese, or -to stay closer at home- a Colombian, a beautifully built space is not taken for granted by a Venezuelan. History, climate, geography, and I do not know what other reason of those named superior, have not been instilled in our genes that certain thing which in a dark and mysterious way favors the search of the sophisticated detail, the demand for an ordered space and a clean form of the surroundings. Ours is disorder, provisional, indifference, passivity; in a few words, a vocation for slumming. When in the normal course of indifference the unexpected phenomenon of the exception appears -that of course exists to confirm the rule conveniently- the option to accept it and respect it becomes hard, arduous and against one's ways. This theory is so true -more than a theory is the positive proof in the manner of Gil Fortoul, a demonstration in Laureano Valenilla Lanz's- that it is verified clearly in the prodigious case of the University City declaration as a monumental work and a landmark, worthy of the highest respect and consideration by all: students, professors and authorities, as well as the common citizen that perhaps visits it sporadically during the Sunday musicals in the Aula Magna or during the moving graduations of their sons and daughters. In spite of being considered by specialists, and naturally by architects, as a work of exceptional urban and architectural quality, the campus of the central university has not received any special



attention on behalf of its users. On the contrary, only recently has its growing deterioration commenced to be detained. It can be stated that its academic population has never seriously taken into account the continental and global dimension of its excellence.

It is true that we are not Swiss -but now things have changed. Due to those contradictions that fortunately save this country and make it so tasty and unpredictable, from now on and forever University City is a national monument. What awaits us now, is what we could call the duty by law to love and admire Carlos Raúl Villanueva's finest work, our national architectural pride. We did not love it before because it never came from our soul and our culture. We must do it now by presidential decree. A good experience: we must learn to live inside a monument. We will have to develop that special sensitivity that makes one love a space, a wall, a perspective. We will have to learn to distinguish good architecture from a small improvised shed, a dignified space from a hovel. We will have to instill in our blood the marvelous Aula Magna and the *Plaza Cubierta*, and learn that whatever we place next to it has to be as good as these buildings are. It now has to be understood that admiring and conserving does not mean freezing and immobilizing. On the contrary, respecting and treasuring imply the challenge of adding quality, of summing excellence, of incorporating splendor and mastery to everything that University City already displays. A monument is not a brake that becomes an obstacle, detains or moves back, but a functional challenge, an impetuous and passionate call to continue creating.

Perhaps we can now start the long march that will take us, as people and as a nation, to learn to enjoy good architecture generously and to feel the healthy pride of having Latin America's best university precinct.

Juan Pedro Posani is the director of the National Institute of Cultural Heritage, a publicist and critic and a professor of history of architecture in Venezuela.

Difficult simplicity - a tropical paradox

Antillean rationalism in the Caribbean

It is not an easy task to establish a chronological timeframe for the existence of rationalist architectural concepts on the Caribbean Islands. In the first place, because there is not a precise incision in the changes of architectonic language in a region, that is dominated by constant superposition and stylistic articulations that define the conceptual categories of 'ambient syncretism'. The reassessment of classic academicism is not originated only from the discourse of the Modern Movement, but as well from the nationalist current, impelled by neocolonialism and by the presence of constructive technological innovations, assumed from the United States and integrated in the expressive set of design tools of *Art Deco*.

On the other hand, the limits between the canonical use of the 'white boxes' and the later assimilation of the general principles of the *International Style* are dissolved. Secondly, the use of a rationalist vocabulary cannot provide a theoretical frame for modernity, based on clear ideological principles, or related to the existence of entrenched local artistic movements, disseminators of ruptures generated by the European avant-garde.

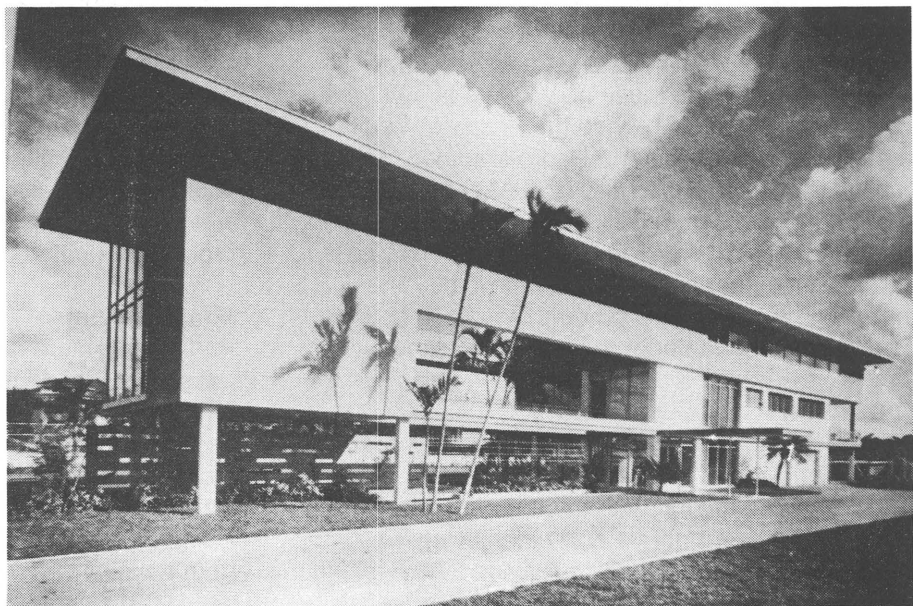
by Roberto Segre

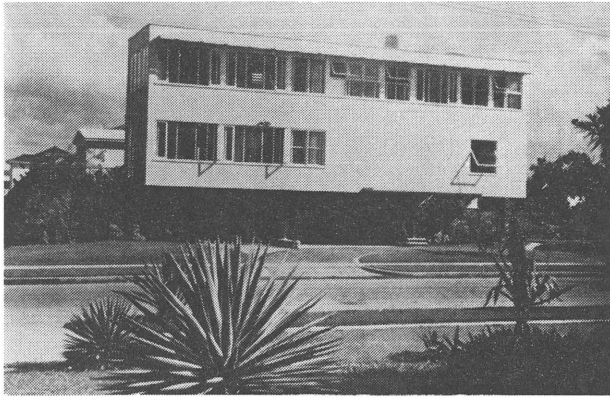
The fragility of the postulates of the Modern Movement on the islands occurs as a consequence of the distance that separates them. Although there is a geographic proximity, the direct relations with distant metropolitan centers, at the same time minimizes the regional contacts: Aruba and Curaçao with the Netherlands, Barbados and Jamaica with England, Puerto Rico and Cuba with the United States, and Martinique and Guadalupe with France. Their character of minor colonies kept them on the eave of the cultural dynamics of developed countries, recipients of circumstantial flows, dependent of fragmented governmental initiatives, which were taken in the Netherlands,

England and France, that always regarded the islands as economic enclaves, originally exploited as plantations based on slave work. This is the reason why, on these islands, rationalism has been identified either with new functions, such as cinemas, gas stations, offices, hospitals, or with public buildings of the 1940s, for example the postoffice headquarters and the Municipal and Supreme Courts of Guadalupe and Martinique, designed after the 'Monumental Modernity' promoted by the French state.

Also, there was a lack of organized local professionals, specialized magazines (the only one with stable periodicity was published in La

The *Noval House* of 1949
by Marco Ramañach, in the
Country Club of La Habana.





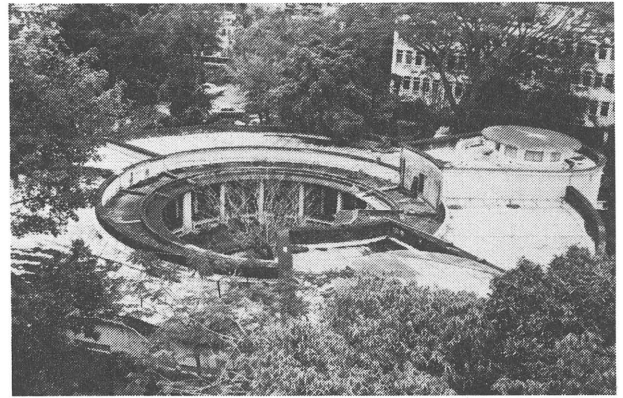
Habana), and only Cuba and the Dominican Republic offered architectural training in their universities.

Cuba

The Antillean rationalism achieved its summit during the 1940s, which is ten years behind of the development of the Modern Movement in Europe. The reason was not only because of political and economical imperative circumstances on the islands, but also because of the influence of foreign designers that made themselves known on a regional level. Until 1933, the imposition of a dictatorship in Cuba (president Gerardo Machado) was associated with eclectic codes. By the end of the 1930s, the handling of *pure form* hesitantly took place in private housing -which is a process of stylistic substitution- and in private buildings. Three professors, Alberto Camacho (1900-1929), Pedro Martínez Inclán (1883-1957) and Joaquín E. Weiss (1894-1968), supported the tendencies of renewal in the magazine *Arquitectura* of the School of Architects. At the same time, these tendencies were being attacked by the popular Argentine architect Ángel Guido, whose ideas were the opposite of Le Corbusier's, and, as a result, became well-known on the island. During the short stay in La Habana of José Luis Sert (1939), the visits of Richard Neutra (1945) and Walter Gropius (1949), lectures addressed the validity of supporting these new ideas. In 1947 the architecture students burned the Treaty of Viñola in their school, and in 1948 Pedro Martínez Inclán published the *Carta de Habana* (Letter of Havana), a tropical version of the Letter of Athens. Between 1944 and 1948, the government of Ramón Grau San Martín elaborated a plan of public buildings that would give place to schools, hospitals and housing, designed under the rationalist canons.

Innovation

In the Dominican Republic, the predominance of dictator Leónidas Trujillo lasting for more than 30 years, was not favorable to the maturation of the architectural avant-garde, while identifying the works of the government with the academic models and monumental 'Mussolinians'.



Nevertheless, the ambiguity of the ideological and political formulations made the use of such double codes possible. In 1929, the international contest for the Colón Lighthouse attracted intellectuals and renewers. A group of constructivist artists led by Konstantin Melnikov, that did not find an echo in the local ambiance, participated as well. Finally, in 1992, a sad and obsolete monumental project was realized.

The main Dominican promoter of the new formal principles, the architect Guillermo Gonzales (1900-1970), designed after a public initiative the -now demolished- Jaragua Hotel (1941) in Santo Domingo, a paradigmatic work of Caribbean rationalism. It was assumed as an example by other professionals of his generation: José Antonio Caro, William Reid and the brothers Marcial and Pou Ricart, designers of the Dutch-influenced orthodox school *Salomé Henríquez Ureña* (1943). The direct relation of Puerto Rico with the United States continued its architectural development. Until the 1940s the classic model, neocolonial and the incipient *Art Deco*, existed, coinciding with the conservative positions of the American governors, the heirs of the 'Big Stick'-politics.

The presidency of Roosevelt, administrator of the democratic principles of the 'New Deal', made a cultural overture possible. In 1943, Rexford G. Tugwell, the last political representative of the north, invited Richard Neutra; he realized a plan of schools and hospitals and establishes a point of departure for an architectural innovation. His presence was reflected on the local professionals -Henry Klumb, Osvaldo Toro and Miguel Ferrer- who were responsible for the language of regionalism within the Modern Movement.

Sinuuous forms

Particular force has been achieved by the rationalism of La Habana during the 1940s. Already in 1937, Luis Dauval Guerra (1900-1979) designed a project for the children's anti-tuberculosis hospital *Ángel Arturo Aballí*, which was followed by the maternity hospital *Maternidad Obrera* in Mariano (1939) of Emilio de Soto (1902). Both hospitals have big curved roofed terraces so the patients could lie in the sun. The primacy of the

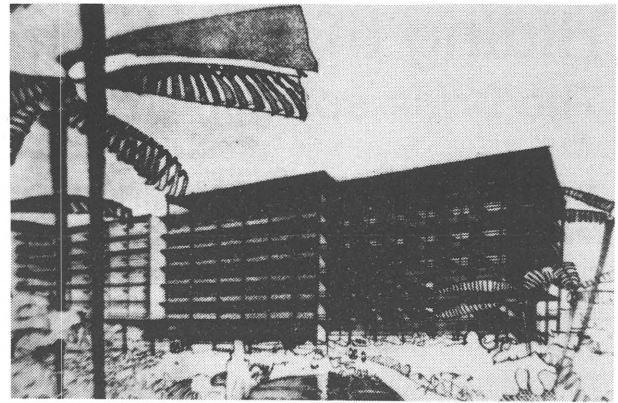
Far left: Frank Martinez's Residence in the Miramar Quarter (1950).

Left: Building of the Syndicates in Fort de France on Martinique of 1944.

Right: Richard Neutra's design for a hospital in San Juan de Puerto Rico.

Bottom left and right: Design by Konstantin Melnikov for the Colón Lighthouse.

Photos of the lighthouse by Hans-Joachim Heyer.

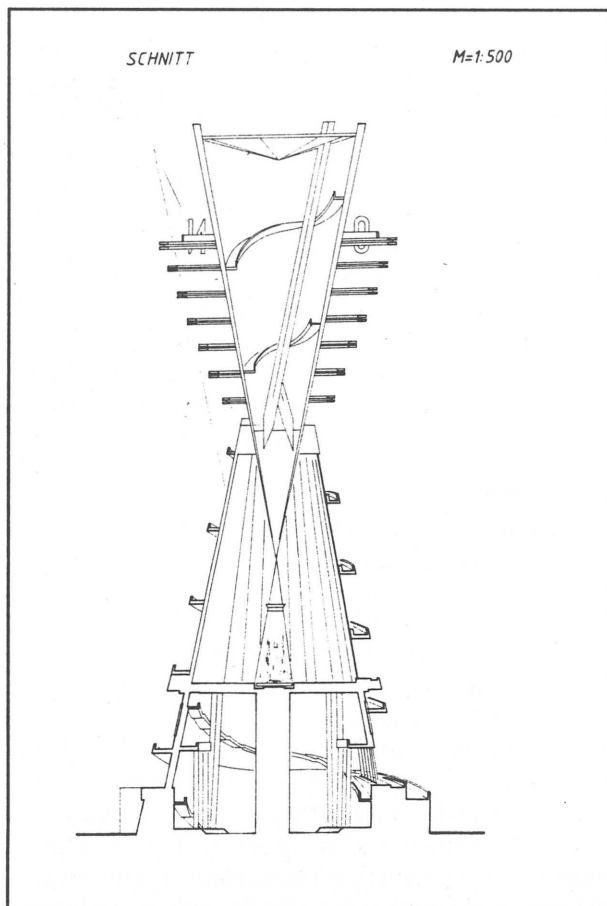


sinuous forms is present in the first *modern* apartments of La Habana. It was started by the realization of *Pedro Martínez Inclán* on 23rd Street, followed by the *Santeiro* of Emilio de Soto in 1937 and the *Solymar* of Manuel Copado in 1944, highly original in terms of adaptation to the tropical climate. The purification of spaces and forms emerges in the individual residential buildings of some members of the bourgeoisie, who were anxious to adopt the new images of First World-modernity.

Rafael de Cardenas (1902-1957) built a series of emblematic residences in the Vedado and Miramar quarters, while towards the end of the decade Max Borges (1948) and Mario Romañach (1917-1984) succeeded in the culmination of the new language. The *Malecón House* (1947), De Cardenas'

personal residence in Miramar and the *Noval House* (1949) in the Country Club of La Habana, demonstrate a maturity that reaches the limits of the expressive possibilities of the Modern Movement, transformed in harmony with the contextual and environmental qualities of the tropics. The *Noval House*, characterized by transparencies, generates virility and lightness of its forms. The articulations with the natural landscape constituted, at the same time, the paradigm and the final point of the Antillean rationalism.

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Hiding the sun

The *brise-soleil* in Brazil

The property of Modern Movement architecture to overcome darkness is very often remembered as a prior element in the *modern* architectural discourse; a concept that surpasses the figurative sense to the actual manipulation of light, the control over a natural limitation like the night. In a metaphorical sense, light also refers to the humanistic enlightenment that was a main goal of the Modern Movement.

This same attitude however, understood in the opposite way, distinguishes Brazilian Modern Movement architecture: the capacity of producing shade. The assignment of reducing the incidence of sunrays to the inside of a building, creating a zone to disperse the heat and to allow good ventilation, was performed by the *brise-soleil*. Although having a precise definition, it developed into a rich variety of models and materials.

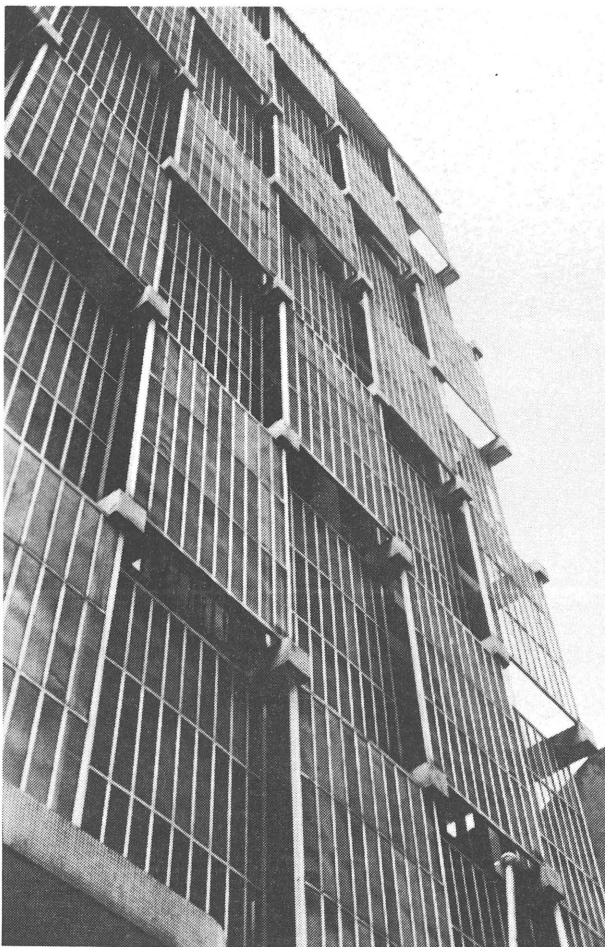
by Anna Beatriz Galvão and Angela West Pedrão

The term *brise-soleil* was given by Le Corbusier; it means something like 'sun-block'. His first studies were for the 'Villa à Carthage' in 1929 and for the 'Projet de Lotissement à Barcelone' in 1933. The most significant proposals however, were for the urbanization of Alger (Algeria) in the 'Maison Locative' of 1933 and the 'Cité des Affaires' in 1938. This country has similar climatic conditions as those of Brazil. At that time, the idea of the

brise-soleil was not applied, but it remained as the strongest reference followed specially by the architects of Rio de Janeiro. The adoption of this solution was favoured by the former use of the *muxarabis* in Brazilian colonial architecture, usually balconies closed by a fine lattice work of wood. An Islamic element, common in early Portuguese architecture, served the protection of houses from excessive sunlight, providing extraordinary ventilation as well; an important intermediate space of social participation, also a transition between private and public domains. On the other hand the new architecture had within its canons the independent structure, the minimum partition of the floor plans and the elevation of the main body of the building (*pilotis*), pursuing the transparency of space in a general way. These premises of the project, together with the sense of confronting an environmental imposition, encouraged the use of the *brise-soleil*, and this same *brise-soleil* was able to recover the notion of a transitional space, that is particular to the Brazilian baroque culture. The constitution of this vocabulary was in part responsible for the creation of a modern, Brazilian architectural profile.

Combogó

The Modern Movement opted for a change while liberating the wall systems from their structural function, exposing the essence of the mechanical forces evolved as an image of truth, even if only apparently. There was a new understanding between interiors and exteriors of built up sites, and this implied a discussion of the role facades accomplished in modern architecture. In Brazil, the propositions of the new architecture were shared by many architects, that were concerned about constructing the future of a country which seemed more occupied by its own peculiarities. When the facades are overexposed, this is, with no kind of



allegory dividing spaces -but functionality as the only true meaning-, the environment becomes the motif of a rational redefinition of the external arrangements of the building.

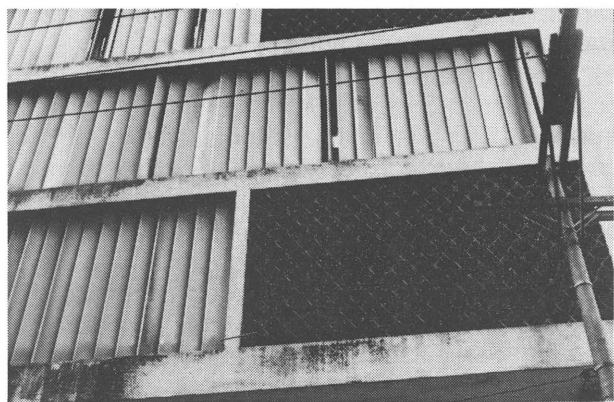
In the early 1930s, in the northeast state capital Recife, the prominent young architect Luis Nunes used a then recently developed hollow cement and sand block, of 0.5 m. x 0.5 m. x 0.5 m. (industrially produced, available for low income housing), in an unplastered secondary wall, detached from the window openings. Doing this, he created the *combogó*, a name derived from the owners of that industry: Coimbra, Boekman and Góis, and often wrongly attributed to an Indian origin. This was the first version of a *brise-soleil*: a protection from intense sunlight that would allow a good ventilation and transparency as well, at low costs.

The *combogó* had a rationalistic inspiration while being a single modulated piece, that would easily form patterns and panels, which gave an expression to the new architecture. Though Nunes openly revealed being influenced by Gropius' Bauhaus, by concentrating the new use to the *combogós*, he managed to attribute a local consideration.

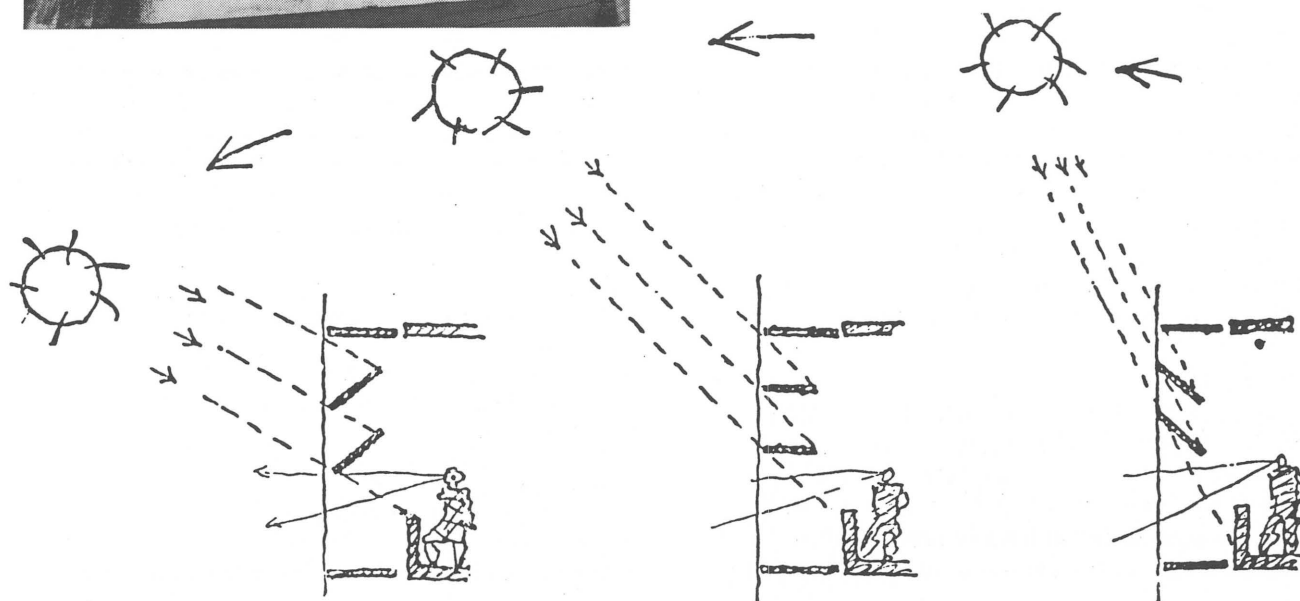
The *combogós* originally were concrete blocks, but the technique had been improved and the ceramic would become the main material applied, because of its smaller weight, easy formwork and availability. Also, with the typical Brazilian

ingenious attitude, PVC tubes cut transversely into pieces were arranged in panels and transformed into *combogós*, as in the building for the Association of Brazilian Press (ABI) in Salvador, designed by the architect Diogenes Rebouças in 1953.

In 1946 the *Caramurú* Building was built in Bahia, which would display one of the best examples of the use of the *brise-soleil*, a project of the architect Paulo Antunes Ribeiro. In his book 'Modern Architecture in Brazil', Henrique Mindlin wrote: 'Taking into consideration the warm climate of Bahia, and the exposure of the facades on two streets (enjoying a very fine view but requiring suitable protection all day long), the architect designed a system of light iron grilles of 2 x 3 m., detached from the outer wall and arranged on two planes, alternating in a chessboard pattern, 25 cm. apart, and resting on concrete brackets jutting out from the floor slabs. On these grilles a Venetian blind made up of bronze strips of 1 mm. wide is stretched; this material ('koolshade') is supplied by the makers to form a sort of wire gauze. The protection against excessive sunshine thus obtained, as though by mosquito netting transformed into *brise-soleil*, is complete, without interfering the view from the windows. At the same time it forms a peculiarly gay, forceful pattern on the facades, breaking up the monotony of the massive rectangular block.'



Two examples of the use of *brise-soleil* in Salvador:
Far left: The *Caramurú* Building of 1946. Left: The ABI Building of 1953. Photos by Angela West Pedrão. Bottom: The working of *brise-soleil* during the different hours of the day. Sketch from the book *Brésil, Architecture Contemporaine*, 1952.



Orientation

The *brise-soleil* as proposed by Le Corbusier in Alger was widely used by the Roberto brothers from Rio de Janeiro. In 1936, they adopted this solution for the project of the ABI Building in a competition (which they won), for a construction that became the first modernist building in Brazil. The Roberto brothers slightly changed the original idea, using only oblique vertical blades, initially made in aluminium, but finally executed in concrete because of costs reduction. Long horizontal overlaid bands were the results of this disposition, determining its final aesthetical and functional characteristics.

The *brise-soleil* was composed of parallel blades, fixed or articulated, and was actually the result of solar graphic analysis. Studies of the sun's movement, the different seasons of the year and latitudes of interest, would help to establish some rules for the use of *brise-soleil*. In this southern hemisphere country it meant: totally unusable for the south, partially for the east (exposed only to the sunrise) and absolutely indispensable for the north during winter, and for the west during all seasons.

Surprisingly, the *brise-soleil* is especially advantageous during winter, when the position of the sun is relatively low on the horizon, reaching deeply into the building. On the other hand, during summer, the sun passes the zenith, becoming uncomfortable only at noon. Consequently the horizontal *brise-soleil* are recommended to face the north, where the sun is always near its highest point, while the vertical *brise-soleil* should be disposed to the west. The use of the articulated *brise-soleil* had the advantage of being moved according to the sun's displacement, avoiding the eventual use of electric light during daytime, and adjusting simultaneously the range of visibility. The materials used were basically cement variations, with asbestos or prefabricated reinforced concrete, and occasionally aluminium. The rotation systems of the articulated blinds were made of iron alloys and, due to the lack of regular maintenance and oxidation, are today out of use. Only after World War II, a skillful technological application of concrete was developed because of the impossibility of importing materials from countries involved in the conflict. The implementation of the industrial park was being negotiated with the USA, which in return expected to have Brazil on the allied side. It is notorious that such sudden international interest of recognizing Brazil in many fields -as in architecture- was not casual.

Shift of daylight

In 1936, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) was conceived in Rio de Janeiro. The use of the *brise-soleil* in this building was directly inspired by Alger, and by Le Corbusier. He was invited to participate as a consultant, but the Brazilian team was responsible for the final result.

The *brise-soleils* were justified by its designers Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy, Carlos Leão and Jorge Moreira with a wide variety of reasons.

First, there was a concern with that ambient fact called sun (and it must be remembered that the insistence of exposing the facade towards the sunset was because of the view at the sea). Secondly, if this building had an aspect of 'common apartments' it would be 'regrettable'. The system applied in the MEC consisted of fixed vertical blades of concrete linked to the ground, and tilted articulated horizontal plates made of fibre-cement armed in steel. The horizontal plates were placed 0.5 m. detached from the external wall, thus forming a void for air circulation, avoiding the entrance of heat by irradiation into the offices. In the vertical sense, there are only two points of attachment to the structure, to prevent a rigid ensemble that would facilitate heat transmission. The bascules were constituted by double plates of asbestos cement, whose isothermic properties were very diffused.

The problem of ventilation was as well studied, adopting a process for crossed ventilation, of recognized efficiency. A system assured by the air draft produced by the differences in temperature of opposite facades.

Soon, however, these elements were frequently combined together as in the *Parque Guinle's* apartment buildings of 1948 (Lúcio Costa, Rio de Janeiro). Also, they assumed an important plastic status and turned out to be one of the main aspects of Brazilian new architecture. The combination of *brise-soleils* including *combogós* (here with a circular outline) expressed the functional internal disposition of the building from the outside, with colours such as unexpected soft pinks, greens and blues. This aesthetical implications did not end formally with the compositional elements. The internal ensemble provided a delightful game of shadows by the cutting of daylight to an exact measure, taking from the sun only what was desired.

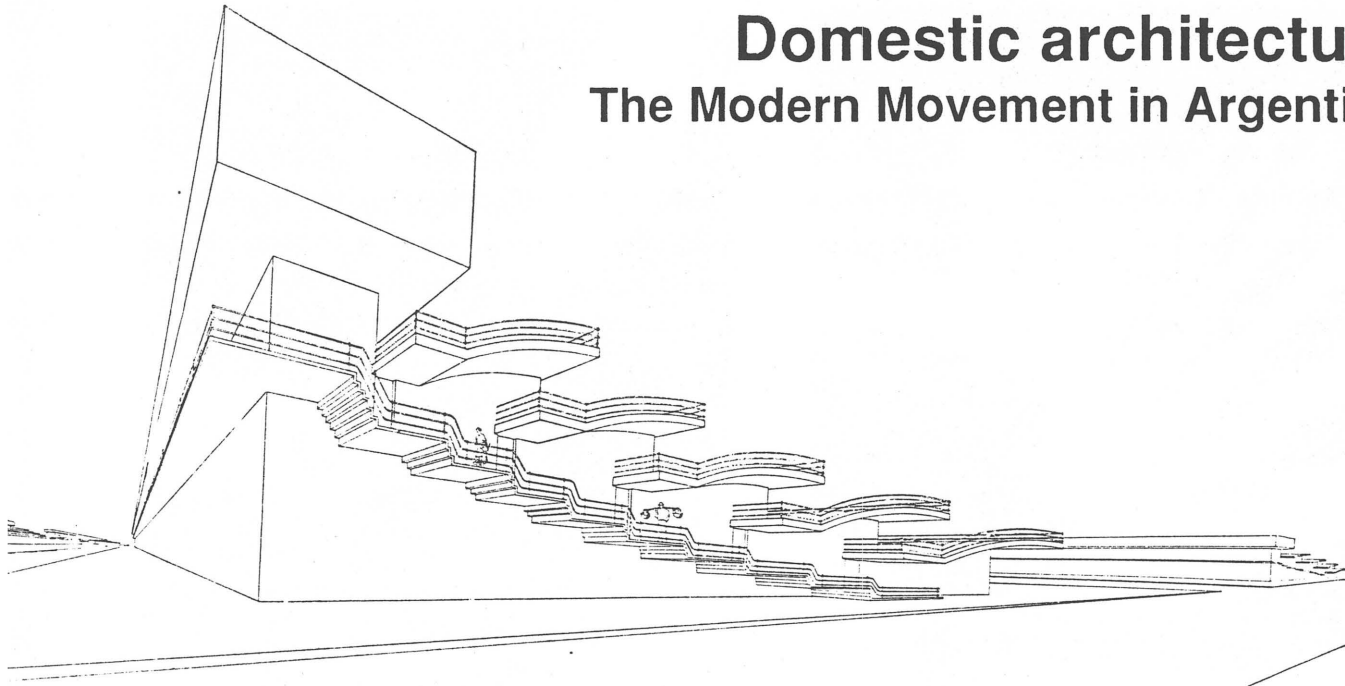
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Domestic architecture

The Modern Movement in Argentina



by Mabel M. Scarone

'I have just received an album containing excellent pictures of your house by the Rupenhorn [...]
At the time when you invited me to visit you, (the house) was not yet quite finished. I do not know if I told you then how very much the terraces pleased me, the bare facade with the narrow corner pierced by the windows which resemble strips of crystal. And then comes the greenery, the plants, mingling with the white of the facade... the hall where a wall of glass wafers down like a handkerchief and dissolves into the floor and then passes over with the terrace into the green foliage. I stood motionless between the white walls, looking at the sky, the water and the greenery and thought of my legendary America. We love these new houses above all things... If you one day have the coastline (of the River Plate) from Vicente Lopez to Tigre before your eyes, then you will agree with what I am saying. Morand, who visited us last year, declared that our country was the country of airplanes, but it is also the country of new houses [...]

Thank you very much, Eric Mendelsohn for your album. Your new house always makes me call to mind a line of Claudel: Autour de mon palais, dit le roi, j'ai mis un anneau de ciel.'

Excerpt from a letter of the Argentine journalist and writer Victoria Ocampo to Eric Mendelsohn, early 1930s.

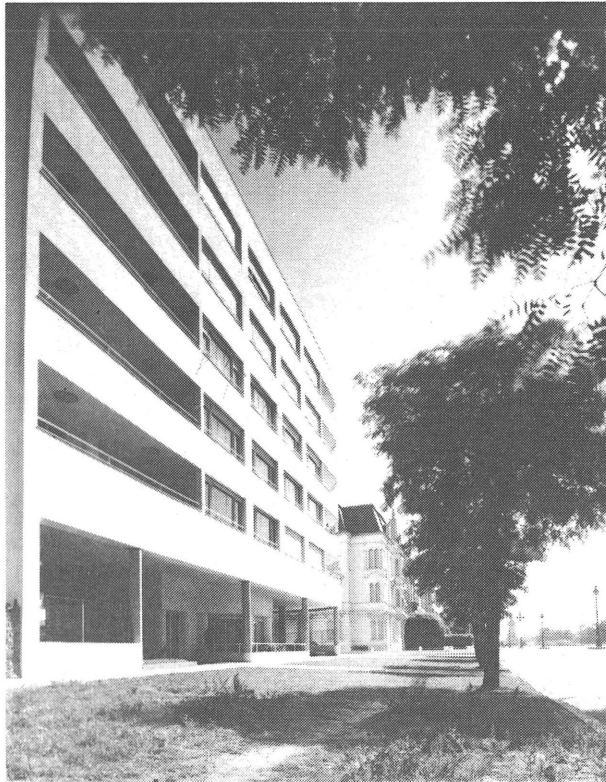
Victoria Ocampo's letter of appraisal for Mendelsohn's home by the Rupenhorn, above the Havel, written in a time when attacks from many European critics called for Amédée Ozenfant's defence (*Neues Haus - Neue Welt* - Berlin 1932), speaks clearly of the convictions and strength of the Modern Movement in Argentina in the mid-1930s and of the early links with the European avant-garde. The early relations with the German industry have paved the way for Germany's important engineering firms to settle in Argentina. Such was the case of the *Compañía Transatlántica de Electricidad* and a branch of the *Berlin Allgemeine Elektrische Gesellschaft* (1899), soon to be followed by others such as *Philip Holzmann* from Frankfurt-am-Main (1907) and *Wayss & Freitag* from Neustadt-am-Hardt. These enterprises were fundamental in the development and use of reinforced concrete structures, together with the establishment of cultural and technical ties with advanced groups of engineers and architects in different parts of Germany between 1900 and 1920.

Three volumes

A summarized cross section of the architectural situation in the 1930s will show not only the depth but also the cultural extension that the Modern Movement had achieved in covering the majority of important urban and rural areas of Argentina, before the Second World War.

The movement can be studied in three volumes of production, which cover:

a) The residential buildings designed for an intellectual *elite*, familiar with the avant-garde in Europe. Such is the case with Victoria Ocampo



and her circle of painters, writers and architects, well acquainted with the founding fathers of the Modern Movement.

b) A vast amount of lower middle class and working class housing, mostly built by contractors (again of German origin) and politically committed architects, linked to international socialist movements. They were to build social mass housing complexes that show explicit similarities with European contemporary models.

c) Finally, the very few examples -almost laboratory research production- of far reaching professionals who, too advanced in their proposals for the time and the country's technical background, became a center of discussion and their projects a hothouse for new ideas, to be developed by future architects.

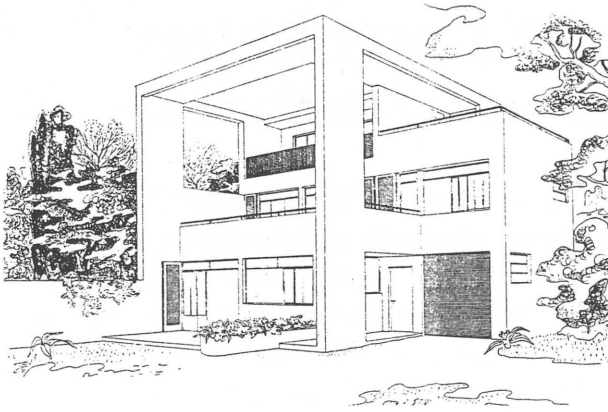
Change of attitude

The first noticeable difference in the comparison between all examples and their early European counterparts is the high quality of construction, both structural and in detail, having well withstood more than fifty years of use, in spite of a lack of proper maintenance in many cases. A key to understand this fortunate situation with a view towards appropriate conservation procedures, lies in the first class training received by engineers, architects, builders and masons in the use of the new materials and the adoption of practice and methods that had, almost overnight, changed the traditional masonry building practice and even replaced, to a great extent, the British legacy of ironwork that remained unrivalled until the turn of the century. The important private and governmental

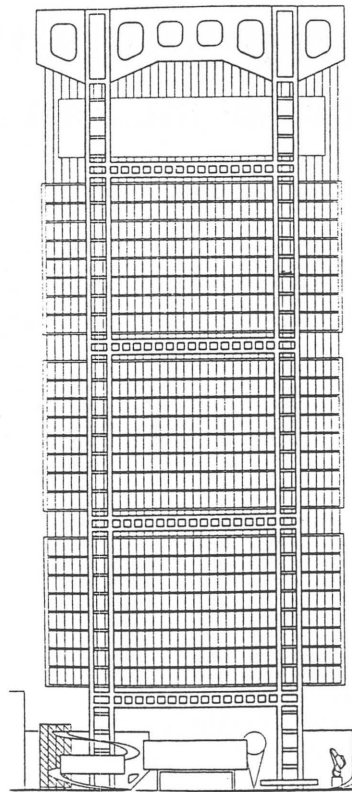
undertakings that were meant to turn Argentina into a modern republic began in the early 1890s, together with the economic boom which lasted until the end of the First World War. The above mentioned German building companies became crucial during this time of technical change, which was taking place in Europe and that, due to the important building programs going on in Buenos Aires, Bahia Blanca, Rosario, Mendoza and other provincial capitals of Argentina, were almost immediately used under the direct supervision of important professionals from Europe. Such is the case for instance with Hans Hertlein of Berlin. The need to use, for economic reasons, local manpower, made the German organizations decide to set up training courses that were to change the attitudes, ways of thinking and operating in matters of design and construction. This situation became a starting point for Modern Movement architecture in Argentina, ripe for change after thirty years of foremost technical experience concerning concrete structures.

Gropius standard

A no less important aspect were the new attitudes and concepts concerned with *comfort* and *function* which had been developed by the English Arts & Crafts movement and Herman Muthesius. The compact plan of domestic prototypes built for managers and employees of both British and German enterprises in Argentina at the end of the century, together with the elaborated planning of kitchens and bathrooms, gave way to a general public aspiration. It was to be found at large in the propositions of the design for a *Minimal Wohnung*.



Far left: Flats in Buenos Aires, developed in the 1930s. Left: A private house in Mar del Plata, designed by Amacio Williams. Top: Drawing by Wladimiro Acosta for an experimental mass housing complex. Right: The suspended construction of Williams' office block (1940). Previous page: A housing complex by Williams (1943).



The first built prototypes, by architects such as Walter Gropius and Frank Moller (two houses in Vicente Lopez) and by builders of German origin, like Zinndorf, Wunsche, Klein and others, firmly established the *Gropius Standard* in the country. An important fact, noticed at the beginning of this summary, is that the rationalist architecture ran through all levels of the social hierarchy of Argentina of the 1930s and 40s. It is a matter of pure logic that Victoria Ocampo's new house was the first to scandalize the French minded local architectural circles. Her house in Palermo, designed by the architect Bustillo, became the gathering place of the intellectuals of the new movement, not only locally but also globally, such as Le Corbusier.

Architects such as Alberto Prebrisch and Antonio Vilar were definitely two outstanding figures of the Modern Movement, with remarkable designs including private houses and flats. Yet they were not alone, since other pioneers such as Leon Dourge, Hector Morixe, Sanchez, Lagos y de la Torre would change the appearance of Buenos Aires and other cities in Argentina. Theirs was a cultural approach that used the new concepts and principles of architecture to solve the problems of a new society.

Laboratory of ideas

Master builders with more modest aims in mind such as comfort and hygiene -also because it was fashionable in higher circles- used the expanding suburbs of Florida, Olivos, Leon Suarez and Villa Ballester as a testing ground for detached housing types that witness the impact on the user of the

much publicized benefits of a *new architecture*. The benefits were real since these types were definitely more appropriate to a modern society than the old colonial housing inheritance with large rooms and scant services, cold in winter and totally non-functional by present standards. Architects such as Fermín Beretervide and Wladimiro Acosta -both committed to international socialist movements- are relevant to exemplify mass housing examples that echo the *Siedlung* solutions. Appropriate and thoughtful plans for prototypes and their combinations can be found in the Helios study by Acosta, who was born in Russia. Last, but not the least, a lonely but stout fighter for the principles of the Modern Movement and its overall design, Amancio Williams, should be remembered as well. Strict in the interpretations and the appraisal of the founding documents of the new architectural and planning ideas -written and built, as well as a personal acquaintance with Le Corbusier- his studio turned out to be a laboratory of ideas and advanced proposals that still hold a spell for new generations, especially in view of the present developments seen in current architecture. To illustrate this point, two examples of references: his 1940 proposal for an office building in Buenos Aires that parallels with Foster's for Hong Kong and his Concert Hall and Arts Exhibition Centre, a proposal well before Le Corbusier's Pavilion in the Brussels Fair.

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An unnoticed but authentic revolution

The vicissitudes of modern architecture in Mexico

The division of contemporary architectural history into study periods is a matter of debate. A strict interpretation may infer, that modern or contemporary architecture appeared as such after World War I, when avant-garde movements such as cubism, expressionism and abstract art were consolidated artistic languages. The increase in technology, the extension of education and the appearance of new communication and entertainment media resulted in radical changes in customs. These events, that stipulated some significant international developments, coincide with the turning points in recent Mexican history. The architectural vanguard movement arrived just after the Mexican Revolution, to reach a high point in the 1960s.

by Victor Jiménez

'Non delle forme di tutto ciò intendevano parlare, ma di tutto quanto esse nascondo.'

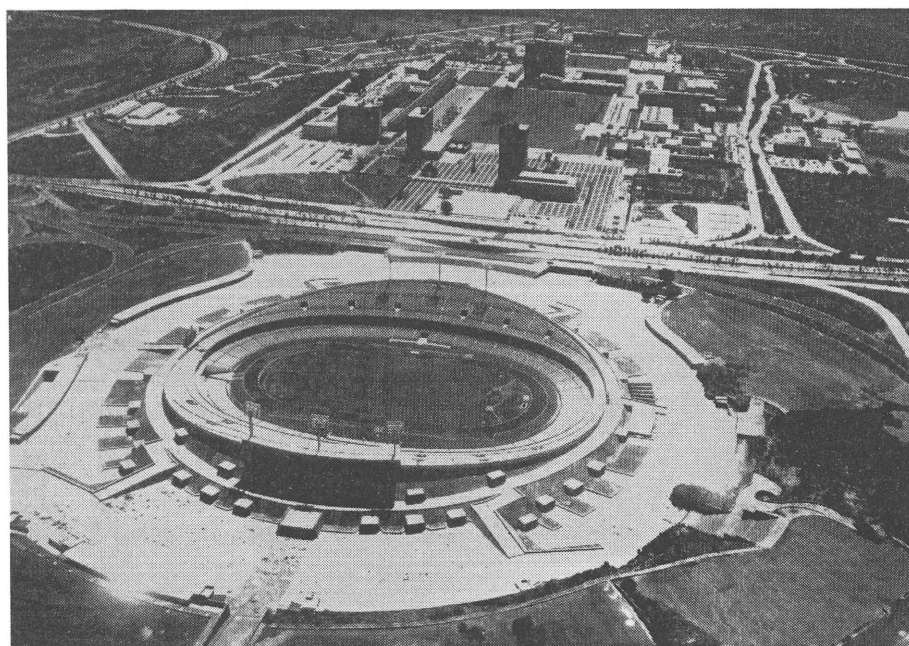
Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco dal Co
in *Architettura Contemporanea* (1976)

Precedents to the radical social changes of the *Interbellum* may be found back in the 18th Century in the increasing secularization of social life, the American and French revolutions, and the industrial revolution. In architecture, the projects of Ledoux Boullée and others make for a singular case in art history. When Emil Kaufmann compared in 1993 the two authors mentioned in the title of his book (*From Ledoux to Le Corbusier*) it makes us wonder which painter or musician of the 18th Century could be related to Kandinsky or Stravinsky. It is not the same to study an artistic expression through the first manifestations of change, which are not always perceptible, as to

study the tangible results of a consummated transformation.

Let us propose, however, the end of World War I as a moment of consolidated transformation and the starting point for our approach to the problem. That moment was a unique occurrence in history, a time when the point was to turn away from history. Anybody then could identify the characteristic aspects of modern art and architecture as easily contrasting with previous movements.

The new architectural language, which became known as the Modern Movement, extended throughout the world for half a century after the 1920s and 30s. When this movement suffered the crisis that led to postmodernism of the 1970s a new cycle began for architecture, and also apparently for all other artistic and cultural expressions. The interesting thing about this



Period photo of the Olympic Stadium at *Ciudad Universitaria* (University City), designed by Augusto Perez Palacios, Raúl Salinas Moro and Jorge Bravo Jimenez in 1952. It was hailed by prominent figures like Frank Lloyd Wright and Diego Rivera.

second and recent artistic revolution is that it favors the reinclusion of history in architectural and artistic creation, if only in an ironic, irreverent and critical form, radically different from the ingenuous academic posture of 19th Century historicism. The previous scheme, valid from an international point of view, peculiarly coincides with correlated Mexican events: The end of World War I corresponds to the end of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. The old liberal regime of the 19th Century turned conservative under Porfirio Díaz, and identified itself with an architecture that expressed that social and economic program with great perfection. It incorporated and indeed subordinated Mexico to the notion of European and North American cultural and economic progress. The new social projects fostered by revolutionary governments in the 1920s found that those regions provided them with a innovating architectural movement that sought to take some distance from the past. Authentic revolutions went unnoticed at first, before they became visible on the facades and in the streets. Experiments were carried out with new building typologies, materials and construction techniques, which led to formal transformations.

These invisible cause-and-effect phenomena and the lack of adjustments involved, oblige historians to plan an analysis strategy where it becomes impossible to understand the most obvious transformations as simple sequences of themes in time. The suggested simplification, however, may prove useful after all.

A political and architectural revolution

The architectural avant-garde appeared in the United States and in some European countries after World War I, and in Mexico after the revolution. Even in those countries a transition

The library of University City of 1953 was designed by Juan O'Gorman, Gustavo Saavedra and Juan Martínez de Velasco. The colorful mosaics on the facade reflect Mexico's turbulent history. Photo: Wessel de Jonge.



period was necessary at times, such as *Art Deco*, which forms are a geometric derivation from Viennese *Art Nouveau*, and above all from Josef Hofmann's *Palais Stoclet* (1905-1911). *Art Deco* became widely known after 1925, when Charles Plumet organized in Paris the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs* that gave the movement its name. The *Art Deco* fashion had the advantage of being easily adaptable to several architectural styles. In Mexico City it was first used in its cosmopolitan version by Carlos Obregón Santacilia to decorate the interior of the *Banco de México*¹ (1926) and to build the Public Health Secretariat. In the 1930s two important buildings became prime examples of *Art Deco*: The insurance company *La Nacional* by Manuel Ortiz Monasterio and Bernardo Calderón, and the Palace of Fine Arts, finished by Federico Mariscal.

The *Colonia Hipódromo*, a neighborhood developed after 1925, boasted many constructions in this style. The *Ermita* Building (1930) by Juan Segura combines a movie theater, apartments and shops in an almost expressionist and futuristic version of *Art Deco*. He developed another variant of this style, vaguely reminiscent of nationalist and neocolonial architectures, in the neighboring *Isabel* Building (1929). Incidentally, both buildings are very popular nowadays, as are the *San Martín* and the *Tehuacán* Buildings (1931) by José Buenostro in the *Colonia Hipódromo*. Francisco J. Serrano, originally an engineer, designed a series of *Art Deco* buildings, such as the *Anáhuac* (1932). By the end of the 1930s, after attending the architecture faculty, he switched to a more abstract and avant-garde language inspired by Mendelsohn. Examples of this are the *Encanto* Movie Theater (1937), the *Acro* Building (1939) and his biggest success, the *Basurto* Apartment Building (1942).

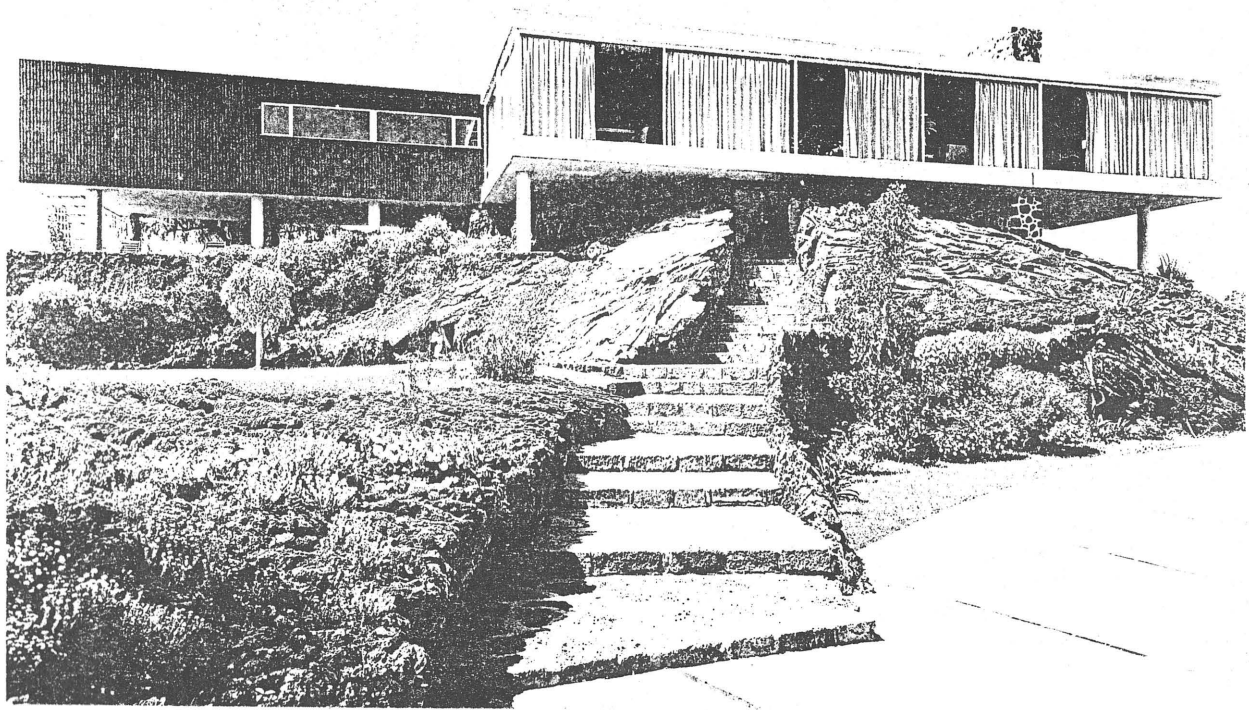


Image of prosperity

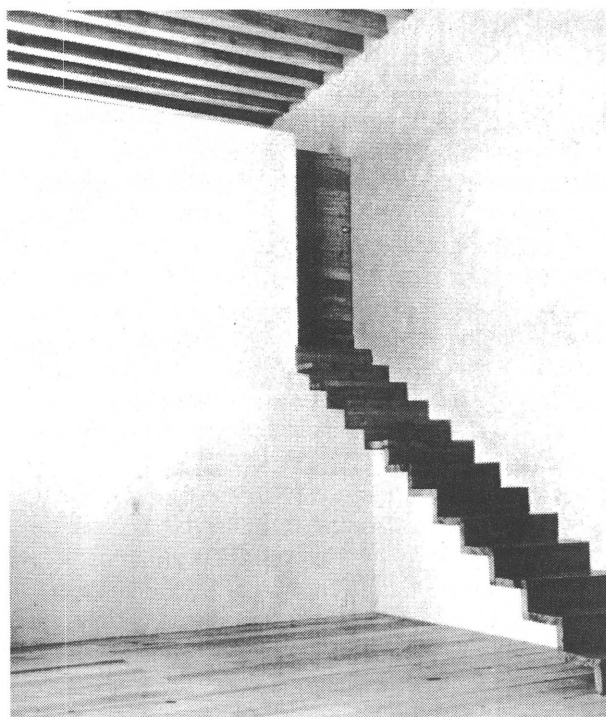
Attempts to create a national architecture of either indigenous or colonial roots existed since the end of the 19th Century, and the post-revolutionary nationalist context reinforced the trend. It was limited, however, to a series of trials that affected only the decoration of buildings whose structural and spatial scheme was anything but preHispanic or colonial. The State adopted this language for some, institutional buildings such as the *Benito Juárez School* (1923) of Carlos Obregón Santacilia, colonial in style. The centric districts of the city became invaded with carved stone and tezontle² pastiches, a trend which in a way is continued even to this day. In neighborhoods like *Roma Sur*, *Lomas* and *Polanco*³, local imitations of the Hollywood-favored California Colonial style ranged from austere Italian-like facades to intricate carved stone door- and window-frames. It was in the midst of these neocolonial and *Art Deco* architectures, enriched by their various combinations that the first examples of unadorned architecture appeared around 1930, imposing the new international language of abstract cubism, which was heavily conditioned by the revolution in construction technology occurring at the time. Very soon intellectualized architects abandoned decorative fashions to their conformist peers, and modern architecture spread rapidly. Juan O'Gorman, Enrique Yañez and José Villagrán adopted a militant and combative posture. For three of four decades the triumph of functionalism or rationalist architecture seemed unquestionable, for it accompanied the consolidation of the post-revolutionary state and the bourgeoisie that led the country through a period of lasting economic and political stability, which was aided

by external conditions. Mexican cities filled with public administration and private sector buildings reflecting an image of prosperity which may have been insufficient, but seemed highly promising from 1930 to 1960. Many schools, hospitals, office and apartment buildings, movie theaters and shops were built during that period. When examining photographs of the neighborhoods built in those years throughout the country one is surprised by the homogeneity of their architecture, their relatively good quality, and the beauty of the streets.

An era of economic stability

José Villagrán, who began his career in *Art Deco* with the National Stadium (1924) and the *Popotla Sanitary Farm* (1925), converted to the new unadorned architecture with the zeal of a spiritual guide. For decades, most Mexican architects attended his course on Theory of Architecture and learned there was only one way to create architecture. A profoundly religious man, Villagrán adopted all the ideas that had advocated a relationship between ethics and aesthetics since the 19th Century. He followed the principles of Louis Sullivan (form follows function) and Adolf Loos (ornament is a crime) in a candid way that ignored to what extent aesthetic preferences blind even those critics who claim not to have any. Though he was not the only one to preach these doctrines, no one in the 20th Century influenced Mexican architecture as much as he did. The *Huipulco* (1929), *Cardiology* (1937) and *Gea González* (1942) hospitals he designed are especially noteworthy; incidentally, this architectural theme exemplified his postulates admirably. His influence coincides with the ample diffusion of

Left: One of the houses in the *Pedregal*, designed by Francisco Artigas in 1955.
 Right: Interior of Luis Barragán's private house of 1947. The *modern* theme of space-in-time is represented by the 'floating' staircase and the half-high partition, while the application of local materials reflect a vernacular interpretation of modernity.



the architecture of Le Corbusier and of the Bauhaus. A contemporary of Villagrán, Enrique del Moral was a talented adapter of the modern architectural language to local conditions, as can be appreciated in some of his work in Guanajuato in 1936 and in the state of Morelos a few years later. Without abdicating from the abstract rigor of functionalism, he opened the way for a definitely Mexican-inspired architecture with two houses built in San Angel⁴, one for Carlos Tejeda (1943) and the other for José Iturbe (1946), both of which have now been demolished. In these projects he became the precursor of all picturesque suggestions and relied on large closed volumes with rendered walls, reminiscent in any case of popular *adobe* architecture. It is very possible that the site where these houses were located suggested this type of solution to Del Moral. He was incapable of making easy concessions to non-contemporary architectural languages, yet he was very sensitive to the virtues of popular Mexican architecture, as he demonstrated in the primary school he designed in Casacuarán, Guanajuato, in 1946. His own house, began in 1947 in the traditional neighborhood of *Tacubaya* in Mexico City, was a recapitulation of the ideas present in his previous designs. An increasing influence of Dutch neoplasticism and of Richard Neutra's work is also evident. This trend was simultaneously explored by Luis Barragán (who was also Del Moral's neighbor) who had developed similar tendencies in Jalisco, with a more direct influence from traditional roots. It must not be forgotten that Le Corbusier worked in Northern Africa since the 1930s, cultivating a certain 'Mediterranean' sensibility. During the 1940s, the influence of Richard Neutra's architecture in Los

Angeles also became very important. Some urbanizations like the *Pedregal* in Mexico City, dating from the late 1940s, may be defined as an infinite number of variations on Neutra's themes: Large spans of concrete support slabs concealed in walls, glass walls, and structures resting on dramatically exhibited rocks. Del Moral also collaborated with Mario Pani, a rival of Villagrán's who was trained in Paris and owed little to the great *maestro*. Pani exerted great influence through a magazine that published his work along with national and international novelties. He also gave considerable impulse to urbanism, an activity that became highly prestigious after the 1920s and at a certain point threatened to absorb architecture completely. Some very ambitious projects were drawn then, although few of them were ever carried out. The layout of several neighborhoods such as the *Colonia Hipódromo*, *Las Lomas*, the *Pedregal* and *Ciudad Satélite*, urban compounds like *Ciudad Universitaria* and numerous housing units reflected the new urbanistic principles. However, urban growth of Mexican cities still followed the course it had had for the previous hundred years. General urban growth plans were nonexistent, and urban authorities barely controlled the private real estate sector.

University City

The economic context of the mid-20th Century was particularly favorable to the flourishing of architects like Mario Pani. In a brief period he built huge housing units such as the *Multifamiliar Alemán* (1948), the *Multifamiliar Benito Juárez* (1950), and finally the *Nonoalco Tlaltelolco* Housing Unit (1962). His most important project was perhaps the National Music Conservatory (1946) where he

managed a fortunate combination of functionalism's ideas and composition schemes derived from the *École des Beaux-Arts*. One of the most ambitious government sponsored building projects was that of *Ciudad Universitaria* in 1950. All the consecrated architects of the time, as well as many younger professionals, participated in the creation of a heterogeneous complex that manages to convey a sense of unity. Of all the buildings designed there, the Olympic stadium -by lesser known architects Augusto Pérez Palacios, Raúl Salinas Moro and Jorge Bravo Jiménez- is perhaps the best known and most admired structure, hailed by figures like Diego Rivera and Frank Lloyd Wright:

'It rises from the ground with the same potent logic as the volcanic cones that form the landscape where it stands; its main apparent material is basalt, taken from the eruption of the closest of these volcanic cones. Its overall shape is only comparable to the volcanoes themselves; it is an architectural crater'. -Diego Rivera.

'The stadium of the University of Mexico is precisely Mexican. Several of the structures that form *Ciudad Universitaria* are up to par with Mexico's remarkable architecture and grand traditions. The first of these is the stadium. Here Mexico's great antique traditions do honor to modern times. Yet this structure is not an imitation. It is an authentic creation and it will rightfully be considered as part of great present and future architecture'. -Frank Lloyd Wright.

International recognition

Augusto H. Alvarez, Juan Sordo Madaleno, Ramón Torres and others interpreted the theme of the glass facade skyscraper that became obligatory in every city of the world. Although he kept away from government projects, Luis Barragán worked closely together with developers since the late 1940s. He participated in the layout of several neighborhoods (*Jardines del Pedregal*, *Ciudad Satélite*, *Las Arboledas*) with remarkable works of urban ornamentation that became publicity symbols for new developments, as was the case with the *Satélite Towers*, designed with Matias Goeritz in 1957. In his native Jalisco, Barragán's first designs were loosely related to a Mediterranean-inspired *Art Deco*, taken from Ferdinand Bac. He used arches and tile roofs, slender columns, fountains and small windows in an austere style, entirely devoid of applied decoration. When he moved to Mexico City in the late 1930s, he adhered to a Le Corbusier-inspired cubism, as did most architects of his generation. He developed a large number of houses and apartment buildings in the *Colonia Hipódromo* and *Condesa* that do not stand out from other constructions of that period. At the end of the 1940s, however, he experimented with a partial return to his first style, now infected by his work in

avant-garde architecture. He returned to rough textures, but discarded tiled roofs (although he continued to use wooden beams) and symmetrical layouts; he carefully incorporated large windows, while keeping to strategically placed, minuscule openings. Together with Le Corbusier (double height spaces, large floor-to-ceiling windows, the narrow overhanging staircase, the *promenade architecturale*) and Dutch neoplasticism (opening of the volumes to the planes that compose them), his influences were now monastic and rural architecture.

For the next twenty-five years he devoted himself to the realization of a handful of extraordinary projects that made him the author of the only Mexican architecture to attain international attention in this century. His house (built in 1947 and continually transformed during the 1950s) became both a manifesto and a classic. He later built the *Prieto House*, (1950), the *Capuchinas Chapel* (1952-1955), the *Gálvez House* (1955), the *Egerström House* (1967, in collaboration with Andrés Casillas) and the *Gilardi House* (1972). Barragán's success made many to follow in his steps, with various degrees of success.

End of first act

Félix Candela developed a technology for building light concrete shells of great aesthetic and technical interest, as exemplified in the church of El Altíllio (1956, in collaboration with Enrique de la Mora). As an architect of Spanish origin, he added an international flavor to Mexican architecture from 1949 to 1970. The application of reinforced concrete in very thin shells made his work innovative, not only in technical terms, saving material in large-span construction, but just as well in aesthetical terms - and world famous at the same time.

As well known, of course, is Pedro Ramírez Vázquez's design for the National Anthropology Museum (1964), which, with its outstanding collection, became one of Mexico City's reference points of Modern Movement architecture. Yet, the first symptoms of a crisis appeared in the 1960s. It is relatively clear today, that the first act of Modern Movement architecture in Mexico was then drawing to an end.

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Notes:

1. Except when otherwise indicated all buildings mentioned are in Mexico City.
2. *Tezontle* is a volcanic rock used in construction since prehispanic times.
3. *Roma Sur*, *Lomas* and *Polanco* are neighborhoods in Mexico City developed during the 1930s and 40s.
4. San Angel is a former colonial village, now part of Mexico City.

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