

ENGLISH

English translation by Paula Olmos

The purpose of form

Miguel Ángel Baldellou

The taxi driver told me it was difficult to say where the entrance was. It was not a trivial remark. He was talking about a "thing" which was a work of architecture. He would never have said the same about a "thing" which would have happened to be an sculpture, for example.

It was not any "temporal structure". Nor a "falla".

It was, and everybody knew it in advance, one of the most important works in the history of recent architecture, it was probably trumpeting some future style. Thanks to it, the world would know about the City. Even in America, people would be able to find it on a world map. The city would be "promoted" and would join the circuits of the most demanding cultural offer. An alien culture, though, unexpected and even obtained by means of residual funding. Nevertheless, the very material cost of the operation guaranteed its own galactic rentability.

It was widely acknowledged that the quality of the architectural work was guaranteed by "one of the world's best architects", famous for some of his works and other difficult to realize projects. He had even been laureate with "the Nobel Prize".

The aim and basis of all those forms remained unclear, though. But it was not necessary to understand them. This difficulty, could even enhance the project's "originality", its singularity. The forms would be considered a kind of logo, which would define the city's own personality and relate to the strange "Institution" which financed the operation.

I had already heard similar commentaries in other cities, related to other recent and also "surprising" interventions. Most of them museums. But, more and more frequently, this "surprise" factor was becoming somewhat of a shocking component for the users. And determined a kind of "visual weariness" directly proportional to the singularity of the form.

But, if the purpose of the form cannot be understood, if the initial astonishment

provoked by any progressive proposal cannot finish, then Form tends to its own purpose. It becomes a self-purpose.

If our world is running out of ideological, moral, economic and formal resources, it is probably due to the dreary state of a civilization which observes its own finale. As it usually happens in this kind of process, it experiences a disorder consisting in a return to childhood. The materialization of the signs of identity has always been the aim of architecture, and for the architect, this has always been his main challenge. He is an interpreter of an ideal, and when this happens not to exist, the result is just the absurd and senseless. Sometimes, just personal resistance.

When none of it is involved in the problem, the solution is always erratic. Any solution. If architecture is basically, according to its formal conception, an over-determined question, the lack of particular solutions makes of the problem an insoluble one. That is the reason of the importance assumed in some cases by concepts as the "site", the "programme", the "idea" or simply the "formal will" of the author.

In this sense, the determination of the author of "Discourse about the Cubic Form" is as formal as Scharoun's standpoint. The "mystic" and "acoustic" basis, respectively, of these two authors gives place, in both of them, to an autonomous form. Mendelsohn's formal resources, applied in his *Einsturmturm* are similar to those used by Shöckel, which determined his personal trademark. Which is also apparent in his American synagogues.

Helpless, on their own, abandoned in their search for an ideal by the Institutions which should undertake it, the architects face reality as a simple mirror. A mirror which gives us, in return, our own deformed image, the monstrous likeness of our own collective unconscious. Always our crisis, always our deficiencies. Historically accustomed to play against everybody, they take the initiative and thus, risks which are not their own. That is

why I tend, more and more frequently, to insist on the necessary moral authority as our last and probably only possible resource. The insistence of some artists, whose proposals are simply enormous banalities, on their formalistic capacity, have led them to observe the convenience of a discreet retirement in order to essay a deeper study of the form.

A "dyslexic form" is replacing, in this troubled end of the century, its own contents. The absence of a purpose of the form, something so inscrutable, is determining that the form itself should be the purpose without representing either the form of that purpose.

The deviation provoked by the application, after the Second World War, of the laws of capitalism to architecture, implied the inner disintegration of the rational form promoted by a formalistic rationalism originated in intellectual effort. "Release the tension", this could have been the motto of the adjustment plan. But this resulted in the smooth and agreeable landing of the immense majority, welcomed by the market as useful experts in selling the new products. Nevertheless, when one visits the 1957 Interbau and compares it with the 1987 IBA, the nostalgia of our recent past becomes irresistible. The comparison between both operations indicates how the collective resistance has been transformed, at best, in individual survival. How the descent towards the abyss has been determined. How the formal efficiency has been relegated to a few altars dedicated to clonic Golden Calves.

The strong law of Form has been replaced by a weak and workable law. Like the bonds, forms are nowadays in the Stock Market. The most competent merchants in speculation obtain the best benefits without creating real goods. They just obtain illusion. But they are not magicians, nor priests. Architecture and Mysticism tried long ago to guess the relationship between Number and Geometry making of Form the logical consequence of both. But the ideological character of this operation became the main impediment for its consistency. From the very beginning, the origin of form has been something explored in order to obtain a categorization of the apparent which could legitimate the most diverse results. The artificial segregation of the poles of Reason and Form has had as a consequence the inescapable separation of the criteria determining both options. This separation becomes the origin of a perverted designing process just based on the image, when this image should generate reason, against which this ideology just justifies the resulting form. Thus, our culture has given place to diverse Rationalisms and Formalisms always conceived as opposed options.

Few arguments have been so much assumed and accepted by our subconscious system as the idea, propelled by an ingenuous functionalism, that function is the only reason and that this implies the necessary and sufficient relationship between reason and architectural form.

A series of internal contradictions determined by the trivial use of these terms,



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reason, form and function, has perverted the architectural "thought" of the last years to such an extent that it seems impossible to redefine problems from this perspective. Because, the core of the debate, seems to have been displaced towards the margins in a move which benefits manipulation. Architectural Form and Reason are, consequently, the theme of all those newcomers from the marketing or the magazine journalism world, who play with a virtual reality created for the purpose. Once the limits between the coherence of form and reason (unnecessary by themselves) sufficiently blurred, we join a new context of senseless references which permits the maintenance of an alienated, not self-conceited, Form which has no need of a *raison d'être*.

The individual and isolated efforts employed in an attempt to dominate Form (those exerted by Mies or Kahn, just to mention two apparently distant examples, in designing their objects) have become pointless nowadays, in a world which has extensively decided to accept stupidity as the norm.

The problem is not an exaggerated conception of the autonomy of Form. No, the Formalistic passion which affected in the same way all those who tried to reduce form to its own essence and those who were dragged by its residues, and which produced disturbing and efficient results which went from silence

and absence to audible convulsions, is being widely attacked nowadays. The vulgarization of the designing process cannot maintain its melodramatic course. We are witnessing and old phenomenon which, nevertheless, seems to be more and more powerful each day.

The old denounce of such diverse people as Goya and Erasmus is, nowadays, pronounced with a weary voice which assumes the enormous and unmanageable power of the adversary.

The foolish insanity denounced by the Rotterdam author by means of a lucid eulogy of the very stupidity, seems to have culminated its swallowing of the social body. We should, nevertheless, demand from the most responsible the assumption of the role of that child who was brave enough to point out the nakedness of the stupid and conceited King who rode his horse showing "his shame" in public. The Biblical bowl of lentils has, anyway, been accepted. The price is not important (Shaw knew what he said). There will be no child at the parade, or, worse, he will have been instructed to act in an appropriate way when the medals of complicity would be granted. The acceptance of these medals will imply the loss of the moral authority or the innocence required to point out the shame.

I am not criticizing any resulting Form, but a way of formalizing.

It is bad form. ■

"Good guys and bad guys": The pioneer's treason

Manuel de Prada

"In Architecture, Palladio means game. It is something great. But just a few can appreciate it nowadays, because you need hard training to master and savour such a game. This game cannot be disappointing. Tricks are not concealed. And this implies a constant intellectual struggle. If this struggle becomes too strenuous, the game fails. You cannot trust luck either because you are dealing with such a complicated machinery that it seems impossible to manage not being a Jones or a Wren. So it is a great game, an ennobling game".
Edwin Lutyens: letter to Herbert Baker (1903)

"Gothic was soon understood... to be a design system that went from in to outside, in opposition to the Classical model that went from out to inside. In other words, a Gothic architect bore in mind the spatial needs, the building's programme, the exterior aspect and prospect when designing a facade, while the Classical one was just thinking on the facade itself. Symmetry and balance were tyrants for him... the

period in which Norman Shaw's professional career was at its peak was more of a Gothic than a Classical period... Later on, Georgian Classicism would come to fashion corrupting even the great Lutyens".

Charles Annesley Voysey, in "Architectural Review". 1930

How is it possible for two acknowledged pioneers of architecture to maintain such different standpoints? The answer is even more complicated if we talk about history and critique, instead of constraining ourselves to our architectural discipline. Lutyens' and Voysey's architectures were not so different but, while Voysey's arguments complied with the "official version" and are, even today, widely and easily accepted, Lutyens' viewpoint is completely opposed to it and has never been analyzed in a proper way.

If we want to undertake a deeper examination of this problem, we must try to do it from two different perspectives: theoretical (sometimes mixed with the moral and ideologic) and disciplinary.

We will have, then, to enter the intricate territory of architectural critique.

Lutyens' Polemics.

Lutyens' statements, pronounced when he was 34, displayed just one single aspect of his architecture. This particular feature could even be presented separately from its own context, as Butler did in order to vindicate Heathcote.

If we accept Lutyens' words about "Palladio's ennobling game" literally, the conclusion is: Lutyens was a classical architect who tried to stretch up to the twentieth century the English Baroque style best known as "Wrenaissance", "Edwardian Baroque" or "Grand Manner". In such a case, Lutyens' architecture would be something completely disconnected from the progressive line drawn by Pevsner (and Giedeon), going from Voysey and Mackintosh to Gropius and Le Corbusier. This kind of interpretation has been accepted for decades, and we have a clear example of this attitude in Alison and Peter Smithson's statement: "Lutyens took the wrong way". ("RIBA Journal". April 1969. "The Responsibility of Lutyens").

In any case, during the first sixties, some voices came to question this generally accepted view. Robert Venturi, for example, included five of Lutyens' works in "Complexity and Contradiction in architecture" recommending their complex and rich approach full of suggestion and meaning.

Some years later, on the occasion of Lutyens' centenary, Venturi and Denise Scott Brown dared to oppose the Smithsons' mentioned article with another one "Learning from Lutyens" (RIBA Journal. Summer 1969) in which they tried to "celebrate Lutyens' talent and the unique significance of his work nowadays".

Their appraisal was so passionate that in the Spanish edition (Tusquets) someone decided to minimize it by adding a prologue by the architect David Mackay in which he warned us about the "spoiled child" that was Lutyens whose defective education had transformed into "an immature, independent and dogmatic man, restricting his own creativity to the use of a simply poetic, formalistic and well known language... It is evident, said Mackay, that he had enough skills and a particular ability to dominate that artificial language, but one must sadly agree with the opinion of the Smithsons that his was a wasted talent". It was surprising to learn, just a few pages later, that Venturi and Scott maintained that opinions like that of the Smithsons (and logically Mackay's) were just the outcome of a "a particular reading of recent history in terms of good guys versus bad guys". This could have been an appropriate attitude in the heroic period of modern architecture, "a time in which confusion was despised, in which answers were ready", but not today.

The radical opposition between the Smithsons and Mackay's opinion and Venturi and Scott's viewpoint, was a new example of the gap produced between the theoreticians of "Modern" and "Functional" architecture, like Muthesius and Pevsner and other, not so literary architects that had written less and built much more.

It is rather significant that, in 1930, when Nikolaus Pevsner arrived in England he should be immediately asked to deliver his opinion on the architecture of "the Great Lutyens". It could not be otherwise: Lutyens was an architect that made use of pilasters, columns, basements... elements that "I particularly disliked" and which "determined that my first impression about Lutyens' architecture should be so disgusting". Pevsner did not mention Lutyens in "Pioneers of Modern Design" (1936) nor in "Outline of European Architecture" (1943) and he just made a brief remark about him in "Origins of Modern architecture and design" (1968) saying that "he was an architect with a brilliant talent who went stray from the progressive movement, going back to that 'Grand Manner' initiated by Norman Shaw in 1890".

But, even before Pevsner, other supporters of Modern and Functional architecture, like Muthesius, had already been shocked by the fact that many of the so considered "pioneers" made use of classical motifs and regular schemes in their residential designs, accepting "the cold embrace of Classicism" instead of keeping themselves "away from the strict and obstinate Italian architecture, from Classical orders and the obsession about geometry."

But the acceptance of the Classical "ennobling game" on the part of Lutyens or Shaw, was not produced by any ideological commitment. It was just an approach to the most traditional English forms; to the schemes of the great 18th century architects, the schemes of their admired Sir Christopher Wren. It was not contradictory for them to assume in a single move the medieval forms

and the English Classical schemes. Both belonged to the same tradition. In fact, Lutyens and Shaw had no objection to go back to the Medieval language of their youth, when the client or the commission required it.

The problem gets even more complicated if we take in account that the Medieval model defended by the supporters of "Functionalist" architecture was an idealized and Romantic ideal which had little in common with the real Medieval schemes like Haddon Hall or Penshurst Place. The only really common features were the irregularity and the additive quality of the different spaces. But, while the real models were always presided by an asymmetric H-shaped hall with two orthogonal axis, the ideal and modern model could just grow like a climber plant. The distance between both schemes was so evident that, when the supporters of the ideal model noticed that an architect was using the traditional one, they criticized him. This was precisely the case when Muthesius denounced Shaw's "archaeological amateurism" for using a real "Medieval" hall which was a form that wasted so much space.

The real Medieval model was almost unknown to these "partisans", but not to the architects who were really in touch with their own country's architectural tradition. (Norman Shaw had visited Penshurst at the beginning of his career). So the truth is that, while the architects who worked unaware of ideological disputes could make use of three possible accepted models, the two Medieval and the Classical one, the followers of the "English Free architecture" had to constrain themselves

to the idealized Medieval model which represented the traditional virtues of the "English gentleman" ("discreet", "honest", "private", "reasonable" and "practical") against the "expensive", "public", "pompous" and "less comfortable" Classical scheme.

But when one thought that this model was not exclusive, he had two options: either use other model at his client's request, or integrate in a single composition the virtues of various schemes, obtaining more complete and representative residences. In this case, different forms and languages had to be combined, and this was something that, according to Venturi, "good guys tried to avoid", because they thought that "everything should match". In Venturi's opinion the good guys did not achieve any variation in the architectural language. He wondered "why should anyone be sorry for using different elements according to a new and enriching architectural meaning?" It was precisely Nikolaus Pevsner who pointed out the key to all this problem in an article about Lutyens published in the "Architectural Review" in 1951. The title "Building with wit", a kind of riddle, suggested, in a derisive way, that Lutyens built only with "wit".

The article's thesis was that Lutyens' architecture "petrified by the cold and constant grip of Palladianism" should be considered a product of the English wit.

In order to justify Lutyens' success, Pevsner presented him as the "eternal enfant terrible" of whom it was impossible to discern "the spontaneous from the premeditated". A man whose most intimate friends called



"genial, capricious, bewildering, irreverent and sharp" and "amiable, irresponsible and rather spirited". His jokes, according to Pevsner, were continuous, and went from baffling riddles to the most brilliant witticism. He also noticed that in England, eccentricity is something hailed by society, like the strength, serenity or efficiency; eccentricity could be even accepted in such a professional field as it is architecture. His conclusion: "Sir Edward Lutyens was, undoubtedly, one of England's most important builder of Follies".

In England, this penchant to ingenious forms was something rather extended among the upper class, most of all in critical times. With these formal games, "devices" or "follies", just comprehensible for the initiated, the upper class proved its wit and its capacity to solve complex questions and, thus, its right to govern the country.

Ingenious sentences and mottos, conflicting forms and contents, integrating apparently contradictory elements, which challenged the traditional meanings associated to certain images. Only the upper class, the properly educated could be able to understand and evaluate this transgressions.

Lutyens assumed this situation always trying to accept new challenges in his architecture. And he did it in the same spontaneous way as he delivered ingenious sentences. As we have already mentioned, one of these self imposed challenges was the integration within a single building of all the formal schemes traditionally related to domestic construction: the two medieval models and the Classicist one. In fact, most of Lutyens' residences can be precisely analyzed as attempts to combine, sometimes in a rather unnatural way, the different traditionally sanctioned orders.

In Tigbourne Court, for example, Lutyens created a monumental facade, conceived as a scenic front, which concealed an irregular and additive rear side. The transition between these two divergent schemes was solved thanks to a transversal staircase which obstructed the direct access to the main space, determining a ritual z-shaped itinerary towards the main hall. It would have been much more simple to connect the vestibule and the hall in a direct way; but Lutyens, in spite of his Palladian play, could not ignore the importance of the inner transversal axis in medieval residences.

Tigbourne Court is not, therefore, "just a screen-wall over the street" as Alison Smithson would put it, nor just "an intricate and amusing play of two perpendicular axis", in Venturi's words. Tigbourne is a game, a complex and rigorous game whose design intention is to integrate, within a single residence, the traditional meanings and forms of an assumed country life.

Collage technique

"...the collage technique, integrating many of the "world axis"... could allow us the enjoyment of an Utopian poetic

without imposing the many inconveniences of Utopian politics. That is, the collage, as a design method, presents the great virtue of irony; the collage, as a technique, makes use of diverse elements without a strong conviction about their efficiency, so it can be an strategic procedure to treat Utopia as a simple image. We can, thus, take just fragments of it, rejecting it as a whole; what means that the collage can be an strategy to maintain the illusion of invariability and finality while presenting, in fact a changeable and movable reality of action and history."
Colin Rowe in "Collage City". 1978.

Most of Lutyens' residences, as others by Norman Shaw, can be analyzed as combinations of different models. In some of them, though, these oppositions and contrasts operate at different levels. That is the case with Thakeham, designed by Lutyens in 1902 or the Papillon Hall, built a few months later.

We can say that Little Thakeham and Papillon Hall integrate the three mentioned models in a similar way as Shaw's Greenham Lodge (1878) and Chesters (1890): the outer regular H-shaped or X-shaped perimeter responds to the Classical model, the interior distribution, to the real Medieval model, and the lateral addition of the services area, to the idealized model.

But in both of them the play is much more complicated, because, while the outer appearance is built by means of medieval motifs, the interior presents multiple Classical elements.

In Little Thakeham, the Classical motifs of the hall are not combined in such a way as to coordinate a complete wall composition, but just form autonomous and discontinuous units. This lack of ornamental homogeneity is in complete opposition to the coherence in the arrangement of the inner spaces: the interior staircase is opened towards the hall, a disposition that unifies three separate spaces in one single composition.

Little Thakeham's hall is a rather singular piece. If we do not pay attention to the ornamental elements and just take into account its spatial quality and the architectural "promenade" it determines towards the upper level, we must say that its structure is similar to that of the hall at La Roche House designed by Le Corbusier twenty years later. On the other hand, it is a rather ambiguous space in which the inner walls are treated like facades.

Little Thakeham is a jack-in-the-box: the iron railings of the balconies have a Spanish flavour, the chimney is located in a strange position, under the void created by the inner gallery and the interior openings present a rather Mannerist ornamentation. All these details make of it a somewhat contradictory and distressing site.

So, we can say that, although "Palladio means game", Palladio was not his only game. Lutyens' architecture seems to be a much

more complicated and extended game, which goes beyond styles, moral values and ideological dogmas. This particularity made of his buildings living and tense creatures. And this tension was responsible for the materialization of his architectural objects as meaningful "sites", as "islands of sense" beyond any accepted convention or custom.

It might seem rather bold to compare Lutyens with Le Corbusier, yet this comparison has already been proposed by Allan Greeberg in 1969 and the very Le Corbusier suggested it when he mentioned Lutyens' talent "to oppose the critics that protest so much" against his New Delhi project.

Evidently enough, both Lutyens and Le Corbusier tried to combine free schemes with symmetric and monumental forms. Moreover, their architectures can be analyzed in terms of "play" and "collage" and belong to what could be considered Rational architecture, in opposition to the, so called, Functionalist architecture that, according to Adolf Behne tended to conceive architectural objects as a simple tools.

In any case, the works of these two architects dealt with problems of order; a complex order in which the contingent had to coexist with the necessary. Sometimes, the outcome was a great collage in which, according to Colin Rowe "objects and episodes are strangely imported and, although they keep some aspects of their source and origin, they also achieve a new impact in their changed context".

If we accept this point of view, we can compare Little Thakeham's hall with other, similarly ambiguous, spaces designed by Le Corbusier; like the one visible in the first sketches for the House at Garches, although, the ambiguity, here, is provoked by the incorporation of an artificially framed vegetation within the interior space. (This tendency to design ambiguous pieces, "impossible to define as "interior" or "outdoors" spaces" was, according to Colquhoun, a constant feature in Le Corbusier's architecture). Little Thakeham's chimney, located, as it has been mentioned, under the inner balcony, could be conceived as an ironic element comparable to the Baroque chimney placed by Le Corbusier on the parapet before the roof of Beistegui's apartment; or to his play of superimposed "suspended gardens" and his roots designed as independent elements in a kind of Acropolis.

The outcome of all this game was the creation of unreal "sites" detached from their immediate contexts; sites in which apparently absurd and disconnected images and events made up a new meaningful reality. The objective was not, though, the achievement of a capricious and arbitrary combination, nor the search of "picturesque" situations, but the conscientious integration of different orders of meaning.

The collage has traditionally been interpreted as "a convention and a rupture with convention which necessarily acts in an

unexpected way. A simple method, a kind of discordia-concors, a combination of divergent images, and the finding of concealed similarities between apparently dissimilar things"; but it seems that, if these images are not related to certain meanings, their capacity to call on the conscience would be clearly reduced.

In that case, these "bad guys", in Venturi's

words, would have been clearly misunderstood, something that has also happened, to a certain extent, with the masters of "Modern architecture", specially with Le Corbusier. Their residences were never conceived as "tools" nor as "machines". In most cases, they tried to make of them meaningful objects, capable of provoking strong emotions. ■

conceived; and the ornamental symbols are not anything that is added afterwards, although they, very well, may not have any structural or mechanic function.

Semper is clear about his own standpoint, rather different from Bötticher's, when he describes the Greek as the only people capable of creating architectural structures and tectonic products with a kind of organic life...; Greek temples and furniture have not been built, have not been skillfully joined, they have grown; they are not ornamented structures although they present floral and animal motifs; their forms are very much like those of the, so called, organic powers when fighting mass and weight.

The dematerialization of the wall, an evolution of tectonics. Gottfried Semper, Mies van der Rohe and the Farnsworth House.

Jesús María Aparicio Guisado.

1.- Gottfried Semper and Tectonics

1.1.- The Concept of tectonics in Semper.

When writing about the Attributes of Formal Beauty in his "Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder Praktische Aesthetik", Semper defined tectonic art as that which takes Nature as its model; not any specific natural phenomenon, but Nature's uniform rules with which it orders and creates things. Due to this particular quality, every natural thing becomes, for us, a paradigm of perfection and rationality. The sphere of tectonics is the world of phenomena; everything that is created, exists within the

space and reveals itself by means of a certain form and color.

In his definition, Semper maintains that men try to make this law of Nature evident in any ornamental object. In this way, we have achieved the tectonic art, which shows, at the same time, the cosmic order and the ornamental quality of its objects.

Semper divides architecture in form of the nucleus and artistic form. The form of the nucleus is not, for Semper, a designed form. It just arises from necessity.

To sum up, according to Semper, architecture is not only a symbolic labor; it is also history and tradition; the form of the nucleus arises from mere necessity, it is not

1.2.- Semper, Architecture's Four Elements and the Caribbean Hut.

Architecture's four elements were, for Semper: hearth, roof, floor and fence. The hearth is the central element, the spiritual core of everything, the germ of every social institution, the first sign of reunion. The form of all primitive dwellings was just a roof erected over the ground. The sheltering wall was added later, and so, the house was born. So we can name two alternative origins of the human dwelling. First of all, the patio house, with its perimetrical walls, and secondly, the hut, with its predominant roofing. The patio house, has an horizontal sense (the plan), while the hut, conceived as a supported roof, has a vertical sense (the elevation).

The primitive hut, with its hearth, becomes the first temple (vertical sense) with its cella, the sacred site, the first dwelling. Then, walls,



fences and barriers became necessary to protect the hearth, and the hut (horizontal sense) was born.

Semper found a clear example for his theory of Architecture's Four Elements in the 1851 Universal Exhibition. He saw there a drawing representing an Indian Hut in Trinidad (plan and elevation) with his four elements clearly visible. In this Caribbean Hut, all the elements of primitive architecture acquired their most original and purest shape: the hearth was the center, the floor, surrounded by a frame of sticks, as an ample terrace, the roof supported by columns and mats closing the space, the wall.

This modern Caribbean hut was a good example of primitive domestic architecture and confirmed Vitruvius's texts about the derivation of the Greek Temple form a wood frame structure.

1.3.- Semper's views about the Tectonic and the Stereotomic

The word Stereotomy means the art or technique of cutting solids. Stereotomy is connected with stone, with earth. This type of construction has a three-dimensional development which makes of the building or element a continuum of matter. Thus, we can understand Semper's opinion when he maintains that the realm of domination is expressed by the stone: the monumentality. So we see the relation between the stereotomic and monumentality.

But, what is different with the tectonic? In German, the word for tectonic is Wand, which comes from Gewand, to dress. In this way, the tectonic is connected with dressing, with covering and, therefore, also with skeleton, with structure. This type of construction is developed in a two-dimensional way and the resulting building is a discontinuous matter within the space. In this case, the building presents joints, which are the visible connection between the parts that make it up. The tectonic is related to the idea of dwelling. There are two theories about the origins of stereotomic and tectonic construction. One of them maintains that stereotomic construction (stone) is a historic evolution of earthen construction; the other, that the stone building technique had its own specific origin. It is rather interesting to learn Semper's opinion about the possible timber original model of the Greek Temple. He says that it was relevant for the general composition, but not for the specific artistic form adopted. And this is precisely the determining difference between the tectonic and the stereotomic, it is a matter of detailing. In the first case, it is apparent, outward and, in the second one, inward and concealed. That is the means to achieve the continuous and the discontinuous.

2.- Mies van der Rohe and the Farnsworth House

2.1.- The Farnsworth House as an example of Semper's Four Elements.

The Farnsworth House is located by the River Fox in Plano, Illinois. The client for this architectural work was Doctor Edith Farnsworth, a brilliant female physician from Chicago who was Mies' intimate friend until he designed her house.

The house presents a rectangular structure made up of eight steel columns forming two, 28 feet distant, rows. Along the large side of the rectangular plan these columns are separated 22 feet. The eight columns support two slabs (floor and roof) with an steel frame. These seem to float in the air. The inferior side of the lower slab is 4 feet above the ground and the inward plane of the roof is 9 feet over the upper side of the floor slab. The columns are H-shaped steel sections. Both slabs are cantilevered 6 feet on each side counted from the last supporting column. Between these two floating slabs there is simple space, enclosed in glass panels, with a porch. The dwelling space is clearly a single room divided into bedroom, sitting room, kitchen, and service area. The flooring is Travertine marble, the ceiling, white plaster, the scarce vertical partitions are finished with spring natural wood; the curtains, behind the glass skin are hard silk, naturally dyed white, the steel structure is also painted in white.

The steel structure was carefully polished before the paint was applied: first of all, the welded joints were reduced, afterwards Mies had the steel sections sandblasted in order to eliminate their rough texture; then, he had a zinc coating blown over the polished surface in order to prevent oxidation, finally, the white paint was so carefully applied that the finished surfaced seemed to have been cast in a mould.

One of the reasons of the elevation of the floor slab over the ground were the periodical floods of the River Fox. During the flood period, in the spring, the house became a ship or a pier.

It took Mies six years to design and build this house (1945-1950).

After this description of the Farnsworth house, we will try to trace the appearance of Semper's four elements in it.

- The hearth. In the Farnsworth house, the fireplace is on the ground, while in the Caribbean hut, it was carved in the ground. This is an essential difference between both buildings, as in the first case hearth and ground are superimposed, while, in the second, they are a unified element. In both architectures though, the situation of the fireplace in plan is rather similar, it is the center of reunion.

- The roof is, in both cases, a single element which covers the space. The hut roof is both supported by and made up of straw and canes and, so, it is a labor connected with covering and dressing, with the tectonic.

In the Farnsworth House, the roof is conceived as a whole unit suspended from the columns. In itself, it is continuously stereotomic. Its relation with the rest of the elements, though, is tectonic.

- The floor, in the Caribbean Hut, is continuous with the soil itself, inside which we have seen the hearth placed. This continuum of ground and architecture provides the last one with a symbolic meaning. Its symbolism, thus, related to its stereotomic floor. The Farnsworth floor, instead, can be considered either stereotomic or tectonic as it is both things. The floor is continuous in itself, in its perfect prismatic form, in its Travertine marble flooring, in its concealed joints. But its relations with the ground and the rest of the house are discontinuous, tectonic. The floor of the Farnsworth House is a stereotomic piece which is not continuous with the ground nor the hearth. The floor, as the roof, is suspended and not supported.

- The wall of the Caribbean Hut arises from the bare necessity of sheltering the hearth. This fence develops the idea of a fireplace with a perimeter wall on which there is a lesser opening. In this case, the enclosing fence which is to become a wall domineers the rest of the elements. The fence in the hut is a mat joined to the structure by means of ties. In the Farnsworth house, the fence is again a wholeness, a continuum of glass placed over a slim and smooth frame. There is no difference here between the wall and its openings. The whole glass is opened to light and outward views and closed to the weather.

So we can think of the Farnsworth house as an interpretation of Semper's Four Elements. While, in the Caribbean Hut, all these elements are tectonic, in the Farnsworth House, the four are stereotomic units.

The Farnsworth House makes use of highly symbolic stereotomic elements to make up a tectonic wholeness in which each part keeps its own significance. Nevertheless, the Caribbean Hut develops all its elements as both stereotomic and tectonic. In the Caribbean Hut, the continuous hearth and floor and soil are stereotomic. This totality makes of the ground a symbolic element which supports vertical elements, mainly the roof. In the Farnsworth house, the ground itself is elevated with the floor of the house, thus losing its symbolic character, while the horizontal sense is assumed by both floor and roof. The columns are conceived as perfectly vertical elements, while in the hut, they are both vertical and horizontal.

Finally, the Farnsworth house is tectonic architecture made out of stereotomic pieces. Welding is a new kind of joint which makes possible this coexistence of stereotomic, both vertical and horizontal, elements with a tectonic conception of the whole. Tectonics is not anymore the means to weave and tie things together. In this house, welding is a new type of knot, an invisible knot which is finally transformed into a continuum of uniform matter (steel).

In this context, Blake's description of the steel structure polishing may have a new meaning: first of all, the welded joints were reduced, afterwards Mies had the steel

sections sandblasted in order to eliminate their rough texture; then, he had a zinc coating blown over the polished surface in order to prevent oxidation, finally, the white paint was so carefully applied...

2.2.- Materialization and dematerialization in the Farnsworth house.

The idea of materialization is something obvious in stereotomic architecture, in the components of the Farnsworth house, for example. But that of dematerialization begins when these components show themselves capable of being tied together without losing their character.

We can say that the concepts of materialization, continuous and stereotomic belong to a certain category, while those of dematerialization, discontinuous and tectonic, are opposed to them. The Farnsworth house

presents both families of concepts: its components are definitely materialized, while their joints are dematerialized. The glass screen does also belong to both categories. Glass is used as if it were stone, so it is, in some sense, material and stereotomic, but its matter is transparent, disappears and makes Nature, with its tectonic character, fully visible. This glass, though, does not always disappear, it becomes dematerialized when we look through it in a perpendicular way. But if we take a sideways view, it seems to become perfect stone. This trans-materialization depends on the light and the phenomenon is much more apparent from indoors than from outdoors.

We should also consider how the stereotomic and material significance of the horizontal planes (floor and roof) is mainly due to the visual dematerialization of the vertical ones, the glass wall and the hearth.

Once the glass wall is seen as

dematerialized, Nature itself becomes the new wall of the house. The only apparent element of the real screen in the thin frame. The dematerialized glass is transformed, while we look through it, in a continuous nature changing under the play of light. But, if we approach it, glass does become real matter. Our reflection upon it makes of the glass, real stereotomic stone. All these considerations make us think about the in/out relationship established in the Farnsworth house.

From the interior, the stereotomic idea is stronger, due to the importance acquired by floor and ceiling. Nature is framed, you see it through the glass panels, which are continuously changing their character. And the wall seems to belong outward.

From the exterior, the house becomes a purely tectonic structure which is almost disguised in the surrounding nature.

When glass is used in such a way, it can transform architecture. When glass is conceived as a dematerialized element, the house belongs to the tectonic; when glass is visibly transformed into stone, the house becomes a stereotomic box with its continuous roof, floor and wall.

If we compare the Farnsworth house with a Gothic temple, we will find some common features as the idea of using the outside world in order to achieve an interior wholeness.

We can recall Semper's words, when he says:

...A Gothic church is a purely interior building. The exterior is just there to support the inner space; the pillars, although self-bearing, are still pillars... Each inner part is evident from outside and is integrated within the whole building, and he concludes: a Gothic building, as seen from the distance, is somewhat of an open work; masses disappear and also detailing. It seems as if it were still on site, still surrounded by scaffolds.

Semper's words confirm our thesis, but there are still many differences between the Gothic temple and the Farnsworth house.

First of all their location: the Gothic temple belongs to the city while the house is in the countryside.

Secondly, the different use of glazing: Gothics used colored, translucent glass in such a way that the images projected in the interior surfaces became part of the architecture of the building. Light comes from outside. The transformed light connects the inward and outward components of the Gothic church. From the Gothic temple's interior, the exterior world is the paradise of framed likenesses, made up by colored glass pieces, which belong to the tectonic world due to the light. From outside, the glass window is a stereotomic continuum.

In the Farnsworth house, instead, the glass is transparent and the projected images are outdoors images, so it is the exterior world, now, what becomes part of the building's architecture. The outside forms, lights and colors are architectural elements which belong to the tectonic ideal, due to the natural phenomenology. What Nature creates



exists within the space and reveals itself through its form and color.

The freedom of this tectonic concept is architecturally controlled by means of stereotomic elements.

There is a perfect visual connection between the exterior and interior worlds in the Farnsworth house. Light modifies both realms, the paradise is something that is always changing its form, light and color. The exterior world itself, due to the transparent glass, is a present Paradise as seen from both out and inside the house.

In the Farnsworth house, we also find Semper's concept of the carpet-wall, a wall which belongs both to culture (history) and to Nature. The glass wall is a step forward in our culture and Mies is using it as if it were just part of Nature. The house is a primitive hut covered with carpets.

From Theo Van Doesburg to Reima Pietilä and Jorn Utzon

A critic from New York, said about M.Duchamp: "My own understanding of Duchamp comes and goes". I think he was not the only one. About Theo van Doesburg's figure and thought, the generalized ignoring opinions and neglecting attitudes do also come and go. He is a neglected and forgotten figure whose contribution to the course of the twentieth century Art and Architecture is, nevertheless, rather significant.

After the avant garde epoch, we find other personages as J.Utson and R.Pietilä, both architects, the first one almost exclusively associated with a single work and already marked in the others and the second one, an ignored passing figure in our "architectural universe".

In any case, the three had the aura of the damned and the audacity of being considered just second rate actors, working on a line abandoned by the noisy prima donnas and, thus, more free to do whatever they thought convenient. In any case, they knew too well that they risked oblivion by the prestigious critics, those who just want to pay attention to dazzling glows or just conceal their ignorance about other issues.

Independently from the particular via crucis of each one of these three personages, there are certain connections between them all and, although their works seem to be rather different, in fact, they are based on similar theoretical basis and are more connected than they seem to be. R. Pietilä maintained that his works were based on van Doesburg's theories, which he learnt from one of his masters. His testimony will help us to analyze in a unitary way the works of our three characters.

Finally, we will affirm that landscape, in the Farnsworth house, is an essential part of architecture. This makes us think how that house is transforming the architectural ideal in a continuum of changing walls, the tectonic ideal. The paradise-like landscape is, in itself, a new wall.

In this context, we should recall Mies' insistence on the rationality of his glass wall. He did not consider it as an impractical decision, but as an attempt to visualize, in a most clear way, the distinction between bearing and non bearing elements. This can help us to analyze, in a new way, Blake's words: the Farnsworth house tried to be, and fortunately was, a clear and somewhat abstract expression of an architectural ideal. All this, in less, is more... The glass prism Mies designed for his friend is a mirror reflecting the beautiful landscape. ■

J.J.Barba

Van Doesburg was probably right when, quoting a Dadaist, he said that the words we use are exhausted and do not represent any essential quality anymore. That is why I will stop my analysis now and then when I would not find the appropriate words and will try to replace it with graphic or non-linguistic procedures, without trying to emulate any particular artist.

Theo van Doesburg is usually present in the all the studies about Chromatism, about the new conceptions of art and style, or about the avant-garde movements which took place in the first quarter of the century. But we will have more difficulties in finding useful references in architectural monographies. Taking a look at the book "The International Style", based on the exhibition organized in 1932, which defined for the great public this new style, we learn that, for its authors, van Doesburg did not exist at all. "It is particularly in the early work of three men, Walter Gropius in Germany, Oud in Holland and Le Corbusier in France, that the various steps in the inception of the new style must be sought. These three with Mies van der Rohe in Germany remain the great leaders of modern architecture". Someone could say "well, they were the most important", but, if we continue our research in a second level, we will not find a single picture of van Doesburg's works. Taking in account the extensive repertory presented by the book, we should miss as important works as the Rietveld-Shróder house.

The situation is rather similar in other many publications about Modern architecture, but I will not undertake a detailed analysis of their flaws and virtues. I will say a word about

one of the figures precisely mentioned in "The International Style", J.J.P. Oud, who was rather connected with van Doesburg through their common nationality and specially through van Doesburg's most important contribution to the avant-garde, the De Stijl magazine. Just by chance, it happens that when, in October 1918, the De Stijl magazine celebrated its first year, the group published a Manifest. It was signed by van Doesburg, Hoff, Huszar, Dok, Mondrian and Wils. Oud's absence is rather incomprehensible, above all if we take in account that he had been already a year working with the group and that the commemorative issue published one of the projects he had realized together with van Doesburg in Noordwijkerhout.

Well, if we follow Hitchcock and Johnson, we will have to admit that his own Manifest seemed to be much more important. Not for its contents, though, but for its timely publication. Van Doesburg was never lucky enough to publish his manifests in the right moment. He was too ubiquitous: painter, poet, typographer, architect, sculptor, dadaist...

But I will not undertake an ordered and detailed analysis of all his texts and works. Let us leave the mineralized continent as it is now, although it would be rather significant to trace again van Doesburg's remnants and find the erroneous basis of many fossilized beliefs. This kind of operation, as Carlos Sambricio's unveiling of van Doesburg's texts about the Spanish architecture of the time, would disturb some people. So, we will center on the contents of van Doesburg's work which can be traced in R.Pietilä's. Let us take a look at the discussions between Oud and van Doesburg to learn what was really happening and let us also follow the De Stijl's procedure, going from the particular to the general.

We all remember Van Doesburg's letter to Oud: "Because my own solution breaks with the more or less monotonous character of standardization; because the complete construction is already decided; because I am not a house painter and I undertake much more serious works; because I am van Doesburg and I have the perfect right to say you: NO-NO-NO, it will be my way or nothing" Oud would answer him in a more docile way in one of his texts: "In order to avoid any misconception, I will say that, for me, De Stijl, was a moral factor, a kind of guidance, a formal dogma. When I abandoned De Stijl, because I thought that what was being defended was a certain formal law and not a formal will, that did not mean that I should neglect the ideals I had been trying to achieve. These ideals could be and can still be condensed in the search for a general architecture, a certain Style (Stijl). But it was impossible to create any style without establishing a more consistent contact with the evolving society".

So, we understand that Oud tried to create an style which would replace "the individual" with "the universal", which would be generally valid for "the conscience of our present world", in van Doesburg's words. Oud's

interpretation of this last point was more related with money than van Doesburg's, and this was the origin of the rupture.

But which was the way to go from the individual to the universal. One of the basic principles was found in the art of painting. Modern Painting was representing, in a rather immediate way, the experience of an active and non passive aesthetic. It connected the terms "active and creative", rejecting any strict reproduction or reduplication of the object of experience. The idea was to free the means of expression from any particular concept, making them tend to a universal language in which modern painting would act as the appropriate means for any thought: a painting is a colored-thought.

"Art is the spiritual transformation of matter"

"There is nothing as real in painting as color. Color is a kind of energy whose character is determined by means of its opposition to another color.

Color is painting's basic matter: it has no other meaning beyond its own substance"

Que Mr Mutt ait
fait la Fontaine de ses
propres mains ou non, n'a pas
d'importance.
Il l'a CHOISIE. Il a pris un article
courant, l'a placé de
telle sorte que sa
signification utilitaire
disparaisse sous le nouveau
titre et le nouveau point
de vue - il a créé pour cet
objet une nouvelle idée.
voir
On peut regarder voir;
On ne peut pas
entendre entendre.

This energy, thus defined and capable of

materializing, in a complete way, the work of art which previously resided within the spirit, is responsible for the destruction of architecture. That is, painting and color are capable of destroying the architectural constructive-tectonic base (at least visually, spiritually talking) and achieve the anti-form in order to obtain a new architecture based on an active aesthetic.

Oud described in 1918 the role played by Frank Lloyd Wright in all this movement with his theories about "the destruction of the box": "Wright has laid the foundations for a new concept in architectural aesthetics. Measures are exceeded in all directions, forward, backwards, to the left and the right... In this way, modern architecture will progress more and more towards the decline of positive proportions, as it has happened with modern painting".

This idea of dynamism dominates, from the very beginning, the theoretical development of the new art. The way it was assimilated in latter stages responds to the necessary theoretical and experimental progression. We find again this concept of dynamism in the redefinition of the Neoplastic ideals undertaken by van Doesburg in one of his manifests, published in 1926. He incorporated another concept which was intended to avoid prejudiced interpretations of the principles of the new art, the Elementarism.

"The Elementarism rejects any compulsory aesthetic requirement which could lead us to stagnation, to the paralyzation of the creative powers.

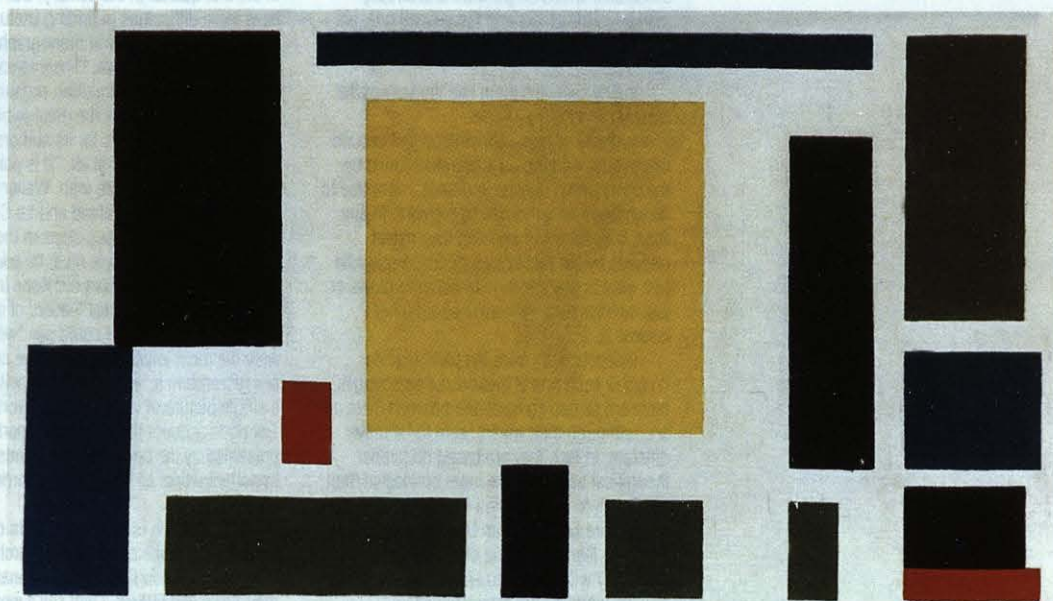
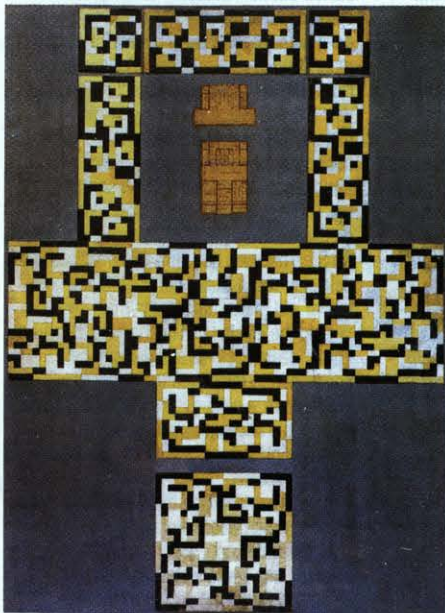
Against the denial of Time and Space, the Elementarism accepts these factors as the most fundamental for the new plasticism. The Elementarism tries to establish a balanced relationship between these two factors, the static and the dynamic (arrest and movement). In a similar way, it aspires to synthesize both fundamental elements, Time and Space, in a

single dimension. If the means of expression of Neoplasticism are reduced to the two-dimensional plane, the Elementarism, instead, is conscious about the possibilities of a four-dimensional plasticism in a spatial-temporal ground".

The abstraction is a kind of a big bang process in which the spirit selects certain values in the real object which, once materialized become real objects at their turn. This conversion of the abstract in real and material is what determines, according to van Doesburg, the relative quality of the concept.

In fact, without stating any specific definition of the abstract, van Doesburg gave us some clues for its concretion, "abstract is just what is produced by our inner thought". But we must try to examine in a deeper way this assertion and the thinking process behind it. Because if we consider art as the capacity to abstract from Nature the part which is the representation of the Whole, we will understand van Doesburg's conception of the artist as the person with the power to reconstruct, by means of his own artistic procedures and through a simple fragment which can be visually managed, "the harmony of the Whole", according to a certain personal aesthetic experience. "The Whole conceived as an abstract concept, according to the law which governs appearances: the law of infinite harmony, thanks to the constant transcending of one over the other".

This point of view can be related to the idea of fractal objects within a fractal space, according to Benoît Mandelbrot and, therefore, is rather connected with the theories of Organicist architecture. Rather connected indeed because, according to Maria Teresa Muñoz, and we agree with her, Theo van Doesburg's polemic definition of the abstract is derived from Nature and, therefore is a kind of concept which is coincident with the Organicist architectural basis.



We have just mentioned one, but we can easily find other links between van Doesburg and the Organicist architecture. It is rather easy to understand how van Doesburg's anti-compositional dynamism, with its spatial-temporal tension emerged from the inspection of the contingent, just where the assumption of Topos and its development in Chronos precisely result in the spatial-temporal relationship which gives place to the definition of the Elementarism, contributes to our own understanding of Pietilä's words in an interview realized by Kaisa Broner-Bauer. "In other words, I construct various fantasies in my mind, and as a final result I can draw a parametric form on this material."

I presume that cleverness lies in an ability to produce certain ingredients, from which a person can make architecture or literature. A visual artist produces images of these ingredients. An ingredient is a very important concept. It is like an intermediate zone between really existing and really imaginable things".

Now, this reminds me of van Doesburg's own definition of art in december 1929, "Art is the spiritual transformation of matter" or the creation of the form-spirit concept. We must take in account that "Henki", in Finnish, means the Spirit of things, but also Fantasy, Imagination, Dream and if we learn that the interview took place in Finnish as was realized by the Finnish Broner-Bauer, I am rather sure that this "fantasies in my mind" are Henki, the idea which explains the necessary transit from the really existing towards the really imaginable. This statement can be easily related to the same principles as van Doesburg's definition of art.

We are also rather near the basis used by J. Utzon in his Sydney Opera House project, as it is clearly connected with dreamt forms. In an article published in 1948 and entitled "The essence of architecture", he even said that the starting point of any architectural work was the "translation of unconscious reactions to conscious actions". Unconscious reactions produced within a certain Topos and Chronos which determine the where, how an when of any operation.

The analysis of these two assertions leads us to two similar theoretical grounds:

A.- The definition of abstraction restrains any possible formalization of ideal architectural models or types which would not emerge from the study of the contingent circumstances, which would not pay attention to the Topos, to the site. It implies, instead, the necessity of an individual approach to each case, each project, encouraging the development of designs based on the basic geometry and structure of the particular site.

B.- The dynamism of an active aesthetic implies, on its part, the rejection of the Euclidian space, which is considered as static and unproductive and tends to promote, instead, a dynamic, active and creative architectural space which would integrate and articulate the diverse architectural elements with the concept of the continuous and

gradual, incorporating an specific analysis of each particular situation.

The formal result of these architectures is rather different but the spirit behind them was rather similar, implying, in all these cases, an active spirituality, a sought for harmony of the whole and the rejection of "ideal" arrangements. These architectures are not the result of any conceptual pattern based on analysis or segregation, but the outcome of an exquisite aggregation unaware of any aprioristic prejudice.

So, we have a real method which is more than coincident. R. Pietilä used to say that it was very difficult for him to express his "modus operandi", as the architect always works within a non-linguistic level. How can we interpret his thorough concordance with van Doesburg's constant exploration of new means of expression because the existing ones were too prejudiced? We have already mentioned that he also talked about non-linguistic means of expression.

This modus operandi is completed by means of some ingredients which permit the translation and materialization of spiritual ideas. Ingredients such as intuition and science, in its purest conception. I must mention B. Maldebro's insistence on the concept of intuition as a fundamental piece of the mathematical development involved in the definition of the new fractal space. So, we can now mention a new "coincidence" between van

Doesburg and the architecture developed by J. Utzon and R. Pietilä. Let us pay attention to the following texts:

"Most of the painters work in a similar way as confectioners or dressmakers do. But we work with mathematical and scientific data, that is, with intellectual means."

The work, before its materialization, is already an existing spiritual item. Its realization should present a technical perfection coincident with the concept's perfection".

"Architecture is similarly based on intuition and science. Those who want to become architects should dominate the required technology in order to materialize their ideas, in order to demonstrate the efficiency of their intuitions and realize their dreams".

These are too many coincidences. Our research and analysis labor has, probably, been too brief. We should, certainly, undertake a deeper study of these most singular facts. But our results have been fruitful and distinct. We have found affinities and coincidences enough to prove the necessity to pay attention to the connection between van Doesburg and the architecture of Utzon and Pietilä, without trying to impose any previous conception. In any case, it is time now that these three architects should be examined in order that our understanding of them would "stay" and not "come and go" anymore. ■

Sensible and senseless gestures: The rotation of the grid

Miguel Martínez Garrido

We are currently witnessing important changes in the architectural taste of our Schools. These transformations require a profound analysis beyond the hastened and passionate opinions poured out, in private or public circles, by many people, more or less related to the world of architecture or architectural education. I am specifically talking about the prevailing gesture of breaking with the traditional orthogonal design with the incorporation of rotated or altered structures. This procedure is usually apparent in the plans of the projects, and from some years ago, it is generally known under the name of "the rotation of the grid".

This motif, which has been repeated to exhaustion in architectural compositions inside the School and out of it, has passed through different stages in its evaluation on the part of the teachers. Nowadays, its status is more or less indifferent, and that means confusion for the students, as they eagerly try to imitate, without really understanding what they are copying, these most impenetrable and irregular gestures, which just give them the opportunity to display a complicated and worthless graphic material, with more

fashionable novelties than real architectural contents.

If we understand architecture as related to the order of things, we must admit that one of the origins of this uncomfortable situation is the different and changeable understandings of that order along history.

The idea of architectural ORDER has been, for centuries, associated with the apparent use of certain geometric figures which can be perceived and understood by a rational mind. Even in such emotional stages as the Baroque period, architecture has always tried to incorporate rational geometric proportions. Or, better still, rationalized, in the sense of a mathematical tool used for justifying some design. We must remember that it was precisely in that period that what we know as Rational Mechanics was created.

The replacement of the Renaissance circle (Copernicus) with the Baroque ellipse (Kepler), although fundamental in physical terms (static-dynamic transformation), did not result in a visible change in the method of analysis and justification. From this point of view, Bernini can be considered as rational as Brunelleschi, and we can say the same thing about the, so called, Rationalistic and

Organicist tendencies of the historical avant-garde movements, according to Giedion and Zevi's classification.

Nevertheless, in the last few years we have witnessed the distinct crisis of this kind of approach. The core of the crisis is the loss of confidence in the scientific method and its role in the creation of a contemporary architectural theory.

This situation encourages us to examine the existence of some rational basis beyond the mimetic effect easily produced by the visual influence of an enormous number of specialized magazines. So I would like to clarify some points about the matter.

The basic idea of my reflection is that art in general and, specifically, architecture have always been related to a certain and concrete World Model. And so, a better knowledge about our current World Model, would be rather useful in the hermeneutic theory of contemporary architecture and would help us to clarify the apparently confusing panorama of Postmodernism.

This new World Model, from a strictly scientific point of view, incorporates the important conceptual revolutions implied by the Theory of Relativity and the completely new Mechanic-Quantum Scientific Paradigm. This latter has replaced the Newtonian Paradigm, which dominated the physical theory during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, in the social and epistemological role explained by Thomas S. Khun in his "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions".

Everybody knows that architecture and construction are inseparable aspects of a single profession, although they can be analyzed separately, specially if we talk about

architecture as the object of our study beyond its more complex character as a cultural phenomenon.

Both concepts must be clearly discernible as, in my opinion, one of the most widespread mistakes in the recent history and critique of architecture has been, precisely, the identification of these two separate aspects. This phenomenon has resulted in important inaccuracies in the idea we have about the authentic origin of the modern movement. In fact, the, so called, modern construction is completely based on the Newtonian Paradigm while modern architecture has been developed, more or less consciously, within a new scientific paradigm. In this sense, the Modern Movement could be considered the most important artistic event related to the last one among the Deterministic Theories: the Theory of Relativity and its revolutionary spatio-temporal concepts. That is why it is so easy for us to see the works of, say, Mies, Le Corbusier, Gropius or Wright as classical, according to the judicious classification by Sota.

But, as I have already mentioned, the new scientific paradigm which is currently involved in our conception of the physical world, is a complex fusion of the clearly deterministic Theory of Relativity and the Quantum Physics in which the only determination is the evolving probability of a system.

Therefore, the contradictory features present in many recent architectural operations could be understood as the outcome of these new mechanic-quantum scientific concepts and their contribution to a non-deterministic theory of the physical world.

The mentioned new concepts are to be found in Bohr's Principle of Complementarity,

Heisenberg's principle of indetermination, the more recent Theory of Interactive Systems and Prigogine's studies on the order of the chaos (Thermodynamics of Irreversible Processes), the geometric structure of hazard (fractal models, space of configurations and chaotic attractors) as well as in the philosophical controversy about the legitimacy of the Principle of Causality. To sum up, and recalling the famous Wittgenstein-Popper polemic, we could say that our model of the world is more of a giant process than a collection of facts.

That is why the criteria based on the classical scientific methodology (that is, those based on the Newtonian Paradigm, as conventionally accepted) are not sufficiently appropriate when analyzing the architectural works of the most representative architects of today's tendencies, even taking in account that our pretensions are more heuristic than epistemological.

There is obviously a tremendous variety of attitudes within the architectural realm but, in the most interesting recent projects, there is a kind of characteristic invariant which we could call Dislocation, consisting of the controlled alteration of the structural elements' normal position, due to the interaction between the architectural object and the stress produced by the Site's preexisting elements. The site understood, in broad terms, as Existentialist Topos and its preexisting elements as perceived by the particular designer's sensibility.

If we admit that architecture's main tool is the establishment of relationships and that the Order of any formal configuration is revealed by means of the rational apprehension of its



phenomenological counterpart, the Structure; we should introduce, according to the above mentioned conception, a certain Theory of Imprecision, somehow linked to a Theory of the Site and assume the validity of new criteria in the evaluation of form. These new criteria could be based on what Prigogine calls structural stability, which establishes a more definite limit between the order and the chaos. In general terms, the most recent views about architectural operations enlarge their scope, incorporating the, so called, Area of Influence or Domain of Operation-Transformation. Thus, we have a new concept of structure: the interactive structure, whose basic laws are much more complex.

If we now accept the premise that the irrationality, surely present in any artistic activity, cannot be accounted for in a theory of art; that is, that art can be rationally or irrationally produced, but theory can only be achieved by a rational mind; then, the problem is the anachronistic use of evaluation criteria which are definitely linked to a certain idea of what is reasonable, limited to the laws of a powerful and fascinating but stiff geometry embodied in the Newtonian aesthetic ideal, the Enlightened ideal of perfection and beauty, thus, transformed into an enormous and great Prejudice.

Now, in order to elaborate an architectural theory which would be more in accordance with the current scientific paradigm, we should create new criteria for geometric order which would allow us the design of new visual and logic objects, capable of assuming the same representative role as their predecessors of the Newtonian and Relativist paradigms (Boullée's sphere for Newton's Mausoleum or Picasso's *Demoiselles D'Avignon*).

Coming back to Popper, I will admit that today's most fascinating structures are but clouds, very difficult to grasp from the point of view of substantial immutability maintained by J. Borchers' wonderful definition. Within this new epistemological panorama, the concept of symmetry, defined by Herman Weyl in the fifties as the invariant character of a certain configuration before a series of automorphic transformations, and widely associated to the idea of Structural-formal stability and Interactive Equilibrium, could now be considered a strong criterion in order to establish, in a more precise way, the limits between order and disorder, becoming a possible basis for the new Evaluation Criteria applicable to architectural forms.

Consequently, architecture's ontology, ORDER, and its phenomenological counterpart, the STRUCTURE, should be seriously revised in order that they would incorporate the heuristic power of the Mechanical-Quantum World Model and its capacity to account for the geometry of the clouds. Finally, I will make a rather bold statement which risks to be just understood as a poetic ditto, because I think that more than trying to analyze the geometry of the space we should begin worrying about the geometry of time. Something which, for our schools, is nowadays almost unattainable. ■

More damned still

"Resist, you damned!", this was the roaring cheer I employed when introducing a group of young but mature or maturing architects from the School of Madrid. Well, their same characteristic age (under forty), their dedication to teaching (assistant teachers or recognized scholars), and their critical resolution (with submitted or almost finished doctorate thesis and other published texts), can be found in another group of architects, who are working and teaching throughout the country. These "more damned, still", are erecting, for architecture's sake, first quality works, rigorous, logical and wisely beautiful. This generation, if it is capable to resist, will build the architectural history of the day after tomorrow.

When I write "more damned, still", I know that this expression has a double sense: either you consider that these are even more damned than the other, or you interpret that there are more imprudent people still than we thought, whom we must add to those belonging to Madrid's group. Both meanings are acceptable, and I assume that this particular characteristic is, and always has been, throughout History, indispensable for any good creator.

If someone may have thought that the panorama was somewhat static, after the publication of my "Resist, you damned!" in this same magazine (*Arquitectura* No. 304, 4th quarter, 1.995) we had a very interesting and complete AV issue (*Arquitectura Viva* No. 46, january-february 1.996) with the also seductive title of "Fresh Blood", in which Luis Fernández Galiano designated and encouraged a "numerous group of professionals who are sowing the seed of the future Spanish architecture". He said about them that they are "precociously wise", "more competent than intrepid" and he made a series of considerations which tended to support the position of "those who are starting their professional career in a context which is rather hostile to innovation and progressively impervious to unexpected proposals". This really elaborated AV issue will, undoubtedly, be a mandatory reference in the future history of contemporary Spanish architecture.

The text did also include a certain amount criticism, as it demanded from these young generation the "duty of their age", in Ortega's words, that is, it demanded from them a more combative opposition. They were characterized as "innovative in forms but not in ideas" and the study concluded that they "employed their talent almost exclusively in the realm of the visual and graphic".

I would like to center on this particular point in my completion of that "Resist, you damned!" with the present "More damned, still". Because I think that the adventure undertaken by these young architects is more

Alberto Campo Baeza

serious and more profound than any simply formal speculation. Moneo's triad of concepts, mentioned in 1978 when evaluating the young Spanish architecture of the time, had the rare virtue of exemplifying the indispensable balance between facts and ideas, between designed and built architecture and the ideas behind it. Architecture, always understood as a built idea. And that is why I decided to make use of those same criteria in order to analyze, in the best way, the group we try now to complete. Many of them, most of them, are mentioned in the AV issue. Our selection, though, is not only based on architectural quality and young age, but also takes in account the already mentioned critical labor and professional teaching which are capable of sustaining a more profound and rational creative process.

The sleep of reason produces monsters and even more in architecture were dreams remain built forever. In this dislodged and irrational society in which reason sleeps, the most efficient rebellion should be the strict use of a lucid reason, the creation of a reasonable architecture, which is exactly what I think this damned group of rebel architects is trying to do beyond their own forms.

In this group, we must include a series of names which I will begin to enumerate:

Pere Joan Ravetllat with Carme Ribas, Rafael Aranda with Carme Pigem and Ramón Vilalta, in Barcelona. Pepe Morales with Juan González Mariscal and Ignacio and Luis Rubiño with Pura Márquez, in Seville. Alfredo Payá in Valencia. Jesús Irisarri with Guadalupe Piñera in La Coruña. In Granada, Juan Domingo Santos. In Valladolid, Gabriel Gallegos with Juan Carlos Sanz. In Pamplona, Miguel A. Alonso del Val and Patxi Mangado. In Las Palmas, Luis Correa and, in San Sebastián, Santos Barea.

Pere Joan Ravetllat and Carme Ribas had a long and excellent familiar tradition supporting them. Their own interest and their critical sense were clearly visible in their brief but really interesting A30 venture (I still remember very well that at Llinás). Their present labor as teachers in the Barcelona School is being generally appraised. Some of their projects, as the S. Pere de Ribes Institute, are really mature works. The central space emphasized with the play of light, is rather impressive.

The work developed by Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramón Vilalta can be unquestionably defined as neat and compact. They teach in the School of Barcelona and, among their works, we must mention the Law Faculty in Gerona and the recent and precise Guests Pavilion at Can Cardenal, in Olot. Or their beautiful entrance pavilion at the "Fageda de Jorda".

Ignacio Rubiño, Pura Márquez and Luis Rubiño, who work in Seville, are capable of erecting particularly luminous architectures, as the Victoria Cultural Center in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Profusely published, it expresses their capacity to combine a contemporary language, near to Siza's, with the most profound traditions of Andalucía, with exemplary results. This is also rather apparent in their residential units at Los Palacios.

These same characteristics are present in José Morales and Juan González Mariscal, although they even seem to incorporate a greater theoretical support and formal freedom. Their most hailed work, Coripe's Town Hall, is a brilliant exercise of lighting control, as a really courageous cape performance. We expect their next Auditorium at Zamora, a project developed together with José María Romero, to consolidate their privileged position.

They teach at the School of Seville and have created a really interesting group with exceptional perspectives.

It does not seem so easy to build in India, as Le Corbusier and Kahn did. Well, Alfredo Payá designed at Lahore his first and most beautiful house. His most recent one at Tarifa is not less attractive. Both reveal his capacity to design a precise architecture in which logic and accuracy are the most apparent features. His University of Alicante Museum, a commission he obtained as a contest award, is a stout box floating over a deep excavation. Still on site, it will reveal its author's true competence. He also works as teacher in the School of Valencia.

I still remember the impressive appearance of the great glass with which Juan Domingo Santos concluded his exhibition at

Seville's Royal Alcazar. He is a prestigious architectural teacher at the School of Granada and works in collaboration with Alvaro Siza (good eye and good beard) in the project he is undertaken in that city. He is almost finishing his doctorate thesis in which he talks about the capacity of modern architecture to continue with the discourse of the historical city, taking as an example Alvaro Siza's architecture. He has just concluded a luminous house at San Matías and is finishing the project for an impressive Chipie House.

I must confess, it was not so easy for me to have the young and unknown Jesús Irisarri and Guadalupe Piñera selected for the 3rd Architectural Biennial. I thought their housing project in Vigo was magnificent. Their circular court housing blocks are neat and limpid. As it was their INEM office building in Vigo or their first and distinct cardboard installment in the 1.994 Photographic Biennial. They teach at the School of La Coruña.

Among the group of young architects working and teaching in Pamplona, I must mention, at least, two of them, who are precisely the most prestigious and those who have built more projects. Miguel A. Alonso del Val and Patxi Mangado may be young but their critical resolution and their educational labor has determined their architectural maturity. Their harvest is fruitful and seasoned.

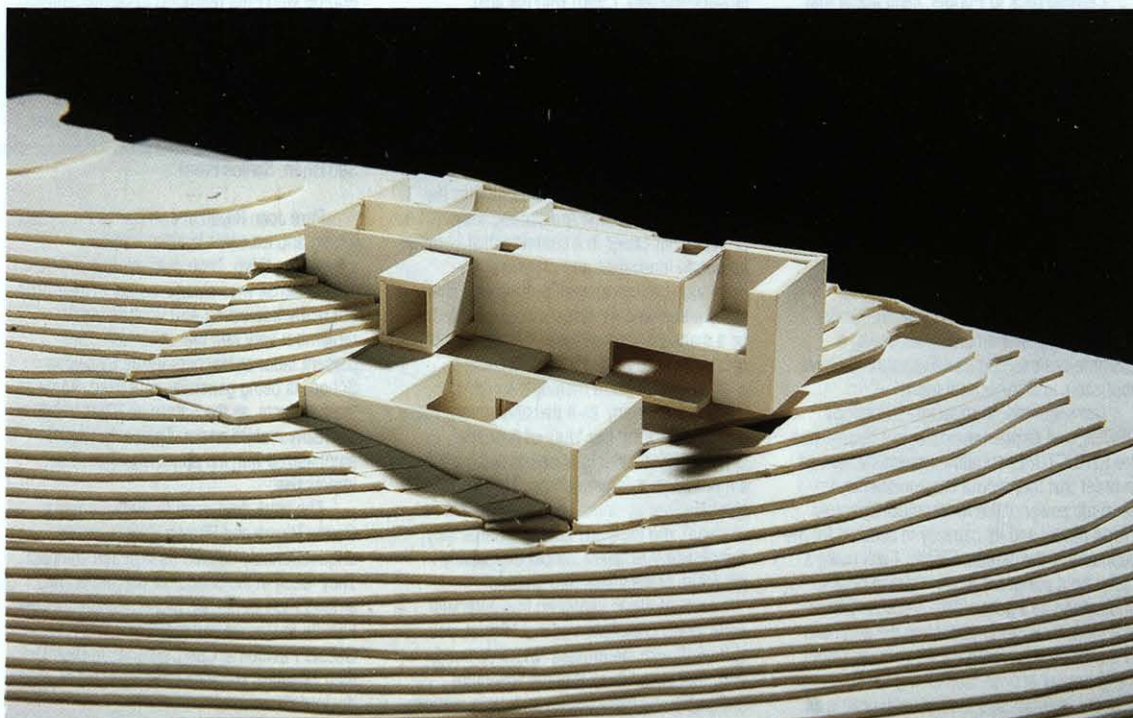
Alonso del Val, who began his brilliant career at the University of Columbia, has already designed such impressive buildings as the Sport's pavilion for the University of Navarra. His master use of light and its neat selection of materials makes of this building an exceptional one. As a teacher, he has worked with my group at Madrid's School.

Patxi Mangado, who made his first projects in collaboration with Maite Apezteguía, has already developed a brilliant career, with really interesting designs in which he has thoroughly worked the specific detailing. He has decided to innovate, making use of new materials which are just now being accepted by rest of us. His house at Irache and his Golf Club are clear examples of his magnificent trajectory.

From Valladolid, from its School, we receive news about Gabriel Gallegos and Juan Carlos Sanz, who had already proved their quality on the occasion of their refurbishment project for the Official College of Architects. Their Cultural Center in Villamuriel de Cerrato, Palencia, was a magnificent work of architecture, with powerful volumes and a very well arranged plan. But their School in Pozal de Gallinas, Valladolid, is not less interesting. The play of fences which make up a white box enclosing a simple yellow walled device, is simply perfect.

And, from the School of Las Palmas, Luis Correa, with such magnificent works as the refurbishment project for the Cuyás Movie Theatre. And, from San Sebastián, the Loosian Santos Barea whose brilliant work is being widely appraised.

An excellent author and friend of mine, used to say that "the novel is the decision to proceed, not to stop, to see what happens next, and progress, riding on the words. While poetry implies detention, to linger before the words, and enjoy their progressive unveiling just to fall exhausted on your knees". Well, all these damned designers, all these more damned still architects, have in common their penchant to poetry, their insistence on taking



their time to do things right. Unlike other architects who rush towards the swallowing mouth of fame, celebrity and money, not really knowing why or what for, these more damned still, as those we talked about, try to proceed patiently and cautiously, spending the necessary time in each step to make it a sure one: architecture at poetry's pace, with a poetic allure, rigorous and profound. Because these damned know damn well that, without poetry, there is nothing left.

The Sea, according to poet Sabines, is measured in?? waves. Architects, in projects. The Sea of our young architects, the most damned among the damned, is nowadays full of enormous waves, with terrifying tides and drifts????, with the unavoidable passion of their term, "the duty of their age". We hope that, with time, these brave architects will give birth to more quiet, more mature waves with which they will moisten the sands of the the next millennium's society.■

Diva at Home: Domestic Architecture and Divas

Adam L. Bresnick

The house of a Diva is a sanctuary dedicated to herself, a scene in which she proves that her residence is as large as an opera house, that her house is not the place in which she would admit any lessening. At home, according to the diva's myth, the great lady exhibits, displays and creates monuments to her own grandeur. The house of a Diva is not, therefore, the place of a repressive domesticity, nor the retreat of traditional femininity nor masculinity.

In his description of the Diva's house as an extension of her own ritual, Wayne Koestenbaum shows us the way to begin our architectural itinerary. While depicting a Diva's domestic space, Koestenbaum provides us with a new subjective classification in the realm of domestic architecture. In the diva's case, he talks about a self-built subjectivity and space, with the Diva demanding and creating her own temple. But, in some singular cases, when an architect has been asked to realize such a domestic space, we see how his own subjectivity colors the Diva's house and distinguishes the built work. A diva is not masculine nor feminine, it is a man, a woman; a personage whose public personality is fused and confused with her private being. Being a diva, in architectural terms, is nothing clearly related to any particular profession or definite gender. We must include all those people whose status and personal career have enveloped in an outstanding aura, fictitious or not, deserved or not, which elevates them to such a category. A diva client contains another personality who is not necessarily subject to traditional norms.

A diva is someone whose work is, precisely, that of being another, pretending or assuming other roles, as actors and opera singers do or even creating their own fictitious personage as famous people do. Successful architects are, sometimes, also divas. The way they design their own houses could be a good example of the kind of architecture we are talking about. That is the reason for the worldwide success of Anaxo Zabalbeascoa's book "The house of the architect", published

by Gustavo Gili. When analyzing a work of architecture, particularly a domestic space, we have the opportunity to explore its specific definition of subjectivity and the relation established in it between this concept and the physical work of art. Together with the built project, there is always an implicit project which we should try to examine. The struggle of the architects in search of that subjectivity has resulted in all kind of inventions. Instead of trying to dive in these intricate speculations, we will concentrate on an specific gender (the diva's house), an specific subject (the diva) and inquire about an specific question: how can we trace, in the built work, our diva's subjectivity?

The question of the diva's house has its popular counterpart in the traditional pilgrimages to the houses of all the Hollywood stars or to the mythical Graceland, the home of the deceased but not deserted Elvis. This fetishism of the body is a phenomenon that has already been described in architectural terms and whose relation with the diva's architecture is rather clear. But we will not deal with these most kitsch characterizations, we will just take a look at some specific works in which the architects assumed the subjectivity of their client divas.

Architecture and theatre have always been rather related through the concept of the scenic space. But it was just during the Enlightenment, when the art of architecture began to be independent as a discipline and profession, that it established a closer relationship with the concept of individuality. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, the architect of the Enlightenment, showed a constant interest in the forms derived from the theatrical world. His project for the Royal Saltworks at Chaux presents a semicircular form, a kind of amphitheater, in which the use of the Classical typology makes the factory appear as a cavea and the Director's house as its scene. When representing the hall of the Theatre at Besançon, in a disturbing and unforgettable drawing, Ledoux chose to delineate the pit as reflected in the pupil of an actor on scene. Historian Anthony Vidler relates this image to a certain enlightened concept of government but, leaving aside his rousseauian analysis, what is evident is the importance due to the

diva's vision, in whose pupil we see the image reflected. Thus, Ledoux inverts the usual experience of the public's vision, offering us, instead, the view of this same public as seen by the diva. In this inversion of terms, though, the public, present in the diva's vision, becomes also a creator as the diva would not exist were it not for the public's returned vision. Vidler's analysis presents us the concept of an ideal government. But we can also see Ledoux' interest in the theatrical visual operations, in which gestures are larger and more exaggerated and create a diva who stands against and architectural work.

This connection between architecture and the world of the divas is something present in Ledoux' professional career from its very beginning. In 1769, Ledoux was commissioned to design a house and private theatre for Marie-Madeleine Guimard, a dancer of the Paris Opera House from 1762 and former first dancer at La Comédie Française. The house, inaugurated in 1772, presents an entrance pavilion and, after the court, the prismatic volume of the residence itself with a rear garden.

The main facade of the house has a semicircular porch, like a void carved up in the prism. This symmetric porch is sheltered under a peristyle with four Ionic columns and supports a sculpture representing the crowning ceremony of Terpsichore, the Muse of Dancing. The void, then, acts as an indication of the presence of the figure which should fill it, the divine Mlle. Guimard herself. This little temple makes a building with an asymmetric plan appear as symmetric. The entrance, in fact, is placed to the right, while Mademoiselle's "Cabinet de Toilette" occupies the privileged position of the central axis. No doubt, the star is the Diva, whose physical presence determines the architectural composition of the house. Thus, Ledoux places the supposedly intimate space of the "cabinet de toilette" in the most public and dominant position of the house.

The small theatre placed over the "porte cochère" is a scaled reproduction of the Opera House at Versailles, built in 1769 by the architect Gabriel. With a capacity for five hundred spectators, it was the place in which Mlle. Guimard organized her "sumptuous productions, parties and quasi-pornographic performances", and was rather well known for the intimate relationship established there between actors and public. The fact that she would have a private theatre at home shows us the most divine facet of Mlle. Guimard who transformed her house into a literary space for performance.

Mlle. Guimard, according to Koestenbaum, who was imprisoned for some conflict with the Opera administrators, told her servants on the occasion: "Don't worry, I have written the Queen to talk her about a new hairstyle. We will be free before sunset". This frivolous anecdote, shows us a new aspect of the divas' demeanor. They act in such a subversive way in order to isolate themselves from the public contempt and protect themselves from any emotional injury.

This hard character who is capable of obtaining her freedom in exchange for toilette secrets, is the same who can display her charm in the house created by Ledoux. The diva's allure resides in her fascinating capacity to create sublime worlds located in her own self. She has an over-expanded personality which can occupy a central axis in Ledoux' architecture. She is the living sculpture who fills the entrance porch with her own figure, the star of her own theatre. This "Hotel Guimard", together with the house made for Madame du Barry, were, according to Vidler "paradigmatic, as they established a perfect harmony between their owners' personality and the character of their architecture".

The Paris house designed by Adolf Loos in 1928 for the singer and vedette Josephine Baker, does also present some elements of design which can be related to the physical presence of a famous Music Hall star. The project integrates the exuberant self of Josephine Baker in all its features, by means of a "raumplan" distribution of the different spaces.

The building states its own presence by means of its graphic exterior appearance, its black and white marble stripes. We must remember the Afro-American origin of Josephine Baker, whose fame was due both to her dancing and singing and to her own exotic appearance in that Paris of the "happy twenties". Thus, both architecture and the diva herself, exhibited their skin as their own differential mark. In opposition to Ledoux' subtle palace of love, Loos' house pictures the alternate themes of racial conflict and sexuality, so present in Baker's personality. The interior of the house is determined by the development of the different spaces around the central swimming pool. Thus, the swimming pool, "the paradigm of a sensual space", becomes the house's spatial core. A corridor with thick glazing windows surrounds the

swimming pool under the water. These openings are coincident with others practiced on the facade, in such a way that any passing spectator can become a voyeur and look towards the swimming pool, concealing his figure from the person who is enjoying the skylit waters.

This device, so similar to a theatrical play of light displays the image of the diva for the eyes of the spectator and operates an inversion in the visual domain which unveils the diva's sexuality and its object quality, even in her own house. As in the theatre, she remains the target of all the glances. We must say, though, that this image of an exuberant and sexually free Josephine Baker is something in clear contradiction with her own biography. Baker retired to the countryside, where she bred alone a numerous and adopted family.

The last stop in our itinerary could be the house the architect Philip Johnson built for himself in his estate at Canaan, Connecticut, in 1949. It is an example of domestic architecture self-determined and self-designed by the diva himself. The complex is made up of a series of constructions, the last one of which was completed this same year. In the first unit, the Glass House, Johnson displays the style of his first epoch as an architect, but also his own character.

Based on Mies van der Rohe's sketches for the Farnsworth House, Johnson's house is a kind of self introspection realized through architecture. The architect Johnson built a house for himself whose construction is the very self of the architect as connected with his architectural discourse. Johnson tells us: "I contemplate my own house, not as a real home (though it is so, for me) but as a bank of ideas which can be filtered afterwards, either through my own work or through others". So, when he decided to design his own house,

Johnson, as a diva, considered that his home should be something greater than a mere house, more representative, a source for the rest of the mortals.

In the prismatic glass house, the interior is mistaken for the exterior. "When I entered it", said Frank Lloyd Wright, "I couldn't say whether I was outside or inside. I doubted if I should take my hat off or keep it". We can analyze this ambiguity as a generalized feature of a multiple personality as the diva's. Johnson is an architect, a historian, a member of the highest New York social circles and a representative, in his nineties, of the Gay Pride from the cover of the American Out magazine. Johnson, as the diva he is, is consciously creating a manifest declaring his own self, a showcase to exhibit himself, multiple, literal and figured. The house of a diva is an object to see and be seen and incorporates the physical presence of the diva within its own architecture. The diva assumes certain transgressive aspects of sexuality or freedom of expression which break the norms of the time. Claude Nicolaus Ledoux's Hotel, designed for the dancer Mlle. Guimard, incorporates, within its Classical appearance a voluptuous display which would charm any Count of Valmont. Adolf Loos, when designing for Josephine Baker, expresses the vitality and sensuality which she presented and represented for the European society of the twenties. Finally, Philip Johnson, when building his own house, goes ahead the very Mies and determines his own position in the history of modern architecture which he himself had written. In all these cases, when an architect designs at a diva's request, the result is always an exploration of the otherness represented by the diva herself. For an exceptional person, her house could not be less than that. ■

