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Latin America in Construction Architecture 1955–1980



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Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980

Barry Bergdoll
Carlos Eduardo Comas
Jorge Francisco Liernur
Patricio del Real

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Foreword

It is now sixty years ago that The Museum of Modern Art staged *Latin American Architecture since 1945*, an influential showcase of then-contemporary architecture of the vast and complex region between Tierra del Fuego and the Rio Grande. That show, along with *Brazil Builds* of 1943, marked a moment of the Museum's intense involvement with Latin America, as well as continuing the ethos, predominant since the Department of Architecture's founding in 1932, of creating exhibitions from newly commissioned photographs.

It has been a much more challenging undertaking, for *Latin America in Construction*, to evaluate retrospectively the quarter of a century between 1955 and 1980 by assembling the materials of architectural production and dissemination: design and construction drawings, models, and period photographs and films. In contrast to earlier exhibitions, this show proposes an intellectual laboratory for exploring a vibrant architectural culture marked by great growth but often shadowed by dictatorship and brutal military rule. Our South American guest curators, Carlos Eduardo Comas and Jorge Francisco Liernur, have worked with Barry Bergdoll and Patricio del Real, of the Department of Architecture & Design, to open new lines of inquiry. Their travels have taken them to archives, libraries, museums, government agencies, foundations, and the offices and homes of architects and their families to collect a rich and unprecedented array of original materials.

The title *Latin America in Construction* has a meaning in addition to the obvious architectural and political ones, signaling an exhibition and publication that function as an ongoing laboratory for constructing new histories. This catalogue is conceived as an opening for new research; we have placed its bibliography on-line, so that it may continue to grow. We are immensely grateful to the scholars from the region who have contributed precious advice to the curators and texts to the catalogue. We are equally indebted to the teams that have realized new materials for the exhibition: handsome didactic models produced under the direction of Jeannette Plaut and Marcelo Sarovic at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago, and under Jean-François Lejeune at the University of Miami; engaging anthologies of films researched and edited by Joey Forsythe; and the stunning new photography of Leonardo Finotti.

We greatly appreciate the scores of lenders on three continents who have made the show possible. My thanks go to the curators for their unflagging determination in assembling these materials and for their creative interpretation in laying them out, in an exhibition that will stimulate debate and new studies and in a book intended as a point of reference. I would like to thank the members of the Museum's Acquisition Committee on Architecture & Design, who have supported a robust program of enhancing the permanent collection, including the specific gifts of Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Elise Jaffe + Jeffrey Brown, André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, and Alice Tisch, the committee's chair. Additional help has come from the Embassies of Argentina and Chile in the United States.

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Glenn D. Lowry

Director, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

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Portfolio of photographs by Leonardo Finotti

1. Headquarters of the Corporación Venezolana de Ciudad Guayana–Electrificación de Caroní, Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela. 1967–68. Jesús Tenreiro-Degwitz (Venezuelan, 1936–2007). View of a terrace and sunshade structure. 2014. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of André Aranha Corrêa do Lago
2. Iglesia de San Pedro, Durazno, Uruguay. 1967. Eladio Dieste (Uruguayan, 1917–2000). View of the vaulted ceiling above the sanctuary and nave. 2011
3. Church for the Benedictine monastery of Santísima Trinidad de Las Condes, Santiago, Chile. 1963–64. Hermano Martín Corréa (Chilean, born 1928), Hermano Gabriel Guarda (Chilean, born 1928). View of the ramp to the nave. 2010
4. Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 1953–67. Affonso Eduardo Reidy (Brazilian, born France. 1909–1964). View of the northern facade at night. 2012
5. Aula Magna, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Caracas. 1952–53. Carlos Raúl Villanueva (Venezuelan, born England. 1900–1975). View of the covered plaza. 2014
6. Palácio do Itamaraty (Ministério das Relações Exteriores [Ministry of Foreign Relations], Brasília, Brazil. 1962. Oscar Niemeyer (Brazilian, 1907–2012). View of the honorific staircase leading to the curved mezzanine. 2007
7. Edificio Palmas 555, Mexico City. 1975. Juan Sordo Madaleno (Mexican, 1916–1985). View from Avenida de Las Palmas. 2007
8. Niemeyer apartment building, Belo Horizonte, Brazil. 1954–60. Oscar Niemeyer (Brazilian, 1907–2012). View of the facade. 2007
9. Congresso Nacional, Brasília, Brazil. 1958–60. Oscar Niemeyer (Brazilian, 1907–2012). View from the Esplanada dos Ministérios. 2007. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Elise Jaffe + Jeffrey Brown
10. Edificio Girón, Havana, Cuba. 1967. Antonio Quintana (Cuban, 1919–1993). Exterior view. 2014
11. Complejo Habitacional Bulevar Artigas, Montevideo, Uruguay. 1971–74. Ramiro Bascáns (Uruguayan, 1936–2012), Thomas Sprechmann (Uruguayan, born 1940), Héctor Vigliecca (Uruguayan, born 1940), Arturo Villaamil (Uruguayan, born 1947). View of the northeastern wing. 2011
12. Headquarters for the Banco de Londres y América del Sur, Buenos Aires, Argentina. 1959–66. SEPRA Arquitectos (est. 1936), Clorindo Testa (Argentine, born Italy. 1923–2013). View of the mezzanine. 2014

Front cover: Mercado de la Merced, Mexico City. 1957. Enrique del Moral (Mexican, 1905–1987). Photograph by Guillermo Zamora. Archivo Enrique del Moral, DACPAI, INBA

Back cover: Residencias El Parque (Torres del Parque), Bogotá. 1964–70. Rogelio Salmona (Colombian, born France. 1929–2007). View with Plaza de Toros bullfighting ring (1931). 2014. Photograph by Leonardo Finotti

Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980

The decades after World War II saw an architectural flowering in Latin America, a region central to the emerging concept of the "developing country" and the political dynamics of the Cold War. While many of these countries were struggling between democratic and authoritarian regimes, they were also facing the challenges of modernization, from housing the populations of their cities to managing territories rich in natural resources. *Latin America in Construction* proposes a reading of this architecture as a practice entwined with the politics of development, which colors undertakings from housing programs and systems of prefabrication to the creation of entire new cities. Although the focus is historical, many of the issues addressed here—of housing, territorial expansion, systems of production, and the creation of public space—are still of vital importance around the world.

The book is arranged like an atlas, with sections on Argentina, Brazil, the Caribbean, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. It includes an array of original architectural documents—drawings, models, construction documents, and period photography—along with texts by specialists from each country and a selection of new images by the Brazilian photographer Leonardo Finotti. Taken together, this material challenges the widely accepted notion of Latin America as a testing ground for innovations developed in Europe and the United States, and it brings to light the high quality and radical originality of architecture and urban planning in a vast and complex region.

Barry Bergdoll is the Meyer Schapiro Professor of Art History at Columbia University and a Curator in the Department of Architecture & Design at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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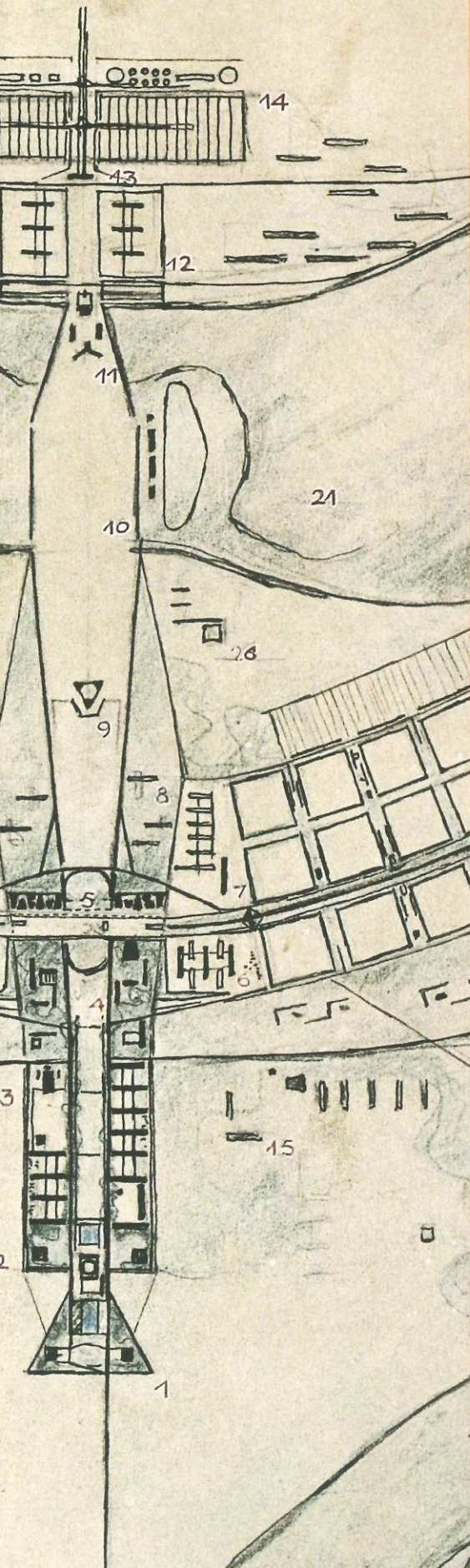
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