

English summary

ARQUITECTURA 1918-1936

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The main article of this month's issue presents a reflection of the history of architecture from 1918-1936 as seen by *Arquitectura*. Included after the introduction by Eduardo Navarro are repints of articles which were originally published by this journal.

Arquitectura began publication in 1918 headed by José Moreno Villa and with collaborators García Mercadal, Lacasa, Bergamín and others. Its original focus was a professional publication dedicated mainly to historical buildings and restorations. In the mid 1920s it extended its scope to take on a more international focus. It kept abreast of the modern architectural movement in Europe with reporting done by Theo Van Doesburg on the De Stijl group. A 1927 issue explored the Expressionist Movement through the works of Mendelsohn and the Competition for Minimum Housing of 1929 shows a further link of the journal with the current movement in Europe at that time.

'EL VISO' HOUSING. MADRID, 1934

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Through viewing the original plans for low income housing in the area of Madrid, 'El Viso', its divergent aspects with respect to other housing projects of the 1930s are seen. Rafael Bergamín, the architect/engineer, adopted a formalistic, orthodox use of the language of architecture which at that time was popular in Germany. Contrary to other housing schemes, this one emphasized the privacy of the individual unit with possibilities for modification of the floor plans based on client needs. Finally, and unfortunately, it can be distinguished from other social housing projects in that its constructors were able to interpret the 'Low Cost Housing Law' in such a way as to turn the destined workers' housing into single family homes for the upper classes.

'B.D.' DESIGNERS

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For four years a group of Barcelona designers, calling themselves 'B.D.', have been designing and marketing furniture

in an attempt to provide autonomy for the designers, extend the possibilities of experimentation and eliminate the restriction of dealing with commercial middlemen.

Initially 'B.D.' reproduced works of such masters as Gaudi, Pagano, Terragni, Mackintosh and others as well as works of their own. They have recently expanded to include importing works and have opened a gallery/store in Madrid with the renovation designs by Elías Torres and Oscar Tusquets. The renovations, shown in this issue, called for a minimum of alterations to the traditional and dignified architecture of this section of Madrid.

DOCUMENTA OF KASSEL

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Calling the Documenta of Kassel one of the most important cultural events of the post war years, Francisco Calvo presents an article on the changes that have taken place and describes the current state of the exhibition. Though the present emphasis is on commercialism rather than experimentation, the cultural value of the gathering of so many in the field of contemporary art cannot be denied.

The chronological information presented about the exhibitions shows that in the first gathering in 1955, one hundred fifty artists participated. This first success provided the stimulus for the subsequent exhibitions. The 1959 event took the theme «Art Since 1946» with such artists as Rodin, Max Ernst, Dali and Chimiotti participating. During the fourth Documenta of Kassel such terms as pop art, minimal art, and op art were seen. This year marks the sixth exhibition. Calvo's thoughts are «an excellent exhibition, excellent catalog, excellent organization, excellent business...».

MINIMUM, MAXIMUM

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Eulalia Grau, Catalan painter, presents six conversations from six different neighborhoods of Barcelona as a unique form of social commentary on the relation between the structure of the urban area and the class system. She strongly criticizes that the character of a neighborhood is a direct

result of the division of classes. «The houses of the bourgeoisie, in addition to their technical functions, also serve as a demonstration of prestige and an affirmation of power. Many times the workers' housing, seeking to imitate that of the bourgeoisie, requires heavy financing and this in turn subjects the worker to further capitalist exploitation.» She concludes her argument by stating that to intend to change the fabric of the city without changing the larger society is an utopian illusion.

PALACE OF ZABALBURU: ARCHITECTURE IN DANGER Page 74

This continuing section of the journal is undertaken by the Cultural Commission of the professional association of architects. Its purpose is to highlight buildings of architectural value which face the threat of demolition, and in speaking out, call attention to the process of their destruction. This issue features the Palace of Zabalburu an 1878 example of neogothic rationalism located in Madrid.

NATURE AND RECREATIONAL SPACES Page 83

Juan Antonio Espejel and M. H. Jaén Zulueta discuss in their article that nature and recreational areas may be interpreted by some as less urgent needs of the urban dweller when compared to, for example, housing. However, in reality, they are no less an important need and should exist within the city fabric. The authors define the difference between natural and recreational areas basically as; the former are maintained in their natural state while the latter areas are subject to modifications which allow many types of leisure activities and spontaneous uses.

Using Madrid as a case example, they present a theory of 'saturation of natural areas' and the consequences which are precipitated by this. They show that an urban area without sufficient recreational areas easily accessible by public transportation implies that the public will flee to the nearest natural areas. The outcome of this many times results in saturation of the natural area, its destruction and finally, its take over for urbanization and/or commercial use. They warn that this is what happened to the green belt of Madrid and may happen in other areas.

JOSE MANUEL AIZPURUA Page 86

José Ignacio Linazasoro's article centers around Basque architect José Manuel Aizpurúa (1904-1936) and his place within the modern movement of architecture in Spain. Within the context of architectural isolation in the country and although many of his projects were not realized, Aizpurúa was still able to reach levels of maturity and deepen the vocabulary of the modern movement.

A parallel can be seen between Terragni and Aizpurúa in that they both attempted to use a modern architectural vocabulary and at the same time held reactionary beliefs. Aizpurúa

early in his career utilized a symbolic language, but later changed to a typological system that was close to the typologies of German rationalism and especially that of Hans Schmidt.

J. NAVARRO: A HOUSE FOR AN INTERSECTION Page 97

The project of Juan Navarro Baldeweg is featured as a third place winner in the International Shinkenchiku Residential Design Competition, 1976. The theme of the competition was «a house for an intersection». The project seeks to contrast the house with nature while at the same time uniting the two. The continuity between nature and man made artifact is formed in this case by the water wheel which links the house and river.

One important influence on the design of the house, especially seen in the 'D' form in the northern elevation, comes from Duchamp's glass intersection, «Glissière contenant un moulin à eaux en métaux veisings».

ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIOGRAPHY Page 90

In his article, Tafuri seeks to present a new interpretation of the history of the language of architecture. His argument is two-fold: a) it speaks of the autonomy of linguistic selection, and b) connects labor with the history of the relations of modes of production. He believes it possible to introduce architectural history into the history on the division of labor. He sees two consequences of this: a) a revision of the criteria for the periodic nature of the classical writing of history, and b) a questioning of the legitimacy of the historical division of labor with respect to the analysis of architectural symbolism.

L. KRIER: LA VILLETTE COMPETITION Page 102

Leon Krier's entry for the La Villette Competition for Paris was awarded third place and is a model of his approach to architecture. Three basic themes of his work are; the city should be constructed on the scale of the individual. Krier uses a small urban block of 28 meters by 60 meters as one implimentation of this theory. Second, his work embodies a rejecting of zoning and in its place the establishment of autonomous 'quartiers'. Thirdly, he argues that the various buildings that constitute a city should be recognizable as 'types'. Krier relies on a number of existing traditional urban centers in giving form to his project, as can be seen in his proposal for the Grand Boulevard. The large buildings, such as The Theatre, The Hotel, etc., are not unique architectural models, but «an attempts to create a system of social and formal references which would make up the landmarks of the contemporary city. 'Types' of a new social content». In contrast to the Grand Boulevard, the local avenues and industrial buildings take on a more modest articulation with a variety of typologies interpreted according to needs and within the framework of the urban block.