

English summary

TOWARDS AN ECLECTIC PLURALISM IN MADRID

Gabriel Allende

Gabriel Allende begins his article with a brief view of the increase in attention paid to «eclecticism» as seen in a series of conferences in San Francisco entitled the Challenge of Eclecticism» which sought to redefine plural eclecticism as an evolution of modernism based on the current existence of pluralism in many fields of art.

Allende traces, in general terms, the path of modernism to arrive at the Modern Movement and Post-modernism of which he says, «the uncertainty of post modernism in terms of definition and concept is augmented when architectural projects are identified merely through visual elements and not their real content».

He then links this global vision to the current situation in Madrid. Unlike some critics who declare the existence of «post» architects and a Madrid School, Allende states that pluralism has always existed within the Madrid framework, whereas purism has been almost non-existent. Madrid, the created capital city, due to its nature and history can be seen as a city which opted for a «modern» solution and continues without a profound search for a local identity or strong definition of place. These characteristics are further supported when one examines the projects of Madrid architects in recent architectural competitions.

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF CONTEMPORARY SPANISH ARCHITECTURE CONVERSATIONS WITH ANTONIO FERNANDEZ ALBA

Francisco Calvo Serraller

Recently, Madrid architect Antonio Fernández Alba opened an exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art reflecting his work over the past twenty years. To coincide with this showing, critic Paco Calvo has undertaken an extensive interview where contemporary Spanish architecture is discussed as well as projects by Fernández Alba.

The revision of the critique of post war nationalistic architecture is due to a more general debate aimed at the recuperation of historical influences. According to Fernández Alba, the architect most representative of the epoch was Luis Moya who built, among other projects, Professional schools in Zamora and the Labor University of Gijón. Influences from neoclassical currents, the Nazi model, as well as Italian thought related to a Renaissance scheme can be seen in the work of this time.

Following this period, Fernández Alba speaks of a «false tradition» in Spanish architecture displayed in the search for simple codes such as a «mediterranean architecture» which at the time became mere ornamentation.

Rationalism, developed by about eight to ten architects in the country in post war Spain, was based on techniques of reconstruction used in the rest of Europe. The emergence of central European models followed with the achievement of simple codes and quiet forms by these architects.

The generation of Fernández Alba marked by attempts to break with the past and establish a personal language created publications such as «Teoría» and the group El Paso. This generation, victim of circumstances (such as uncontrolled land speculation in Madrid) was unable to occupy a key role in the definition of the city through the design of its buildings. With respect to the future, it seems that the general tendency of the past five years has been towards a recuperation of historical antecedents to fill the formal void of the critics of the 60's.

IN THE MIDDLE ANALYSIS IS VIRTUE... OF MEANING

Ignacio Prieto

Ignacio Prieto analyzes «11 Row Houses» in the northern part of Madrid by architect Antonio Vélaz in this new section of *Arquitectura* dedicated to the presentation and critique of recent Spanish buildings.

Prieto cites the congruence between the project and Vélaz's personal ideas about the nature and process of architecture. «The architectural object

should never be considered as a single entity, but rather as a complete realization within a larger reality.»

The design employs materials, height and elements of architectural language similar the typologies of row housing for workers and craftsmen common in this area of Madrid at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

The main facade, behind a traditional wall which emphasizes the lineal character of the housing, shows both the idea of community and individuality.

Orientation appears to be a fundamental organizing factor of the plan. This leads to the placement of the staircase in such a way that organization of the daily living spaces is difficult. The interior in general, expresses a middle class professional mode of living through the functional nature of the floor plan and the relation of spaces.

KAHN, HEIDEGGER AND THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE

Christian Norberg-Schulz

Christian Norberg-Schulz presents an indepth article linking the basic structure of Louis Kahn's theory of architecture to the writings of philosopher Martin Heidegger, «whose ideas in certain respects show a striking resemblance to those of Kahn and facilitate the needed interpretation and development of Kahn's theory.»

«Kahn's famous question: «What does the building want to be?», is usually taken as the point of departure when discussing Kahn's «philosophy». The question suggests that buildings possess an *essence* which determines the solution. Over and over again he emphasized that there exists an *order* which precedes design. Every form has an *existence-will* which determines the very nature of things.»

«Evidently it was not Kahn's intention to make general philosophical statements. He was concerned with architecture, and wanted to give our field an «objective» basis. His aim was to show how «architecture is an embodiment of the unmeasurable». To approach this problem, he introduced the concept of *institution*. Above all, architecture is an expression of man's institutions. What Kahn talks about are man's basic forms of Being-in-the-world, to use Heidegger's terminology. Life is not arbitrary, but has a structure which comprises man and nature. Kahn confirmed this holistic view emphasizing the commonness of the inspirations and institutions.»

Norberg-Schulz draws on fundamental concepts of Heidegger which he further illustrates with Heidegger's description of the Greek temple. The connections between Kahn and Heidegger are then made.

«Heidegger's understanding of the work of art (architecture) as an embodiment of truth corresponds to Kahn's definition of «design» as the «how». «It is through art that order becomes manifest», Kahn says, and he regards this making manifest as a strife between order and circumstances, rather than a mere question of *representation*. It is not surprising that both use *silence*, *light* and *shadow* as images when explaining this fact. «Language speaks as the peal of stillness», Heidegger says.»

«Whereas Kahn defines the purpose of architecture as the expression of man's institutions, that is, «the most timeless and fundamental aspects of human existence», Heidegger introduces the more general concept of *dwelling*. To him *dwelling* means something more than to reside in a place; it means how «mortals are in the fourfold», that is, an authentic relationship between man and the existential structures. Thus dwelling becomes the *basic character of Being*.»

The third section of this article is devoted to discussing the language of architecture. «Through his building and his thinking Louis Kahn made architecture revive as an art. «Expression is the reason for living», he said, and Heidegger echoes: «Man is language and is he who says». Neither of them, however, discussed the language and the poetry of architecture in detail, nor did they define its existential basis.»

Through the development of two basic questions of the language of architecture in terms of existential structure and the process of embodiment, Norberg-Schulz closes this important analysis of architectural theory.