

LUIS E. CARRANZA and FERNANDO LUIZ LARA

*Foreword by Jorge Francisco Liernur*

# MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN LATIN AMERICA

ART, TECHNOLOGY, AND UTOPIA








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1964-C

MARTÍN CORREA AND GABRIEL GUARDA, LAS CONDES  
BENEDICTINE MONASTERY CHAPEL

MARTÍN CORREA and Gabriel Guarda's chapel for Las Condes Benedictine Monastery near Santiago, Chile, is a work whose complexity derives precisely from its very lack of complexity. It is the work of two young architects, freshly graduated from the School of Architecture at the Catholic University in Chile, who had left architecture to dedicate themselves to monastic life. It was a commission they received after the order had rejected two previous proposals for it; the last one had been deemed too excessive and expensive. Located on a hill, the chapel serves, first of all, to contrast the human-made and geometrically ordered building with the beauty and sublimity of the Andes mountain range that lies, on approach, behind it.

Secondarily, it reorganizes the experience of the visitors through a series of geometrical shifts so that they may focus on the religious experience rather than on the architectural one. To meet this goal, the chapel is composed of two cubes (46 ft. and 49 ft. [14 m and 15 m]) that intersect diagonally at the corners. The semicircular entry is connected to a path leading upward and along the side of the shorter cube and toward a statue of the Virgin Mary that is also the terminus of the axis, or nave, composed of the diagonal connection between the two cubes. The two cubes,

Martín Correa and Gabriel Guarda, Las Condes Benedictine Monastery Chapel, near Santiago, 1964.

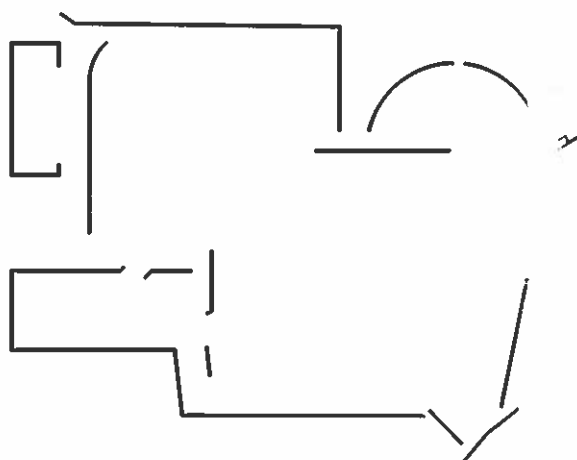




Interior of the chapel.

in plan, axially link the statue, the altar, and the rear corner of the taller volume. Programmatically, however, the two cubes emphasize the separation between the clergy and the public, each positioned within the different cubes and separated by the altar itself. Under the chapel are the crypt, sacristy, and cellar—all accessible via a semicircular stair in the entry volume.

One of the pressing requirements of the architects was to make a restrained work that reflected the monastic vow of poverty, something they achieved through the simple control of light and use of materials. For example, the height difference between the two volumes is marked at their connection by a clerestory window, which allows sunlight to bathe the altar. In addition, by angling the roofs of the two cubes in different directions from each other, the entering light creates an almost prismatic reading of the interior spaces. Other architectural details that control and direct light include slit-like openings at some of the edges of the cubes as well as overlapping planes that permit light to come into the space at the edge of the walls (this is particularly the case at the entry path). Light is made to glow, as historian Rodrigo Pérez de Arce suggests, "avoiding any suggestion of theatrical effects" ("Material Circumstances," 73). In the chapel, reinforced concrete is used as the primary structural and decorative material. Understood



Plan of the chapel.

as an exploration of postwar Corbusian principles and thetics, the church refers in many of its material details to Le Corbusier's design of La Tourette (near Lyon, 1957). is the case of the expressed texture from the formwork the rotated and semiautonomous campanile, and the circular entry volume. In the chapel, however, the concrete is painted white inside and outside, with a few exceptions where it is left unpainted.

# INVENTING NEW EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS, ALBERTO CRUZ COVARRUBIAS AND GODOFREDO IOMMI (POETICALLY) FOUND THE CIUDAD ABIERTA IN CHILE.

## CHILE

*¿no fue el hallazgo ajeno  
a los descubrimientos  
—oh marinos  
sus pájaras salvajes  
el mar incierto  
las gentes desnudas entre sus dioses!—  
porque el don para mostrarse  
equivoca la esperanza?*

*¿no dejó así  
la primera pasión del oro  
al navegante ciego  
por esa claridad sin nombre  
con que la tarde premia y destruye  
la apariencia?*<sup>1</sup>

GODOFREDO IOMMI, *AMEREIDA* (1967)

LIKE ULYSSES searching for Ithaca, a group of artists, philosophers, and architects began a journey in 1965 from Punta Arenas, Chile, to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in search of the soul of Latin America. The act of the journey would provide the basis for what they would refer to as "the poetic founding of America." For Alberto Cruz, a Chilean architect, and Godofredo Iommi, an Argentine poet, this travel would be known as *Amereida*, the name being a combination of the words "America" and "Eneida" (from the Spanish version of Virgil's *Aeneid*). Through an epic poem, intended as a manifesto, a foundational myth was created for the Instituto de Arquitectura (Institute of Architecture), which itself had been founded within the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso in the mid-1950s. Like much of the world, unsure of embracing rationalism after World War II, a group of visionary artists in Valparaíso were looking to poetry for the foundation of architecture.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Institute of Architecture began in 1952 when Jesuits took over the Pontificia

Universidad Católica de Valparaíso and opened the opportunity for a more progressive and intellectual education. As a consequence of this, Cruz was offered a position in the School of Architecture, which he accepted contingent on them also hiring Iommi. The result was the development of a faculty composed of a group of young and progressive architects, painters, poets, and engineers.<sup>3</sup> They shared a common desire for "removing architecture from its doctrine, buried in mathematics and formalisms, and re-centering it in the poetic word."<sup>4</sup> For this, they established the independent Institute of Architecture as a critical component of the new curriculum. The creation of an institute separate from the existing department provided the independence of structure that facilitated their research endeavors. The Institute of Architecture's pedagogic program was built upon reorganizing architecture around values different from functionalism or technology.

To achieve their goal of bringing poetics back to architecture, they tried to find a balance between scientific methodologies rooted in empirical observation and research and a more experimental approach based on a desire to eradicate the boundaries between art and life. In a way, they were much closer to the goals of the historic avant-garde than a more aesthetically directed educational process that left behind the fundamental ethical component of transforming life's praxis.

The commitment to poetry as a guide is most clearly evident in the beginning of each project. All of the projects at the institute begin with a poem that acts, according to Alberto Cruz, as a "*foundational act*."<sup>5</sup> On that note, a whole series of public events, known as *phalènes*, are performed for each new construction. These include physical exercise, spatial choreography, and poetry readings and are intended to define the initial relationships to be forged between the body, the site, and the imagined space, spiritually connected by such performances.

CL



Ciudad Abierta, Hospedería del Errante, Ritoque, Chile, 1991.

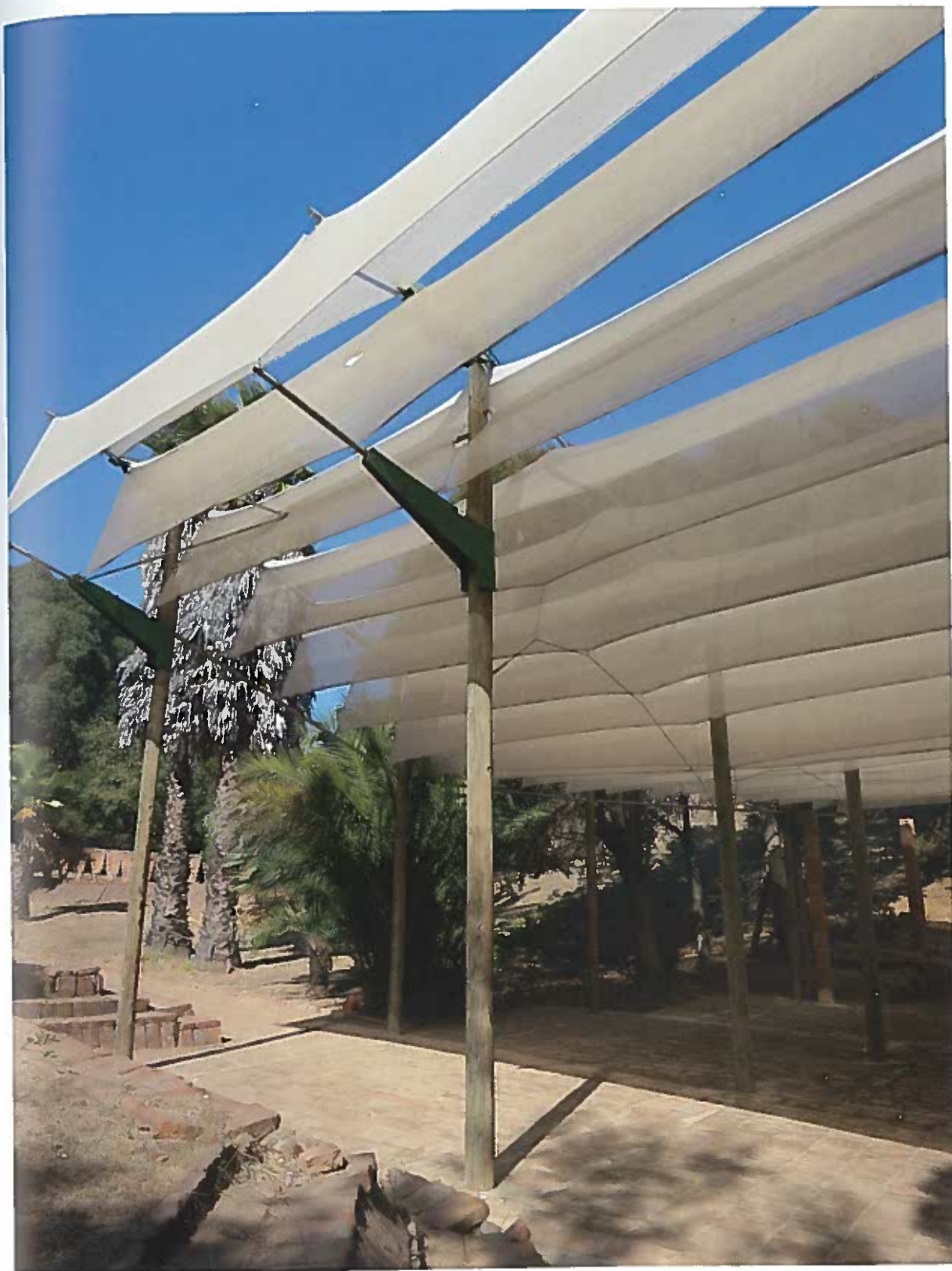
In addition to those performances, travels were an integral component of the educational mission of the school since its inception. This is clear from the journey that ten faculty members from the school took in 1965 from Punta Arenas, Chile, to Bolivia in which "numerous poetic acts [were carried out and] improvised on sites along the route . . . each poetic act initiated the construction of a physical mark, inscription, or offering on the site."<sup>6</sup> This *travesía*, or journey, inspired Iommi to write *Amereida* (1967). As noted above, *Amereida* operates as the institute's manifesto. Textually and visually, this poem illustrates the institute's ideas and concludes with the statement that "the road is not the road." It is interesting to note that instead of relating the field of investigation and journey to Homer's Greek *Odyssey*, Iommi connected it to the *Aeneid* and, in this way, linked the architecture of Latin America to its Latin Mediterranean roots.

From the beginning, Iommi sought to emphasize the European founding of the Continent as accidental. Likewise, *Amereida* also challenged the Eurocentrism of the mapping of the continent by invoking Joaquín Torres-García's famous 1943 inverted map of South America and his desire for an artistic creation uniquely rooted in Latin American histories, traditions, and cultures. *Amereida*, as a manifesto, calls for a more holistic understanding of the region and its traditions;

in short, it calls for a new form of pan-Americanism. For this, Iommi summons an exploration of the continent's interior, or "inner sea" (*mar interior*), as he called it, that is akin to that undertaken by the Spanish conquistadors.

Since 1984, the *Travesías por América* (Journeys through America) became part of the school's curriculum. Students and faculty have traveled and crisscrossed the whole continent: from the southern tip of Chile all the way north to the Amazon; from the Brazilian northeast to Easter Island on the west. Also, like the very first trip in 1965, the teams built small structures along the way. These are interventions in the landscape informed by local materials and local needs combined with their observations and investigations.

Inspired by those small constructions, Ciudad Abierta (Open City) was created in 1970, the same year that Salvador Allende was elected president. With him came a brief period of progressive reforms and higher social consciousness. As a type of experimental field laboratory, Ciudad Abierta provides students with the opportunity to broaden their education through the construction of permanent and semipermanent structures in Ritoque, a beach area 15 miles (24 km) outside of Valparaíso. Built by faculty and students



Ciudad Abierta, Capilla y Cementerio, Ritoque, Chile.



Ciudad Abierta, Hospedería de la Entrada, Ritoque, Chile.

working collaboratively, these structures include living spaces—like *hospederías* (lodges)—and public spaces that are built over extended periods of time. As these are public dwellings and open structures, anyone, especially visitors, is free to inhabit them. In this way, experimental architecture meets experimental socialism. The experimental nature of the constructions also means that construction documents are not used and, instead, their building begins with a poetic idea for the use of materials, which, as in the *travesías*, are used to create the structures. In the end, the shelters are open-ended in the sense that they are continuously worked on (sometimes remaining unfinished, in the traditional sense of that term), and they serve as the basis for collective experimentation with materials, forms, and space.

Among the first structures to be built was the Hospedería del Banquete (Feast's Lodge), a shelter designed around the dining table as the primordial architectural element. As with all other structures, the Hospedería del Banquete had its poetic founding in an

open-air meal in 1971. The idea, like Pablo Neruda's *Ode to the Table*, was to build a space that could receive all people equally at the table. Another lodge, the Hospedería del Errante (Lodge of the Wanderer) took a decade to build (1981–1991).

In many of the structures, their enclosures look like a haphazard collage of pieces added by different sets of hands and minds to an irregular structure. The resultant spaces are as exciting as one can possibly imagine: the light conditions continuously change, modulated by panels, planks, and trusses that make up the shelters. Regularity and irregularity are brought face to face to make room for unexpected poetry.

On September 11, 1973, this all changed when the Chilean military, led by Augusto Pinochet, deposed the democratically elected government of Allende and instituted a U.S.-oriented and right-wing set of economic and social reforms. The 1970s and 1980s in Chile will always be remembered for the economic success

"Chicago boys," a group of Chilean economists trained at the University of Chicago who advocated market-driven capitalism, and for the executions at Estadio Nacional.

While the Catholic University of Chile in Santiago was linked to an element within the clergy that supported Pinochet, the Catholic University of Valparaíso, led by Jesuits, tried as much as possible to keep their social-oriented liberation theology alive. The Valparaíso School of Architecture, their *travesías*, and the Ciudad Abierta were, in a way, protected by this orientation and served as an alternative universe to escape the harsh realities of the Pinochet era. What remains to be discussed is how much their poetic foundation was combined with the tectonic pragmatism of the Santiago

school to inform a generation of Chilean architects that came of age around the time of Pinochet's demise in the 1990s.

#### FURTHER READING

Pendleton-Jullian, *The Road That Is Not a Road and the Open City, Ritoque, Chile.*

Pérez de Arce. "So Far yet So Near: The Open City and the Travesías."

Pérez Oyarzún, "The Valparaíso School."

Reina-Bravo, "A Modernist Experiment: Traces of Poetry, Art, and Architecture within the Travesías and the Open City."

Torrent, "Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture since 1950."

## CHILEAN POSTMODERNISM IS CHALLENGED BY JOSE CRUZ AND GERMÁN DEL SOL.

### CHILE

IN THE FINAL DECADE of the twentieth century, no other country received more attention for its architecture than Chile. Economics and politics can explain this disparity; Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina were suffering stagnant economic growth and politically turbulent regimes in the 1980s and 1990s. In the United States, President Bill Clinton won two elections with the slogan "It's the economy, stupid," and it seemed that Latin America could only follow behind his Washington Consensus. The future rise of the left at the turn of the millennium would prove that wrong, but, in the meantime, we have to admit that in the case of Chile, at least, market-oriented reforms did produce remarkable architecture.

As much as Chilean architectural excellence is a consensus, we need to look into the roots of such a phenomenon and the results it yielded. According to historian Horacio Torrent,

The most typical conditions of Chilean architecture in recent years have been dominated by several factors: a pressure to build quickly a product that expands the country's economic growth; the availability of a significant quantity of architectural projects for the market; the crisis of a welfare state; and the absence of a public entity that promotes disciplined architectural strategies.

All of the variables described by Torrent came directly from President Augusto Pinochet's market-oriented reforms in the 1970s. After the military coup of September 11, 1973, Chile embarked on a radical experiment of market liberalization and a dismantling of the welfare state. As argued by historian Jorge Francisco Llerenas, Chile experienced a very early globalization process as the result of Pinochet's regime, and, as could be expected, all of the good and the bad that comes with globalization affected Chile before any other Latin American country.<sup>1</sup>

In architecture, the move from state commissioned programs to market-oriented developments coincides

with the demise of the modern movement and the rise of postmodernism. Marina Waisman, in a lucid text published in *Arquitectura Viva* magazine in 1991, called the previous decade "la década rosa" not only for the favorite color of Michael Graves, Peter Eisenman, and Aldo Rossi, but mostly for the political economic reforms of U.S. president Ronald Reagan, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, and, in Chile, Pinochet.

Chile already had a strong local modernism with Enrique Browne, Christian De Groote, and Cristián Fernández Cox rose to prominence in the 1980s. In 1931, De Groote graduated from Santiago's Catholic University in 1957 and proceeded to graduate school at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. Back in Chile, he collaborated with Emilio Duhart at CEF, one of the most important commissions of the early 1960s (see 1966 entry). At Casa Vergara (Algarrobo, 1980), De Groote designed a series of porticos that are adapted to the triangular shape of the site and the topography, something reminiscent of his many years working on industrial programs. At the house, the simplicity of the structure allows for the creation of very sensible and varying spaces with a remarkable economy of means.

Another important architect of those times in Chile is Enrique Browne Covarrubias. Born in 1942, Browne graduated from the Catholic University in 1965 and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1969.<sup>2</sup> Back in Chile, Browne's early work shows a strong focus on tectonic expression using brick and wood as well as his pioneering attentiveness to nature as part of the built environment. His designs for buildings at Calle Padre Mariano (Santiago, 1974) and Calle Suecia (Santiago, 1978) propose green roofs at a time when only visionaries were doing it. A few years later, Browne built a house on Calle Paul Harris (Santiago, 1980) that used a wooden trellis volume to be covered with vines, a design element that would recur in his work. Taking full advantage of Santiago's weather,

the vine-covered box provides a lush and shaded space in the summer while allowing for the winter sun to filter thorough its deciduous vegetation. At the building for the Consorcio Nacional de Seguros (1990), Browne's mastery of foliage as a design element would be used to enhance an office building, advancing by decades the breathable façades that populate architectural magazines of the first years of the twenty-first century.

According to Liernur, this late-modern Chilean generation was not interested in the tabula rasa of modernity as the previous generation had been but, instead, in a "classic interpretation of modern traditions," an architecture of austerity, control, sensibility, and silence.<sup>4</sup> The fact that those four words used to describe Chilean architecture fit the Pinochet years very well is no coincidence.

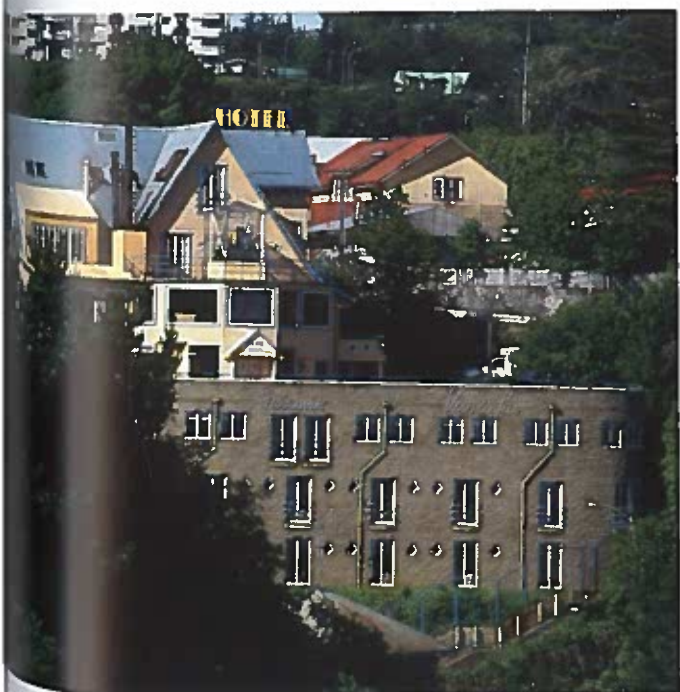
What might surely be a coincidence is the fact that an alternative Chilean architecture, more truly tectonic

and more attuned to the country's geography, would emerge in the early 1990s at the very same time that the Pinochet dictatorship was crumbling.

In distant Chiloé, 700 miles (1,127 km) south of Santiago, Edward Rojas developed an architecture of intense "geographic consciousness," to use a term coined by Horacio Torrent.<sup>5</sup> Having studied under the radical architecture program of Valparaíso (see 1969-a entry), his work would no doubt keep a distance from the market-oriented developments of Santiago. In Chiloé, Rojas had a chance to build several public structures that respond to its maritime southern conditions. A modern materialization and spatiality in wood and careful reinterpretation of the traditions of southern Chilean architecture, such as fishermen's housing, can be found in the Dalcabue fair (1978) or, a decade later, in the Chiloé Modern Art Museum (1988). At Hotel Viento Sur (1991), an Aalto-like curved form in reinforced concrete is built on a sloping site, right below a 1930s structure that was renovated to accommodate the hotel's shared spaces. The new concrete building is quite hidden in the landscape and functions as a pedestal for the old house, supporting new parking spaces on its roof.

Meanwhile in Santiago, Alvar Aalto's influence would be felt again, this time in the competition for the Chilean pavilion for the Seville Expo in 1992. Conceived to celebrate five hundred years after Columbus's famous journey, much like its past exhibition (see 1929-a entry), it was intended to support Spain's role as Latin America's motherland.

If it had been Mexico and Peru that displayed sophisticated readings of the two countries' past in 1929, this time it would be Chile that stole the limelight. A beautiful pavilion designed by José "Pepe" Cruz Ovalle and Germán del Sol housed a giant piece of an iceberg as its main exhibition. Most of the media reaction focused on the environmental provocation of refrigerating 85 tons of Antarctic ice in the middle of the Andalusian summer (not to mention the cost of hauling



Edward Rojas, Viento del Sur, Puerto Montt, 1991.



José Cruz and Germán del Sol, interior of Chilean pavilion at Seville Expo, 1992.

it back and forth), but the envelope around the iceberg deserves just as much credit for the success of the Chilean pavilion.

The result of a competition carried out in 1990, the Chilean pavilion is a rectangular box slightly curved in an S shape and oriented north-south in relation to the country's geography. Built in laminated wood and covered in copper (two prized Chilean products), the pavilion referenced Aalto's Finnish pavilion for the 1939 World's Exhibition in New York. A detached roof, also in laminated wood, lets in a soft light that floods the interior space. In the competition report, the architects wrote about carving a unified interior space from detached wood planks to allow for air circulation and for a modulated light inside.

Del Sol and Cruz were only beginning their careers when they won the competition for the pavilion in 1990. Germán del Sol was born in 1949 and started architecture school at Catholic University in Santiago in the late 1960s, transferring later to the Escuela Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB) from which he graduated in 1973. His early years working

as an architect were spent between Barcelona, Chile, California, and, finally, back in Chile in 1986. José "Pepe" Cruz Ovalle was born in 1948 and started his architectural studies at the Valparaíso school, founded by his uncle Alberto Cruz. Like del Sol, Cruz left Chile for Barcelona in 1973 and graduated from ETSAB in 1975, not returning to Chile until 1987.

In Seville, they had a unique opportunity to help redefine Chilean architecture, and they did so by combining the warmth of wood with the added value of the laminated process as well as the simplicity of the single void with the subtle curves of the longitudinal walls. This was an appropriate metaphor for a Chile that wanted to keep its modernized and globalized image while moving away from the repressive Pinochet years.

The poetics of the Valparaíso school had mixed here with the tectonics of the Santiago school.

In thinking about the transformations in Chilean architecture in the 1980s and 1990s, it becomes clear that the radical globalization and market-oriented policies of Pinochet were later tempered with a Chilean seasoning. Liernur, again, connects the pavilion of del Sol and Cruz with the "NO" Campaign of 1989 that voted Pinochet out of the presidency (but not out of power completely). This new "arriving joy" (the jingle of the "NO" campaign was "*La alegría ya viene*," or "Joy is arriving") was turned into a new branding of Chilean architecture that combined the Valparaíso expressive sensibility with the Santiago rigorous tectonics. The new Chilean architecture mirrored the new Chilean man of the "NO" campaign: globalized but rooted in place; sophisticated but fond of raw materials; progressive in image but conservative in core values.

#### FURTHER READING

Korowin, "Iceberg! Right Ahead!" (Re)Discovering Chile at the 1992 Universal Exposition in Seville, Spain."

Liernur, *Portales del laberinto: Arquitectura y ciudad en Chile 1977-2009*.

Quantrill, *Chilean Modern Architecture since 1950*.



Enrique Browne, Consorcio Nacional de Seguros, Santiago, 1990.

## SMILJAN RADIC, CHARCOAL BURNER'S HUT

SEVERAL CRITICS HAVE PRAISED contemporary Chilean architecture as the best in Latin America in the last years of the twentieth century. In common, they speak of a sensibility to site conditions and an attention to materiality that gets translated to a level of precision higher than in Mexico, Brazil, or Colombia. Behind that is also a conceptual intensity that elevates the architectural discourse and reaches out to contemporary art and, specifically, to installations as experimental architecture.

The work of Smiljan Radic weaves together all the elements that make Chilean contemporary architecture so celebrated. Born in Santiago, Chile, in 1965, to a family of Croatian immigrants, Smiljan Radic Clarke graduated in 1989 from the Catholic University in Chile. After his studies, Radic attended art and aesthetics classes at the Istituto Andrea Palladio and the Istituto Universitario di Architettura, both in Venice, Italy. In addition, he collaborates extensively with the Chilean sculptor Marcela Correa.

Balancing his Chilean and European roots, Radic's work is simultaneously very Chilean and extremely universal. Much like Emilio Duhart in the 1970s (see 1966 entry) and Enrique Browne in the 1980s (see 1990 entry), Radic has been widely published since the 1990s, making him a pioneer among contemporary Chilean architects despite his young age. His work combines visual appeal with intellectual rigor. This kind of work is quite common in North America and Europe, where young architects use installations and museum pieces as stepping-stones to large buildings. Radic should be praised for focusing on the intensity of installations and small structures while many of his peers jumped quickly on large commissions, at the expense of quality and rigor. At Casa Chica (Talca, 1995), Radic used rough granite slabs and recycled materials such as windows and doors to build a tiny house of 300 sq. ft. (28 sq. m). In addition to referencing the work of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, it is a type of primitive hut for contemporary times with a steel structure, stones cut by prisoners, and materials salvaged from other structures. His Cooper Houses 1 and 2 (Chiloé Island, 1996–1999, and Talca, 2004–2005) and his Chilean Houses 1 and 2 (Rancagua, 2005–2006) are investigations centered on a single theme: the whiteness of Chilean houses and the material properties of

copper, of which Chile is the largest world producer.

On the periphery of Santiago exist the remains of a Charcoal Burner's House and furnaces. As a point of departure to intervene at the site of the ruins, Radic looked at the traditional construction processes of charcoal-burning furnaces. At Casa del Carbonero (1997), a type of charcoal maker's hut or an addition to the charcoal maker's house, Radic's architecture is revealed in all its intensity and contradictions. The project is not an inhabitable space but an installation. For the original furnaces or "huts," a hole was dug in the ground, 10 ft. (3 m) in diameter and 4 ft. (1.2 m) deep, to be carefully filled with wood. The wood was then covered with mud and straw (for extra strength) and fired up, turning the clay into a ceramic hut.

In Radic's piece, the traditional ground excavation was turned into an aboveground sphere with wire mesh used to form the lower half. The wood sticks are carefully placed to form the sphere, and the volume is covered in mud with small holes for ventilation. Once the fire is set, the smoking giant mud ball activates the space, referencing the earlier use of the site while becoming a center point of this new public space. The platonic volume, built with traditional Chilean methods, links the local and the universal as well as old construction methods to the new world of landscape art or site constructions. Radic explains that calling the piece an "addition to the charcoal burner's hut," does not adequately explain that it is not a proper expansion of the living space but rather an amplification of its imaginary.

In another iteration, he created three more mud spheres and located them among twenty-three palm trees in a larger field called Cancha Culipran. *Cancha*, an Inca word that means "open public space," is probably the most used word of Andean origin in contemporary Spanish (used as a synonym for "field" or "court"). For Radic, architecture is a "warehouse of memories." Here and with the Charcoal Burner's Hut, he has accessed architecture's multiple layers of meaning of the forms, names, and organizing structures and has transformed them into metaphors and relationships that, for him, are as important as the materiality itself. The precision of the architecture, with sculptural inspirations that carry into his later houses, is created in a way that diffuses its significance into a variety of interpretations.

the Arquitectos Asociados (Alexandre Brasil, Andre Prado, Bruno Santa Cecilia, Carlos Alberto Maciel, and Paula Zasnicoff) built several remarkable structures, such as the Burle Marx Educational Institute by Brasil and Zasnicoff (2006–2009) and the home for *Cosmococa* (2008–2010), the provocative installation designed by Hélio Oiticica and Neville de Almeida in 1973 (see 1967 entry). But it is at the Miguel Rio Branco Gallery (2008–2010) that their work resonates the most. Here, we encounter a distorted cube enveloped in Corten steel that appears to precariously hang from a cliff. Inside, the edgy photographs of Rio Branco are displayed in various manners: framed, printed, or projected on walls or on hanging pieces of white cloth. Working alongside the artist, the architects convinced the curatorial staff that the rusty steel box should have its structure exposed inside, as if the guts of the building were revealed. Since the rooms are kept in the dark, it is only when a bright photo of Rio Branco is projected for a few seconds that the structure is visible.

Structural revelations have always been the focus of architects from Rosario, Argentina. Rafael Iglesia's work (see 2002 box) can be described as a constant challenge of structural limits in which something is always cantilevered, always hanging, as if shouting at the presence of gravity. Drawing from Iglesia as much as from Jorge Scrimaglio and the Paulistas is the work of Gerardo Caballero and Maite Fernández. Their *Edificio Brown* (Rosario, 2005–2007) is perhaps the most successful apartment building of the last decade, an elegant combination of diverse materialities (brick, concrete, and glass) cleverly carved out of a corner block in a way that works well for both the dweller (maximizing privacy as well as views) and the city corner.

#### TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY SOCIAL AWARENESS

As noted earlier, gravity can also convey urgency, necessity, significance. Throughout the book, we have addressed architectural proposals whose utopian sense served as the means to induce social change and to improve the grim realities under which many Latin Americans live. Those realities, however, slowly changed during the last century; the economies grew and political systems matured. Nevertheless, large portions of local populations still live under dire conditions. The fruits of modernization and globalization benefited some much more than others, and inequality is the most pressing issue in Latin America today.

At the same time, the idea of utopia held in the past has been abandoned, as we've become skeptical of any grand solution to the problems. Instead, we focus on the transformative power of smaller interventions and their potential for dissemination. For that reason, we now call social awareness what we called utopias before. It implies a change in scale (smaller projects) and also means that architecture no longer claims to have the power to change any given societal problem.

No single project embodies those ideas better than Alejandro Aravena's *Elemental Housing* (2001–). Deriving from a long list of Chilean social housing projects as well as from similar experiments such as PREVI in Peru (see 1969-b entry) and more contemporary Dutch proposals (Habraken, MVRDV, Mecanoo, etc.), *Elemental* tries to combine the best of the construction industry gains of scale with the best of informal processes of flexibility and affordability. The main design idea is to build smaller units (lowering costs upfront) that have within them the possibility of expansion. Each family would then expand when needed. The scheme was first built in Iquique, Chile, with ninety-three units of 320 sq. ft. (30 sq. m) each, expandable to 780 sq. ft. (73 sq. m). Since then,



Al Borde, Nueva Esperanza School, Ecuador, 2010.

1968

1. Eleven years later, following the coup d'état of September 11, 1973, that ousted Salvador Allende's democratically elected government, the stadium was used as a concentration and torture camp by Augusto Pinochet's military junta.
2. Ramírez Vázquez, *The National Museum of Anthropology: Mexico*, 15.
3. Ramírez Vázquez and Trueblood, *Pedro Ramírez Vázquez en la arquitectura*, 144; "What We Can Do: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez in Interview with Tania Ragasol," 212.
4. Díaz Ordaz, *V Informe de Gobierno* (1968), 356.
5. "What We Can Do: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez in Interview with Tania Ragasol," 220.
6. Goeritz, "The Route of Friendship: Sculpture," 402.

1969-A

1. was not the founding alien  
to the discoveries  
—oh, seamen  
their wild birds  
the uncertain sea  
the naked people among their gods!—  
because the gift to be displayed  
causes hope to be mistaken?

did not  
the first passion of gold  
leave the sailor blind  
to that unnamed clarity  
with which the afternoon rewards and destroys  
appearance?

(Translation by Luis E. Carranza)

2. Around the same time, the Texas Rangers were working on parallel ideas in Austin, Texas.
3. Among the new faculty was Claudio Girola, an Argentine Concretist sculptor who had been a part of the renowned Asociación Arte Concreto-Inventiva.
4. Pendleton-Jullian, "Autopoetic Architecture," 267.
5. Rispa, *Valparaiso School: Open City Group*, 14; emphasis ours.
6. Pendleton-Jullian, "Autopoetic Architecture," 274.

1969-B

1. Fernando Belaúnde Terry graduated from the University of Texas School of Architecture in 1935. After working in Mexico for two years, he returned to Peru and founded the magazine *El Arquitecto Peruano* that same

year. Teaching since 1943, Belaúnde became dean of the Civil Engineering and Architecture Department and later was elected to the Peruvian Congress (1944–1948). Having served twice as Peruvian president (1963–1968 and 1980–1985), Belaúnde is, to our knowledge, the first trained architect ever to be elected to such a high national post in the world. (Ecuador elected Sixto Duran in 1992.)

2. James Stirling (UK); Knud Svenssons (Denmark); Esquerra, Samper, Sáenz, Urdaneta (Colombia); Atelier 5 (Switzerland); Toivo Korhonen (Finland); Charles Correa (India); Kikutake, Maki, Kurokawa (Japan); Iñiguez de Onzoño, Vázquez de Castro (Spain); Hansen, Hatloy (Poland); Aldo van Eyck (Netherlands); Candilis, Josic, Woods (France); and Christopher Alexander (USA).

3. Miguel Alvarino; Ernesto Paredes; Miró-Quesada, Williams, Núñez; Gunther, Seminario; Morales, Montagne; Juan Reiser; Eduardo Orrego; Vier, Zanelli; Vella, Bentin, Quiñones, Takahashi; Mazzarri, Llanos; Cooper, García-Bryce, Graña, Nicolini; Chaparro, Ramírez, Smirnoff, Wyszowski; Crousse, Pérez, Pérez-León.

4. José Antonio Coderch (Spain), Halldor Gunnlogsson (Denmark), Peter Land (UN) Ernest Weissmann (UN) Carl Koch (US/UIA), Manuel Valega (Peru), Ricardo Malachowski (Peru), Eduardo Barclay (Peru), and the consultants Darío González (Peru) and Álvaro Ortega (UN).

5. Strauven, Aldo van Eyck: *The Shape of Relativity*, 545–546.

1971

1. Kosice, "Abstract Art," 492.
2. Kosice, "Madí Manifesto," reproduced in Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820–1980*, 330.
3. Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial*, n.p.
4. Kosice, "The Architecture of Water in Sculpture," 520.

5. Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La raza cósmica*, 24.

6. Ibid., 25. For Vasconcelos, the opposite of Unversópolis was "Anglotown," which he defined as a metropolis. Oswald Spengler had used this term to define the material, architectural expression of a civilization at its peak and, therefore, on its way into decline. From "Anglotown," colonizing troops were to be dispatched to conquer the world and to eliminate the rival races.

7. Bernardes, "The Paths of the First Tropical Civilization," 254.

8. Calvacanti, "Sérgio Bernardes: A Modernist Adrift," 243.

9. Amancio Williams: *Obras y textos*, 16.

10. Arai, et al., "Proyecto de la Ciudad Obrera de México." This project was presented in the 1938 International Congress on Planning and Housing that was celebrated in Mexico City. Congreso Internacional de

1990

1. Torrent, "Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture since 1950," 91.
2. Liernur, "Portales del laberinto," 4.
3. While many of the best Chilean architects came to the United States for graduate school, Argentine architects preferred to go to Europe. Brazilian architects of the same generation rarely pursued foreign degrees.
4. Liernur, "Portales del laberinto," 12.
5. Torrent, "Abstraction and Tectonics in Chilean Architecture since 1950," 101.

1991

1. Liernur, "Un nuovo mundo per lo spirito nuovo," 107-109.

1994-A

1. Rio, *Vida vertiginosa*, 53.

2. It has been difficult to find precise quantitative data on Favela-Bairro, with different authors using very different numbers. The sums here presented were taken from Luiz Paulo Conde and Sergio Magalhães, *Favela-Bairro: Uma outra história da cidade do Rio de Janeiro*, 147-155.

2000

1. Montezuma, "Facing the Environmental Challenge," 1-10.
2. Mazzanti, "A Conversation between Sergio Fajardo and Giancarlo Mazzanti," 34-41.

#### CONCLUSION

1. Mauricio Rocha: *Taller de Arquitectura*, 246.