ALDO VAN EYCK'S PLAYGROUNDS

Taller de Formación y Representación II Campo de Juego

Escuela de Arquitectura,
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

1º Semestre de 2015
Santiago, Chile

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Aldo van Eyck (1918-1999), one of the most prominent members of Team X, has a peculiar life story. He was born in Utrecht. His father was a writer and his mother had Latin American family connections. He spent part of his youth in England and began his studies in the Academy of Visual Arts in The Hague. His studies continued in the ETH of Zurich during World War II. Graduating with a degree in architecture in 1942, he received extensive training that opened his mind to a variety of problems including those of the African cultures.

Although towards the last third of the twentieth century a strong critique of modern architecture emerged, van Eyck remained faithful to the conviction that it was possible to reconcile the technical modernization and avant-garde art with a humanist and democratic city. In 1972, during Salvador Allende's government in Chile, he was a jury member for the international competition to redesign the western area of downtown Santiago. On this occasion he visited to the Architecture Department of the Universidad Católica.

In 1947, guided by this conviction he began his series of playgrounds while he worked at the municipality of Amsterdam. The initiative lasted for more than two decades and hundreds of these play spaces dotted the city like a constellation. They proposed that children were protagonists of the city, freeing these spaces from their dependence on devices. As such, they are conceived as abstract configurations in which elements like bars, walls, seating, or sandboxes could be explored by both children and adults.

In this sense, the van Eyck's playgrounds have a double advantage as triggers for a first year undergraduate studio: on one hand, they represent elemental architectural configurations that, although reduced to their minimum expression, are not trivial. On the other hand, they depict an assessment of the city and its problems; a confidence that many small interventions are capable of significantly enriching it. These ideas, this purpose, and these values offered a theoretical, practical, disciplined, and valuable content for the students beginning their training in architecture. **ARQ**

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Aldo van Eyck, Playground Antillenstraat, 1950.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Joaquín Cárdenas

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Saffierstraat, 1951.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Marjorie Barros

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Rozijnenstraat, 1952.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Michelle Freite

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Dijkstraat, 1954.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Paula Guzmán

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Weesperzyde, 1954.
Dibujo de / Drawing by María Victoria Fernández

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Mariniersplein, 1956.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Silvana Aguilera

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Dulongstraat, 1957.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Francesca Costa

Aldo van Eyck, Playground Nieuwmarkt, 1968.
Dibujo de / Drawing by Carla Schwartz