PRAÇA DAS ARTES

URBANISM MADE OF ARCHITECTURE

Brasil Arquitetura

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São Paulo, Brasil

2012

In a metropolis like São Paulo, where buildings resemble a native forest and where the surplus of vehicles has threatened the sense of the city, to think of architecture as urbanism –granting more public space for pedestrians– is an exception. By opening to the street the empty spaces inside the block, the Praça das Artes does just that, transforming into public space what was once the most private space of all.

KEYWORDS · public space, ground, void, pedestrian, São Paulo

In times of total crisis of urban comfort due to the failure of a city model based on cars and social inequality, nothing sounds more reasonable and imperative than to resume the agenda of urbanism and architecture, to rethink why we build cities and what kind of cities we want to build.

The laws and regulations designed to forge and control cities no longer guarantee the quality of urban space or the urban comfort required for social coexistence. Neither do generic or macro scale urban plans guarantee the quality of public spaces. In some cases they may work, but usually fail when materialized as architecture at a human scale.

Jane Jacobs' dream of understanding human issues as fuel for the design and building of cities, was always thought to be on the architectural scale, on the scope of the project that affects –for better or worse– the individual citizen or group. Where is the comfort scale to be found? Where is that scale that mediates between different everyday functions? Theoretically it is at the architectural scale of urban projects, but in our current cities it doesn't exist, given an almost total lack of architecture.

LEYENDA / LEGEND

1. Acceso / Access Av. São João
2. Plaza cubierta / Covered plaza
3. Hall
4. Exposiciones / Exhibitions
5. Centro de documentación / Document center
6. Restaurante / Restaurant
7. Auditorio / Auditorium
8. Acceso por / Access by Conselheiro Crispiniano
9. Plaza
10. Cafetería / Cafeteria
11. Escultura a Verdi / Verdi sculpture
12. Acceso / Access Formosa
13. Sala de ensayo orquestas / Orchestras rehearsal room
14. Sala de ensayo danza / Dance rehearsal room
15. Salas de ensayo música / Music rehearsal room
16. Terraza / Terrace
17. Administración / Administration
18. Sala de conciertos / Concert hall
19. Camarín / Dressing room
20. Terraza-jardín / Garden terrace
21. Acceso entre edificios / Access between buildings
22. Sala de ensayo coral / Chorus rehearsal room
23. Sala del director / Director's room
24. Salas de apoyo coros / Choirs support rooms

Croquis propuesta /
Proposal sketches

REUNION OF IDEAS

In 1981 we participated along with Lina Bo Bardi in the competition for the project of re-urbanising the Vale do Anhangabaú. Obviously we didn't even receive an honorable mention. Our entry was considered a prank. And what was our proposal for the Vale do Anhangabaú? To take the car far away from the ground and onto a thin, elevated metallic structure that would cut the valley in two, as a highline. No tunnels or water collectors, all in order to free space for people by creating a park, a garden or a major plaza for all of those who live in or pass by the city. Neither more nor less than the litany that we constantly preach and listen to.

Thirty years later we were able to design and build the Praça das Artes. In both cases the design intentions were explicit. We tried to understand what was obsolete, without use or function, that which was now out-dated from our previous urban design; a design that configured the city of the 19th century which had deteriorated together with contemporary anachronism.

Today, the houses or small buildings with back-yard gardens belonging to the long Portuguese sites are no longer justified. They usually end up generating an empty void. Empty in both a physical and figurative sense: without buildings or use. These are the square meters that contribute to real estate profit, in the perverse calculation of coefficients and floor area ratios considered by building industry, something far from the social function of property. What is surprising is that they are actual areas, spaces that have lost their useful features. In other words, places that are 'non-places' that no longer hold life.

From these leftovers, or better, with those remains of the city dispute, we built the Praça das Artes, and we could have built Anhangabaú again. As there are many voids in the

Corte AA / AA Section
E. / S. 1:1.250

Corte BB / BB Section
E. / S. 1:1.250

city centre, there are many possibilities of transforming and reintegrating these spaces through projects.

Our project for the Vale do Anhangabaú rose through lateral slopes conquering new areas, incorporating sites and expanding frontiers. The same occurs in the Praça das Artes: a project that is born from the depths and is conformed by them, showing up to the city while revealing its origins: the failure of an urban model that is no longer consistent with life in the metropolis. Therefore, as a form of criticism, we did not occupy the empty ground level, not even with columns. This also allowed us to think about an architecture that is made from difficulties and restrictions, that doesn't need plain land as a plinth. But this becomes the topic of another discussion.

TRANSFORMATIVE HERITAGE

Considering central voids as heritage, which means that these, by disgrace, have never been part of the agenda of urban decisions. We mean that urban plans never start from available assets; they don't rely on built heritage to develop and justify themselves. They tend to destroy the old city to build a new one; they don't manage to develop them simultaneously or to overlap them, as in Lisbon, Paris or Istanbul. This relates to dominant ideas and practices of both the preservationists, that are up for putting heritage on an altar or display as a fragile,

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Ubicación / Location
Rua Conselheiro Crispiniano, Rua Formosa,
Avenida São João. São Paulo, Brasil

Cliente / Client
Secretaria Municipal de Cultura,
Municipalidad de São Paulo
Ingeniería estructural / Structural engineering
FTOyamaha

Construcción / Construction
Consórcio Construcap/Triunfo

Presupuesto / Budget
USD\$ 37,560.000

Superficie construida / Built surface
28.500 m²

Año de Proyecto / Project year
2006

Año de construcción / Construction year
2012

Planta emplazamiento / Site plan
E. / S. 1:12,500

Obra en construcción / Building under construction © Sylvia Masini

Obra en construcción / Building under construction © Sylvia Masini

useless porcelain, and developers (or demolishers) that, in the name of progress fight to destroy heritage opening new paths for easy profit.

The urbanism that we want is made out of grass, plants, steel, cement, and trees; raw materials that conform and configure the project. It is made with a clear motivation for transformation and a search towards people's comfort. It is made of architecture. **ARQ**

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Founded in 1979 and headquartered in São Paulo, Brazil, the office led by Francisco Fanucci (FAU-USP, 1977) and Marcelo Ferraz (FAU-USP, 1978) develops projects of architectural design, urban planning, restoration and interior design. Between 1977 and 1992 they collaborated with Lina Bo Bardi where they worked in the project for the sesc Pompeia in São Paulo. Among the publications of their work we can find *Francisco Fanucci & Marcelo Ferraz - Brasil Arquitetura* (Cosac Naify, 2005), *Brazil Arquitetura + Marcos Cartum* (Uzina Books, 2013), and also the book *Praça das Artes* (Azougue Editorial, 2013) by the author Victor Nosek about their project in São Paulo.