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W STRONĘ KRAJOBRAZU

TOWARDS THE LANDSCAPE

Witruwiańskie zasady: *firmitas, utilitas, venustas*, wciąż zachowują całą swoją aktualność. Tytuł tego artykułu, *W stronę krajobrazu*, kieruje uwagę na aktualne narzędzia projektowania architektonicznego, w wyraźny sposób różniące się od *idei przestrzeni*. Rozważany tu nowy paradygmat rozważa ideę „krajobrazu” jako zamiennika idei „przestrzeni”, można by rzec – zamiennika reguł kartezjańskiej i euklidesowej geometrii (idei wyjątkowo całościowych na tle współczesnej złożoności i niepewności).

Słowa kluczowe: krajobraz, innowacja, system, nowy sposób patrzenia

The Principles Vitruvianus: *firmitas, utilitas and venustas*, they are obsolete at present. “Towards the Landscape” title of this article tries to confront the current instruments of the architectural project that differs glaringly from the “idea of the space “. The new paradigm that we offer confronts the concept of “landscape” as substitute of the idea of “space”, that is to say, it replaces the rules of the Cartesian and Euclidian geometry (concepts excessively totalizer in the complexity and contemporary uncertainty).

Keywords: landscape, innovation, system, new way of looking

Vitruvius stated that architecture has three essential conditions: strength, functionality and beauty. This triple concept was maintained almost without argument until the 19th century, although some authors have substituted the original terms for others in more modern parlance, such as “decoration, construction and distribution, which clearly involves a modernisation and adaptation of the ancient Vitruvian terms.

One of the more marked attempts to shake off the dust of the past and re-establish architecture with new principles was that that of substituting the language of the academy which was based on the Vitruvian concepts, in order to generate new ideals which would

be named with words hitherto unused, for example “functional”, “rational” or the term “space which we occupy”. The none-too great temporal distance which separates us from the high point of movements such as Functionalism or Rationalism, allows us to understand up to what point the substitution of the word “strength” by “rational” or the word “functionality” by “rational” has been no more than a conventional slip-up and which relates to paradigms which, due to their high level of abstraction are still pertinent today.

However, unlike what happens with children, art and architecture are not part of nature, they are cultural conventions. In this sense it is difficult, at

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least to establish what their “essences” are, i.e., that which remains invariable throughout time, that which “constitutes its being”, as the arts and architecture are not the way they are by their nature, but through convention, and conventions are arbitrary and mutable, as the development of Art itself has shown.

(...) The currently-held idea that space constitutes the essence of architecture is the major contribution of avant-garde art and the architecture of the “modern movement”, whose developments chronologically coincide with the contributions of historians. If space was not understood until then as something essential in architecture, this does not mean that architects in other eras were not aware that the buildings they made enclosed or delimited a determined and differentiated space, or that artists did not develop the laws of perspective as constructions to represent three-dimensional spaces on the surface of a painting, it meant however that the terms in which they thought and built were not “spatial” in the same sense as we use the term today. Space was a consequence or a residue of the construction of solid volumes, or it was considered to be an abstract entity, superior to determined forms, such as an entity superior to the idea of “corporeal volume”, a term which Wölfflin used to define architecture.

Today we place a positive value on many qualities in the constructions of both the past and the most immediate present, values such as solidity, contrast, colour, scale, proportion, rhythm, texture, light or sound, yet one of the qualities which can most certainly be used to qualify a building as having “fine architecture” is that of being able to create spaces, i.e. both open and closed areas which possess perceptive and emotive conditions.

Unlike the static and directional contemplation with which one comprehends a flat painting, space demands for its compression a type of contemplation

characterised by the movement of the bodies which circulate around it, as only through movement can space be understood.

The special qualities of architecture are not reduced to an enclosed volume within a construction, however extensive or complex this may be, but are reduced to the volumetric and rhythmic qualities which its constructive elements provoke in the viewer on moving through its interior.

Through movement, space is no longer a mere vacuum between bodies and it becomes an active entity. However, for the carved and ornamented bodies, burdened with cultural signifiers, to become passive volumes and for the vacuum to make sense with respect to space, the viewer must go from mere perceptive sensation to intellectual interpretation. In this sense space is presented as an intellectual theme, as a philosophical matter, which from (aesthetic) perception moves on an area of reflection (ontology).

Starting from the idea that space takes on its full sense through movement and bringing sequences and rhythms to the forefront, means that time must be considered as an element inextricably linked to space. The idea of continuous space-time was initially proposed by the sculptor Hildebrand, on proposing the idea of “kinetic vision”, and is also found in the fundamental nucleus of Albert Einstein’s theory of 1905.

As Javier Maderuelo states in his book “The Idea of Space (Architecture and Contemporary Art 1960–1989) at this time, the essence of architecture as origin is a paradigm and the object of my reflection is linked to the concept of landscape: TOWARDS THE LANDSCAPE.

LANDSCAPE AND NATURE

Landscape as interpretation and environmental project

The landscape is not nature but a vision of nature. Implicit in the term landscape is the concept of vision

and perception. Landscape makes no sense if Man is not there to observe it, contemplate it, and more specifically, experience it.

Acting on the landscape means proposing an interpretation (perceptive, sensorial and existential) of nature and translating it into forms. Projecting the landscape is constructing an artifice in nature and manipulating it for perception or habitat. As such, an agricultural landscape is nothing more than a manipulation of nature for agricultural production and the use of the land's resources which has been undertaken in the most compatible way possible with the environmental characteristics of the land (geological, soil-related, botanical, etc.).

LANDSCAPE AS FORM AND TIME

The landscape project as form in movement, in transformation (through the cultures of space, of image and of time)

Landscape is formed by living forms and therefore changing forms, such as vegetation or the atmospheric and climatic agents themselves. This is why landscape is the representation of forms (both natural and artificial) which arise and continually mutate. Time and mutation are part of the landscape project which consequently foresees in itself growth, seasonal change, deterioration and maintenance.

Landscape is a procedural form, as is the landscape project.

The forms of landscape are founded in movement, in the perception of movement. The time factor and the factor of movement are substantial in the landscape project. A landscape also changes because it is lived in and is literally moulded by the movement of the user, as with a contemporary work of art in minimalist or land art.

The time of the landscape and the time of the city: the city, architectures and urban functions last for extended periods of time and at the same time

brief instances, certainly different from those of the natural landscape, of the time of the seasons or the decades which a tree needs to reach maturity.

When the objective is a future time, can the project be undertaken through a series of strategies which govern the constructive process? This means measuring and marking a landscape, establishing geometries, itineraries, routes, visual perspectives, spatial and geographical coordinates, architectural landmarks of plant life and forested areas, systems of systems.

Landscape cannot be defined, it cannot be identified with the territory alone, with the dimension of extensive terrain; one must reflect on its smaller, more articulated dimension and therefore also consider the landscape as a point of view, a way of seeing space and therefore a way of looking and experiencing.

Today, often working on the landscape means working with nature's forms and manipulating them with regard to a new aesthetic and useful operation, where art, biology, architecture, engineering, botany, etc. offer a necessary framework of study and reflection.

It is useful to evaluate the interaction of both method and substance between the landscape project and the architectural project, the engineering project and the environmental project, provided that greater relevance is given to an articulated strategy on the land and that one does not fall into the trap of using mere definitions.

Reflection on the landscape cannot be limited only to placing attention on its definitions, however important they may be, it must also direct itself towards its true measurement, based on the results which produced, and it is necessary to observe its efficiency and identify the value of the project which links it to different materials and which sustain it and which must be established in the area concerned.

Today the procedural and transformational concept have also become part of the themes of landscape and territory. In this sense the relationship with the techniques of the landscape project also partly involve architecture, engineering, geography and botany, etc., especially in its modern, contemporary appearance, where the time factor and the factor of movement are fundamental.

Spatial sequences, circulation and routes – basically the kinetic appearance of space and even the revival of the picturesque are decisive factors for acting on the landscape.

There are also “Landscapes with Memory” or “Re-read Landscapes”, which necessary involve, in their recreation, their re-configuration and the provision of a future, as well as work on nostalgia, given that the elements of the past cannot be manipulated and re-configured with indifference.

LANDSCAPE AND ARCHITECTURE / LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Public space

Open space (parks, gardens, avenues, motorways, roads, squares, car parks, etc.) have taken on a decisive role in the definition of the form of a city. Yet the city has delegated many activities and roles which it is incapable of sustaining. Yet in the continual growth and mutation of these roles and in the continual diversification of the possible users, what are the limits of variability which the landscape project can and should have?

Architecture is explicitly an artifice, as it acts according to a manipulation and a transformation of nature, and often, in open opposition to nature.

Architecture itself is an integral part of the landscape. And the best architecture is that which cooperates in the first person, in the interpretation and integration (even through negation) of the landscape.

Projecting architecture means – in the same way or even more so that projecting the landscape – cre-

ating an artifice in nature, manipulating it for human perception or experience. Occasionally it means differentiating itself clearly and markedly from natural forms, contrasting trilitic forms or even avoiding contact with natural forms.

In this there is a perfect harmony of project techniques between landscape and architecture and in this “cinematic” acceptation, landscape and architecture often tend to blend and become confused in a single aesthetic operation.

On observing the “space” factor in architecture, that is, in an architecture considered above all to be focused on the interior, a relationship may be conceded between architecture and landscape as an outside-inside relationship, a relationship of horizons, of diaphragms and visual perceptions, of mutual relationships between interior and exterior.

Infrastructures / architecture and landscape must participate with other disciplinary fields in an articulated system which will be able to enrich each field reciprocally, if attention is paid to the presence of the landscape as a territorial physical structure, and to the dimension of the landscape as a cultural technical support.

OPERATORS WITH THE LANDSCAPE

However, in any event, to act on the landscape in a defined area we need the architect to act as an (interdisciplinary) mediator with the technical and aesthetic capacity to act on nature, the area and the city with the capacity to accept what is distinct.

João Nunes described this from with the need for the use of the terms “tolerance and generosity” in both the project work, as well as in the recognition of the mechanisms which act on the landscape in “time”. Both terms, are word-concepts which describe the requirements one needs to learn while participating in a culture which transfers the “landscape object” as a cultural framework of the 20th century to the “space/time landscape” which

we are proposing in the investigation and work on today's landscape.

With these comprehensible terms/concepts we move from the culture of the object to that of space, and from there to the culture of time.

In this case THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE PUBLIC SPACE which derives from the transportation of infrastructures is both valid and disconcerting from those dimensions of the landscape which associate space and time to the way in which one observes, comprehends and operates with reality.

Paul Virilio has already said, in reference to the 1789 French Revolution, the profound revolution exists in the invention of a "public gaze", and this public gaze is that which has been granted and which still lasts, from the Panopticon of Jeremy Bentham, to Berlin, Alexander Platz, from the text of Alfred Döblin or in the film by Rainer Weiner Fassbinder, or in Ridley Scott's film of Los Angeles – Blade Runner – or in the agonised public gaze of The Matrix by Joel Silver and the Wachoski brothers this need for evolution demanded by Virillo is made evident.

The common points between them is based on the control for establishing the angle of the gaze in the "PRINCIPLE OF VIGILANCE": "Beware, as it sees all".

The mechanisms of vision (and of its transmission) have acquired not only a practical use, but also a symbolic one. Such as the artefacts, engineering, architecture and landscapes in the films Blade Runner and The Matrix.

"Seeing but without being seen".

In same way we are faced with this change which Virilio warned about, a fact confirmed by Antonio Álvarez Reyes in ACTAS Huesca, 1998:

"From the moment in which "public space" cedes to "PUBLIC IMAGE" it is necessary to see that monitoring and illumination move in turn from the squares, streets and avenues to this terminal for the reoption of

advertisements, domestic information which furnishes the city, to the land of the shop window, J. Bentham, to the urban space and the illuminated landscape in Alexander Platz to the television which shows Blade Runner or to the interface of the multiple computer program of the Matrix. All of them with the need to provide finalised forms in a transformational logic, capable of doing without the generative time in a mixed/ machinistic aesthetic."

Revising this concept by R. Bocchi in "Ciudad Paisaje" (City Landscape) published in Finestre sul Paesaggio (Gargemi Publishers)

"The finito albertiana has ended en architecture (I would even say with the classical role of the architect). This does not mean the dissolution or the destruction of forms, it means the restitution of spaces to time, of giving time to space, of making other spaces in a continued dynamic which contradicts the staticity and in a certain manner tectonics itself."

"Spaces of relationship and relationship between spaces are sought more than spaces finished in which to celebrate archaic or modern rituals."

Contemporary culture analysed in this paradigm with authors such as anthropologists, philosophers, geographers – Richard Sennet, John Brinckerhorf, Jürgen Habermas, Hal Foster, E. Soja, Mike Davis, Kenneth Frampton, David Harvey etc., coincide in rethinking the dimension of the public in a context of late capitalism where public space has been practically abandoned due to the deregulation of marketing practices and of the greater attraction of the media space as a means of relating the public and the political.

We are therefore in a representation of public space, seeking new paths offered by its scenery and these are inextricably linked to the environment, to nature and to the culture of the landscape on the region.

Other beginning is needed, with a less classifiable sensibility for rules and procedure as instruments of

control of the geometry and that are articulated in the following arguments:

1. Paradigm of the Look. A NEW WAY GIVES TO LOOK. (Concept of "silence" in the Biennial show of Canaries, 2009)
2. Towards a New Dimension of the Public thing. Public sphere.
3. Territory like opened, multidisciplinary "SYSTEM".
4. The consideration of the "INTANGIBLE THING" like factor in the art and the Theatre.
5. Art like critical construction, as INNOVATION.
6. LANDSCAPE like DEVICE between technology and process of creation.