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PROJECT AND AESTHETIC SENSE

PROJEKT I ZMYŚŁ ESTETYCZNY

Piękno oznacza możliwy do uchwycenia stopień rytmizacji i zharmonizowania. Piękno to stopień powtarzalności postrzegany pomiędzy elementami rzeczywistości w przestrzeni i czasie. Piękno i czytelność mają, jak sądzę, wspólną istotę: mentalną radość, którą budzi zrozumienie tego, co czytelne i postrzeżenie czegoś jako piękne.

Zrozumienie i odczuwanie piękna jako rozgraniczanie, rozdzielanie zrozumiałego i niejasnego, spójnego i niejednorodnego, informacji i zgiełku, ziarna i plew.

1. AS AN INTRODUCTION

I shall start this thought upon beauty and architecture based on two extracts of two reference books.

FIRST TEXT

The first one is the “Epilogue of the Second Part. The Beautiful and The Intelligible” from the book “The Rebellion of the Forms” by Jorge Wagensberg: It is a suggestive title by an author who has captivated me since 1985 with his ideas about the complexity of the world. This book deals with the aesthetic sense that is mentioned in the specific title of the conference.

He states:

“The aesthetic sense is not included among the five great ephemerides that crown the race towards mankind. Some millions years ago the *Australopithecus afarensis* started the race towards mankind by getting to their feet (first ephemeris). With the biped phenomenon, the horizon of the savannah is better scanned; the offspring flee more safely in their mothers’ arms and, above all, with the hands free the path to move from theory to practice opens for the development of the brain. In this way, we reach the

Homo habilis, that with the lithic industry (second ephemeris), expands the uses of the hand far beyond the body. Then it is the turn of the *Homo erectus* whose notorious contribution to evolution is the fire (third ephemeris). With fire you eat better and you are eaten worse, the atmosphere temperature is regulated, the daylight is prolonged and the family and social relationships are enhanced... The *Homo neanderthalensis* appears much later (fourth ephemeris) with the first ritual tombs. It is the consciousness of “me”, of “what will become of me”, the emergence of the beliefs, of the other world and of this world. Finally, the *Homo sapiens* arrives with the symbol and the scientific intelligibility (fifth ephemeris). And with this latter, he eats the world. If all the above mentioned is true, then it turns out that the aesthetic sense precedes the self-consciousness and the abstract knowledge by far. Perhaps it should be added as another great ephemeris.

In fact, the complex human knowledge has, in my opinion, three components: a scientific one, a revealed one and an artistic one. The first evidence of scientific knowledge is about thirty thousand years old and it is a cave drawing. The first evidence of revealed knowledge is over one hundred thousand years old; it is a ritual tomb. The first evidence

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of artistic knowledge is almost half a million years old; it is a symmetrical stone axe. First was art. Then, the revelation appeared and finally the science.”

The author continues saying as a conclusion: “So, for the moment, and at worst, *Excalibur (symmetrical stone axe, Homo habilis, lithic industry)* is a proof (another one) that the joy for beauty is previous to the joy for abstract knowledge”.

SECOND TEXT:

And the other one, about the interpretation of reality (indicated in the subtitle) is: “Flatland. A Romance in Many Dimensions” by Edwin A. Abbott. P. Watzlamicks presents an essay about it that he entitles “Flatland” in the book “¿Es real la realidad?” “Is reality real?” known to us thanks to the good advice and help of María Julia Tosetto.

In this essay he introduces us to an extraordinary world:

Flatland is a narration made by an inhabitant of a two-dimensional world, that is to say, of a reality that only has length and width, but no height. It is a flat world, like the surface of a sheet of paper, inhabited by lines, triangles, squares, circles, etc. Its dwellers can move freely over (or, better, on) this surface but, the same as with the shadows, they cannot ascend over or descend under it. Needless to say, they ignore this limitation since the idea of a third dimension is unimaginable to them.

The narrator of our story (a square) lives a totally dismaying experience, preceded by a peculiar dream. In this dream, he sees himself suddenly moved to a one-dimensional world, whose inhabitants are dots and dashes. They all move forwards or backwards, but always along the same line that they call their world. For the inhabitants of Line land the idea of also moving

to the right or to the left apart from moving forward or backward is totally inconceivable. In his dream our narrator tries, in vain, to explain the reality of Flatland to the longest dash of Line land (its monarch).

Another visitor that declares to be coming from Space land tries hard to make the square understand about the three-dimensional reality and the limitation of Flatland compared with his reality. In the same way the square defined itself to the king of Line land as a line composed by many lines, so does this visitor now define itself as a circle of circles, which in his country of origin is called sphere. But naturally the square cannot understand him, because he sees his visitor as a circle, though certainly endowed with very strange and inexplicable qualities: it increases and decreases; it is sometimes reduced to a dot and disappears completely.

This also explains the surprising fact that the sphere can enter the square’s house although he has certainly closed all the doors. He naturally enters from above. But the “up and down” concepts are so strange to the square that he cannot understand them and consequently, he refuses to accept them. Finally, the sphere does not see any other solution but to take the square with him and go to Spaceland. Thus the square lives what we would nowadays call a transcendental experience:

“An unspeakable fright took me over. Everything was darkness; then, a terrible and sickening view that had nothing to do with seeing; I saw a line that was not a line; a space that was not such a thing, I was me, but I was not me either. When I could recover my power of speech, I yelled with deadly anguish: “This is madness or hell.” “It is neither the first nor the second”, answered the sphere in a calm voice, “It is to know that there are three dimensions; open your eyes again and try to see quietly”.

What the essay on Flatland presents is simply the relativity of reality. The history of mankind teaches that there is only just another more murderous and despotic idea than the delirium of a “real” reality (understanding as such, naturally, the reality of our own opinions), with all the terrible consequences that derive from this delirious starting point with implacable logical exactness. The capacity of living with true relativity, with questions that do not have answers, with the wisdom of not knowing anything and with the paradoxical uncertainties of existence; all this can be the essence of human maturity and of the resulting tolerance in front of others.

2. INTELLIGIBILITY AND BEAUTY

The relation that we propose to establish between these texts is a hypothesis that poses to accept the relativity of reality of the artistic agreement, conditioned to the aesthetic sense, where intelligibility and beauty appear as moderators of a desperate struggle in favour of human creation.

And on the other hand, the aesthetic sense is produced by the recognition of the possible multiple realities, as from “understanding and knowing by intuition” “what is reasonable and what is intuitive”, from a critical position with the purpose of anticipating the uncertainties inherent to the human condition.

It is starting from this game of equations where many of the invented forms by the human beings throughout their history and many of the used techniques are explained.

a) **Beauty** is a mental state that is acceded to by means of a visual stimulus or by any other sense. Part of the beauty is in the reality we perceive and part is in our own mind.

The intelligibility is a mental state that is acceded to by reflection, when what is common is discovered among what is diverse.

In both cases, they are the result of “a mental activity” that begins in the outer reality. To know how to see, hear... perceive and not only to look.

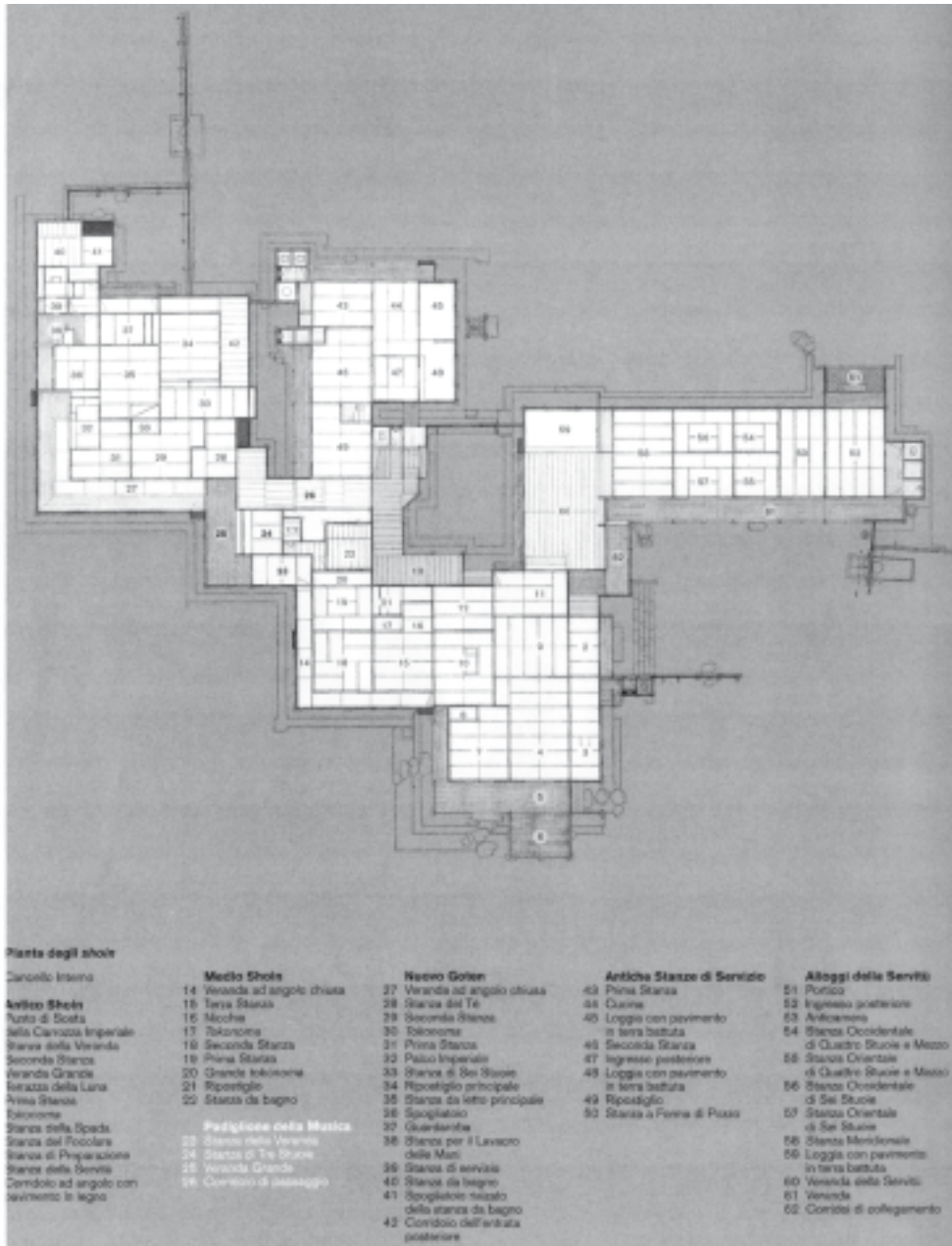
The intelligibility of a piece of reality is about its relation with the rest of reality. **The beauty** of a piece of reality, on the other hand, is about the relation among the parts of the piece of reality in question. [Intelligibility is an outer frontier concept; beauty is an inner frontier concept. The intelligibility of the << tree >> concept is in everything that all the trees share; the intelligibility of the <<pine>> concept must be searched in everything that is common to all the pines ...]

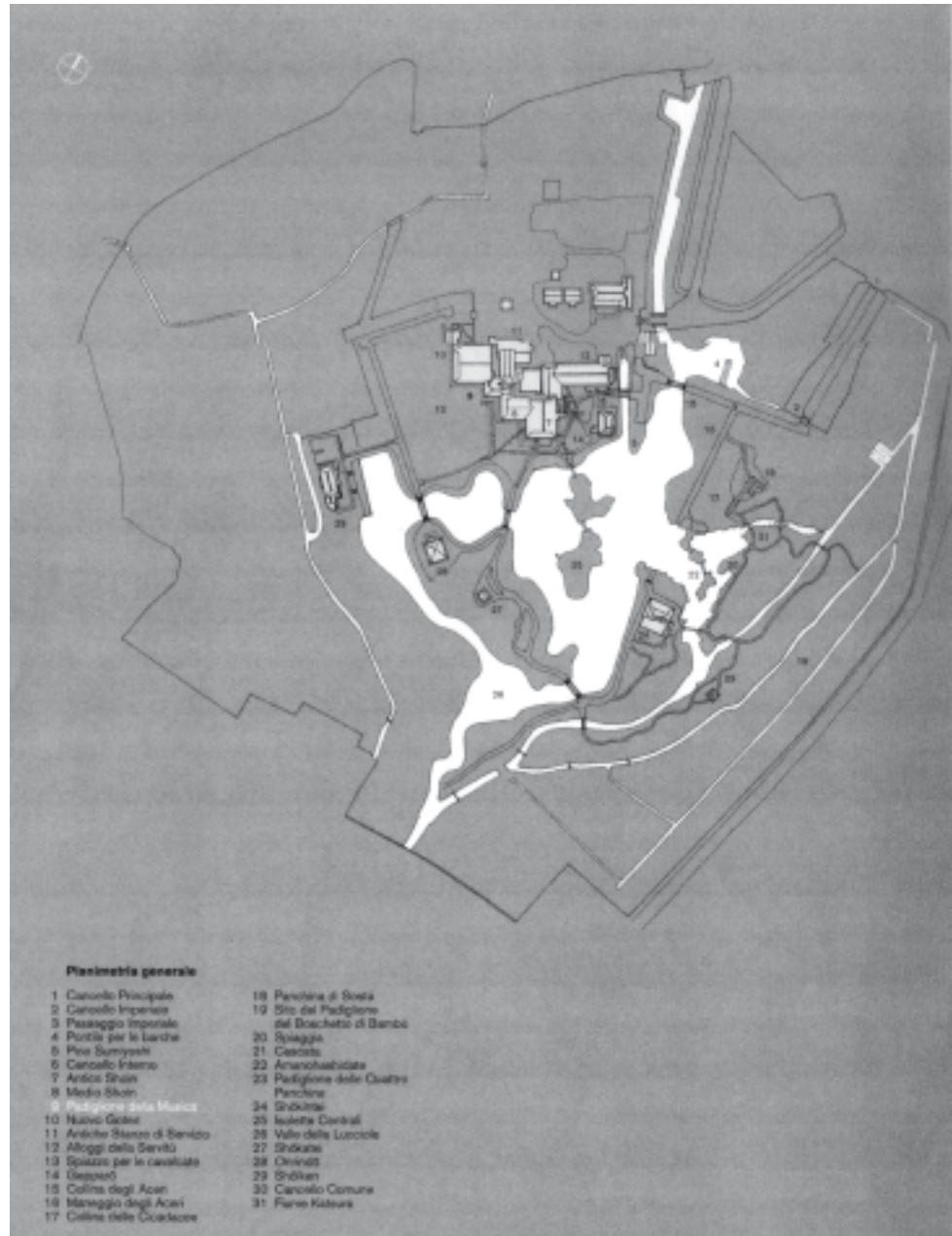
In other words, “looking for intelligibility is looking for something that is repeated” in a variety of pieces of reality, and when we say that we understand any of such pieces (in what is understood, in what is repeated) it is always with regard to the other pieces. The repetition of the things has a name... or two: **The repetition in space is harmony. The repetition in time is rhythm.** We already have a first clue, because (time and space) are the a priori concepts with which we build everything (all intelligent knowledge). On the other hand, [rhythm and harmony] are also, by means of their absence or presence, the essential concepts of [beauty]. We venture a definition:

“The beauty of a piece of reality is the degree of rhythm and harmony that a mind is capable of perceiving”.

That is, beauty is the degree of repetition that can be perceived among the parts of a piece of reality when it travels along space or time.

The beautiful and the intelligible share, in my opinion, a deep root: the mental “joy”, as from understanding the intelligible and giving beauty to the beautiful.





Understanding and giving beauty as separating, separating the understandable from the incomprehensible, the common from the diverse, the essence from the shades, the noise from the information, the grain from the straw.

b) Real.

If the beautiful and the intelligible share something (the joy), there is still something left to be understood. Comprehending is relating a reality with something more compact than itself and, in the limit, with its own essence. The capacity of understanding the world depends upon the accumulated knowledge.

Our reality (the reality as we conceive it to be) does not go beyond representing our best estimate of what reality is like. Therefore, we must keep a clear distinction between our concept of reality and reality as it truly is.

The world we describe is one thing, the world as we describe it is another thing, and both would only coincide if our descriptions were totally correct, something that we are undoubtedly in no condition to assert.

c) Propositioning Conclusion:

In this landscape that I have outlined as from two texts and an equation of multiple entries I must commit myself at least to “throw the dice” as Agustín Espinosa would say it in his book “Half an hour playing the dice” and let us try to relate all the data. In order to do so, it is essential to SENSE, RELATE, and perhaps just rub, a reality against another one that comprehended or not, has been long perceived.

[The trajectory of a ball after the hit of a racquet is sensed after watching a lot of tennis, even though it is not comprehended.] Intuition is a revelation of the own mind, a mind that nourishes with each new perception. That is, the capacity of sensing depends on the richness of our daily lives. <<The oldest person of the place >> does not understand better, but they

sense better. But human perception takes place in a very narrow reality with regards to everything that happens in this world. We do not see what is too small, or what is too fast, or what is too big, or what is too complex; we see few colours, we hear few notes, we smell little and at a very short distance ... That is why, although we can sense without understanding and understand without sensing, our capacity of comprehending surpasses our capacity of sensing by far (science-art). Sensing and comprehending at the same time, as well as, sensing and giving beauty in time, are not impossible experiences. In fact, they assume the instants of great joy of a thinking mind.

3. BY MEANS OF THE FORM: Architecture

Then, I suggest approaching some Architectures, perceiving them, feeling pleasure by enjoying them, understanding them as from an exercise of getting closer to their natures, their techniques, their realities; by means of “sensing” their forms, the ideas of their creations that means comprehending them intelligibly. That is why, I uphold the possibility of referring to:

- The Line and The Reflection, The Groves (The Red Wall, Square and fountain of the belfry and of the water trough) by Luis Barragán in Atizaparc de Zaragoza. Mexico State (1958–1961)

- The Waved Curved Line, La Casa Milá (Milá House) and Camps by A. Gaudi in Paseo de Gracia (1906-1911) Barcelona.

- The Straight and Broken Line, The Imperial Villa by KATZURA in Kyoto, Japan, XVII century (1615–1663)

4. THE POLYSEMIC LINE. IMPERIAL VILLA BY KATZURA in Kyoto, Japan, XVII century (1615–1663)

The villa does not have a dominant shape or style. Meaning of ambiguity.

It presents the following styles: Shoin Zukuri and Sukiya Zukuri.



The Shoin Complex (the restoration works have continued since 1982) was built in three phases:

1. *Ántico Shoin*.
2. Half Shoin.
3. Music Pavilion (Gakkinoma). New Goten.

The general characteristics of this complex:

- They are distributed in such a way that they have façade towards the garden.

- It connects a hidden landscape with the service area.

- In all the phases they lead to the areas of the palace and service areas (Villa de Adriano in Rome).

- New direction of alignment of axis, but placed one after the other. This configuration is called “a stormo di oche in volo” (ganko, landscape- perceptive conception) that is the layout of the wild geese as well as of the utensils for the tea ceremony, denominated Suminake.

Sequences, lengthening and widths which allow an irregularity to create precise functions (air and light).

Orientation with an opening to the south with a help of 19 degrees. It is evidently an ideal orientation to match the reflection of the moon on the water in mid autumn, since this is one of the most important sequences of the Japanese cultural tradition.

Prince Toshitodo from the setting to the Goten, based on the Samurai.

Principle of depth of the angle:

<u>Low Shoin</u>	<u>New Shoin</u>	<u>Goten</u>
Low	Higher	lower (transported from another city to Katsura and assembled)

ÁNTICO SHOIN: (Transparency)

When you enter in front of the white backgrounds of the Fusuma (walls) with designs of golden mica,

they reflect light creating a clear nebula of dark blue lines of the tatamis, and the lacquered borders in black of the fusuma and the dark colours of the pillars cut the luminous space.

These vertical and horizontal lines articulate a unique three-dimensional space that seems to expand into the infinite. It is a variable space, based on a homogeneous module, similar to the one of Modern Architecture:

1:1 1:2 0, 5:1 0, 25:0, 5

HALF SHOIN: (Transparency)

Elements of more decorative importance, paintings in Indian ink on the fusuma and on the walls of lokonoma, the light green edgings of the tatami and the borders of red lacquer of the sliding doors.

NEW GOTEN (Diverse):

The systematic division of the spaces by means of tatami and fusuma leaves the room for a series of assemblies and superimpositions of cantilever platforms and engravings. The pinnacle is the Imperial Terrace of the first room: to the right of the window with a comb shape are the engravings with essences. Kokutan and Shutan (ebony), Citan (rose wood), Dagaysan (black wood from Bombay), Benikarin (Red Chinese Apple tree), Beniisu (Japanese Nut), Kyara (aloe).

Opacity of the space (different from the transparency of the Shoin) generated by means of the superimposition of diverse styles. Diversity and mixture of elements contradictory to one another different from Modern Architecture that preferred the couple of the Shoin. The ambiguity of the space is now the centre.

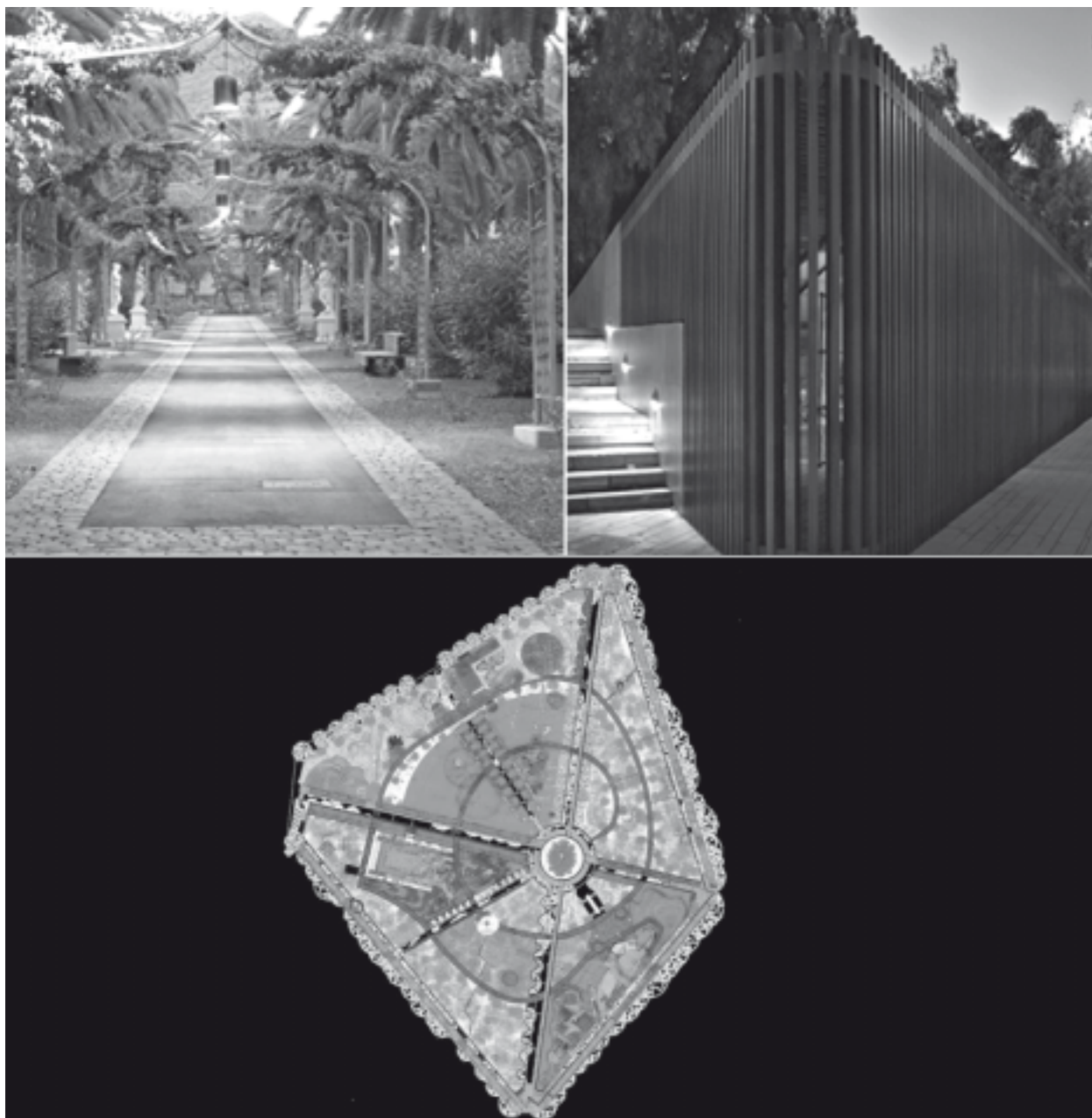
Kobori Enshu / Project Leader

Chief Architect Kunomi: Taste

Saku: Realization

Sekkei: Project





5. THE WAVED CURVED LINE (regulated geometrical source)

La Casa Milá y Camps (Milá House) (1906–1911). La Pedrera. Paseo de Galicia. Barcelona. Antonio Gaudí.

Two forms stand out above the rest: Circles and facades (waved line / Curved)

The forms emerge by means of a cultural selection of a natural relation of nature. The columns spread frontally like the branches of a tree when they reach the top where they share the reaction of the weight. The columns colonise the top.

They anticipate the uncertainty, they accumulate the intuitions. A new theory or a scientific method is not posed but a synthesis of intelligibility and strange beauty is.

Benoit Mandelbrot, states that Gaudí is one of his own in the regulated geometrical use and Arch:

“If the architect produces functionality in his works, he will end up finding beauty. If he looks for beauty directly, he will just find theory in front, aesthetics or philosophy, abstract ideas that Gaudí was never interested in.”

“If Wisdom (Sabiduría) is superior to science, it is so because it derives from the word sapere that is saborear (savour); it refers to the concrete fact.”

“Art that is masculine fertilizes science that is feminine.”

“The ideal quality of the work of art is harmony, which in plastic arts is born from the law that provides relief and decorum. Architecture is the arrangement of the law.”

6. THE LINE AND THE REFLECTION

LAS ARBOLEDAS (The Groves) – El Muro Rojo, Plaza y Fuente del campanario y del Bebedero. (The Red Wall, Square and fountain of the belfry and of the water trough) Antizapán de Zaragoza. Mexico State (1958–1961)

General element of the Project is the *Horse* generating three pieces: Eucalyptus, trees and ash trees, plus water.

It deals with the search for harmony, for beauty by means of the function (*Horse*). The light seeps like a new landscape, providing shadows over walls and reflections over the water.

The characteristic elements of the Project of Architecture in Nature are the following:

- The basin of black stone.
- The White Wall of disturbing size and situation.
- The horizontal Wall of the always overflowing water, tense in the secluded ground, in the blue precincts (the horizon).

7. EPILOGUE WITHOUT CONCLUSION

Personally together with Leopoldo Tabares de Nava and some other colleagues who are present here have dared to “create”, to communicate you our uncertainties about the built reality we produce as Architects. And that is why we will tell you about El Parque García Sanabria de Santa Cruz de Tenerife (García Sanabria Park of Santa Cruz de Tenerife) and we let you “sense” these works and some other possible ones, by means of mental enjoyment overcoming and avoiding, if possible, just the “sensations”, looking for knowledge, the intelligible and beauty.