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DOSSIER TRANSLATIONS

India: Architecture, time,
appropriation

Guest editor: Mario Marchant

Introduction

Mario Marchant

The Dymaxion map developed in 1943 by the visionary designer Buckminster Fuller tried to break away from the binomial north-south and east-west construction, allowing us to see the world in a more integral way. A distinctive feature of this device is that it does not have a right way to look at it, a condition that questions the cultural bias on the territory that is intended to be imposed on us by the old tradition.

The present condition of crisis of social, political and economic systems worldwide, especially of the so-called first world, questions the failure of the institutions of power that are nowadays desperately looking for answers and new ways of operation in places like India and Latin America, where crisis is part of their characteristic condition, where instability is habitual and informality is formal.

*From this perspective, this issue of *Materia Architectura* intends to draw a theoretical map inspired in the Dymaxion map, adding the dimension of time and its manifestation in the actions of the spatial appropriation of its inhabitants to what is properly formal and static in architecture. In order to this, the dossier has focused on India. Although the articles deal with particular topics that emerge from a faraway land, after reading them, we can easily associate these topics to our history and local experience.*

This new conceptual outline begins with an interview with the Indian architect Rahul Mehrotra, who proposes, from a critical look at western urban planning, a new conceptual framework starting from the ideas of the "static city" and the "kinetic city". Following this conversation, Felipe Vera's article marks a new spot on the map going deeper into Mehrotra's proposals based on Indian cities with problems out of the context of the subcontinent, which allows to initiate a necessary understanding no longer of the permanent urban morphologies, but of the indefinite processes related to a more ephemeral urban fabric. Meanwhile, Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava point

out clearly how the north-south connection between Latin America and India has a common past in the search to improve slums and develop strategies for progressive construction, through an interesting intersection of F. C. Turner's ideas applied in Lima and the projects done by Indian architects like B. V. Doshi and Charles Correa. Along the same line, and confirming once more how close the urban conflicts of India and this part of the globe are, Rodrigo Tisi's work contrasts the dynamics of temporary and permanent land occupation, unveiling in his research the construction of a vulnerable landscape. A critical spot on the map is marked by Vineet Diwadkar, who contrasts the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project (SRFDP) with the cultural history of the riverbed as a public place, where nowadays the networks and socio-spatial practices structured by the working poor of the Gujari Bazaar for six centuries have been eliminated. Horacio Torrent concludes the outline with a singular article presenting the form in which design and the construction of Chandigarh, as well as the figure of its author, Le Corbusier, were interpreted in the 1950s in two Chilean publications. Albert Tidy's graphic report visually closes the magazine with an unprejudiced and intense look: the photographic snap of a traveller that steps into Indian territory for the first time.

Finally, it seems that the force of gravity stamped on the maps that used to define who was up and who was down, with all its ideological and geopolitical implications materialized in our architecture and urban spaces, begins to fade out. At the same time, a multidirectional interaction force emerges with much more strength towards new disciplinary and professional relationships. [m](#)