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DOSSIER TRANSLATIONS

Landscape as an architecture theme

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The third issue of MATERIA ARQUITECTURA opens a discussion around the concepts of landscape articulated today, all of them indebted to the conceptual development of the 20th Century. The first meaning of landscape defines it as the representation of nature. Although this concept emerges from painting, it is consolidated through planimetries, technical drawings, maps and perspectives. But the concept has been noticeably modified.

Nowadays, language is not the representation of nature but, mainly, its intervention. Artificial interventions in nature construct and define it. "Landscape is, thus, the effect of a superposition of human activity over nature and it includes modifications derived from the action on the medium to make it productive [...] and artificially constructs over it, either infrastructures [...] or properly architectural constructions" (Ávalos, 2005).

The dossier of this issue of MATERIA ARQUITECTURA focuses on three interpretative edges which overlap in various articles, allowing for the visualization of the discursive complexity of contemporary landscape.

The first edge is landscape as a border. From this point of view, landscape is the multiple and complex space that goes from natural to urban, collecting intermediate situations, the border between both realities. The periphery of the city and its encounter with nature are study topics, as well as the encounter of the city with its determining natural elements: coastal borders, shores or bottom of a hill.

A second edge is landscape as a public space. This acknowledges landscape from properly architectural elements, of urban design or of composition with vegetable species. It is based on the public concept of landscape and on its potential as a social space and integrator of excellence. Urban parks, coastal drives and public infrastructures like swimming pools and summer resorts, challenge the relationships between interior and exterior in their mainly public condition.

A third edge interprets landscape intervened by territorial development. It acknowledges landscape based on elements that allow its use and exploitation and not from the properly architectural or design interventions. Thus, interventions of roadways,

extractive industry or technology, for example, constitute forms of interest because of their aesthetic and formal results.

The dossier is preceded by an interview to Carme Pinós, with whom I visited Tupahue and Antilén swimming pools on a hot January afternoon. Designed by Carlos Martner, the swimming pools were built in the 60s and 70s by the Architecture Department of the Ministry of Public Works and by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning respectively (Eliash y Laborde, 2003). They represent a notable architectural proposal: to combine panoramic views of Santiago in sloping situations, by means of public programs of bathing, leisure and sun.

We talked about her most recent works, about freedom and about discarding already tested formulas. Pinós proposes architecture as a living space. She leaves a formidable message: landscape is the result of man's action on nature throughout time, but respecting it.

The dossier as such, focuses on "Archigram in Monte Carlo and the idea of equipped landscape", an article by Claudia Costa Cabral that reviews Archigram's experience in the 60s and 70s, a period in which it expresses the problem of landscape transformation starting from technology. Costa analyses the visionary condition of the Entertainment Centre for Monte Carlo, done by the group in 1960.

The other five articles follow a certain time chronology. Rafael Zamora introduces the subject of landscape from the recurrent interventions that took place in the 19th Century on the coast of Lima in order to have access to bathing in the sea. Horacio Torrent relates landscape, photography and architecture from the pictures appearing in Chilean magazines on the topic, between 1930-1960, emphasizing the operative role of photography. Danilo Lagos introduces the urban landscape of roadway infrastructure in the 50s and analyses the Aterro do Flamengo (Rio de Janeiro), where there is Flamingo Park, one of the most important landscape projects of Roberto Burle Marx. Finally, Jessie Marshall interprets the interventions done throughout time in Ritoque, as a system of landscape signaling.