

## RALLY 2: AN ARCHITECTURAL CONVERSATION

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The second edition of Peter Cook's international gathering took place this past July in London. With the title *Aesthetics Again* such figures as the Smithsons, James Stirling, Cedric Price, Norman Foster, Richard Rogers and others met to carry on a symposium which had its start in 1956 in the Whitechapel Gallery of London.

This basically anglo-saxon event had a point of friction between the American and English components as seen in the elaborate *show* of Peter Eisenman and also in the contributions of Charles Jencks and Kenneth Frampton.

Norman Foster and Richard Rogers participated in the same session by presenting their recent projects for the Sainsbury Center and Pompidou Center. Other interesting participants included Piers Gough with his mixture of irony and architecture vernacular, Peter Wilson with his visual demonstration of the many uses of Poly Filla and Rem Koolhaas presentation of one of his favorite themes *the metropolis*.

## ROMA INTERROTA

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This issue of *Arquitectura* features as its main section the projects of the exhibition ROMA INTERROTA accompanied by an introductory article by Laura Thermes. The organization Incontri Internazionali d'Art sponsored the redefinition of Rome by contemporary international architects. Each of the 12 sections of the original Nolli plan of Rome (1748) was modified by such architects as James Stirling, Michael Graves, the Smithsons, Aldo Rossi and others to experiment with theoretical visions of what Rome might be like today.

Laura Thermes states that *Roma Interrotta is an important academic exposition that renews in an ambiguous way all the pomp of a mythology of bygone days. It is a spiritual meeting using the map of nolli as its base.*

Water appears as an important element in the projects of Rossi, Dardi, and Stirling. In this last case, the Siemens is suspended over the Tiber on a terraced platform. However, only in the Rossi project according to Thermes, does the metaphor go beyond a homage to Roman mythology: the Casa del Aqua is the temple dedicated to an element in which we are submerged in history. The Caracalla bath ruins according to Rossi's project would be revived for *relaxation, love and exercise*.

Rome according to Portoghesi is an expression of the natural geological terrain of the region. It makes an analogy between this an urban structure—a contrast between natural and artificial. The Kriers, and specially Leon, creates a Rome with a monumentalism completely out of scale. The designs call for huge community centers with open roofs. The office of Venturi and Rauch links Las Vegas to Rome by placing columns from Caesar's Palace on the Temple of Castor.

The works of Giurgola, Graves, Rowe and Sartogo are in general too scholastic to be true, according to Thermes. Giurgola

inserts a Philadelphia community between the Aurelian Walls, the Baths of Diocletian and S Maria Maggiore. Graves resurrects the Sette Sale and the Baths of Trajan. Rowe rebuilds the Aventine, the Callian and the Palatine. And Sartogo with his geometrical approach manages not only to destroy Brunelleschi but also Bramante, Rafael, and Michaelangelo.

The fantasies of the 12 studios provide interesting topics for debate and perhaps if nothing more demonstrate that the re-composed *Rome* ceases to be the Rome of Nolli or the Rome of 1978.

## ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION IN MURCIA

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This architectural competition of July 1977 had as its purpose a comprehensive study for the utilization of the Plaza of San Esteban, Murcia. The first prize was granted to the team of Jose Garcia-Tapial, Roberto Luna, Fernando Mendoza y Juan Ruesga.

Using an exhaustive historical analysis of the area the architects have sought to redefine the plaza and use historical elements to give character to the area. They have incorporated a raised canal following the alignment of the old wall of the city, an orange grove representing the Moorish influence seen often in the South of Spain and a porticoed building (to serve as a theater, conference center, etc.) reestablishing the street to a human scale. The canal and fountain through their use of the paths of the water form the connection which integrates the entire square.

## TRANSPARENCY: LITERAL AND PHENOMENAL

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This well known article written in the 1950s by Rowe and Slutzky previously published in *Perspecta* 8 and the recent book, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* has been translated and included in this issue of *Arquitectura* to make available this important essay to a Spanish readership.

Many times the words *transparency, space-time and simultaneity* are used as synonyms. The authors through their analysis of literal and phenomenal transparency present a more complete discussion of the terms and their application in the fields of art and architecture. In addition to the optical characteristic, transparency embodies a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations. The feeling for literal transparency seems to derive from two sources; cubist painting and what is usually designated as the machine aesthetic... the feeling for phenomenal transparency probably derives from cubist painting.

In summary, the authors state that their purpose is to *clarify the spatial milieu in which phenomenal transparency becomes possible. It is not intended to suggest that phenomenal transparency is a necessary constituent of modern architecture nor that its presence might be used like a piece of litmus paper for the test of architectural orthodoxy. It is intended to simply give a characterization of species and also to warn against the confusion of the species.*