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| Carlos Raúl Villanueva (1900-1975) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Carlos Raúl Villanueva is the most renowned Venezuelan modern architect, designer of several social housing developments as “El Silencio” (1941-45) and “23 de Enero” (1955-57) and also of one of the most singular examples of Modern Architecture in Latin América, the Ciudad Universitaria of Caracas, campus of Central University of Venezuela (1944-70), declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000. Villanueva was born when his father was part of the Venezuelan diplomatic service. His childhood and youth was spent in Europe, most of it in France, where he studied, first in the Lycée Condorcet and later in l’Ecole des Beaux Arts de Paris, graduating as an architect in 1928. Villanueva developed his professional work in Venezuela between 1930 and 1970. During these forty years he embraced the biggest ideal of the modern architect: to work for the common man, for society as a whole, devoting himself to the service of the Venezuelan State. In 1937 Villanueva returned to France for seven months. The project for the Venezuelan pavilion for the Paris International Expo, designed with Luis Malaussena, gave him the opportunity to again be in the midst of artistic avant-gardes. In Paris Villanueva studied Urbanism at the University of Paris and attendance of the 5th CIAM meeting, both of which helped to consolidate his credo in modern architecture and in the synthesis of arts. |
| File: VillanuevaandCalder.jpg  Figure 1 Carlos Raúl Villanueva with artist Alexander Calder (Caracas, 1955)  Source: http://www.viceversa-mag.com/arquitectura-latinoamerica-villanueva/  Carlos Raúl Villanueva is the most renowned Venezuelan modern architect, designer of several social housing developments as “El Silencio” (1941-45) and “23 de Enero” (1955-57) and also of one of the most singular examples of Modern Architecture in Latin América, the Ciudad Universitaria of Caracas, campus of Central University of Venezuela (1944-70), declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000. Villanueva was born when his father was part of the Venezuelan diplomatic service. His childhood and youth was spent in Europe, most of it in France, where he studied, first in the Lycée Condorcet and later in l’Ecole des Beaux Arts de Paris, graduating as an architect in 1928. Villanueva developed his professional work in Venezuela between 1930 and 1970. During these forty years he embraced the biggest ideal of the modern architect: to work for the common man, for society as a whole, devoting himself to the service of the Venezuelan State. In 1937 Villanueva returned to France for seven months. The project for the Venezuelan pavilion for the Paris International Expo, designed with Luis Malaussena, gave him the opportunity to again be in the midst of artistic avant-gardes. In Paris Villanueva studied Urbanism at the University of Paris and attendance of the 5th CIAM meeting, both of which helped to consolidate his credo in modern architecture and in the synthesis of arts.  File: ElSilencio.jpg  Figure 2 ‘El Silencio’ redevelopment (Caracas, 1941-45)  Source: Archive of the Fundación Villanueva (photo by Paolo Gasparini)  Villanueva played a prominent role in the modernization of his country and the construction of its welfare, designing public buildings in Caracas and other cities. While his capacities to deal with the context’s climatic and cultural specificities grew, Villanueva was increasingly bold in promoting the modernist tenets and avant-gardist approach he experienced in Europe. By 1940 he had gathered enough familiarity with his context of origin to be at the lead of a twenty-year long experimentation in the field of public housing within the Banco Obrero (BO), the National Housing Agency. During this period, he took part in the planning and conception of numerous *urbanizaciones*, located mostly in the Venezuelan capital city. Villanueva founded the Taller de Arquitectura del Banco Obrero (TABO), an architecture department that would experiment on low-cost dwelling types and construction techniques to qualitatively house in-migrants and resettle rancho dwellers. Work at the TABO became an opportunity to endorse and revisit CIAM planning principles, innovating multi-story residential typologies and neighborhood design. This occurred without neglecting the collaboration with artists that had already distinguished his earlier design, and made manifest by the polychromatic treatment of *superbloques*.  Villanueva started to work in 1944 on his masterpiece, the University Campus in Caracas. This complex represents a synthesis of Villanueva’s architectural philosophy and of his deep-rooted concept of the architect’s public function. He dedicated to the project and construction more than 25 years of work until he completed a complex that covers a surface of ninety acres with some forty buildings. The Ciudad Universitaria is an exceptional example of modern urbanism and a creative synthesis of architecture, plastic arts and environment. The campus is an urban complex scored by the movement of the body and the survey of the eye. Works of Henri Laurens, Jean Arp, Fernand Leger, Victor Vasarely, Antoine Pevsner, André Bloc, Wifredo Lam, Baltazar Lobo, Alexander Calder and venezuelan artists like Alejandro Otero, Victor Valera, Mateo Manaure, Pascual Navarro, Oswaldo Vigas and Francisco Narváez are articulated by architecture. The Aula Magna is the heart of the campus, a marvelous dream of Villanueva and Calder and the Roofed Square is an open air museum and a landmark in Latin American architecture. At his death in 1975, Villanueva was an internationally acclaimed architect, as the numerous awards, recognitions and published projects demonstrate. His writings illustrate a profound belief in architecture as a service to society, and the significance to reconcile pre-colonial, colonial and modern architectural cultures.   File: AuditoriumCentralUniversityCampus  Figure 3 Auditorium, Central University Campus (Caracas)  Source: Archive of the Fundación Villanueva (photo by Paolo Gasparini)  List of works: Hotel Jardín, Maracay, Estado Aragua (1929-30)  Plaza de Toros, Maracay, Estado Aragua (1931-32) Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas (1935-38) Museo de Ciencias Naturales, Caracas (1936-39) Pabellón de Venezuela Exposición Internacional de París (1937) Escuela Gran Colombia, Caracas (1939-42) Reurbanización de El Silencio, Caracas (1941-45) Unidad Vecinal Rafael Urdaneta, Maracaibo (1943-47)  Ciudad Vacacional Los Caracas, Litoral Central (1944) Ciudad Universitaria, Caracas (1944-70) Casa Caoma, Caracas (1952-53) Unidad Residencial El Paraíso, Caracas (1952-53) Plan del Cerro Piloto, Caracas (1954-55) Urbanización 23 de Enero, Caracas (1955-57) Escuela de Ingeniería y Petróleo, Maracaibo (1956-57) Casa Sotavento, Caraballeda (1957); Ampliación Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas (1966-76) Pabellón de Venezuela para la Exposición de Montreal, Canadá (1967) Museo Jesús Soto, Ciudad Bolívar (1970) |
| Further reading:  (Moholy-Nagy)  (Pérez Rancel)  (Pintò Macià)  (Posani) (Suzuki)  (Villanueva and Carlos)  (Villanueva, Caracas en tres tiempos) (Villanueva, Textos Escogidos)  (Villanueva and Maciá) (Villanueva and Paolo, Villanueva en Tres Casas)  (Villanueva and Villanueva, Villanueva, Tres Cubos en Montreal, Crónica, ) |