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A6450: Modern Architecture in Mexico

Spring 2015, Th 6:00 – 8:00 pm (3 points)

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was an unprecedented search by architects, artists, and writers following the Mexican Revolution to find forms that could architecturally and spatially express the revolution's social and political aims. The results were extremely varied as each individual or group understood the revolution as a catalyst of architectural and social change differently. After the 1930s, following the period of reconstruction and stabilization, Mexican architects and thinkers continued to negotiate their strong cultural identity, association, and legacy with the globalizing and homogenizing forces of modernity.

This course is organized to introduce students to the artistic, social, political, and historical complexities that frame Mexico's rich architectural production and through key examples –some well known and canonical and others that are overlooked in traditional scholarship– provide expressions to those complexities. While the class' focus is on work produced in twentieth century Mexico, we will carefully look at the precedents, debates, and productions that engendered the various architectural works including discussions on plastic integration, international stylistic cross-pollination (including the effects of international debates both in Europe and South America), and the influences of indigenous traditions.

The course is arranged thematically: The first part addresses the process of modernization, the new aesthetics, and the architectural investigations immediately following the Revolution including avant-gardist production and the role of the state. The second part addresses the transformation effected by the Second World War as well as the role of European exiles. The internationalization of architecture and the debates centered on modern architecture as adapted to Mexican sensibilities is the subject of the third part. We will address the political debates of the sixties and their role in transforming architectural production and the use of public space. The course concludes by presenting a glimpse of the contemporary state of the discipline of architecture, the mythification of what is to be considered "Mexican," the impact of post-modernism, and the principal protagonists in the post-1970s architectural milieu.

The upcoming exhibition, *Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955-1980*, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) will provide us with opportunities to see the projects of the third through the last part of the class (many of which will be exhibited) and to discuss how the development of modern architecture in Mexico is tied to broader Latin American investigations and concerns. In addition, there is a possibility of an (optional) short (weekend) trip to Mexico City to see some of the paradigmatic examples covered in class.

January 22

Introduction: Prolegomena to Modernity in Mexico
The Nation and the Myth of the Modern World

James Oles, "From the Porfiriato to the Revolution (1880-1920)" in *Art and Architecture in Mexico*, pp. 198-233.

Luis E. Carranza, "The Struggle for Form" in *Luis Barragán: The Quiet Revolution*, pp. 256-273.

January 29

Revolution: Art, Architecture, and the Role of the State
Secretaría de Educación Pública, Neo-Colonial, and Muralism

"Manifesto of the Union of Mexican Workers, Technicians, Painters and Sculptors" in Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980*, pp. 323-324.

Antonio E. Méndez-Vigatá, "Politics and Architectural Languages: Post-Revolutionary Regimes in Mexico and their Influence of Mexican Public Architecture, 1920-1952" in Edward Burian, ed. *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*, pp. 61-89.

Mary K. Coffey, "Introduction" in *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture*, pp. 1-24.

Further Reading:

Luis E. Carranza, "If Walls could Speak" in *Architecture as Revolution*, pp. 14-55.

José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race*, pp. 1-38.

Lynda Klich, "Estridentópolis, Achieving a Post-Revolutionary Utopia in Jalapa," *DAPA* 26, pp. 102-127.

Maples Arce, "Actual" in Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era, 1820-1980*, pp. 306-309.

Tatiana Flores, *Mexico's Revolutionary Avant-Gardes: From Estridentismo to ¡30-30!*

Esther Acevedo, "Young Muralists at the Abelardo L. Rodríguez Market" in Alejandro Anreus, Leonard Folgarait, and Robin Adèle Greeley, eds., *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History*, pp. 125-142.

Jennifer A. Jolly, "Siqueiros' Communist Proposition for Mexican Muralism: A Mural for the Mexican Electricians' Syndicate" in *Mexican Muralism: A Critical History*, pp. 75-89.

February 5

Reconceptualizing the Past: Neo-Prehispanic
Manuel Amábilis' Radicalized Pre-Hispanic

Mauricio Rodríguez Anza and Gabriel Esquivel, "Prehispanic Modernism: Art, Architecture + Nationalism in Porfirian and Revolutionary Mexico," *AULA* 6, pp. 70-81.

Vladimir Kaspé, "The Legacy of pre-Columbian Past in Modern Mexican Architecture" in Henri Stierlin, *Living Architecture: Ancient Mexican*, pp. 3-6.

Further Reading:

Luis E. Carranza, "Colonizing the Colonizer" in *Architecture as Revolution*, pp. 86-117.

Francisco Mujica, "Introduction," *The History of the Skyscraper*, pp. 13-20.

Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the Worlds Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*.

February 12

Functionalism, or the Architecture of Socialism

Juan O'Gorman + the Debates on Functionalism

Beach Riley, "Social Progress and the New Architecture" in Esther Born, *The New Architecture of Mexico*, pp. 18-20.

Luis E. Carranza, "Against a New Architecture" in *Architecture as Revolution*, pp. 118-167.

Further Reading:

Alejandro Hernández Gálvez, "Juan O'Gorman: Architecture and Surface," *DAPA* 26, pp. 206-229.

Esther Born, *The New Architecture of Mexico*.

February 19

Monumental Architecture

Monumento a Álvaro Obregón and Monumento a la Revolución

Obregón Santacilia, "Machine, Life and Architecture," translation of *El Maquinismo, La Vida y La Arquitectura*, pp. 1-11.

Carlos G. Mijares Bracho, "The Architecture of Carlos Obregón Santacilia: A Work for its Time and Context" in Edward Burian, ed., *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*, pp. 151-161.

Luis E. Carranza, "Monumentalizing the Revolution" in *Architecture as Revolution*, pp. 168-200.

Further Reading:

Clive Bamford Smith, "Mario Pani" in *Builders in the Sun*, pp. 176-217.

Louise Noelle Merles, "The Architecture and Urbanism of Mario Pani: Creativity and Compromise" in Edward Burian, ed., *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*, pp. 177-188.

Luis Castañeda, "Pre-Columbian Skins, Developmentalist Souls: The Architect as Politician" in Patricio del Real and Helen Gyger, eds., *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories*, pp. 93-114.

February 26

Excursion into Mexico: European Émigrés and Exiles

Europe in Mexico: Max Cetto, Mathias Goeritz, Hannes Meyer, and Felix Candela

Mathias Goeritz, "Manifesto of Emotional Architecture," *Casabella* (June 2001).

Goeritz, "We are Fed Up..." in Mari Carmen Ramirez, and Olea, Hector, eds., *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Max Cetto, "Modern Architecture in Mexico" in *Modern Architecture in Mexico*, pp. 9-32.

Max Cetto, "External Influences and the Significance of Tradition" in Roberto Segre, ed., *Latin America in its Architecture*, pp. 105-119.

Further Reading:

Luis E. Carranza, "Mathias Goeritz: Architecture, Monochrome, and Revolution," *DAPA* 26, pp. 248-277.

Werner KleinerüsChamp, "Architect in Exile: Hannes Meyer in Mexico" translation from *Hannes Meyer, 1889-1954: Architekt, Urbanist, Lehrer*, pp. 337-368.

Hannes Meyer, "The Education of the Architect" in Claude Schnaidt, *Hannes Meyer: Buildings, Projects and Writings*, pp. 53-57.

Pablo Lazo, "Two Projects by Hannes Meyer in Mexico," *AA* 47 (Summer 2002), pp. 57-63.

Clive Bamford Smith, "Félix Candela" and "Mathias Goeritz" in *Builders in the Sun*, pp. 93-129; 131-173.

Maria E. Moreyra Garlock and David P. Billington, *Félix Candela: Engineer, Builder, Structural Artist*.

March 5

International Style in Mexico

Mies van der Rohe's Bacardi Building in Mexico.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, "The Architecture of Bureaucracy & the Architecture of Genius," *Architectural Record* 101 (Jan. 1947), pp. 3-6.

Salvador Lizárraga Sánchez, "Bacardí Breezer," *AA* 62 (2011), pp. 104-107.

Further Reading:

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Latin American Architecture since 1945*, pp. 11-62.

"Extract of an Interview with Mario Pani," *Arquitectura* 8 (April 1993).

March 12

Housing the Masses

Legarreta's Worker's Housing; Pani's Multifamiliares; Unidad Habitacional Independencia

Miquel Adrià, "Mario Pani and Collective Housing," *Arquine* 35 (Spring 2006), pp. 74-87.

George Flaherty, "Mario Pani's Hospitality: Latin America through Arquitectura/Mexico" in Patricio del Real and Helen Gyger, *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories*, pp. 251-269.

March 16 - 20

Spring Break

March 26

Realizing Utopia: The Urban Scale of the Avant-Garde
The 'Little City:' Ciudad Universitaria and Plastic Integration

Esther McCoy, "The New University City of Mexico," *Arts and Architecture* vol. 69, No. 8 (August 1952), selections.

Luis E. Carranza, "Horror Vitreo," *Praxis 2* (2001), pp. 112-121.

Further Reading:

Celia Ester Arredondo Zombrano. "Modernity in Mexico: The Case of the Ciudad Universitaria" in Edward Burian, ed. *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*, pp. 91-105.

Paul F. Damaz, *Art in Latin American Architecture*. pp. 134-139.

Francisco González de Canales, "The Mask House: Juan O'Gorman, House in the Pedregal de San Angel, Mexico, 1948-56" in *Experiments with Life Itself*, pp. 118-143.

April 2

MoMA: *Latin America in Construction* Visit
[Time/Date/Readings to be determined]

April 9

Tlatelolco, the Olympics, and Public Space
Olympic Architecture

Mark Kurlansky, "In an Aztec Palace" from *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, pp. 321-344.

"What We Can Do: Pedro Ramírez Vázquez in Interview with Tania Ragasol" in *Mexico 68*, pp. 212-223.

Further Reading:

Luis Castañeda, "Beyond Tlatelolco: Design, Media, and Politics at Mexico '68," *Grey Room* 40 (Summer 2010), pp. 100-126.

Mathias Goeritz, "'The Route of Friendship': Sculpture," *Leonardo* v.3, n.4 (October 1970), pp. 397-407.

Film: *Mexico 1968*

April 16

Mexican Myth Making: The Case of Luis Barragán
The Museum of Modern Art and the Canonization of Barragán

Luis Barragán, "Gardens for the Environment - Jardines del Pedregal," *Journal of the A.I.A.* (April 1952), pp. 167-172.

Luis Barragán. "1980 Pritzker Architecture Prize Speech" in *Barragán: The Complete Works*, pp. 204-207.

Further Reading:

Federica Zanco, "Inward Outward: Barragán in Transition," *DAPA* 26, pp. 180-205.

Emilio Ambasz, *The Architecture of Luis Barragán*.

Keith Eggner, *Luis Barragán's Gardens of El Pedregal*.

April 23

Postmodernism and Beyond
Enrique Norten and High-Tec Postmodernism

Richard Ingersoll, "Mexican Architecture at the End of the Millennium,"
Lotus 91, pp. 31-60.
Miguel Adria, *Mexico 90's: Una Arquitectura Contemporanea = A
Contemporary Architecture*, pp. 6-25.

Further Reading:

Eduardo Langagne, "Mexican Architecture: A Survey of Past Influences in
Present Design" in *Center 7* (1992), pp. 59-69.
Lebbeus Woods, "Introduction" in *TEN Arquitectos*, pp. 6-16.
Enrique Norten, "Immaterial Architecture" in *The Work of TEN Arquitectos*,
np.
Lotus International (1996)
Casabella 460 (July-August 1980)
Process Architecture 39
Fernando Romero, *Translation*

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Class Participation (15% of grade)

Each class will consist of a careful examination and in-depth discussion of the issues raised in the texts, presentations, etc. As such, attendance and active participation are obligatory as well as intensive reading and preparation of the material assigned.

Reading Assignments

The reading assignments are required and must be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned. You are expected to read and prepare to discuss all of the readings in order to facilitate a collective discussion of all of the material.

With some exceptions, all of the readings will be on-line. The books can be purchased and will be also available on reserve at the Architecture Library. For class, make sure to bring any notes and/or copies of materials to class for reference purposes during the lectures and discussions.

Midterm Assignment (25% of grade)

Given the opportunity to see first hand material related to the class, you will be asked to choose a Mexican project shown at the Museum of Modern Art's *Latin America in Construction* and discuss, diagram, compare it, etc. in relationship to issues/materials addressed in class and to other contemporary Latin American projects shown at this exhibition.

Final Papers or Short Documentary Film (60% of grade)

This final paper or short documentary film (working in groups of two students) is intended to be an academic and individualized research into a topic of the student's interest. The topic must be developed through consultation with the instructor. The paper should be approx. 15 – 20 pages long (without including bibliography and images); the film should be 15-20 minutes. Of the 60% final grade for the Final Paper or Film, 10% will be based on an annotated bibliography, 20% will be based on an outline, preliminary draft, and research notes. **The final paper or film is due on Thursday, May 7, 2014.** Please keep in mind that **no late work will be accepted. No exceptions.** In addition, any instance of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will be reported and dealt with according to the Policy on Academic Honesty set by Columbia University. All quotes and ideas from sources other than your own must be properly referenced.

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus and requirements as needed.