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Editorial

The issue of the relationship between film and architecture is so broad and so evocative that the research that can be done on it is practically limitless.

Film functions as a mirror through which we can analyze our collective imaginaries and the symbolic appropriation of public and private spaces. In it, we confirm preestablished roles, systems of domination, the definition of the other and the prejudices of current societies. Through film, narrative features in particular, we can understand the modernization process and the way in which it has affected individual stories. Film also documents the existence and use of architecture and spaces that have disappeared or been radically transformed.

In film, architecture has served as a laboratory for the exploration of the built world, sometimes anticipating future forms of architecture and urban design; others containing imaginative spaces that can only exist in cinematic space. The ability of film to construct its own architecture of light and shadow, of form and movement, has led to the superimposition of these two spatial arts. In the relationship between the two, we find the limits of each one.

Of all the arts, architecture has been the one with the most privileged, but also the most difficult, relationship with film. Since the birth of modernism, the arts have tried to capture recent discoveries regarding space-time, an intrinsic characteristic of modernity. The most static arts tried to imitate film in order to reproduce effects or techniques of movement and the interpenetration of space and time - the collapse of time into space - even reproducing cinematic montage, the method of combining on a single plane (the screen) a sequence of juxtaposed images consisting of a variety of elements or fragments of a phenomenon that were filmed in different dimensions and from different perspectives. The Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein felt that, despite its many attempts, painting had been incapable of the total representation of a phenomenon in all its multi-dimensionality, and that only the film camera was able to resolve this problem on a single surface. Nevertheless, he considered architecture to be the unquestionable predecessor of film in this respect.

Film thus became the preferred artform of the avant-garde. This medium offered novel perceptual experiences that promised to express the dynamism of the metropolis, a reality composed of fragments and made up of different points of view; this new art could represent the collisions and shock effects characteristic of urban modernity in a more genuine fashion. It allowed for the fleeting, the transitory, the momentary to be recorded. Nevertheless, if film was the ideal means to represent the metropolis, this was not the case for modern architecture. Despite the importance that this technology had for all avant-garde art, particularly for avant-garde architecture, film was not utilized as a strategy for promoting modern architecture except for on a couple occasions; neither was it the preferred means of representing architectural masterpieces, a role that continued to be played by photography, magazines and books. One possible explanation is that the movie camera remained outside the control of the architect.

Despite this, the discovery of film was essential, opening up new perspectives for modern architecture, which – like film itself – had been described as a play of reflected light that incorporated the disinterested spectator / passerby. Film offered up possibilities for architecture not just in terms of design, but also in its possibilities for experimentation. It revealed the potential to develop a new architecture of time and space, free of the material limits of gravity and everyday life. Film appeared not just as a means of representation, but also as an opportunity to conceive of architecture itself as an apparatus for seeing cinematographically.

The projection of "spatial" images that moved before immobile spectators allowed them to understand the lived experience of built spaces and to pay attention to common, everyday things, thus escaping from the state of distraction with which Walter Benjamin argued that architecture is perceived. According to the description of Alberto T. Arai, the projection of films in theaters designed for this purpose also gave spectators a feeling of alienation, distancing, a shock that drove them to identify the medium more closely with their everyday experiences on the streets of the metropolis.

Time was central to Le Corbusier's idea of the architectural promenade, which offered a way of seeing time sequentially, through an environment that came alive as it was experienced. This idea can be related to film. One comes to know architecture as one walks through it: the scale changes, one discovers corners and appreciates details, etc. Nevertheless, a film montage depicting a tour of this type, filmed from the perspective of the spectator, would provoke disorientation and confusion. This type of filming has turned out to be inadequate for the representation, comprehension and understanding of the built world. The cinematic eye could never equal that of a spectator moving around inside of a building. It is anti-cinematic, if not impossible, to use a camera from this perspective, as it loses the kinesthetic feeling (that of all the senses combined); it's necessary to change the camera's perspective to that of a fixed angle in which it is the object that moves. In contrast with the condition of free exploration, the spectators of a cinematic architectural promenade are limited to selected views offering restricted angles that will never have the reach of the human eye. We could verify this for ourselves in this issue, in which we constructed a sort of primitive montage: the sequence of photographs that pass by rapidly if one flips through the pages of the magazine, which depict a cinematic architectural promenade of the building designed by Jorge Rubio, Eugenio Urquiza and Carlos Barbará Zetina as the Central Clubhouse of the UNAM campus.

A film montage can represent, for example, a mental journey through multiple phenomena, separated in time and space but brought together in a certain sequence as part of a single concept, filmed with camera movements and framings that distort space to freely spark emotions and construct realities; all of these distinct impressions pass before the eyes of an immobile spectator. Due to this perception of cinematic space, films involve discontinuous spaces - no spectator has a clear mental image of the spaces they are seeing on screen. This reinforces the idea that, in film, it is the story that is important, with space being used, above all, to create psychological atmospheres. Cinematic spaces are new creations, existing outside of any architectonic logic.

Reflecting on film and architecture could help us to formulate design processes based on experience and temporal sequence, planned out like a screenplay instead of as an organized list of scientific needs. It also allows us the possibility of interpreting those projects that increasingly seem to be immersed in the field of the cinematic imaginary. Today, the most famous architects continue to find ways to represent movement and temporal succession in architecture, and so they continue to turn to the avant-garde tradition, which, in turn, was shaped by the impact of cinematic techniques.

Cristina López Uribe

FE DE ERRATAS: Página 24. "La casa Fernández de Tampico…" ***Dice:*** asociada. ***Debe decir:*** asociado. **Página 49.** "Arquitectura moderna en Tecamachalco…" ***Dice:*** Boris Albin house's. ***Debe decir:*** Boris Albin's houses. **Página 51.** ***Dice:*** lotificará. ***Debe decir:*** lotificara. **Página 63.** "¿De la vista nace el bienestar?…" ***Dice:*** coveniente. ***Debe decir:*** conveniente. **Página 141.** Reseñas. ***Dice:*** catedreales. ***Debe decir:*** catedrales. **Página 142.** ***Dice:*** ecnomómico. ***Debe decir:*** económico. **Página 124.** "Habitar sin la vista." ***Dice:*** Lucía Marín. ***Debe decir:*** Lucía Martín.