

Between Art and Architecture

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Trascripción de Esteban Jaramillo

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... the great masters did both, from Leonardo to Alvar Aalto.

The line between these two disciplines may sometimes be hard to draw. And in the end it is unnecessary. Both were inspired by the same philosophy of their time. They reflected the way of thinking of their time and tried to structure a holistic picture of the world. Today the edge of marriage between art and architecture sometimes seems to be divorced. At least they have two separated house halls. Art is nearly a changeable furnishing chosen by different kinds of comities and left as an autonomous visitor to architecture, which many, especially artists, even prefer. At the same time contemporary architecture is affected by contemporary art, especially European architecture (and I think not too much the American) has been affected by modern American art since the 1960's. The empirical research into these pictures by many American artists like Robert Irving, Donald Judd or Gordon Matta Clark, just to mention a few, I believe has had a great impact on the architecture practice on this side of the Atlantic. Contemporary art with shapes, moundings, or light, or mind has also created new roles and strategies between artists and architects. I have selected six case studies for this morning covering our experiences with different artists in different situations. So, for the first case the motto could be by the Swiss born artist living in Bern, Georges Stamen: "Everything is relationship, nothing exists by itself". And in this project the roles between architect and artist have been reversed. The artist has been director under whose supervision we as architects have done our autonomous part. Growing Sculpture has not been built yet but hopefully it will be built in Komi Autonomous Republic of Russia in the easternmost

part of Russia west of the Eurial Mountains. George Stamen has some experience on births like these, he has recently renovated the old Tatlin art whole by himself by making an art project out of it. He called the work: Forum of Sustainability. It was supposed to be an artistic intervention and a mode to create or help a research pristine forest conservation biodiversity and sustainable forestry. On the left side you see the map of the Komi Autonomous Republic, and this part here is where this sculpture or project will be erected. In this part of Russia we have the largest forest resources in Europe and also the largest pristine forest, a forest which has not been touched by the human hand. And on the map to the right you can see those black squares and the areas which haven't had any human intervention so far. And these are the mind maps, as the artist Steinmann likes to call them, so now a little bit about his approach to the problem. For instance, our part is actually helping him to design and to organize the actual building of this Forum of Sustainability. The building itself is a kind of peak of the iceberg and under this peak there is a huge amount of research, cooperation, collaboration, organizing the founding ... I don't remember by heart what all these squares and circles mean. But anyway there is a bird wildlife foundation integrated and most of the founding would be coming from the Founding Aids Program in Switzerland. Finland is also to some extent integrated there, and of course the local people on many stages. So we studied the project and I traveled together with George after the launch of the project to the site to learn more about the local conditions. We visited several villages where the local vernacular architecture is very similar to what we have in Karelia on the Russian side of the eastern Finnish border. What was dramatic and very sorrowful here was that most of the villages were almost empty, hardly just a couple of very old ladies still living there. The reason why this thing happened was that during the Stalin era these were called villages without perspective and it meant that inhabitants had to move to the biggest cities, so many of those wonderful places are about to collapse and in a very bad condition, very sad places. This gives you some hint of what is happening there. At the moment the *nouveau riche* are building brick castles like this and the old knowledge, know-how, how to use timber for building has also ... kind of ... almost disappeared. It's a very awkward and clumsy way of using ten by ten centimeters boles with some moss in between, and after erecting the building they just change the corners, there are no skillful joints to be seen anymore. After, we visited some of the six or seven sites we finally found in this place along the river on the low lands of one of the pristine forest areas. The strategy here and why we chose this place was that we were able to create here distance and proximity. On the other hand we have the view from the site, untouched forest almost as far as you can see. These are the first site plans showing the river, the building, and the proximity means that just behind the building there should be very high trees to give the presence of the forest. Also we would like to reintroduce both, the old ways of building using wood locks, but also the new methods, more advanced, technical advanced methods for building. This is a kind of strategically axonometric showing how it's located with the forest behind and views to the river. Well, the next case is even further north, it's five hundred kilometers more to the north, in Rovaniemi on the arctic circle where I am

from. We built, more than ten years ago, an airport there and as we all know modern airports are not only a question of architecture, but they are more like machines, instruments. To handle very complicated traffic, luggage and passengers, especially small airports have problems, when having to use very limited space for simultaneous changing flights, flights to Russia, domestic flights, departing and arriving flights. So finally you have this kind of very cryptic maze which has a big impact on the interior of the building. So this is what we did there: The building itself is more or less a kind of a very simple steel frame, but when you are building something in Lapland, specially on the arctic circle, you have a very strong call for the narrative and we didn't want, in a way, to respond to this narrative by celebrating Santa Claus but more or less connecting this very special place to its cosmic connections. And what's spectacular here is that we found out that the building was lying exactly on the arctic circle in 1992. We called the university in Helsinki and from the experts there we learned that the arctic circle isn't a fixed line on earth but it is moving all the time, and it is not only the arctic circle but also the equator and everything, so be careful nothing is stable. You can see here how it moves, that's the map, that's the building, and this shows where the arctic circle has been in 1970, 1980, 1990, etc. It moves a little bit further north all the time, and in the year ... I can't see it from here (...) it will reach the antipode of Finland and then it will slowly go back again. So what we did was to cut the roof of the building exactly where the arctic circle was when we started, when the building process was started. But then the other connection, a cosmic one, which was connected with this building, was done together with the artist Lauri Anttila. We made a small hole... or he made it, he ordered a small hole in the roof of the building and he organized a small mirror fixture there. So you have here the *aparatur* and every time the sun shines, at noon, exactly at noon, it catches the sun rays and reflects them on the floor of the terminal. Depending of the height of the sun of course, the reflected dot down on the floor is in a different point. You are able to see this reflection of the sun maybe for ten minutes on the floor, the next day it will be a little bit in a different place and the next day again in a different place. So if you connect these dots you will get a kind of figure that resembles the figure of the number eight, and that's called the analemma of the sun which shows actually the flying pad, the flying orbit of the earth. And this story is told in all the languages heard here. Lauri Anttila's idea was that modern airports are a little bit today's towers of Babylon where the nations and different languages meet each other. So fasten your seat belts. The next project is the headquarters of McDonalds in Finland. It contains offices, headquarter offices, it's a small educational center for restaurant holders and there is also a restaurant there. What we did there in the first place was to play a little bit with the size. The first sign here is made of perforated metal with light inside so it's very strongly lit in the night time. And then we made a shade on this M sign on the surface of this sunshade kind of sun tray lace which protects the office rooms from the sun. By the way this tray lace structure is made using the so called thermo wood, which is a special method of using wood; you can use northern woods like birch, pine or spruce. You put it into the oven and keep it there for a certain time until it gets a very nice brownish color, it is more sustainable, more resistant than the tropical

woods. It's very economical to use the local woods we have. It's an old thing which is in a way nearly reintroduced, prefabricated ... industrialized. By the way the CEO, the manager of McDonalds, thought this M was too big, he didn't like the idea because he thought that it was banal to make that kind of great big sign there. Now we came with the artistic intervention part of it, the same manager gave us free hands, so we didn't ... were not forced to make any standard type of typical McDonalds architecture. We could do anything we wanted, only for one exception; he wanted that the restaurant space should be styled in the 50's style. So we made a little bit of research on that. This is a young kid collecting these cars there were in coffee packages from the 50's, and this boy is remembered in many films ... is remembered very well. The first artistic intervention was made by Pekka Mannermaa, he is very known in Finland for painting tracks, the track doors. I think you have here in Spain the same kind of artist who paints beautiful woman with very small bikinis on the tracks. This time he made a ... from his own head this kind of 50's icon on the wall. The next intervention was made by Kari Cavén. He is a well known artist in Finland who is playing all the time. He doesn't take anything too seriously. And this time he chose this chair to play with, and you know this chair is a kind of symbol of the design of the 50's. It has many names as loved babies usually have; the first name is by its inventor, Hardoy Chair. It's also known as BKF Chair, African Chair, Continuous Chair, Argentinean Chair, Pampean Chair, Latino, and Butterfly but in Finland it's called Bat Chair. It looks a little bit like a bat. He somehow distorted it, just in a way pressed the structure of the chair and then he made a huge kind of snake which is suspended from the ceiling there ... little by little it opens so on the one hand you almost can sit on it, but on the other hand it's totally flat, and using the same colors as the McDonald's red and yellow. Well the next project is in Munich ... it was a competition some years ago about the new Assembly Hall for the Bavarian Parliament in Munich, and there is a huge castle ... Maximilian's Castle where the Bavarian Parliament is at the moment. That is at the end of the Maximilian's trace which goes through very huge and beautiful parks and what we suggested there ... we didn't want to touch the actual castle at all, but to build the parliament assembly hall in front of ... just in the axis of the Maximilian's trace and it would have been connected by an underground tunnel to the castle itself. We got the fourth prize there. But what is more interesting here is that we collaborated with a fine artist. He is in his sixties, I think, and he is very well known for his very systematical approach in his painting ... mostly he is using some kind of system, painting systems, which are mainly white-black and systems which change all the time according to specific formulas. And the formula we used in this project is described here, so normally when he works he finds out, researches, this formula and after that, when the formula is found, anybody could do it, actually it's normally his son who is doing this more boring painting job. And how we used this idea: all the facades of this new assembly hall are made using this kind of double glass, double facade system. There are two glasses ... the body of the container of the assembly hall is glass, and then there is the outer skin ... something like sixty centimeters, one meter off, there is another glass. And this is the model we made testing this idea, in this we have only one glass but

on the other side of the glass, we have printed the number eight pattern made by Matecuyas, this is the other side, there is another pattern a little bit similar but different use, different colors. This is the other pattern he has made using black color and the other white color. And in reality there will be one meter between these two patterns, and what happens ... the whole facade, the image of the facade will change according to the light conditions, if there is more light coming from inside, or if most of the light is coming from the sun, or it depends on the effect ... the architectural effect depends on the view point of the contemplator ... how you move in or approach this piece of architecture. I will quote one of his readings: "On the other hand my painting can be seen from many positions, whatever, in any direction, whatever, and vice versa, and also for any length of time, whatever. In addition they change as you look at them. In this sense they are different from music, which is bound to a form of time that moves in one direction." I'm sure that Juha Leiviskä, the next speaker, will speak more about the relations between architecture and music. This is back in Helsinki, the capital of Finland. This is the gateway to Vuosaari, a new growing suburb in the eastern part of Helsinki City. And we were asked there by the deputation mayor of Helsinki to do something to this new highway, which was just a highway nothing else, to make it a gateway to this flagship suburb of Helsinki. And it was not an easy task. The speed limit there is 60 km/h, but everybody is speeding there. And what we did there was to combine the lighting system, landscaping and art. In this project we collaborated again with Lauri Anttila, the same person we spoke about in relation to the Rovaniemi Airport. And Lauri actually gave us the hint, the point of departure for the whole thing. Because Helsinki was supposed to be destroyed at the end of the Second World War, in the early 1944 by the Russian airplanes in the same way Dresden was to be destroyed by the Allied forces. And this map is very secret, it's top secret, so I hope you won't tell anybody that you have seen it. And Helsinki is here, this peninsula here is Helsinki and the Vuosaari area where this gateway is. What the anti-aircraft force people in Helsinki did was to turn off all the lights in the peninsula, there were no light here, and then they lit huge bonfires in the Vuosaari area. On that time it was unbuilt, there was nobody living there. It was just forest. Russian airplanes (you can see these lines there) missed the city, they thought that the city was there, and they dropped the full load of bombs there, you can see ... that's the place that was more heavily bombed and Helsinki was saved. The only building actually ... they were able to destroy was the Russian embassy ... the Soviet embassy. So our idea was to have these light piles which suspend the actual street lights, but inside these light piles we have a very strong touch light directing the light upwards. And this pile of cigar is made of perforated metal, so when you pass with 60 or 90 km/h you have this moiré effect which resembles a little bit a living fire, so you have ... it's not very strong I must admit, but anyway you have the feeling of having a fire, row fires, bonfires on the way, when you pass this place. Lauri Anttila's own kind of commitment in this project was that he made the biggest sundial in the world. Here you can see the Vuosaari gateway street with its lighting, and he chose four kinds of interactions there...