

Editorial

From within/From outside: Mass Media and the International Spread of Post-War Architecture

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This monograph edition of the journal HPA attempts to map the international spread processes of architectural culture in the mass media after the Second World War, taking the period 1945-1960 as a traditional time framework.¹

It focuses on how certain ideas about the city and contemporary architecture were diffused through periodical publications, exhibitions and conferences, by analysing some monographic case studies in an attempt to answer some essential questions:

1. How was an architectural and/or urban project linked to a specific framework, presented in the International context through state, professional and educational channels—be they either institutional or otherwise?
2. How did it happen in a period of radical cultural reconstruction and fundamental disciplinary redefinition?
3. And vice versa: how was the same project interpreted from the point of view of foreign establishment?
4. How did the vision “from within” and the perspectives “from outside” interact?

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We believe that analyzing this type of “external” perspective (specifically: how the architectural world of one country looks at the architecture of another) offers a productive path toward a historiographic renewal of studies centered on the processes affecting the international dissemination of modern architecture, beginning from the early years after the Second World War in Europe.

In fact, there is a long history of monographic analyses of the mediatization of architecture: consider the special issue of *Rassegna* on “Architecture in the Avant-Garde Magazines” (edited by Jacques Gubler in 1982),² the debate held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 2004,³ or the exhibition *Clip/Stamp/Fold*, curated by Beatriz Colomina and held at the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York in 2006.⁴

Other research models dealing with this issue can also be found in fields more directly related to the arts in general: for example, in the volumes *Riviste d'arte fra ottocento ed Età contemporanea. Forme, modelli e funzioni*⁵ or in *Les revues d'art à Paris 1905–1940*,⁶ or, dealing more specifically with exhibitions, in *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the 20th Century*.⁷

² Gubler, Jacques, and Isabella Pezzini. “[Architettura nelle riviste d'avanguardia] La rete delle riviste.” *Rassegna: Problemi di architettura dell'ambiente* IV, no. 12 (December 1982): 44–88.

³ Jannièrè, Hélène, Alexis Sornin, and France Vanlaethem, ed. *Architectural periodicals in the 1960s and 1970s: towards a factual, intellectual and material history: Proceedings of the international colloquium held on 6-7 May 2004 at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, CCA, in Montréal (Montréal: IRHA, Institut de Recherche en Histoire de l'Architecture, 2008).*

⁴ Colomina, Beatriz, and Craig Buckley, ed. *Clip, stamp, fold: the radical architecture of little magazines 196X-197X* (Barcelona, Princeton: Actar, Program in Media and Modernity, Princeton University, 2010).

⁵ Sciolla, Gianni Carlo, ed. *Riviste d'arte fra ottocento ed Età contemporanea. Forme, modelli e funzioni* (Milano: Skira, 2003).

⁶ Chevrefils Desbiolles, Yves. *Les revues d'art à Paris 1905-1940* (Paris: Ent'revues, 1993).

⁷ Altshuler, Bruce. *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition. New Art in the 20th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

However, in the cases cited above, the journals themselves are the main focus of analysis; in contrast, in the monographic issue proposed here, the focus of the research is the exchange of perspectives that takes place “through” the different media.

Of course, this comparative analysis has a long-established tradition;

above all, one that has prioritized bilateral experiences between two prominent nations, and in which Jean-Louis Cohen has very often been involved: from the experience of a seminal debate at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris in 1985 (later published under the title *Américanisme et modernité: l'idéal américain dans l'architecture*),⁸ in the exhibition *Scenes of the World to Come: European Architecture and the American Challenge 1893-1960*⁹ at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1995; in the exhibition *Interférences / Interferenzen. Architecture Allemagne-France 1800-2000*¹⁰ in Strasbourg in 2013 (and later in Frankfurt), and finally in the recent exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, which opened in 2019: *Building a New New World: Amerikanizm in Russian Architecture*.¹¹

Another very recent example (which included the participation of several members of the research group that prepared this monographic issue of *Histories of Postwar Architecture*) focused on the relationships between Italy and Spain during the 1950s, through an exhibition and a catalogue that highlighted how influential Italian magazines (*Domus*, *Spazio*, *Comunità*) disseminated Spanish architecture of the period: *Imagining the Mediterranean House. Italy and Spain in the 50s*.¹²

It should also be noted that the editors of this monographic issue are currently working on the R&D project *Spanish Architecture in International Communication Media: Publications, Exhibitions, Congresses (First Part: 1940–1975)*.¹³ The project aims to

⁸ Cohen, Jean-Louis, and Hubert Damisch, eds. *Américanisme et modernité: L'idéal américain dans l'architecture* (Paris: EHESS, Flammarion, 1993).

⁹ Cohen, Jean-Louis, ed. *Scenes of the world to come: European architecture and the American challenge: 1893-1960* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995).

¹⁰ Cohen, Jean-Louis, and Hartmut Frank, ed. *Interférences / Interferenzen. Architecture Allemagne-France 1800-2000* (Strasbourg: Éditions des Musées de Strasbourg, 2013).

¹¹ Cohen, Jean-Louis. *Building a New New World: Amerikanizm in Russian Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

¹² Pizza, Antonio, ed. *Imagining the Mediterranean House. Italy and Spain in the 50s* (Madrid: Museo ICO, ediciones asimétricas, 2019).

¹³ <http://www.spanisharchitecturenetwork.upc.edu> [Accessed November 27, 2019].

document the exterior presence of Spanish architectural culture in the period between 1940 and 1975, based on a study of the international publications, exhibitions and congresses most relevant to the period.

Our opinion is that this research experience can be applied to other countries and architectural contexts, with the goal of enriching the historical approaches to post-war architecture, which has often been confined to autogenous debates, characteristic of each individual country.

At the opening, the **Ana Tostoos'** text: *How Brazil's modern architecture revolution impacted Europe and Africa*, investigates how the spread of Brazilian Modernism after the Second World War through the magazines, contributed to the diffusion of modern architecture in the colonial countries of Africa.

The "Focus" section received a large number of contributions. The selected collaborations reveal the variety of approaches to the subject in question, confirm recognized trends and, at the same time, open new avenues of research. We present them here, divided into three subsections.

North American Hegemony

To begin, in his article "The Best of All Possible Worlds. USA 1949–1959: God's Own Country", **Ugo Rossi**, an independent scholar and holder of a PhD from the Università Iuav di Venezia, analyzes the American propaganda machine in Europe during the Cold War, especially through the exhibitions developed by the US government, as part of the Marshall Plan.

Then, **Carlo Carbone**, from the Montreal Design School at the University of Quebec, highlights the interconnection between architecture and industrial mass production in "The Kit of Parts as Medium and Message for Developing Post-War Dwellings", an article focused on American domestic architecture, which tracks the affiliation between military technological knowledge and its crossover into civil applications in the search for new social housing building typologies during the Cold War.

Lina Malfona, from the Dipartimento DESTeC at the Università di Pisa, with "Building Silicon Valley. Corporate Architecture, Information Technology and Mass Culture in the Digital Age", proposes a journey through the different phases of the high-tech computing hub, from its initial "militarized" phase through to the entry of the counterculture there, and finally offers a detailed analysis of the emergence of cyberculture, with ongoing references to the critical readings of Reyner Banham.

Monographic Studies on Publications and Exhibitions

In “A Window on the United States. The Image of American Architecture in West Germany’s Journals: 1947-1962”, **Marta Bacuzzi**, a PhD student in Architecture, History and Project at the Politecnico di Torino, explores how North American architecture is approached in two leading West German specialized publications: *Baukunst und Werkform* and *Baumeister*, media tools that represent two different ways of dealing with the transatlantic world without underestimating it under any circumstances.

For their part, **Paulo Tormenta Pinto** and **Alexandra Saraiva**, both from the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), and **João Paulo Delgado**, from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Porto (FAUP), offer an in-depth study of two Portuguese magazines in their essay: “Spanish post-war architecture in Portuguese magazines (1946-1970) - the cases of *A Arquitectura Portuguesa e Cerâmica e Edificação Reunidas* and *Arquitectura*”. Covering a historical period that goes from the postwar period until the 1970s, their study examines the extent to which Spanish “realism” may have had an impact on the evolution of Portuguese architecture at that time, pointing out correspondences and discrepancies between the respective cultures.

Carmen Rodríguez Pedret, Scientific Coordinator of the Gaudí Chair (ETSAB-Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya), with “The Resurrection of Antoni Gaudí in Postwar Media: A Critical Chronology, 1945–1965”, details the discovery and initial valuation of the figure of Gaudí during the post-war period, through his appearances in different periodicals, exhibitions, photographic features and international film productions, giving rise to a historiography that, from that moment forward, was longer subject to epistemological limits or geographical boundaries.

Peter Minosh, from the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto, and **Hunter Palmer Wright**, an independent scholar, discuss in “Built in USA: Post-war Architecture”. Midcentury Architecture as a Vehicle for American Foreign Policy” the close correspondence during the post-war period between US government policy and a prominent exhibition promoted by the MOMA in 1953, upholding the utopian shaping of a shared and widespread “International Style”.

For his part, in “Federico Correa in Vienna. Central Europe in *Arquitecturas Bis* (1974-1985)” **Alejandro Valdivieso Royo** analyzes the cultural background of an outstanding Barcelona magazine from the 1970s, demonstrating ties with a series of other manifestations that offered an alternative to the obscurantism of the Francoist regime

and highlighting a significant connection with the reformist culture that derived from the *Wiener Secession*.

On Team X and the “New Brutalism”

In “The Story of Another Idea: *Forum voor Architectuur en Daarmee Verbonden Kunsten’s* Construction of Netherlander Contemporary Urban Landscape”, **Rebeca Merino del Río**, a researcher at the Universidad de Sevilla, studies various issues of the journal *Forum*, demonstrating its role as one of the main platforms for disseminating the ideas of Team X, through the work – primarily – of Aldo van Eyck and Jaap Bakema, uncovering a shared critical perspective in the rejection of the contemporary city’s forms of development and the search for urban models based on a humanization of social relationships.

Julio Garnica González-Bárcena, from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, in “Dear Alison’. The diffusion of J.A. Coderch’s Work through his Participation in Team Ten”, takes as the foundation for his analysis a letter to Alison Smithson written by José Antonio Coderch in 1967, in response to a Team X questionnaire. Based on this declaration written by the Spanish architect, other central figures from the group are brought into the discussion, giving rise to a dialectical field in which both correspondences and ideological contrasts become apparent.

Finally, **Juliana Kei**, from the University of Liverpool, in the article “New Brutalism and the Myth of Japan”, shows the Smithsons’ interest in Japanese architecture, mediated by the films of Teinosuke Kinugasa, and its influence on the formulation of the New Brutalism.