

Carlo Scarpa, Aldo Rossi, Renzo Piano and Giuseppe

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Immagini

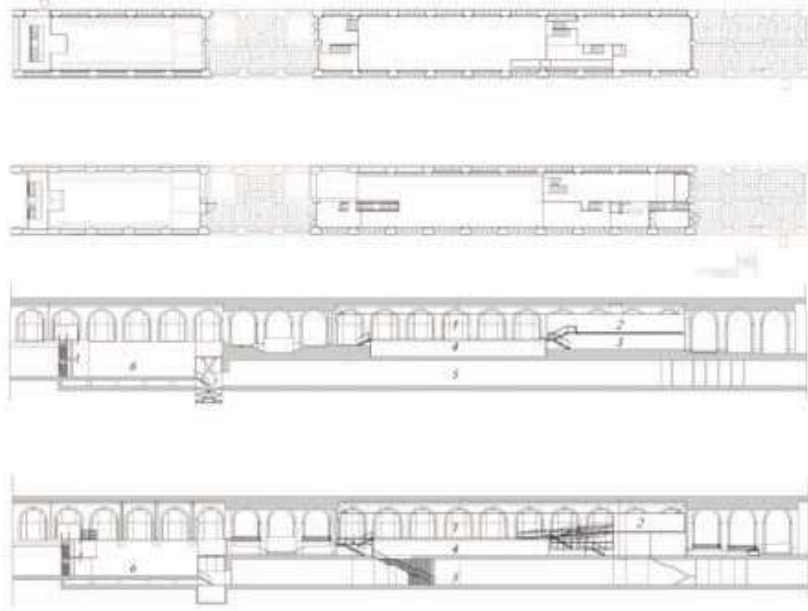
1. (Upper image) Upper (upper) and lower (lower) floors of the Exhibition Hall of La Arquería in its current state after variations of the original project by Secundino Zuazo (1933). (Image below) Longitudinal section of the Exhibition Hall of La Arquería. Sala Alejandro de la Sota | 2. Sala Félix Candela | 3. Sala Matilde Ucelay | 4. Sala José Luis Sert | 5. Sala Secundino Zuazo | 6. Source: Digital funds of the Ministry of Development, Nuevos Ministerios, Madrid (consultation and digitalization 11/07/2016).

2. Photograph by Manuel Castillo. Assembly of the exhibition "Carlo Scarpa. Obra Completa" (1985). Exhibition Hall of La Arquería (Madrid). Digitised by the authors of the funds of the Ministry of Development (file floor 6, wardrobe 4, folder 5).

3. Photograph by Manuel Castillo. Exhibition "Aldo Rossi" (1986). Exhibition Hall of La Arquería (Madrid). Digitised by the authors of the funds of the Ministry of Development (file floor 6, wardrobe 4, folder 13).

4. Photograph by unknown author. Assembly of the exhibition designed by Renzo Piano on the occasion of the monographic exhibition on his figure, organised by the MOPU in 1993. Exhibition Hall of La Arquería. Digitised by the authors of the funds of the Ministry of Development (file floor 6, wardrobe 4, folder 45).

5. Photograph by Hisao Suzuki. Assembly in the archery and courtyard of Nuevos Ministerios of the exhibition "Giuseppe Terragni" (1997), with an exhibition design by Jesús Aparicio. Exhibition Hall of La Arquería, Nuevos Ministerios. Digitised by the authors of the funds of the Ministry of Development (file floor 6, wardrobe 4, folder 62).



La Arquería de Nuevos Ministerios: The drive of an era.

In October 1983 the Exhibition Hall of the Ministry of Housing of the Government of Spain was inaugurated with the exhibition "Nordic Classicism, 1910-1930"¹. Time would consolidate its reference as an exhibition landmark in the national landscape and its collective refounding as *La Arquería* (the Archery). In a slow process of political decantation -and the consequent redefinition of objectives and strategies- that exhibition would signify the beginning of a vast series of exhibitions, seminars, courses and exhibitions promoted by the various ministries that inherited the obligation and responsibility for the diffusion and promotion of architecture. In its rooms, following the rhythm of fluctuating interests and tendencies, the most relevant architectural work of the 20th century has been shown. The themes have been closely conditioned by a democracy to be built and an atmosphere of technical schools driven by the endowment of resources and the growth of students. In

the local context, *La Arquería* has become an obligatory visit for architects, specially students and teachers, shaping the gaze of a generation. The innovative effect of such an unusual category in previous periods as the exhibition implies the opening of a new genre within the cultural resources used to date in a practically non-existent programme for the dissemination of architecture.

The new exhibition hall, located on Avenida de la Castellana, filled a notorious void in the area of cultural promotion of architecture; in 1924, the architect González Edo had argued the need to create a national museum without any project (González-Edo, 1924). The idea, blurred for eight decades, was taken up again with the proposal for a National Museum of Architecture and Urbanism during the mandate of the Minister of Culture Carmen Calvo and at the initiative of the Minister of Housing María Antonia Trujillo (Royal Decree 1636/2006, of 29 December)². The stagnation of public investments in cultural matters not only prevents the materialization of

the project, but also interrupts the exhibition activity of *La Arquería* itself (Pan-Mantojo, 2015).

The thick logbook drawn and written by the ministerial exhibition hall and its itinerant journeys contains a thick layer of invisible threads in which modernity is linked and condensed. The permeability between its exhibition script and the theoretical-reflective discourse given in the schools allows a clear reading of the evolution of European architecture and academia, as well as X-raying the political trends in cultural matters of each legislature of the Spanish Government.

The Italian factor is precisely present as a common factor in all of them, scattered over time. Carlo Scarpa (1985), Aldo Rossi (1986), Renzo Piano (1993) and Giuseppe Terragni (1997) participate in a capital way in the programme of exhibitions as an integral part of the history of European architecture. The Venetian architect was the first Italian figure to have a monographic exhibition, only preceded by the one devoted to the English William Morris

Terragni from Madrid: Italian architecture in *La Arquería*



(1984). Around these four historical milestones of Italian architecture, figures of radical importance for the development of certain indispensable architectures are orbiting. Asplund and Lewerentz (1987), Schinkel (1989), Jacobsen (1993), Utzon (1995) or Rietveld (1996) draw a map of disperse cartography but cohesive by a common space-time lexeme, in which Mediterranean architecture is only represented by Spanish, Portuguese and Italian names.

In addition to the four exhibitions that argue for this article, Italy seems to be represented in two more monographic exhibitions, that would be the ones dedicated to Mario Riboldi (1991) and to Mario Botta (1992), and two collective ones "Venice in Madrid. De lo construido a la arquitectura asin papel" (2009) and "Arquitectura Española en la 14ª Biennale di Venezia" (2014). In total, Italy's presence in the exhibition programme in its period of activity accounts for almost 4% of the content shown, making it the country with the greatest presence after Spain.

Carlo Scarpa (1985)

On 7 February 1985, the exhibition "Carlo Scarpa. Obra Completa", would have showcased a vast ensemble of material and works: consisting of 279 drawings from family funds and the RIBA in London, as well as 70 photographic panels, models, furniture and various bronze objects designed for the San Vito cemetery. The exhibition was designed by Mario Botta, with the collaboration of Boris Padreca. On the occasion of the exhibition, the Milanese publishing house Electa edited the catalogue "Carlo Scarpa, 1906-1978. Obra Completa", under the supervision of Francesco Dal Co and Giuseppe Mazzariol (Allende *et. al.*, 1985). The choice of Scarpa as the first great Mediterranean figure highlights the weight of Italian architects in a newly created programme of exhibitions, essential for a comprehensive understanding of the universal history of contemporary architecture.

His first intervention, the design of a monographic exhibition on the masters of Murano glass for a Parisian

room (1930), inaugurated the exhibition, verifying the crucial importance of "spaces to show" in his work. In fact, the task of modifying a space -in order to teach, artistically and scenographically, a specific content- moved away from the tasks that used to be carried out by the architects of the first third of the 20th century. His patrimonial interventions, loaded with a vast intellectual formation and a deep knowledge of the constructive logic, mark a special episode in the chapter of the treatment of times and spaces.

The exhibition design was based on the achievement of curved panels on iron rod exhibitors, aligned at one end and the other of the room. The Venetian's projects were shown on these panels by means of photographs, plans and sketches. On the lower level, the panels were placed next to the open windows of the room to the interior garden of the architectural complex of the New Ministries, and others, those of the interior, resting on white curtains that enveloped the scenic space in the manner of a grid.

Aldo Rossi (1986)

Just one year after Carlo Scarpa's exhibition, the Mediterranean guest was another key figure in the History of Architecture. The monographic exhibition on Aldo Rossi included 10 projects illustrated with drawings, plans and models and 70 original drawings of studies, sketches and compositions, with the aim of condensing the vital, cultural and intellectual journey of his work. Present at the inauguration, Rossi presented his theory on the continuity of cities, equating it with a canvas of erasures in which ancient and modern monuments cohabit in a palimpsest, exposing the Mosque of Cordoba as a paradigm.

The exhibition showed some of the most innovative projects, such as the San Cataldo cemetery in Modena or its recurrent *Teatro del Mondo*. Precisely through theatre, Rossi resumed the concept of typology, condensing his theory into this project which, in the architect's words, is the place where architecture ends and the world of imagination begins (García Santa-Cecilia, 1986). In a clear reference to



exhibition spaces, Rossi reiterated throughout his career that architecture offers a stage for life, with public spaces that act as a backdrop to life experiences. In this symbolic game, the theatre acts as a metaphor for their illusions: the spectators of the *Teatro del Mondo*, in addition to perceiving the theatrical space of the floating pavilion itself, could see the true vital representation of the world through boats, water and its reflection. In this case, the exhibition design was more complete than in Scarpa's, introducing large white vertical supports throughout the room. Above them, the aforementioned drawings and models were placed, with the capital presence of a large model of the Venetian Theatre presiding over the space. As if it were a premonition of the evolution of the exhibition described by *La Arquería*, its inaugural speech ended thus: "*The transformation of a space or its possibility of transformation is the most important part of architecture*".

Renzo Piano (1993)

With the exhibition dedicated to the Genoese archi-

tect, *La Arquería* continued the cycle of revision of 20th century Italian architecture, after Carlos Scarpa, Aldo Rossi and Mario Ridolfi. Piano's studio, with offices in Genoa, Paris and Osaka, was in charge of organising and setting up their own exhibition, presenting his last 12 works through models, drawings, plans, sketches, photographs, videos and computers. The San Nicola stadium in Bari, Kansai airport in Osaka, the refurbishment of Fiat's Lingotto factory in Turin or the Menil Collection Museum in Houston offered a vision that proved its architectural transcendence, applying a scholarship in the union of natural elements and advanced technology. The consideration of architecture as a game of effects and movements led to open circulations and natural lights, starting points applied throughout its trajectory. With these tools, the exhibition design managed to maintain the spatiality of the room without renouncing to rethinking it. The lower level began with a tra-

ditional placement of the elements, with framed drawings and sketches and models on wooden plinths. On the upper level, a running table with chairs invited people to contemplate and interact with the material it held. Here, models, constructive details and explanatory texts could be touched and read. While details of the Kansai airport roof were suspended from the ceiling, a parterre with bamboo plants occupied one of the cantilevers of the room, reminiscent of the always recurring interior gardens of his architecture.

Giuseppe Terragni (1997)

On 7 March 1997, with the production of the Milan Triennial, a monographic exhibition on Giuseppe Terragni, curated by Gloria Moure, was inaugurated at the Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo of Santiago de Compostela, masterpiece of the Portuguese Alvaro Siza, inaugurated 4 years before. For the first time the original documents of his work could be seen, transcending fascism as an architect and free thinker. Models,

plans, drawings, letters, photographs and manifestos were shown as quarries of inspiring influences. Terragni's commitment to his work in each of the projects he worked on, based on a functional and compositional premise, would greatly influence avant-garde architecture.

Hand in hand with Víctor Pérez Escolano, the exhibition travelled at the end of the years to Seville to be exhibited, this time at the Andalusian Centre for Contemporary Art, housed at the former Carthusian Monastery recovered for the International Exhibition. The exhibition, articulated here in seven blocks and two parts, began with the title "Giuseppe Terragni" in which his first biographical, academic and professional steps were explained. The second "Terragni y la Muerte: Il Danteum", produced by a team of Andalusian architects, dealt with the architect's most complex and suggestive project. Irrealized, his evocative capacity made it possible to transfer the Divine Comedy to the plane and the reader from the plane to the dream world of Dante Alighieri, writing -projecting- a true architectural



poem (Ciucci, 1997). Between one exhibition to the north and the other to the south, the Madrid version of the exhibition was inaugurated in June of the same year in Room 1 of the New Ministries. The points of reference of *La Arquería* were blurred, moving from the stone to the neat white of the *Casa del Fascio*, moving the room to the Como of 1934 - whose façade, in relief, presided over access from the Paseo de la Castellana -; the location of the exhibition can be seen through the writings stored in the archives of the Ministry of Public Works. Jesús Aparicio's exhibition project is one of the pleasures and paradigms left by the programme for the dissemination and promotion of architecture. The exhibition appropriated the interior courtyard of the New Ministries, considering the garden of cypresses and firs as an exhibition space, with three of his work on display. A wall raised about 30 centimetres above the ground, supported by small supports, enclosed the newly conquered garden and transformed it into an extension of *La Arquería*.

An overhang protruded from the beginning of the arches, supported this time by pillars of circular section that, cohabiting with the trees, proposed a game of time and art.

Conclusions

The fact that Mediterranean architecture is only represented by Spanish, Portuguese and Italian names leads to a reflection on the partial view of governmental cultural discourses in the construction of a Europeanised collective memory. In the case of the different Spanish ministries in charge of disseminating architecture, the influence of European cultural ties seems clearly proven as the main argument when deciding which architects and works to show. The weight of Italian architecture being evident in the course of the history of the discipline, its presence in *La Arquería* is noteworthy, above other nationalities with a close cultural relationship such as Portugal or France. In the analysis of the different exhibition montages one can visualise an evolution based on a growing trans-

formation of space: although in the case of the Scarpa show the show was summarised in a series of panels in the form of furniture, twelve years later Terragni's exhibition revolutionises the interior and exterior space of the room. In the intervening period this gradation is observed, with Rossi's theatrical exhibition, in which a transformation of the longitudinal spatial logic of space is produced, and that of Renzo Piano, in which use is made of unexplored elements such as the ceiling or in which plant elements are introduced.

In an exercise of architectural metalanguage, it is interesting to see how the first two Italians to take part in an exhibition were concerned about the exhibition spaces throughout their work.

This review of Italian architecture through the Sala de la Arquería allows us to understand, in a synthetic way, the evolution of the way in which architecture has been taught, disseminated and shown by the Government of Spain since the birth of democracy.

Note

¹ This exhibition would be followed by more than 200 exhibitions spread over three decades. As Minister Julián Campo Sainz de Roza, the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 1977 by the first democratic government palliated the great qualitative leap between Spain and neighbouring countries. The impulse to great prizes and scholarships for training and creation began to open up culture as an engine of public knowledge and progress. A tool to overcome the hackneyed monocular vision with which the centenary of the generation of '98 had been treated in the last years of the regime.

² It would be possible to think of the museum conception poured around Antoni Gaudí in Barcelona, or that of the Torroja movement located in the Zarzuela racetrack.