

Images

01. Francesc Mitjans, Dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, numbers 5, 7 and 9, Barcelona, 1944. Photograph by Juan Pablo Mitjans.

02. Ramon Duran i Reynals, exterior of Casa Cardenal, Barcelona, 1935. Photograph by the author.

03. Ramon Duran i Reynals, exterior of Casa Espona, Barcelona, 1935. Photograph by the author.

04. Ramon Duran i Reynals, ground plan of Casa Cardenal, Barcelona, 1935.

05. Ramon Duran i Reynals, ground plan of Casa Espona, Barcelona, 1935.

06. Charles Platt, 47-49 East 65 Street, New York, 1908.

07. Francesc Mitjans, standard plan of the dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, numbers 7 and 9, Barcelona, 1944.

08. Francesc Mitjans, main façade of the dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, numbers 7 and 9, Barcelona, 1944.

09. Francesc Mitjans, ground floor of the dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, numbers 7 and 9, Barcelona, 1944.

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11, 12. Francesc Mitjans, main façade of the dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, number 5, Barcelona, 1948.

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14. Francesc Mitjans, standard plan of dwellings in Calle Pérez Cabrero, number 5, Barcelona, 1948.

15. Francesc Mitjans, dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2, 4 and 6, 1954. Photograph by the author.

16. Francesc Mitjans, location of the dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2, 4 and 6, Barcelona, 1954.

17. Francesc Mitjans, standard plan of dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2 and 4, Barcelona, 1954.

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20. Francesc Mitjans, main elevation of the dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2, 4 and 6, Barcelona, 1954.

21. Francesc Mitjans, entrance to the dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2 and 4, Barcelona, 1954.

22. Francesc Mitjans, entrance to the dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 2 and 4, Barcelona, 1954.

23. Francesc Mitjans, entrance to the dwellings in Calle Mandri, number 6. Photograph by the author.

24. Francesc Mitjans, entrance to the Dwellings in Calle Mandri, numbers 8, 10, 12 and 14. Photograph by the author.

25. Francesc Mitjans, Calle San Mario. Photograph by the author.

05

Avant-Garde or Disguised Tradition: Reverberations from the Past in the Vocabulary of Frank Gehry, Los Angeles 1952–1985

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Architecture, including that of the avant-garde, is a debate between reference to episodes in the past and the invention of strategies. This paper summarises a journey that explores Frank Gehry's early works in California. It is a journey that throws up a multitude of encounters, among others with the architecture of modern master Frank Lloyd Wright and the criticism of Charles Moore, and from which unexpected accords emerge. The progressive shift towards fragmentation in Gehry's architectural language is preceded by volumetric distortions and geometric explorations that, in advance of the contemporary avant-gardes, question the concept of project unity and coherence, preferring mechanisms like symbolic aggregation, volumetric dislocation and the banalisation and vulgarisation of the Modern vocabulary. At the core of the Modern tradition itself, Alberto Sartoris pre-empts examination of the destabilisation of the concept of hierarchy, confirming the fragility of categorisation. In tracing these unsuspected accords with past explorations there is no intention to assert either repetition nor copy. Rather, the intention is to contribute towards diluting, once and for all, speculation about his inventiveness..



"Whoever is used to travelling, will have been surprised arriving to places, situations, instants just like other ones already lived. It is not a matter of repetition, copy or influence. There is an unexpected accord between things — through time, through space — as mysterious and exact as that amongst the stars in a constellation. To pay attention to these coincidences, in order to draw their pattern, is always a stimulating exercise. There are those who, having known one of these accords, can not help going out seeking such similarities. Every discovery, then, coincides with a return. Accords get us home."

Josep Quetglas¹

The various avant-gardes of the 20th century were perceived within architecture as a series of innovations, seemingly without precedent, that began with the genuine revolution instigated by the Modern Movement.² For decades now — in fact for more than a century — architectural criticism and practice have been influenced, via either review or challenge, by their doctrines. In this

context, any novelty that appeared to be free of references to the masters, or that subverted the new formal order they proposed, could be presented by the critics, through the decisive medium of the profession's journals, as genuine invention.

This was precisely the case among those architects who, at the end of the 1970s, basked in the freedom, arbitrariness and formal irreverence of the work catalogued, at the time, as deconstructivist. They did so even while the boldness and extravagance of their proposals masked references to, or parallel explorations of, past architectures, forming surprising accords between them. This paper traces the architectural connections in the work of one of the seven participants in the now mythical exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture*,³ Frank Gehry (1929). In this respect, one of the first reviews of his work was published in the article *Revisitando a Schindler, comprendiendo a Gehry, Los Angeles 1921-1979*.⁴ To complement this, this article conducts a review of his output in light of buildings designed by three architects: *Anderton Court Shops*, Beverly Hills, 1952, by Frank Lloyd Wright (1857-1959) **01**; the *Sea Ranch*, Sonoma, California, 1965⁵ and *Kresge College* at the University of California in Santa Cruz, 1971, by Charles Moore (1925-1993); and plans for *Casa Arnulfo Córdoba*, Tacoronte (Tenerife), 1952, drawn up by Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998). All three revelled in the slipstream of modernity: one of its masters, a critic of its propositions, and a passionate propagandist.

THE VERNACULAR TRADITION IN THE ORIGINS OF THE DECONSTRUCTIVIST AVANT-GARDE

It seems appropriate to begin by recalling that, together with the Modern tradition, the avant-gardes count several other traditions among their sources. It is no coincidence that in the catalogue for the above-mentioned exhibition the only photograph

that alludes to the new avant-garde is of a small cabin, dating from around 1860, set in the harsh Nevada landscape. Named *Spring House*, the picture was taken in the mid-1980s by Michael Heizer (1944) **02**. It is counterposed by the image of a self-aligning steel ball bearing.⁶ Exhibition curator Philip Johnson thus illustrates his text with two antithetical and equally iconic images. The former, as the expression of the creed of the International Style, and the latter, as a visualisation of the disquieting and disjointed pluralism of the final quarter of the last century.⁷ As the architect curator himself states, "the contrast is between perfection and violated perfection."⁸ The retrospective gaze adopted by the 1988 MoMA exhibition can be framed in its long tradition of reinvention drawn from the past.⁹

From the very moment of the birth of deconstructivist architecture, and as an expression of its avant-garde nature, it paradoxically harks back to an anonymous and naive representation of the vernacular tradition. In this way, the multiple references in the exhibition catalogue, among them to the vernacular tradition, insinuate the impossibility of innovation. Likewise, the links to differing artistic movements confirm the discourse of architecture's differing explorations and contributions, to the detriment of innovation. Thus, the preface to the exhibition catalogue states:

"Since no forms come out of nowhere, but are inevitably related to previous forms, it is perhaps not strange that the new forms of deconstructivist architecture hark back to Russian Constructivism of the second and third decades of this century. I am fascinated by these formal similarities, of our architects to each other, on the one hand, and to the Russian movement on the other. Some of these similarities are unknown to the younger architects themselves, let alone premeditated."¹⁰

Although it is true that there is no premeditation, there is evidence of unexpected accords. It should not therefore be a surprise that the design of another vernacular structure, a barn, provided the starting point for Gehry's deconstructivist journey.¹¹ Until 1968, he worked within the comfortable bounds of professional

and commercial commissions. That year, however, the architect was tasked with designing an agricultural structure, the O'Neill Hay Barn in San Juan Capistrano, California, as part of the redesign of the layout of a ranch **03**. The project's minimal specifications — an open but covered space — allowed him the opportunity to explore spatial relationships with greater freedom and to adopt an approach closer to that of the minimalist sculptors. A wooden structure composed of telegraph poles — his first foray into recovering and reusing industrial elements found in the locale as building materials — supports a corrugated sheet metal roof that, depending on the angle at which the light strikes it, merges with or disappears into the surrounding landscape. Exploration of space, with no ornamental rhetoric, extends to the pitch of the rectangular roof and the way its diagonal lines create a minimalist structure that evokes a sense of the work of Carl André or Donald Judd.

For the first time in his work, Gehry assimilates the constructive and plastic values of vernacular architecture, juxtaposing them with the semantic potential of transformed materials like sheet metal. Formal exploration produced a change in strategy in his architecture that would culminate in construction of his own home, in which the concept of fragmentation prevails over that of unity.

It should also be remembered that the adoption of fragmentation and formal dislocation cannot be considered a phenomenon exclusive to the end-of-century architectural avant-gardes. Although these works expressed disconnection in architecture as a reflection of a heterogeneous world in which it is impossible to summon unity of any kind, the value of fragmentation and disjointedness has its precedents in architectural history, to the point where we could even speak of a fragmentary tradition. Moneo, in a seminal article in this regard,¹² explains in the words of Manfredo Tafuri as applied to Piranesi's output how architecture has long and definitively questioned the idea of design coherence: "The obsessive articulation and deformation of the compositions no longer correspond to an *ars combinatoria*. The clash of the geometric 'monads' is no longer regulated by any 'preestablished harmony'.¹³

We will now outline those unexpected accords in the architecture of Gehry with past explorations, doing so with no intention to assert either repetition nor copy. Rather, the intention is to contribute towards diluting, once and for all, speculation about his inventiveness.

THE VERNACULAR TRADITION IN THE WRIGHT: FROM EARLY INFLUENCES TO CONTROLLED DISLOCATION

One of Gehry's first projects,¹⁴ *Steeves House* in Brentwood, California (1959), is indebted to Wrightian tradition. The design reveals three direct examples of the master's influence: the arrangement of the space along two doubly symmetrical orthogonal axes, at the intersection of which is the hearth around which the house is structured; the emphasis on planes and horizontal composition; and the dissolution of the boundaries between interior and exterior, incorporating nature into the project space via patios and open porches **04**. The extension to the house, designed in 1981 for other owners, evidences an evolution in what Gehry himself describes as "my (early) preoccupation with hierarchical spaces and formal planning organization"¹⁵ in the first design. The formal explosion is the result of evolving social and family structures whose expression can no longer be based on Wrightian organisation around a shared hearth. The spatial container is destroyed and a different and supposedly more flexible internal structure gives rise to a spatial translation as interconnected boxes.

In several projects, Wright advances strategies that, retroactively, we can consider precursors of Gehry's interests. In the *Auto Service Station* project (Detroit, 1951), which was never built, a startling alteration becomes the design's central argument. The roof is relieved of its traditional homogeneous protective role to become,

by means of an abrupt geometric fold, an unexpected showroom that stunningly exhibits a car, transgressing the traditional concept of its function. This distortion, unlike what later occurs in contemporary vocabulary, does not invert the sense of unity of the project but rather is understood as a counterpoint to it.

In the *Lindhorn Service Station*, in Cloquet, Minnesota (1958–1960),¹⁶ Wright incorporates and anticipates the cultural parameters that characterise 20th century US vernacular architecture and which had a particular influence in shaping Gehry's career. Its design, spanning two floors topped by an imposing 9.75-metre detached copper-covered roof, is conceived as both an icon of the suburban landscape and a social hub (fig. 05). The integration of the advertising generated by a consumer society¹⁷ in structures expressly designed for that purpose anticipates the debate between architecture and communication. In this way, the service station contributes a degree of urbanity and a sense of place to the locale that would not otherwise exist. A new liberal and democratic society found in architects like Wright, and later Gehry, mediators capable of transmitting its values.

The gradual march of Gehry's architectural language towards fragmentation is preceded by his work's formal distortion of the Modern vocabulary. While this ties most directly with the preceding architectures of Schindler and Moore, here we shall look at the *Anderton Court Shops*. Beyond the volumetric distortion produced around the building's ramp, Wright initiates his formal exploration in the deliberate abandonment of orthogonal geometry and in circumventing the challenge presented by gravity. The volumes, and their edges, are no longer arranged perpendicularly, either in relation to one another or to the ground; rather they adopt varying and contrasting orientations that generate a controlled instability.

By applying a new logic to the use of materials, he takes a first step that will lead to later questioning. He uses glass, no longer inserted in the window frame but erected as a smooth free-standing wall, to simultaneously create both voids and enclosures. And this is just how Gehry will use it in his own home in 1978. Thus, the component parts are no longer orderly and unitary as would be expected in Wright, but adopt asymmetries and imbalances typical of later architectural styles (06). Also, and for the first time, treatments are applied to the façades, in the form of perforated sheet metal, giving the overall building a casual air in tune with the consumer society of Beverly Hills. Wright designs the shop fronts as rotated, dynamic volumes that are active participants in the scenography created by the movement generated by the ramp, a functional argument and the compositional centrepiece.

This incipient formal juggling, creating a sense of spectacle in relation to the street from whose alignment it distances itself, quietens to silence in the interior. As if Wright also tired of Los Angeles' disorder, it anticipates a distancing between architecture and an indomitable environment. In contrast, the rear façade is much more discreet, perhaps even anodyne. All the building's expressionist power and vigour dissolve into an anonymous solution embedded between the impersonal adjoining walls of a chaotic urban landscape. Even so, it maintains an unfailingly Modern vocabulary, not so much for its adaptation to its environment, but for its consistency with its own trajectory. Adaptation to that indomitable urban landscape would lead Gehry to re-creation and, in some cases, even formal ridiculing.

FROM THE ASSIMILATION OF PLACE AND THE TRIVIALISATION OF MODERN VOCABULARY IN MOORE TO CONTEXTUALISM AND SCENOGRAPHY IN GEHRY

The career of Gehry's contemporary Charles Moore,¹⁸ anticipates the former's manipulation of the compositional mechanisms of the Modern Movement. His strategies, such as assimilation of the context, the conception of architecture as

symbolic aggregation,¹⁹ the loss of respect for Modern orthodoxy through the banalisation and vulgarisation of its vocabulary, the

acceptance of vernacular figurativism over Modern abstraction, or the conception of construction as viewed through the vernacular use of industrial means of production,²⁰ give rise to a new approach that redefines the boundaries, or the relationship, between formal freedom and coherence and positions architecture as scenography and representation. The continuance of this process is found in the projects Gehry worked on in the 1980s, such as the Frances Howard Goldwyn Library in Hollywood (1980) and Yale Psychiatric Institute in New Haven (1985).

At the Sea Ranch, the architect initiates his strategy of incorporating gentle gestures to adapt to the physical conditions of the context into his projects, exhibiting a clear desire to fuse architecture and nature.²¹ It should be noted that acceptance of the topographic conditions that frame the cross-section of the condominium's different components link directly, in turn, to the architecture of Alvar Aalto.²² The Kresge College project also adapts its component parts to the topography. Moore, in his interest in contextualising his project, paints all the exterior façades over the forest brown and creates interiors in white, two sides of a deliberately bounded multiple reality. Visiting the centre, the radicality with which a direct dialogue with the immediate environment is proposed becomes evident.

The process of decentralisation and dehierarchisation in architecture was initially explored by Moore in his housing projects. Its evolution typically begins with construction of a single container before going on to investigate different ways of grouping the parts of the house together so as to cause their disaggregation. The Sea Ranch starts the juxtaposition of volumes, conjugating vernacular forms with Modern vocabulary. The sense of unity that Moore confers upon the project justifies the use of wood as the only material. In contrast, Gehry, unconcerned with canonical unity, understands volumetric juxtaposition as the sum of differentiated units, both in terms of scale and materials, as confirmed in *Schnabel House*, Brentwood (1989), among others. The creation of a central area at Kresge College becomes possible thanks to the shift away from the perception of architecture generating a single spatial container, the strategy claimed by the deconstructivists but affirmed years earlier by the architects reviewing modernity.

The loss of respect for Modern orthodoxy allows space for both flexibility in composition and the literal transposition of elements and forms from the vernacular tradition abandoned by modernity. The literalness of the treatment observed in Moore's projects (sloping roofs, eaves, vulgarisation of façades and repetition of banal elements) is a consequence of the progressive abandonment of Modern propositions. Unprejudiced freedom of composition facilitates deliberate manipulation of the scale of the parts in the constituting sequence in which they are aggregated. This can be seen, for example, in the lobby of the Yale Psychiatric Institute (fig. 07a). This exaggeration should not be considered entirely novel. The dwellings on the Sea Ranch already featured the symbolic affirmation of house versus landscape in the form of the emphatic chimney (fig. 07b). Similarly, in his *Beach House* project (1959) Robert Venturi creates a composition based on the magnification of a central volume (fig. 07c). Moreover, formal review of these gestures transcends the episodes of the 1950s and 1960s.²³ We should recall that Moore himself would draw on the design of the aforementioned *Beach House* for his *Jenkins House* project (1961), in this case removing the chimney as a compositional counterpoint.

Both Kresge College and the Yale Psychiatric Institute base their spatial and compositional organisation on the aggregation of parts that define interior spatial relationships. In the same way, Moore opens a path that explores overlaid compositions achievable by manipulating Modern vocabulary to attain a representation that is closer to scenography than to the compositional rigour bequeathed by the function of the interior spaces. In each of the Kresge College

galleries, two overlaid rhythms play out in counterpoint: the windows cut out of the back wall and the perforated outer skin (fig. 08). The latter, in turn, is manifested vertically at certain points in the building to create a link with the slender trunks of the surrounding trees. As Portoghesi concludes, this outcome “is one of the most valid and rich examples of American architecture to come out of the rejection of the orthodoxy of the Modern Movement.”²⁴ Gehry will later delve deeper into this strategy in, among other works, the World Savings Bank in North Hollywood (1980).²⁵

In these projects, changes of scale and formal hyperbole distort balance and provoke a heterodox reading of the language received.²⁶ With Kresge College, for example, Moore emphasizes the cubic volumes by increasing the scale and subversively introducing a double order: on the one hand the white frame defined by the prism, on the other the plane at the back that includes the glass wall with the provocative and banal inclusion of conventional windows (fig. 09). At the same time, this double order coexists, in what constitutes a second and intentional provocation, with vernacularly referenced pitched roof volumes. Six years later, with the Frances Howard Goldwyn Library, Gehry once again creates an oversized prism and a double order (fig. 10). The formal similarity should not, however, blind us to the true contextualist meaning, to which end the architect pursues his strategy to fuse his work into a disorderly environment marked by anonymous prismatic buildings bathed in white under the intense Californian sunlight.

The consistent softening of the Modern project, with the sensitive reinterpretation of the memory of place and its materiality, exemplified by the Sea Ranch, gave way in Moore to the vulgar juxtaposition of vernacular figuration versus the language of modernity. In various areas of Kresge College the architect confronts two opposing traditions. Distortion of meanings delves into the permissiveness of an architecture unprejudiced by its own traditions. Continuing this figurative manipulation, Gehry would explore the most diverse of paths, such as the exaltation of traditional eaves in the renovation of the offices on Newbury St in Boston (1988). This could be read as a shift towards brutalism that upholds the vernacular use of industrial production.

But perhaps Moore’s clearest contribution, in relation to Gehry’s later interests, is the conception of the central social areas at Kresge College as a fabulous backdrop against which the lives of the students unfold (fig. 11). This scenography extends throughout the site, creating trivial monuments that do not adhere to any kind of hierarchy. In his 1980s buildings, Gehry aspires to comprehend architecture as scenographic support. However, as Eugene J. Johnson reminds us,²⁷ Moore presents architecture as a theatrical art. Perhaps in Gehry the boundary crossed is one in which the work is not so much a decorative frame for its users’ lives as scenography in and of itself.

SARTORIS, THE TRANSCENDENCE OF A FIGURE OVERLOOKED IN RELATION TO THE AVANT-GARDES

To conclude, we will return our gaze to the Modern tradition itself. Sartoris’s development and contribution to 20th century architecture transcends the view of him handed down as a propagator of modernity. It is enough to find him, and not by chance, among the avant-garde or deconstructivist architects who, at the invitation of Steven Holl (1947), contributed to *Pamphlet Architecture*.²⁸ Sartoris’s *Metafisica della Architettura* explores the limits of geometry, mathematics, proportion and colour and their application to architecture. As early as the introduction to this book Ghirardo explains how:

For Sartoris, rational and functional architecture was not mechanical or “formed according to dogmatic canons, but rather it was a dynamic and evolving architecture which addressed contemporary problems with the newest technologies enriched by a poetic and spatial sensibility.”²⁹

This evolution stems from geometric exploration, consisting of constructing irrational or dynamic rectangles and forming geometric means of dividing them harmoniously using diagonals and perpendiculars. This is evident in the second version of his project for the painter Jean-Saladin van Berchem, Paris, 1930. In Gehry’s career, geometric transformation is likewise present in the home and studio designed for the painter Ron Davis (1972) on the basis of the study of perspective. Of particular interest, in relation to the breaking of the box and the assembly of the resulting parts, is the review of the plans for the *Chexbres Residence* (1937),³⁰ in which Sartoris’s questioning pre-empted the defining traits of future avant-garde projects.

Architecture, including that of the avant-garde, is a debate between legacy practices and the rights of genius and invention. These steered Sartoris to design an astonishing home for entrepreneur and arts patron Arnulfo Córdoba,³¹ in Tacoronte, Canary Islands (1952–1953), foreshadowing end-of-century avant-garde formal strategies and confirming the fragility of categorisations. Similar geometric and compositional experimentation occurs in Gehry’s work. In addition to the aforementioned project for Ron Davis, these explorations continued in the *Gemini Studios* building in Los Angeles (1974) (fig. 12) and extend to his own home in 1978, a decisive inflection point in his work, or to projects such as *Familian House*, Santa Monica (1978) (fig. 13). The Italian architect, charting a parallel course, pushes this investigation to the limit, designing dislocated volumes representing a kind of controlled explosion of the box. Volumes are no longer subject to strict orthogonal control and a process of deconstruction commences, surpassing the strategy applied in the artists’ homes designed earlier,³² among them the aforementioned house for painter Jean-Saladin van Berchem in Paris (1930).

It is undeniable that in this project Sartoris was keen to do something exceptional but affordable³³ and took his time before submitting his first proposal in September 1952. Baudin analyses that proposal as follows:

“It follows a highly opulent residential programme that entails complex, if not Mannerist, formalisation in a slightly oblique rising structure of four or five irregular volumes spread across three floors plus basement, generously provided with canopies — including a miniature semi-rotunda taken from Our Lady of the Lighthouse — and cantilevering, galleries, terraces and pergolas: a repertoire fundamentally composed of the motifs and conventions implemented by the architect in the course of his heroic decade.”³⁴

The distortions in the floor plan do not follow a pre-defined harmonious order but rather accept the interruptions and shifts. Unbroken surfaces are juxtaposed against latticework structures, disrupting any entire previously assumed hierarchy. Likewise, the breaking of the box, which until now had never admitted the abandonment of orthogonal geometry, either in elevation or in cross-section, starts in this project to pursue a parallel strategy further developed at a later date. Conveyance of a sense of stability is no longer an irrefutable objective. The distorted questioning of gravity starts to become explicit (fig. 14). In the wake of this project, Sartoris’s words resonate: “Some fundamental principles, some universal systems of art remain immutable because they contribute to the vital process of intellectual evolution.”³⁵

It seems reasonable to believe that this innovative proposal that sprang from the heart of the rationalist avant-garde also owes its origin and rationale in the captivating spell that the island cast over the architect:

“In a mysterious land dreamed of by poets, home to a fabulous life recounted by legend; in an animated and tumultuous geological and telluric existence; in that wonderful country that the ancient philosophers strove to bring back to life in all its vicissitudes, art is yet born.”³⁶

For the Italian architect, the islands, a place of invention, offer the ideal environment for the progress of art: "Yet that does not mean to say that it should continue to tread the same path, as that would mean the premeditated abandonment of the spirit of invention of which the Canary Islands have always, throughout the ages, shown the most evident signs."³⁷

With this project, Sartoris commences the destabilisation of the concept of hierarchy that will so interest the deconstructivist movement. The project does not refer to a series of preestablished sequences in which situations of superiority and inferiority can be perceived; rather, diluted by the abstraction of these inherited codes, it is no longer possible to intuit a dominant order. Like Sartoris, we conclude that despite the fact that contemporary movements present themselves as irreconcilable with those of the past, there is for us a sign of capital importance that allows us to see in each new facet of art the certainty of introspection.

Evidently, no attempt has been made to draw an unbroken line, or even claim mutual acknowledgement, between these authors. But in all of them we perceive explorations beyond form that take on especially novel significance in light of subsequent events. Sartoris himself sums it up best: "In short, in neither the plastic arts nor architecture does progressive evolution occur; there is only metamorphosis driven by diverse participation in the eternal idea of beauty and harmony, an idea favoured by existence."³⁸

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Notes

01. QUETGLAS, Josep, "Encuentros, esparcimientos", *WAM Web Architectural Magazine*, Homelesspage, 1996, No 1, accessed 27 August 2022 at <http://www.arranz.net/web.arch-mag.com/quet/01.html>

02. A revolution that is still under way if we heed, among others, Sartoris: "Specifically, we want to affirm that the first rationalism, that of the true innovators, has not yet reached the end of its natural cycle, which is why we must give it time", SARTORIS, Alberto, Lecture given at the *Círculo de Bellas Artes*, Madrid, 15 May 1986, Official College of Architects of Madrid, 1987, p. 23.

03. The exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture*, curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, was held at New York's Museum of Modern Architecture (MoMA) from 23 June to 30 August 1988. It showcased, among others, the work of the architects Frank O. Gehry, Daniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Eisenman, Zaha M. Hadid, Coop Himmelblau and Bernard Tschumi. The term *deconstructivist*, inherited from philosophy, came into use in architectural criticism in the wake of the exhibition.

04. See LABARTA AIZPÚN, Carlos, "Revisitando a Schindler, comprendiendo a Gehry, Los Angeles 1921-1978", *RA. Revista de Arquitectura*, 14, 2012, pp. 71-80.

05. The Sea Ranch was designed by Charles Moore in partnership with architects Donlyn Lyndon, Richard Whitaker and William Turnbull. The latter also contributed to the design of Kresge College.

06. Belonging to the museum itself, a gift from the SFK Industries.

07. The beauty of the machine that inspired formal aesthetics at the beginnings of modernity is reflected in the perfection, purity, clarity and precision of a mass-produced mechanism. In contrast, to express the phenomenon of an emerging architecture that references Russian Constructivism and takes to its utmost limit the exaltation of the value of disjointed, fragmented, dislocated creation, he chooses the image of an anonymous shack.

08. JOHNSON, Philip, "Preface", in *Deconstructivist Architecture*, The Museum of Modern Art, Graphic Society Books, New York, 1988, p. 8.

09. In this respect, it recalls the exhibition curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock at MoMA in 1929 and the accompanying text *Modern architecture: romanticism and reintegration*, Payson&Clarke Ltd, New York, 1929, which, through the lens of historical criticism, shows how the most avant-garde contemporary forms are not a rootless phenomenon but rather the final phase in a long cycle of development. Likewise, it echoes the 1975 show put on at the museum, *The Architecture of the École de Beaux Arts*, that addressed its return.

10. JOHNSON, P., *op. cit.*, p.8.

11. We take the bold step of referring to this phase of Gehry's career as deconstructivist with all the caveats that the term imported from philosophy implies. After all, by the time the term was coined among architecture critics, Gehry's home, the icon marking his change in trajectory, had already been built 10 years. It is also worth mentioning in this regard my own personal experience of a brief conversation with the Canadian-Californian architect. In October 1991, he was invited to give a lecture on his recent work at the Department of Architecture (headed by Stanford Anderson) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I had the opportunity to speak to him and mentioned my interest in his work and the doctoral thesis that I was writing on deconstruction. The rebuff and anger that greeted the word *deconstruction* baffled me. Perhaps the echoes of the 1988 MoMA exhibition, in which he had gladly participated three years earlier, now offended his ear.

12. See MONEO, Rafael. "Paradigmas fin de siglo. Los noventa, entre la fragmentación y la compacidad", *Arquitectura Viva*, 1999, No 66, pp. 17-24. As Moneo explains: "The origins of fragmentation are uncertain. Some kinds of what we understand as a broken form appear in the work of artists

like Giulio Romano or later in architects like Fischer von Erlach in projects such as the Karlskirche, but for our purposes, the first clear evidence of fragmentation is found in Piranesi's drawings of the Campo Marzio. It has been emphasized repeatedly that what Piranesi sought was the potential of form liberation. Tafuri has written beautiful and illuminating pages on him and I wouldn't dare to challenge his words."

13. TAFURI, Manfredo, *La esfera y el laberinto, vanguardias y arquitectura, de Piranesi a los años setenta*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1980, p. 46.

14. Gehry began his career at the studio of Victor Gruen, working principally on large-scale residential and commercial projects. He opened his own studio, in association with Greg Walsh, in the late 1950s.

15. ANDREWS, Mason, "Steeves House", in *Frank Gehry, Buildings and Projects*, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p. 18.

16. It is the only service station that Wright built. Although ever since designing *Broadacre City*, or in his writings such as *When Democracy Builds* (1947), he foresaw the automobile-based culture and social model, it was not until 1958 that he created this service station, which is still in use, for a family for which he had designed a home in 1954. The plans were completed in 1958 and construction concluded in 1960, after the death of the modern master.

17. Wright's interest in the subject of the automobile and consumer society in that decade is also evident in the construction of the *Jaguar Showroom* for Max Hoffman in New York in 1954.

18. Moore is, alongside his contemporary Robert Venturi (1925-2018), the most outspoken of the North American critics of the legacy of the Modern Movement. While Venturi places special emphasis on recovering architecture's symbolic and communicative values, Moore focuses his interest on redefining the concept of place and its relationship with the project, initiating a strategy that would later be taken up and developed by Gehry.

19. See the concept coined by BANHAM, Reyner: "Fantasy can lord it over function in Southern California [...] No nonsense about integrated design, every part conceived in separated isolation and made the most of; the architecture of symbolic assemblage", mentioned in STERN, Robert, "Towards an architecture of symbolic assemblage", *Progressive Architecture*, 1975, No 4, pp. 72-77.

20. The debate about the relationship between the vernacular and the modern, and even between the local and the universal, has been raging since the beginning of modernity. In this regard, and in the context of the North American architecture that concerns us, it is essential to refer to RUSSO SPENA, R., *L'architettura americana cerca una identità: 1932-1948*, doctoral thesis, UPC, Departament de Composició Arquitectònica, 2015. Available at <<http://hdl.handle.net/2117/95812>>.

21. It is not a question of revealing the place, or of constructing it, as the masters of modernity bequeathed, but of achieving a balance with the surroundings.

22. In this sense, Ville Carré, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, France (1956-1958) created by the Finnish architect represents a clear example of Moore's design references. To expand on this relationship, see JOHNSON, Eugene J., *Charles Moore, Buildings and Projects 1949-1986*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986, p. 65.

23. Venturi's composition, as Vincent Scully reminds us, admits a historicist reading that links directly to *Low House* by McKim, Mead and White (1887) and *Middlefield House* by Sir Edwin Lutyens. See SCULLY, Vincent, "Robert Venturi's gentle architecture", in *The Architecture of Robert Venturi*, edited by Christopher Mead, University of New Mexico Press, 1989, pp. 8-10.

24. PORTOGHESI, Paolo, *Después de la arquitectura moderna*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1981, p. 121.

25. Similar parallel readings can be made between Moore's *House for a Blind Man* or Gehry's *Winton House*, Wayzata, Minnesota (1987).

26. In an attempt to give voice back to an architecture supposedly muted by modernity, Moore transcends all convention with his proposal for *Condominium*, Los Angeles (1975–1978) and raises the bar for scenography with geometric distortions and stylistic and semantic provocation. He explores the possibilities of a direct language, irreverently trivialising the Modern vocabulary.

27. JOHNSON, Eugene J., *Charles Moore, Buildings and Projects 1949–1986*, Rizzoli, New York, 1986, p. 55.

28. The first 10 volumes of this series, founded by architects Steven Holl and William Stout in 1978, featured the following sequence of authors and articles: 1. Steven Holl, *Bridges*, 1978; 2. Mark Mack, *10 Californian Houses*; 3. Lars Lerup, *Villa Prima*, Facie, 1979; 4. L. Dimitriu, *Stairwells*, 1979; 5. Steven Holl, *The Alphabetical City*, 1979; 6. Lebbeus Woods, *Einstein Tomb*, 1980; 7. Steven Holl, *Bridge of Houses*, 1981; 8. Zaha Hadid, *Planetary Architecture*, 1981; 9. Steven Holl, *Rural and Urban House Types*, 1983, and, in volume No 10, Alberto Sartoris, *Metafisica della Architettura*, 1984. The next issue was dedicated to Mark Mack, *Furniture*. Published by William Stout, Architectural Books, San Francisco, 1984.

29. GHIRARDO, Diane, "Introduction", in SARTORIS, Alberto, *Metafisica della Architettura*, Pamphlet Architecture, No 10, New York, 1984, p. 6.

30. See BOHIGAS, Oriol, "Sartoris: The First Classicist of the Avant-Garde", *Oppositions*, summer 1979, p. 17.

31. Entrepreneur Arnulfo Córdoba Fariña was a patron and friend of the Canary Islands painter and art critic Eduardo Westherdal (1902–1983), who was also managing editor of the journal *Gaceta de Arte*. It was this painter who invited Alberto Sartoris to visit the Canary Islands in 1950. Between 1952 and 1953, Sartoris designed two houses for Arnulfo Córdoba in the Canary Islands, in Santa Cruz and Tacoronte, respectively. The graphic and written material that comprised these projects is kept in dossier 0172.04.0053 of the Sartoris Archive held in

the *Archives de la construction moderne* at l'Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

32. Alberto Sartoris' projects for artists include the *Home studio of painter Jean Saladin* in Paris (1930), the *House of poet Henri Ferrare* in Geneva (1930), the *House of an architect* in Florence (1942) and, in the field that interests us, the *International artists' residence* in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife (1953–1955).

33. BAUDIN, Antoine, *Le monde d' Alberto Sartoris dans le miroir de ses archives*, Les archives de la construction moderne, Presses Polytechniques Universitaires Romandes, Lausanne, 2017, p. 176.

34. BAUDIN, A., *op.cit.*, p. 178.

35. SARTORIS, Alberto, "Metaphysical field of new architecture", in *Metafisica della Architettura*, Pamphlet Architecture, No 10, New York, 1984, p. 32.

36. SARTORIS, Alberto, "El futuro de la arquitectura canaria", *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, 1953, Nos 140–141, p. 45.

37. SARTORIS, A., "El futuro de...", *cit.*, p. 54.

38. SARTORIS, A., lecture given at the *Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid*, *cit.*, p.129.

Images

01. Anderton Court Shops, Beverly Hills, 1952, F. Lloyd Wright. Photography by the author.

02. Spring House, Nevada, 1860. Photography by Michael Heizer. In *Deconstructivist Architecture*, The Museum of Modern Art, Graphic Society Books, New York, 1988, p. 8.

03. Granero O' Neill, San Juan Capistrano, California, 1968, F. Gehry. In *Frank Gehry, Buildings and Projects*, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p. 41.

04. Casa Steeves, Brentwood, California, 1959, F. Gehry. In *Frank Gehry, Buildings and Projects*, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p. 19.

05. Lindholm Service Station, Cloquet, Minnesota 1958–1960. Photographer: Becker, Eugene Debs. (1910–1978), Minnesota Historical Society.

06. Anderton Court Shops, Beverly Hills, 1952, F. Lloyd Wright. Photography by the author.

07.

a. Psychiatric Institute, Yale University, New Haven, 1985, F. Gehry. Photography by the author.

b. Sea Ranch, Sonoma, California, 1965, C. Moore. Photography by the author.

c. Beach House, 1959, R. Venturi. In *SANMARTÍN, Antonio, Venturi, Rauch y Scott Brown. Obras y proyectos, 1959–1985*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1986.

08. Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1971, C. Moore. Photography by the author.

09. Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1971, C. Moore. Photography by the author.

10. Frances Howard Goldwyn Library, Hollywood, 1980, F. Gehry. Photography by the author.

11. Kresge College, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1971, C. Moore. Photography by the author.

12. Gemini Studios, Los Angeles, 1974, F. Gehry. In *Frank Gehry, Buildings and Projects*, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p. 88.

13. Familian House, Santa Monica, 1978, F. Gehry. In *Frank Gehry, Buildings and Projects*, Rizzoli, New York, 1985, p. 131.

14. Arnulfo Córdoba House, Tacoronte, Canarias, 1952, A. Sartoris. In BAUDIN, Antoine, *Le monde d' Alberto Sartoris dans le miroir de ses archives*, Presses Polytechniques Universitaires Romandes, Lausanne, 2017, p. 177.