Instituciones Evanescentes

Evanescent Institutions:

Political Implications of an Itinerant Architecture

Consideraciones Políticas sobre la Arquitectura Itinerante

Tesis Doctoral

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ABSTRACT

Misiones Pedagógicas, setting up the stage of El Teatro del Pueblo (People's Theater) in front of the Palacio de Riofrio, Segovia, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Alejandro Casona presenting the Teatro and Coro del Pueblo (People's Theater and Chorus), Monasterio de Guadalupe, Cáceres, 1935. Collection L. Hernández Iglesias

Built architecture is generally conceived to be either ephemeral or permanent. However, there are architectures that are temporal without being ephemeral and permanent without remaining in place. Street markets, circuses and traveling theaters, portable or mobile structures, Archigram's Ideas Circus and Instant City, Renzo Piano's IBM Traveling Pavilion, as well as the most recent examples of traveling architectures—including the Chanel Mobile Art by Zaha Hadid and the BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow—define a genealogy that challenges the famous Vitruvian virtues of *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* (durability, convenience, and beauty).¹

These structures, easily transportable and removable, open up new possibilities in understanding the relationship between architecture and land. Itinerant architectures and pop-up structures occupy public spaces without the need to follow the rules and regulations that generally apply to permanent constructions, and without the obligation to respond to the local socioeconomic and political conditions, establishing a sort of state of emergency under a friendly and festive appearance.

This thesis analyzes the political implications and the possibilities of itinerant architecture—in particular those structures that take part in the configuration of public space—and the role of architects, institutions, and media in the construction of contemporary transnational territories.

Itinerancy is here considered in relation to contemporary circulatory regimes associated to the global movement of people, ideas, goods, capital, and information. Through different case studies, this thesis investigates how architecture responds to, and it is articulated around, these circulatory processes and the new conditions of belonging that are their direct result. It unveils how the institutions under consideration seek for durable and profitable effects through the use of temporary mobile structures: architectures that seem to vanish with his departure and, yet, leave a legacy of permanent transformation in the social, political and built environment.

¹ Vitruvius Pollio, "The Departments of Architecture," *The Ten Books on Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), Book I, Chapter III, 16.

RESUMEN

Las arquitecturas construidas se debaten, generalmente, entre la permanencia y lo efímero. Sin embargo, hay arquitecturas que son temporales sin ser efímeras y permanentes, sin ocupar un único lugar. Generalmente asociadas con la práctica del nomadismo, las arquitecturas itinerantes definen una genealogía diferente en la que encontramos una relación fascinante entre duración y su interacción con el lugar, el tiempo y la memoria. Los mercados ambulantes, circos y teatros itinerantes, estructuras portátiles o móviles, los proyectos ideas Circus y Instant City de Archigram, las experiencias del arquitecto Renzo Piano en el UNESCO Laboratorio de Quartiere y el IBM Traveling Pavilion, así como los más recientes ejemplos de arquitecturas viajeras, entre los que se encuentran el Chanel Art Mobile de Zaha Hadid o el BMW Guggenheim Lab de los arquitectos Atelier Bow-Wow, desafían la relación que, tradicionalmente, las arquitecturas mantienen con el lugar, el tiempo y la memoria, con la *firmitas* de Vitruvio o la *soliditas* de Alberti.

Estas estructuras, fácilmente transportables y desmontables, permiten ocupar temporalmente y transformar los espacios públicos de nuestras ciudades. Nunca inscritas en las estructuras sociales, políticas y económicas de los contextos en los que aterrizan, las arquitecturas itinerantes se convierten, además, en objetos extraños a su entorno que no siguen las normas generalmente aplicables a las construcciones permanentes y que llegan a establecer una suerte de estado de excepción de apariencia amable y festiva. Su estudio, no sólo abre nuevas posibilidades en la relación entre la arquitectura y lugar, la arquitectura y el tiempo, sino también evidencia las implicaciones políticas y las posibilidades de estas construcciones ambulantes, en particular aquellas que sirven y representan a instituciones culturales y económicas.

Para ello, en esta Tesis se discutirá sobre los diferentes, e incluso opuestos, supuestos que se encuentran detrás del concepto de itinerancia, así como el papel de los arquitectos e instituciones en la construcción de territorios transnacionales, identidades corporativas y espacios urbanos patrocinados. A través de esta investigación, se demostrará como las instituciones, cuyo estudio es objeto de la Tesis Doctoral, buscan efectos duraderos y rentables mediante el empleo de estructuras arquitectónicas cuya materialidad se cuestiona a través de la movilidad y la temporalidad; estructuras viajeras que, si bien parecen desvanecerse con su partida, dejan como legado la transformación permanente de nuestro entorno físico, social, cultural, económico y político.

00.

Introduction

00. INTRODUCTION

00.01 Itinerant architectures, evanescent commitments: enclosure and materiality questioned through mobility and temporality

All architectures are temporal: they change over time, and are subject to continuous material transformations, circulatory processes, and shifting receptions and practices. And yet, some works seem less permanent than others. Installations, pavilions, and other interventions inscribed in the accelerated and inescapable dynamics of creation and destruction resonate with imaginaries and expectations of innovation and constant flux. Recalling the practices of the 1960s and 1970s, contemporary cultural institutions are drawn to—as Archigram wrote about their Instant City—“the loveliness of the idea” of an architecture “appearing out of nowhere, and after the ‘event’ stage, lifting up its skirts and vanishing.” Since 2008, major cultural institutions including the MoMA, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the Centre Pompidou have developed a multiplicity of projects for temporary and traveling architectures, such as the MoMA PS1 Young Architect’s Program (YAP), the BMW Guggenheim Lab, and the Centre Pompidou Mobile.

This thesis focuses on the temporal architecture of cultural institutions, its implications and possibilities, and its role in the transformation of public space. In particular, it inspects mobile and *itinerant* architectures and their manifestations at different scales.

In these institutions in flux and architectures in displacement, conventional associations between the architectural object and its context are

being transformed, and new forms of mediated materiality and identity emerge. The condition of itinerancy destabilizes the traditional relation between architecture and its site—*locus*—, generally conceived as a particular portion of land in a territory, defined by geometric boundaries, associated with a particular sociopolitical, cultural, economic and environmental conditions, and regulated by legal provisions.

In its movement, an architecture that is itinerant describes a constellation and multiplicity of sites as nodes in a dynamic network that is continuously being redefined and actualized. Inserted in and occupying multiple sites, sociopolitical and cultural spaces, scales, and media for which they might not have been designed, the structures studied in this thesis are subject of ongoing processes of dislocation and “disjuncture.”² The multiple assemblages and re-assemblages of the structures, the constant renegotiation of their position, and the relations this instability triggers—among them frictions and estrangements—challenge phenomenological ideas of community and place making. And yet, these itinerant architectures have the capacity to articulate new spaces of affections and “imagined communities.”³

The transformed relationship between architecture and the land it occupies puts pressure on the legal and physical processes of development, generally organized around systems of public and financial approval and real property.

This thesis aims to unveil the ways in which itinerant architectures involved in the construction of institutional spaces intervene and redefine the built environment. Through a series of case studies, it also proposes an expanded understanding of the canonical architectural expression of the building, as well as ideas of enclosure and spatial permanence.⁴ The architectures of the institutions that this thesis addresses are materialized in standing structures, but also in a temporary constellation of bodies, data, images, spaces, technologies, and mechanisms of social order, at multiple scales. These architectures move and, with them, put in motion goods, services, capitals, ideas and people through the territory. Moreover, these architectures function as a medium, facilitating the movement of the aforementioned constituents through particular aesthetics and technologies. In these larger entanglements between spaces, territories and individuals, architecture takes different forms, from networks connecting urban and rural areas, to territorial assemblages of physical institutional structures and its media spaces enabled by communication technologies.

The particularly performative character that these architectures display generates an apparent loss of a sense of monumentality, and even holds a subversive and anti-system potential. Itinerant architectures and pop-up structures land in and occupy public spaces without the need

2 The notion of “disjuncture” refers to the work of Arjun Appadurai in “Disjuncture and Difference,” *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

3 The expression “imaginary communities” was famously coined by Benedict Anderson in his work on modern nationalism. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

4 A larger research on this question and its spatial consequences has been included in the materials of the Oslo Architecture Triennale “After Belonging: A Triennale In Residence, On Residence and the Ways We Stay in Transit” curated by the author of this thesis jointly with Lluís Alexandre Casanovas, Ignacio G. Galán, Carlos Mínguez and Alejandra Navarrete. The research published as part of the Oslo Architecture Triennale has been influenced by the previous research projects developed by the author of this thesis, and by other projects authored by the members of the curatorial team. Similarly, the research also had an impact in the development of the introduction and conclusions of this thesis.

Misiones Pedagógicas, Alejandro Casona and the actors of the Teatro and Coro del Pueblo (People's Theater and The Chorus), among others Ernestina de la Loma, Gustavo Torner, Rosario Somolinos, Ángeles González and Natalia Utray, 1936. Collection L. Hernández Iglesias.

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion by Zaha Hadid, Hong Kong, February–April 2008. © Virgile Simon Bertrand/Zaha Hadid Architects.

to follow the rules and regulations that generally apply to permanent constructions, and without the obligation to respond to local socioeconomic and political conditions. The spatial conditions of temporariness and itinerancy that contemporary circulatory processes allow, have been, paradoxically, coincidental with growing inequalities, unequal concentrations of wealth, structural dispossession and homelessness, precarious labor and living conditions; conditions in which spatial permanence and its material and spatial implications are contingent on foreclosures, forced migration, short-term labor commitments, and conflicts all result from contemporary global neoliberal regimes and their uneven developments.

Temporary architecture echoes our dreams and uncertainties—and both are lasting. In fact, as architectural historian Beatriz Colomina, who has written extensively on pavilions and temporary architecture as a field of experimentation for the most radical designs in the history of modern architecture, has pointed out, “The temporary turns out to be permanent.”⁵ Seemingly impermanent structures—the materiality of which is questioned through temporality—leave a legacy of permanent transformation in the physical, social, economic and political environment, even after their apparent disappearance or departure. Restlessly circulating in the media, provoking experimentation, and showing a speculative ability to find sites of “opportunity,” these temporary and itinerant structures are tools for political propaganda and nation-building processes, and are entangled in urban transformations, processes of real estate speculation, and the logics of the art market, by all of which they achieve a permanent impact in the territory.⁶

5 Beatriz Colomina, “Unbreathed Air 1956,” *Grey Room* 15 (Spring 2004), 32. Previously published in “Friends of the Future: A Conversation with Peter Smithson,” *October* 94 (Fall 2000): 24. “Like all exhibitions, they live a life of say a week or four weeks in reality, then they go on and on forever. Like the Barcelona pavilion before it was reconstructed. The temporary turns out to be permanent.”

6 Previous versions of this text, and other texts included in this thesis, have been published in different magazines and journals, following the requirements of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM) to publish “progress reports.”

00.02 On the politics of space: events, institutions, and territories

Misiones Pedagógicas, José Val del Omar at the balcony of the City Hall expanding on a reproduction of Francisco Goya's painting *Los Fusilamientos del 3 de Mayo*, Pedraza, Segovia, 1933. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

The processes of globalization, in particular the global circulation of individuals, goods, information, and capital throughout the territory has historically had an impact in the forms in which architecture is conceived and designed. This thesis addresses these transformations through the study of *itinerant* architectures, and their manifestations at different scales. It focuses primarily on cases studies from 2008 onwards, a time characterized by increasing transnational transit, a global financial crisis, and worldwide unrest. Other projects from itinerant institutions of the twentieth century are also mobilized in this thesis, to provide a larger historical framework in the analysis of the implications of the contemporary projects.

In 2008, oil prices peaked, while stock markets around the world experienced the effects of the 2007 subprime mortgage meltdown that developed into a global financial crisis. Major financial institutions were affected, and a collapse of the financial system was, in part, prevented by the bailout of banks by national governments. These processes resulted in a global economic recession and a sovereign debt crisis in Europe that were particularly severe for large parts of the population, causing impoverishment, unemployment, evictions, and foreclosures, while triggering global unrest that had its peak in 2011.

That year, anti-government protests that spread in a series of Arab countries became known as the Arab Spring. Months later, the anti-aus-

terity movement in Spain and the Occupy Wall Street phenomenon in the United States grew into a global protest movement that spread to more than eighty countries.⁷ At the same time as these global citizen protests unfolded, two major cultural institutions—the Centre Pompidou and the Guggenheim Foundation—launched multiyear initiatives that are symptomatic of how institutions responded to the contemporary social climate, and their attempt to remain relevant and active players in contemporary cultural production: The Centre Pompidou Mobile and the BMW Guggenheim Lab.

The former, designed by Patrick Bouchain, was claimed to be the “first mobile museum in the world,” one which is “lightweight, removable and transportable, in the spirit of the circus or carnival” and that “can go anywhere in France to the wider public.”⁸ As the president of the Centre Pompidou, Alain Seban, stated during the opening of this mobile cultural institution, “the works of the Centre Pompidou belong to the Nation and we should bring them to all French citizens.”⁹

Despite the fact that the BMW Guggenheim Lab opened in August 2012, before the Centre Pompidou Mobile, the French institution was not mistaken when announcing their project as “first mobile museum in the world.” The BMW Guggenheim Lab, designed by Atelier Bow-Wow, was never presented as a museum, but a “combination of think tank, public forum, and community center.”¹⁰ Both the architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab and the Centre Pompidou Mobile responded to imaginaries of technology and cultural democratization. Its associated spatial manifestations could be claimed to mark the emergence of a new paradigm for cultural institutions.

Whereas museums in previous decades brought a new sense of relevance to architecture concerning its role in intervening in urban space to produce financial and cultural growth, in what has been called the “Bilbao Effect,” with years of budget cuts and declining revenues determined by the crisis the possibilities of constructing buildings that are able to exert a transformative effect on our environment diminished. In fact, the Guggenheim Foundation’s attempts to achieve a similar success to that of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Vilnius, Salzburg, Guadalajara or Taichung were disrupted by the global economic downturn.

The difficulty in making long-term commitments opened the possibilities for new models of financing, interaction, and visibility. In order to remain relevant, museums, galleries, institutes, and foundations developed new formulas and devices appropriate for contemporary territories, technologies, sociopolitical and economic challenges. Thus, the development of public cultural projects depended to a great extent on partnership and/or private sponsorship and on partial commitments and temporary structures that, however, are able to trigger urban transformation, achieve

7 In 2011, citizen multitudes took the streets in different scenarios around the world—from the Arab Spring to the protests in Madrid, Athens, Santiago de Chile, New York, Moscow, among others—to protest against their current models of electoral (and non-electoral) forms of political representation and participation, with claims such as “They don’t represent us” or “We are the 99%.”

8 Centre Pompidou website. Accessed September 22, 2012: <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Communication.nsf/0/46FD004752A36AE9C1257918002D3C01?OpenDocument&L=1&sessionM=8.3&L=1>

9 Website of the Consulate General of France in Atlanta. Accessed September 22, 2012: <http://www.consulfrance-atlanta.org/spip.php?article3256>

10 Guggenheim. Press Release August 2, 2011: “BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens Aug 3 in New York, Launching Six-Year Worldwide Tour.” Accessed August 2, 2011. <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/4200-bglaug2>.

international media impact and attract new audiences and consumers.

The construction of instant, removable and transportable urban environments had been embraced throughout the twentieth century by public and private cultural institutions as a mechanism to enhance the metropolitan cultural condition to disconnected areas. The Misiones Pedagógicas from the Spanish Second Republic, the Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco (Spain), or the Laboratorio di Quartiere UNESCO in Otranto (Italy)—projects which are analyzed in this thesis—respond to the interest in injecting urban dynamics in those culturally isolated areas through mobile facilities that carry information services, education and entertainment, as well as steering diverse political ideologies. Similarly, citizen participation projects under the premise of cultural democratization, linked to temporary architectures and initiated by major global museums and corporations in the first decades of the twenty-first century, have become a formula to intervene in the city through lower investments and non-permanent commitments.

In these projects, temporary architectures participated in the transformation of public space in less visible but equally influential forms than permanent urban development, by encouraging new social practices and behaviors beyond the construction of buildings and standing structures. As such, in contrast to the Guggenheim Bilbao, the mission of the BMW Guggenheim Lab was not to transform the space—the city—but rather to transform the subject. The BMW Guggenheim Lab was envisioned as an institution providing a locus for exchange and participation; a center for citizen’s empowerment “giving back a sense of autonomy of spatial practice to citizens;” a sort of street parliament that carries with it the virtues of the political body and involves the population in the urban debate.¹¹

In the case of the Centre Pompidou, the institution has developed different initiatives for its territorial expansion, including opening provincial branches such as the Centre Pompidou-Metz in 2010, and launching the mobile gallery of the Centre Pompidou Mobile from 2011-2013. Yet, in 2013 and despite the signs of recovery in global economy, the Centre Pompidou Mobile was cancelled reportedly due to soaring costs. Similarly, the BMW Guggenheim Lab, which was expected to visit nine cities over the course of six years, finished its tour prematurely in 2013, when BMW decided to withdraw its support. The museum compiled the findings of the three years of operations in a 2014 exhibition at the Guggenheim New York.

Temporary architectures, however, continued to be the preferred choice for the development of these institutions. After cancelling the traveling circus of the Centre Pompidou Mobile, the Centre Pompidou planned to create a network of “temporary centers” overseas “to present exhibitions, made up of several dozen works, for periods of three to four years, providing a panorama of the twentieth century.”¹² As a result, a

Museo Circulante, a group of children takes notes in front of a copy by Ramón Gaya of Diego Velázquez's *La Infanta Margarita*, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Centre Pompidou Mobile by Patrick Bouchain, interior, Aubagne, France, June-September 2013. © Emanuele Piccardo/Centre Pompidou.

Music Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Frank O. Gehry, Kensington Gardens, London, 2008. © Iwan Baan.

temporary exhibition opened in the eastern city of Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, from October 26 to November 27, 2013, and the pop-up museum The Cube (El Cubo) opened in Málaga, Spain in 2015. As of this thesis, attempts to further replicate the formula in cities in France and other countries failed to materialize.

In addition to the BMW Guggenheim Lab and the Pompidou Mobile, the first decades of the twenty-first century witnessed the proliferation of traveling architectures. In many cases, they were advertising structures under the guise of highly technological buildings. Companies like Puma, UNIQLO, and H&M made use of roving pavilions for their global promotional campaigns.¹³ One of the cases that achieved larger media impact was Chanel Mobile Art, an initiative launched in 2008 by Chanel. The pavilion, designed by Zaha Hadid, travelled to Hong Kong, Tokyo, and New York, reaching its final destination at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in 2011, where a replica of the pavilion is now permanently installed.

The Serpentine Gallery Pavilion presents a particular case of itinerant architecture, one in which the destination of the building after its summer in Kensington Gardens depends on the wishes of its collector. The commission has developed a particular mode of architecture futures market through a contract between the Serpentine Gallery and a buyer, in which the concept of experimentation is subject to the final owner’s capacity to speculate on the future value of the architectural asset, based in turn on its capacity to circulate. After the show in Kensington Gardens ends, the structures are dismantled, transported, and relocated in private collections and touristic enclaves, from selective beach clubs to coveted vineyards, where the mechanisms of capital accumulation and contemporary architecture are together forged, and where the relationship between financial capital, cultural capital, and real estate speculation is fully revealed.¹⁴

Other projects and episodes of twentieth century history are also mobilized in this thesis, such as works of Archigram and Renzo Piano, as they shed light into the lineages and larger discussions from which the contemporary projects have emerged. Between 1979 and 1982, the Italian architect Renzo Piano developed a series of projects that reflect the aspirations of the previous generation of architects and, simultaneously, represent two main lineages of itinerant public architecture after the 1960s: the UNESCO Urban Travelling Reconstruction Workshop in Otranto (Italy, 1979) and the IBM traveling pavilion (twenty European cities, 1982-1986). This thesis analyzes how these two projects constitute a turning point between two unrealized projects by Archigram—Ideas Circus (1968) and Instant City (1969)—and the mobile architectures of the following decades, including those used by companies for their promotional global campaigns such as the aforementioned Chanel Mobile Art, and by cultural institutions, as the Centre Pompidou Mobile, the BMW Guggenheim Lab, and even the demountable Serpentine Gallery Pavilions.

Yet, this thesis focuses not only on itinerant architecture, but on itin-

11 Maria Nicanor, curator of the project, on the Lab: “As a “box of ideas,” the Lab encourages participants not only to contribute to the conversation about urban space, but also to acquire the skills to live in cities comfortably and responsibly.” BMW Guggenheim Lab website. Accessed September 21, 2012: http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/multimedia/media/112?library_id=1 And “Yoshiharu Tsukamoto,” BMW Guggenheim Lab website. Accessed July 22, 2015: http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/where-is-the-lab/new-york-lab/new-york-lab-events/event/yoshiharu-tsukamoto?instance_id=488.

12 Gareth Harris, “Pompidou camps out in Dhahran. Paris museum abandons mobile museum project at home and plans to launch instead a temporary exhibition in Saudi Arabia,” *The Art Newspaper*, Issue 248, July-August 2013. Accessed March 3, 2016: <http://old.theartnewspaper.com/articles/Pompidou-camps-out-in-Dhahran/30074>

13 Puma City (Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano, Lot-Ek, various locations, 2008), UNIQLO Container Stores (Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano, Lot-Ek, New York, 2006).

14 These reflections, together with a larger account of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions’ history has been previously published by the author. See Marina Otero Verzier, “Fair Trade: Architecture and Coffee at the Serpentine Pavilions,” in *The Avery Review* 9 (2015). Accessed October 18, 2016. <http://www.averyreview.com/issues/9/architecture-and-coffee>.

Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, adult dressmaking class. *Revista Agricultura* (insert on "Colonización"), 1948.

erant *cultural institutions* operating in a global scale, borrowing Frederick Cooper's formulation on empires as "a particular kind of spatial system, boundary-crossing and also bounded."¹⁵ In tracing the movement of architectures commissioned by major global institutions, it is possible to identify the associated global commercial, financial, and touristic networks after which architecture moves, and to understand contemporary architecture not only at the scale of conventional buildings, but as something with multi-scalar cultural, material and territorial implications. Paradoxically, even if traversing diverse spaces, the trajectories that these structures describe tend to construct a networked homogenous territory, where practices of architecture are confined to enclosures of an unstable and yet material condition that erect an institutional space: an institutional space constructed by circulating boundaries.

This thesis addresses the *political implications of itinerant architectures*. Here, the term *political* refers to certain political ideologies, their values mobilized in the design of particular traveling architectures: the Misiones Pedagógicas were a fundamental project for the Second Spanish Republic; the Cátedra Ambulante was a vehicle to spread Francisco Franco's regime; the Laboratorio di Quartiere in Otranto was conceived, during the Italian Republic, as a strategy for national reconstruction after World War II; the Centre Pompidou Mobile claimed to represent the values of the French Republic; and the BMW Guggenheim Lab spanned over three countries and the same number of democratic systems.

In addition, the political is understood as the exercise of power over space. This thesis attempts to analyze the relationship between space, power and politics in the urban environment, through the itinerant architectures, their motivations and reactions generated in the spaces where they "land;" and how power is produced and materialized in the physical environment. Here, architecture is an active participant in the structuring and organization of social relationships, as well as in education, knowledge production, discussion, entertainment, exhibition, consumption, and is not merely a reflection of the institutions it serves. Each chapter of this thesis focuses on one particular aspect, and attempts to show how power is materialized through physical temporary structures, technologies and aesthetic regimes.

Furthermore, the title *Evanescent Institutions* (Instituciones Evanescentes) seeks to respond to a larger and probably more polemical question: that of the future of cultural institutions, in a moment when their relevance is contested by societal demands for more horizontal structures and power/knowledge relations, and subjugated to political and economic pressures; as well as the role of architecture in their representation and eventual act of disappearance.

15 Frederick Cooper, "What is the concept of globalization good for? An African historian's perspective," *African Affairs* 100 (2001), 201.

00.03 Methodology

Police vans at the entrance of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, Pfefferberg complex, Berlin, June 2012. © Marina Otero.

A major part of this thesis focuses on contemporary case studies, such as the BMW Guggenheim Lab, of which, beyond general press coverage, there is still no in-depth analysis in specialized journals or books. Thus, the research phase for this thesis required challenging the idea of the archive and other conventional methodologies associated to historiography, and included the construction of a body of primary sources through field trips, interviews, photographs, testimonials, and other evidence. In the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab and the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions, the research methodology was similar to that of investigative journalism, and resulted in original pieces of information, which were previously published by the author in different books and journals during the development of the thesis. For example, this thesis demonstrates the relationship between the BMW Guggenheim Lab, its main sponsor BMW, and the security forces of Berlin police, and how their interaction shaped the way in which the project was developed in the German capital. In the case of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions, the research included the unveiling of the whereabouts of many of the architectures that were considered dismantled, the uncovering of the second lives of several pavilions that had not previously been disclosed, as well as an exploration of the relationship between the pavilions and processes of real estate speculation.

Ideas Circus by Archigram (project authors: Peter Cook and Dennis Crompton), typical tour, 1968. Ink and type on tracing paper. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

Ideas Circus by Archigram (project authors: Peter Cook and Dennis Crompton), principal components, 1968. Ink on tracing paper. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

Ideas Circus by Archigram (project authors: Peter Cook and Dennis Crompton), single lorry version—plan in use, 1968. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

These contemporary projects are analyzed in relation to a broader historical context and previous itinerant architectures that are mobilized as references by its architects, curators, and commissioners, and which despite maintaining strong connections and apparently similar missions, respond to different political contexts. This strategy allows inspection on how mobility serves diverse, even contradictory, aspirations as well as the consequences of these experiences in the transformation of the institutions and also in environments in which they are developed. The Misiones Pedagógicas and Lorca’s Barraca were a source of inspiration for the curators of the BMW Guggenheim Lab; Renzo Piano’s projects were a continuous reference for Patrick Bouchain, architect of the Centre Pompidou Mobile, while the Centre Pompidou director, Alain Seban, situates the project as part of a genealogy formed by Paxton’s Crystal Palace, Archigram, leisure architecture and utopian architecture.

Each chapter responds to the motivations and effects of these itinerant cultural institutions and their architectures. The thesis analyzes project’s mission statements alongside the political contexts in which they are developed, the territories and populations that are targeted, the bodies that are at stake, the material conditions of these evanescent architectures, their aesthetic regimes, the borders that construct the institutional space, and the effects of these architectures in the spaces where they land.

Chapter 1, “Ambulant Festive Spaces,” discusses itinerant architecture altering the order of everyday life in cities. The Centre Pompidou Mobile exemplifies the paradigm of traveling architecture: the nomadic circus tent. The case of the Pompidou Mobile allows discussion on the processes that led to the gradual formalization of the spaces of the fairground into interior spaces, such as those of the modern museum, and the interest of contemporary museums to develop outside the institutional space by appropriating the aesthetics of the fairground culture, and constructing new conditions of viewership that are here analyzed. This chapter sets the tone and unveils how the apparently unassuming aesthetics of temporary architecture is inevitably associated with particular sociopolitical and economic forces and their associated forms of control and power. Chapter 2, “Roving Pedagogical Missions,” analyzes a series of projects for the injection of metropolitan dynamics in culturally isolated areas through mobile facilities bringing information, education, and entertainment services. This thesis demonstrates how traveling architecture is, in these examples, a means through which to exert control over the territory and promote the values of different, sometimes even opposing, regimes and their associated political ideologies. Chapter 3, “Portable Agoras,” looks at the organization of street parliaments carrying with them the virtues of the political body, that enable local communities to participate on a debate on social, cultural issues, and policies. Chapter 4, “Global Corporate Territories,” unpacks the relationship between mobile architectures and the formation of global institutional identities and branded public spaces.

The chapters describe a gradual formalization of the architecture of itinerant institutions. In the first examples, itinerant architecture is a network of circulating materials, bodies, and ideas. The space is transformed through technical and aesthetic devices. From the trucks and caravans of the Misiones Pedagógicas, Cátedra Ambulante, or the Ideas Circus by Archigram, to the project by Piano in Otranto, both vehicle and building, and the IBM and Guggenheim Foundation projects of buildings that are designed to be transported from location to location—itinerant

architecture gradually solidifies, acquiring a character of building, and serving the interests of global corporations and institutions. And yet, the effects of these mobile buildings and their circulating institutional borders can be found beyond the architectural object, for instance in the processes of real estate speculation that are triggered or in the control mechanisms of space—including the police barriers and metal detectors through which visitors have to enter—as well as other material structures that construct these itinerant architectures as well as their associated architectural objects.

This thesis also describes the progressive globalization and commodification of architectural practices, showing how even in an era of global communications and connectivity the imaginaries around traveling architectures detached from the ground continue to be mobilized in projects of “democratization” of education and culture, which nevertheless, in many cases, respond to the aim of reaching new audiences and new consumers.

01.

Ambulant Festive Spaces

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01. AMBULANT FESTIVE SPACES

01.01 Mobile architecture: challenging Vitruvius' *firmitas* and Alberti's *soliditas*

Misiones Pedagógicas, the truck of the Museo Circulante transporting the paintings from Riaza in Segovia, to Cifuentes in Guadalajara, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

I.

Built architecture has been generally linked to the Vitruvian virtues of architecture, *firmitas*, *utilitas*, *venustas* (durability, convenience, and beauty).¹⁶ In most cases, buildings were conceived either to be permanent or ephemeral. In fact, as Spanish professor and editor Luis Fernández-Galiano suggests, “all architectures are ephemeral, but some works are more ephemeral than others;” “Both the Vitruvian *firmitas* and the *soliditas* of Alberti”, Galiano continues, “are rhetorical expressions of a nostalgia for permanence that is narratively in the dream of an ageless architecture, whose form and matter impassively resist the abrasions of time.”¹⁷

This thesis discusses architectures that are temporal without being ephemeral and permanent without remaining in place. Traveling architectures, including circuses, theaters and ambulant markets, define a genealogy in which the notion of durability acquires different connotations, and challenges the traditional relationship between architecture and land, defying the Vitruvian *firmitas* and Alberti's *soliditas*.

And yet, mobility is not only a contemporary exploration for the discipline of architecture. As recalled by architecture historian John Harwood

¹⁶ Vitruvius Pollio, “The Departments of Architecture,” *The Ten Books on Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), Book I, Chapter III, 16.

¹⁷ Luis Fernández-Galiano, “Espacios Efimeros,” *Arquitectura Viva*, 141 (March, 2011), 3.

in his essay “Architectures of Position,” in the nineteenth century John Ruskin drastically divided architecture in two: the “Architecture of Protection,” or buildings intended “to hold and protect something,” and the “Architecture of Position,” constructions whose function was to “place or carry something,” such as bridges, aqueducts, road architecture, light-houses, chimneys and staircases.¹⁸

Ruskin’s drastic distinction soon became problematic due to the industrialization processes and the advancements in technologies of transportation and warfare that placed movement at the core of architecture. As a result of these processes and the increasing militarization of urban environment, the architecture of “protection,” understood as *shelter* and enclosure, would necessarily depend upon, and result from, movement. As such, the representation of an “Architecture of Protection” would no longer be that of a fortress, but a mobile army whose idea of security and protection was based in attack instead of defense, an architecture that would not only facilitate movement, but that could actually move.¹⁹ Circulatory regimes, as well as infrastructural and logistical systems that facilitate movement of materials, people, and weapons would define a new architecture.

The development and perverseness of this militarized environment was evident with the First and Second World Wars, a period of crises, genocides, and human displacements triggered by armed conflicts, which resulted in a major global migration flux. Inevitably, the discipline of architecture reflected upon its responsibility and response to forced and voluntary movements. In the decades following the Second World War, human mobility, and its ultimate rootless lifestyle represented in nomadism, became a critical project, rather than a situation of *force majeure*. In contrast with the previous half of the century, defined by the rise of nationalisms and their role in the World armed conflicts, the discipline of architecture engaged with forms of resistance and liberation from colonial and imperialist forms of power. Prioritizing a cosmopolitan understanding of the territory, architectural production was permeated by projects for a society in flux, free from strong ties to a particular ground, and the definition of new forms of belonging. Among them, Constant Nieuwenhuys’s *New Babylon* (1956-1974) and Kisho Kurokawa’s *Capsule Declaration* (1969) are particularly relevant for the context of this thesis, for their capacity to propose the dissolution of existing structures and institutions and give rise to new ones. *New Babylon* subverts the institutions of work, family, and civic responsibility in the name of a post-revolutionary individual, the *Homo Ludens*. “It is obvious,” Constant claimed, “that a person free to use his time for the whole of his life, free to go where he wants, when he wants, cannot make the greatest use of his freedom in a world ruled by the clock and

18 John Harwood, “Architectures of Position,” *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories, of the Ways We Stay in Transit*, Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio G. Galán, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, Marina Otero Verzier eds. (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016), 226. In reference to John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, abr. and ed. J.G. Links (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), 40.

19 John Harwood, “Architectures of Position,” 227. In reference to Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Annals of a Fortress* [1872], trans. Benjamin Bucknall (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1876), 357, 379-80. [Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc detailed in *Annals of a Fortress* (1872) how the advent of modern artillery and automatic weapons had rendered the fortress hopelessly obsolete: “It will be objected that a vessel or a horseman can move about, but that a fortress is immovable, and that consequently passive force cannot here be replaced by active force or agility. This is a mistake. Though a fortress cannot be moved, the defensive system of a district can and ought to be studied, in view of various contingencies. In future warfare the plan of temporary fortification ought to play a principal part and may be made to do so. In other terms, an army ought to be able to fortify itself everywhere, and take advantage of every position.”]

Capsule Exhibition at Osaka Expo’ 70. Image published in Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” *Metabolism in Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 76.

Kago, a traditional capsule for carrying people around. Image published in Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” *Metabolism in Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 78.

the imperative of a fixed abode. As a way of life *Homo Ludens* will demand, firstly, that he responds to his need for playing, for adventure, for mobility, as well as all the conditions that facilitate the free creation of his own life.”²⁰ In the case of Kurokawa’s *Capsule Declaration*, starting from the concept of capsule, he delineates an argument through which new notions of human, institutions, society, and system of knowledge are deployed. Kurokawa takes an “iconoclastic position in order to penetrate the existing order, break down architecture into units for individuals and then seek to establish a new order” which, due its capacity to relate to other architectural projects and theories, and its radical vision of society and architecture, will be further analyzed.²¹

II.

In March 1969, the Japanese SD (Space Design) magazine published the article *Capsule Declaration* by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, one of the founders of the Metabolist Movement. Eight years later, the article was reprinted and included in Kurokawa’s book *Metabolism in Architecture*.²²

Capsule Declaration is structured in eight articles for a radical transformation of society and architecture:²³ Article 1: “The capsule is cyborg architecture.” Article 2: “A capsule is a dwelling of *Homo movens*.” Article 3: “The capsule suggests a diversified society.” Article 4: “The capsule is intended to institute an entirely new family system centered on individuals.” Article 5: “The true home for capsule dwellers, where they feel they belong and where they satisfy their inner, spiritual requirements, will be the metapolis.” Article 6: “The capsule is a feedback mechanism in an information-oriented, a technetronic, society.” Article 7: “The capsule is the ultimate form of a prefabricated building—an industrialized building.” Article 8: “The capsule mentality is opposed to uniformity and systematic thinking.”

The text was illustrated with images from the “Capsule Exhibition” at Osaka Expo’70, where Japan consolidated its international position and distinct vision of modernity, indicating the turning point in the transition—after the postwar redevelopment and a period of rapid economic growth—to a consumer and information society.²⁴ Expo’70 would also represent the culmination of the golden decade of the Metabolist movement, started in 1960 with the World Design Conference in Tokyo and the publication of the group’s manifesto: *Metabolism 1960: Proposals for a New Urbanism*.

In Kurokawa’s text, the idea of *capsule*, even if in dialogue with similar propositions by Buckminster Fuller, Archigram and Raimund Abraham, among others, acquires new dimensions.²⁵ The capsule is

20 See Mark Wigley / Constant, *Constant’s New Babylon: The Hyper-architecture of Desire* (Rotterdam: Witte de With CICA / 010 Publishers, 1998). And Constant Nieuwenhuys, *New Babylon — A Nomadic City*, exhibition catalogue (The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1974).

21 Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” *Space Design* magazine, Tokyo, 1969: 75.

22 In 1977, Kisho Kurokawa publishes the book *Metabolism in Architecture* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), with an introduction by Charles Jencks. This thesis analyzes the *Capsule Declaration* as it is published in that book.

23 Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” 75

24 Expo ’70 World’s Fair was held in Osaka, Japan, between March 15 and September 13, 1970. It was the first World’s Fair held in Japan and its theme was “Progress and Harmony for Mankind.”

25 We can mention as examples the following projects: *Capsule Homes* by Warren Chalk, Archigram (1964), and *Living Capsule* by Raimund Abraham (1966). In addition, Fuller defined, in a lecture given in Mexico (1963), the word capsule as “a little space house”.

William Anders, *Earthrise*, 1968.

a “cyborg architecture,” a symbiotic structure of mutually dependent elements—man, machine and space.²⁶ As such, it is “a device which has become a living space itself,” and without which humans cannot hope to live.²⁷ Reflecting the sensibility that pervaded the 1960s—and rooted in the impact caused by the publication of the first images of Earth taken from outer space, as well as the haunting memories of the Hiroshima Bomb—the environment is portrayed as a home that neither offers comfort nor haven, a body to be preserved and, yet, that could become a threat to human survival.²⁸ This hostile environment, where only technology would ensure human survival, maximizing bodies and forging their identity, is the habitat of the *Homo movens*.²⁹

Comprehensively described in the book with the same name, the *Homo movens* conveys “a new image of man and new community amidst the flux of contemporary society.”³⁰ By mobilizing statistical data on the increasing population mobility in the United States and in Japan, referring to the proliferation of mobile houses in the United States—similarly discussed by British architectural historian and critic Reyner Banham in his article “The Home is Not a House” first published in 1965—and comparing the car to a “compact room” and an “extension of dwelling,” Kurokawa foresees a declining interest in land ownership in favor of free movement.³¹ In that scenario, the *capsule* would allow the “emancipation of a building from land” and sign “the advent of an age of moving architecture,” a radical step forward in Western architecture’s developments in the course of the twentieth century, following Le Corbusier’s pilotis and the urban developments proposed by Team 10, to ideas of freedom and mobility presented in, among others, Archigram’s *Walking City* and Yona Friedman’s *Mobile Architecture*. Kurokawa’s vision for a dynamic condition of the city and a future characterized by a more fluid conception of labor and a predominance of leisure, finds its roots in the Situationist Movement. *Homo movens* follows the *Homo ludens*.³² In addition, for Kurokawa the emancipation of building from land would also allow the liberation of man from Earth, thereby engaging with the technological challenges of the space-race era, an approach also found in the work of architects such as Buckminster R. Fuller.³³

These conditions of mobility and emancipation give rise to a “diversified society” where traditional social institutions, starting with the family, are questioned. Rather than a hierarchical structure based on the relations among family members, what would instead construct households would be the aggregation and “docking of capsules.”³⁴ In this responsive environment, created by individual choices and their variation upon time and space, the architecture of the city is designed by spatial-temporal aggregations and interrelations of capsules, while

Concrete Capsule House by Kisho Kurokawa, concrete capsules (3m x 3m x 6m) transported by trailer trucks, 1975. Image published in *Metabolism in Architecture*, 117.

Capsule House in the Theme Pavilion Osaka Expo '70 by Kisho Kurokawa, model of capsule, 1970. Image published in *Metabolism in Architecture*, 99.

Takara Beautillion Osaka Expo '70, by Kisho Kurokawa, interior of capsule in the pavilion, 1970. Image published in *Metabolism in Architecture*, 102.

buildings are states “of spatial-temporal docking of more than one capsule.”³⁵ This “docking of capsules” constructs a “metapolis,” which is a social space as well as a physical and “spiritual domain,” where the individual finds a comfortable *locus* traditionally represented by the family home.³⁶ For Kurokawa, therefore, architecture is not longer an instrument of control, but “a means whereby men control technology and machinery.”³⁷

In addition to the family, other social, political and economic institutions are challenged. The plaza—as a symbol of religious, political, and economical power—the park, the hall, and the market have no space in the metapolis. Universities are transformed into socially open and multi-purpose forums. Hotels, terminals and department stores are elevated to havens, places of choice, information, education and socialization where, according to Kurokawa, temporal communities are created through a spontaneous aggregation of capsules.³⁸ Planning and zoning are replaced by emergency and complexity.

Kurokawa’s declaration also announces the shift from the industrial society to a “information-oriented, technetronic society,” from capital to information, an argument borrowed from Zbigniew Brzezinski, who served from 1977 to 1981 as United States National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, and whose words are particularly revealing and relevant for the contemporary debate on state-sponsored surveillance:

The technetronic era involves the gradual appearance of a more controlled society. Such a society would be dominated by elite, unrestrained by traditional values. Soon it will be possible to assert almost continuous surveillance over every citizen and maintain up-to-date complete files containing even the most personal information about the citizen. These files will be subject to instantaneous retrieval by the authorities.³⁹

In this future of information excess, the capsule acts as a “feedback mechanism,” a device that allows individuals to transmit, receive and feedback data, acting as a sort of anti-spam device, or a place where to retreat and be “sheltered from information.”⁴⁰ As McLuhan points out, “there is no possible protection from technology except by technology.”⁴¹ In the “diversified society,” therefore, information is the most valuable resource, and hierarchies would be established based on the quality and quantity of knowledge that an individual possesses and shares.

Kurokawa’s *Capsule Declaration*, despite its radical character, heralds questions at stake in this thesis, namely the role of mobile, itinerant architectures in the definition of new institutional spaces that transcend building, and the entanglement between information and power. The projects analyzed here—assemblages of circulating bodies, information, goods and borders—are conceived to facilitate the access of targeted populations to culture and information, which is simultaneously what

26 Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” 75

27 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

28 In 1968, during the Apollo 8 mission, the astronaut William Anders took a photograph of the Earth. This photograph is called Earthrise.

29 Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” 76

30 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 76, 77.

Reyner Banham, “A Home is Not a House”, *Art in America*, 2 (April 1965).

32 *Homo ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, is the title of a book written by Johan Huizinga in 1938. This book became one of the theoretical bases used by Constant.

33 Buckminster R. Fuller, “World Design Initiative. Mexico Lecture / 1963,” *Your Private Sky: The Art of Design Science* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 1999), 11.

34 Kisho Kurokawa, “Capsule Declaration,” 79, 80

35 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 82. See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America’s Role in the Technetronic Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1970).

40 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

41 Marshall McLuhan, “The Invisible Environment: The Future of an Erosion,” *Perspecta*, Vol. 11 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1967), 166.

legitimizes their existence, as well as the reason behind their enmeshment with different political struggles. Kurokawa’s evanescent institutions serve as a background from which to discuss the implications of these itinerant architectures.

Nakagin Capsule Tower by Kisho Kurokawa, isometric plan of capsule, 1972. Image published in *Metabolism in Architecture*, 109.

III.

Kurokawa’s *Capsule Declaration* illuminates how the simultaneous occurrence of the phenomena of demographic growth and social unrest brought back the discipline of architecture as a relevant tool to manage urban population at a new scale, available through mass media, telecommunications and information technology, in a scale that was not territorial but, rather, planetary.⁴² In this context, the city becomes not only an artifact that has to guarantee movements and interchanges, but an image that conveys the aspirations of the time.

In the 1960s, American cities, including New York, were experiencing high rates of crime and the social unrest, which triggered other radical architectural responses, some of them which—as Colin Rowe suggested in his book *Collage City*—might be seen as means of permitting the “enjoyment of utopian poetics without being obliged to suffer the embarrassment of utopian politics.”⁴³ An example of which is The Comprehensive City by young British architects Michael Mitchell and Alan Boutwell, a project for a gigantic linear city that spanned straight across North America connecting New York and San Francisco, which was published in *Domus* 470 in 1969, the same year of *Capsule Declaration*.⁴⁴

In The Comprehensive City project we once again encounter detachment from land as an architectural strategy to deal with social and urban problems. Yet, in this case, the general strategy would materialize in the construction of a second, artificial land, free from any inherited conflict. Its aim to give a comprehensive response to the whole environment by the development of communication networks and integral solutions could be related to the work of Buckminster Fuller or Constantine Doxiadis.⁴⁵ Mitchell and Boutwell would also develop strategies, along the lines of the work by Kurokawa, and also Archigram, Yona Friedman or the Metabolists, by proposing “mobile, expandable dwelling units, (...) which are owned or hired by the inhabitants, and parked in rented space within the multistory structure, to be towed away like caravans when required.”⁴⁶

Temporary, itinerant mobile architectures that, responding to an increasingly mobile world, refused any understanding of architecture as a fixed stage of human events, echoed both the ambitions and uncertainties

Nakagin Capsule Tower by Kisho Kurokawa, exterior and interior, 1972. Image published in *Metabolism in Architecture*, 109.

of the discipline, and recurred in architectural practices throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁷ While envisioning a notion of place beyond geographic limits and contextual references, these structures have the potential to alter the everyday urban order or, in the words of Henri Lefebvre, “the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption.” This subversive potential has been appropriated by the contemporary institutions and public-private partnerships that drive the cultural and spatial production of cities.

42 My reading of the role of architecture as tool to manage environments and populations, and its relation to the emergence of a global governing apparatus, is indebted by the work of Felicity D. Scott, in particular her book *Outlaw Territories. Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counter-Insurgency* (New York: Zone Books, 2016), which investigates architecture’s relation to human unsettlement and territorial insecurity.

43 Colin Rowe, *Collage City* (Boston: MIT Press, 1984), 149.

44 Alan Boutwell and Michael Mitchell, “Planning on a National Scale,” *Domus* 470 (January 1969): 6. Before being published in *Domus*, the German version of the Comprehensive City project —The Continuous City for the Ruhrgebiet— was released in 1965, in the book *Neue Tendenzen der Architektur, Katalog der Ausstellung* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1965) with texts by Lucius Burckhardt, Constant, Yona Friedman, Günter Günschel, Walter Jonas, Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz, A. Luther.

45 The delineation of the two different genealogies of projects is based on Jonathan Crary’s analysis of the urban theory’s responses which were developed in order “to impose spatial intelligibility onto a locale that was being transformed by the anti-territoriality of the capital.” Jonathan Crary, “J. G. Ballard and the Promiscuity of Forms,” *Zone* 1/2 (1986), 159. Cited in Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia. Politics After Modernism* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2010), 261.

46 Alan Boutwell and Michael Mitchell, “Planning on a National Scale,” 6.

47 The definition of architecture as “the fixed stage of human events” is found in Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).

01.02 Contemporary fairgrounds: the Centre Pompidou Mobile by Patrick Bouchain (various locations, France), 2011-2013

Centre Pompidou Mobile by Patrick Bouchain,
drawing, 2011. © Patrick Bouchain.

I.
In 2011, The Centre Pompidou inaugurated a new cultural institution: the Centre Pompidou Mobile. Claiming to be the “first mobile museum in the world... lightweight, removable and transportable, in the spirit of the circus or carnival,” the Pompidou Mobile was designed to “go anywhere in France to the wider public.”⁴⁸ President of the Centre Pompidou, Alain Seban, stated at the opening of this mobile cultural institution that “the works of the Centre Pompidou belong to the nation and we should bring them to all French citizens.”⁴⁹ To this end, architect Patrick Bouchain designed three easily foldable, unfoldable, and transportable lightweight plastic tents that represent, as Seban put it:

“...all the values of the Centre (...). Do not forget that the Centre Pompidou is the heir of the Crystal Palace, Archigram, leisure architecture, utopian architecture. It is part of the cultural history of

48 *Centre Pompidou*, website. Accessed September 22, 2012: <http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Communication.nsf/0/46FD004752A36AE9C1257918002D3C01?OpenDocument&L=1&sessionM=8.3&L=1>

49 “Le Centre Pompidou Mobile: another innovative artistic concept by the Centre Pompidou,” *Consulate General of France in Atlanta*, website. Accessed September 22, 2012: <http://www.consulfrance-atlanta.org/spip.php?article3256>

temporary architectures, one of the earliest references is Paxton’s Crystal Palace.”⁵⁰

With these words, the director of the Centre Pompidou defined a genealogy of projects connecting the itinerant architectures of pre-modern fairground culture with those of contemporary cultural institutions. In that list, the Pompidou Mobile stands as an example of the non-iconic and temporary architectures that our contemporary visual regimes seem to demand and, simultaneously, a material manifestation of a new paradigm in museum practices, namely the creation of impermanent spaces for entertainment out of the conventional limits of the exhibition galleries.

Since 2011, coinciding with a time of global protests and revolutions, and capturing the resulting aesthetics of their democratic imaginaries, major cultural institutions—the Centre Pompidou, the Guggenheim Foundation, the New Museum, and the Queens Museum of Art, among others—launched a series of experiments on social engagement that take place in temporary outdoor spaces such as itinerant laboratories, think tanks, community centers, cyclical outdoor festivals, and other communal, improvised, and impermanent performances and forms of popular culture.

The nostalgic—and strategic—recovery of pre-modern fairground and carnival culture might be read as the symptom of larger phenomena. Each of the stages in the genealogy naïvely described by Seban represents a rupture with previous sociopolitical and economic models and architectural forms. The transit from the impermanent architecture of the traveling circus to Paxton’s Crystal Palace, highlighting the industrialization process, renders visible the values and means of production of the new capitalist society of the nineteenth century. Similarly, the Centre Pompidou marks the era of mass technological culture of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s that called for flexibility, public participation, and transformable environments and that refused the idea of architecture as a fixed material. The next stage was perhaps predictable: one of mobile architecture, suggesting a society in flux, and an architecture for the contemporary global circulation of people, information and goods.

However, the apparent coherence of this diachronic narrative and its continuities may lead to a simplistic understanding of the role of architecture in the formation of modern and contemporary visual cultures and its relationship with larger economic and political changes. The return of contemporary cultural practices from the interior of the museum to the fairground, or to its aesthetic, points simultaneously to the success and collapse of the later stage of global capitalism. Itinerant architectures intended for communal popular culture embrace the dynamic and volatile condition of finance capital—to achieve a global impact through impermanent interventions—and simultaneously announce the possibility of its defeat by encouraging emergent platforms of collaboration, community self-organization, and decentralized networks of production.

In order to analyze the emergence of these new outdoor and impermanent spaces of cultural production and display it seems relevant to first understand the opposite process, which took place during the nineteenth century, by which the disorder of the fairground was relocated into regulated and institutionalized interior exhibition spaces.

50 Alain Seban, president of the Centre Pompidou, in an interview with architect Patrick Bouchain: “Architecture. Un Pari Architectural,” *Ville-Libourne Blog* (translation by author). Accessed April 5, 2013: <http://blog.ville-libourne.fr/architecture/>

William Hogarth, *Southwark Fair (Humours of the Fair)*, engraving based on a 1733 painting of the 1732 Southwark Fair.

II.

William Hogarth's 1730s painting *Southwark Fair*, and its subsequent engravings, have been generally mobilized as an entry point for a larger historical framework; an artifact that narrates the transit from pre-modern to modern culture. What Hogarth's *Southwark Fair* announces—and modernity confirms—is the privatization of the body and the self-regulation of individual experiences. Through the civilizing process of the nineteenth century and new conceptions of the city as a space of order that facilitates production, circulation, and consumption, the chaotic clash of bodies in space depicted by Hogarth will give way to more regulated encounters.

As a consequence of this economic rationalization of space, and subsequently of entertainment and popular culture in the nineteenth century, the impermanent, outdoor, and unstable cultural practices found in festivals and fairgrounds were relocated to permanent, indoor, and stable spaces of visual and didactic pedagogy, entertainment, and curiosity, such as galleries or museums that configured a "new exhibitionary complex."⁵¹

The dying fairground culture survived in some elements, artifacts, and practices that entered these new cultural institutions, in which participatory practices were replaced by objects of display and a series of intellectual and individual experiences built around them that were driven by commercial interests.

In this process, architecture had an important role. Itinerant and temporary structures of theaters or museums crystalized and gave way to new architectural typologies and interior spaces intended to accumulate and/or display artifacts and objects and, more importantly, to produce a new spectator, according to new notions of the body, rules of social behavior, and means of cultural production and consumption.

Following the architectural genealogy proposed by the president of the Centre Pompidou, we might see Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, site of the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, as one of these arenas where the dying fairground is relocated and from which other architecture explorations connected with contemporary museums depart. The Crystal Palace's interior is depicted as an architecture that has been able to confine the crowd, while simultaneously blurring the limits between

⁵¹ Term taken from Tonny Bennet, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988).

inside and outside, positioning lightness and dematerialization as part of the collective experience of the building.

The industrial revolution facilitated the fabrication of modular, interchangeable pieces of glass and steel and the possibility of large-span structures, in which even Hyde Park trees could fit. From within the exhibition space, all participants in the spatial experience, now transformed in observers, could see London's sky; architecture—which before had been a backdrop for the fairground—was now able to embrace and cover Hogarth's fairground. *Southwark Fair's* open-air stages and scaffolding attached to buildings above the heads of the crowd of performers became, in the Crystal Palace, an intrinsic part of the construction, where new spectators see and are seen moving in order around objects, viewing goods that range from silks to furniture to machinery. As Agamben puts it, “the first great triumph of the commodity thus takes place under the sign of both transparency and phantasmagoria.”⁵²

Dismantled at the end of the exhibition and reassembled in South London, the Crystal Palace became a tourist attraction until it burned down in 1936. Its architecture, nevertheless, survived. The wealth generated by the exhibition was invested in a piece of land located in Kensington that became the site of various museums, and its success remains in some of the most acclaimed architectural projects of the twentieth century, such as those of Archigram or Cedric Price, which finally created the democratic imaginary informing the Centre Pompidou: the large-scale space embracing large crowds.

Jean Baudrillard, in his essay “The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence,” gives the clues to understand the direct link between Paxton's Crystal Palace and Rogers and Piano's Centre Pompidou, while simultaneously positioning the Centre Pompidou Mobile within a larger historical context. “This space of deterrence,” Baudrillard claims, “linked to the ideology of visibility, transparency polyvalence, consensus, contact, and sanctioned by the threat to security, is virtually that of all social relations today. The whole of social discourse is there, and on both this level and that of cultural manipulation Beaubourg is—in total contradiction to its stated objectives—a brilliant monument of modernity.”⁵³

This “contradiction to its stated objectives” is, precisely, what can be found in the Pompidou Mobile by looking beyond its circus tent.

III.

The first decades of the twenty-first century witnessed the emergence of several experiments on social engagement developed by museums, projects that explore the role of cultural institutions as political and social agencies, as a way of celebrating a new mode of institutional enterprise in reality production. “We want to create a festive event,” Alain Seban explained at the occasion of the Pompidou Mobile opening, “something popular and free, that everybody, I hope, will want to take part in.”⁵⁴ At Chaumont (Haute Marne, France), the first stop of the Pompidou Mobile's trip, “only a third of people reported having visited a museum during

El Cubo, branch of Centre Pompidou at Muelle Uno, Málaga, Spain, April 2015. (CC) Epizentrum.

Centre Pompidou Mobile by Patrick Bouchain, Libourne, France, October 2012-January 2013. © Centre Pompidou/Construire.

Centre Pompidou Mobile by Patrick Bouchain, Libourne, France, October 2012-January 2013. © Centre Pompidou/Construire.

Pauline Cathala and Nicolas Valode (Directors), *Pompidou mobile: Un projet architectural, muséographique et culturel*, still frame from video, 00h 21m 25s, 2012. © Centre Pompidou, SCEREN [CNDP-CRDP] – 2012.

the past five years,” commented Seban. “The idea at the heart of the Centre Pompidou Project is to increase contact between art and society.”⁵⁵

This contemporary civilizing process takes place with egalitarian claims and is advertized with free admission. Contemporary cultural fairgrounds are intended to be spaces in which people from different backgrounds meet. The difference, however, between Hogarth's *Southwark Fair* and projects such as the Crystal Palace or the Pompidou Mobile is that in the former everyone could join the crowd, while in the latter the crowd has been transformed into audience, a transition that defines modern and contemporary forms of control and consumption.

The architecture of the Pompidou Mobile, imagined as a lightweight traveling structure that will bring education and culture to rural areas on the outskirts of large cities, represents the values of the institution and the conditions of contemporary social space. Its image, placed on a parking lot, surrounded by a metallic fence, connected to climate control systems, filled with security, fire control and surveillance mechanisms reveals how the institutional architecture is finally constructed. The non-iconic architecture of the tent is, however, inevitably embedded in forms and technologies of power and surveillance, in the contemporary notion and economies of circulation, and in various, even contradictory political imaginaries.

The Centre Pompidou is, its president concluded, “one institution with a capital “I” of the Republic with a capital “R”. This project is deeply Republican. The Republic as we like it: That of Valmy and mass uprising, that of the Third Republic, that of secular schools. To be a great institution is a good thing, it's important for artists, it weighs vis-à-vis the foreigner but it is also to be placed on a pedestal from which one must get off. I think that the mobile Pompidou Centre compels us to do that, puts us back on the same level as the reality of our time. We could have called it ‘the nomad Centre Pompidou’ but ‘mobile’ seemed to be a more accurate term.”⁵⁶

In fact, the term “mobile” seems accurate to describe a \$3.3 million project designed in the “spirit of the circus”—the landing of which in each different city costs \$500,000— and financed by the Pompidou Center and the Ministry of Culture together with four private sponsors representing contemporary cultures of circulation: the Galeries Lafayette, GDF SUEZ, La Parisienne Insurance and the Total Foundation. Inside its flexible and colorful skin, the white walls support valuable works of art.

The tension between interior and exterior shows the paradoxes at work in contemporary cultural production. Museums want to become agents of popular culture, spaces in constant motion; they are haunted by the romanticized aesthetic of the circus and the idea of a building that “has no foundation and is accessible to the population,” while, at the same time, maintain the white wall that ensures the value of an art object.⁵⁷

Patrick Bouchain's confidence in the capacity of festivals and carnivals to challenge conventional urban, social and political structures echoes the ideas of Henri Lefebvre and the Situationists, who saw festivals as manifestations with the power to become spontaneous reactions transgressing the control and order burdening our monotonous everyday life, or in other words, “the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption.”⁵⁸ However, itinerant cultural practices and

⁵² Giorgio Agamben, “Marginal Notes on Comments on Society of the Spectacle,” *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Univ. of Minnesota, 2000): 74.5.

⁵³ Jean Baudrillard, “The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence,” Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson (trans.), *October* 20 (Spring, 1982): 4.

⁵⁴ Alain Seban, president of the Centre Pompidou, quoted in Claudia Barbieri, “Come One, Come All to the Pompidou's Traveling Art Circus,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 2011. Accessed April 7, 2013: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/05/arts/05iht-rartpompidou03.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

⁵⁵ Alain Seban in “Architecture. Un Pari Architectural,” *Ville-Libourne Blog*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Architect Patrick Bouchain in: “Architecture. Un Pari Architectural,” *Ville-Libourne Blog*.

⁵⁸ Henri Lefebvre, “The Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption,” *Everyday in the Modern World* (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 68.

open-air amusements, its architectures and aesthetics, now present a direct relationship with the established economic and cultural structures of power. The interest in mobility and itinerancy is a means to achieve a stronger effect on the cultural, social, and political environment. Therefore, if William Hogarth's *Southwark Fair* could be described, as Jonathan Crary puts it, as "an image in which we can see forms of premodern and modern culture coexisting side by side," we might claim that in the Centre Pompidou Mobile the exhausted model of the modern museum is relocated inside the branded space of the city, the contemporary marketplace, where the phantasmagoria of the dead fairground culture is projected and commoditized.⁵⁹

IV.

After its visits to Chaumont (Haute-Marne), Cambrai (Norte), Boulogne-sur-Mer (Pas-de-Calais), Libourne (Gironde), Le Havre (Seine-Maritime) and Aubagne, and a three-month stay in Aubagne (Bouches-du-Rhône), near Marseille, in September 2013, the Centre Pompidou Mobile put an end to its tour.⁶⁰ Despite attracting more than 200,000 visitors, the itinerant institution became one of the victims of the global financial crisis that left the Centre Pompidou without sponsors. "Today they are absent," claimed Alain Seban. "The future of the structure is also uncertain," he continued, "I do not have the means to store it, I have to find a buyer, or to destroy it."⁶¹

The project was conceived as self-funded, which was possible with the support of the French Ministry of Culture, the cities and towns where it was located as well as their communities, and a number of sponsors, while the Pompidou collaborated with "knowledge, ideas and its collection."⁶² "We have arrived to the end of our sponsorship," stated Florence Brachet Champsaur, from Galeries Lafayette.⁶³ The Ministry of Culture, which supported the project with 1,5 million euros, also decided to withdraw.

Even if some cities were willing to contribute to the project with almost 200,000 euros, the difficulties to cover the costs associated with the landing of the Centre Pompidou Mobile in each location—including transport of the structure in a fleet of vehicles with eight trailers, assembly and disassembly, security systems, equipment, staff, insurances for the artworks, as well as conditioning of the land it would occupy—ultimately triggered its cancellation.⁶⁴

This example of an itinerant institution, free and open to the public, unveils the risks of venturing beyond the walls of the museums to reach a wider audience, without the legitimacy of a collection and a permanent

⁵⁹ Jonathan Crary, "Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Grey Room* 9 (Fall 2002): 7.

⁶⁰ Florence Evin, "Dernier tour de piste pour le Pompidou mobile," *Le Monde*, June 7, 2013. Accessed June 2, 2016: http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2013/06/07/dernier-tour-de-piste-pour-le-pompidou-mobile_3426431_3246.html

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Transcript from Pauline Cathala and Nicolas Valode (Directors), *Centre Pompidou mobile: Entretien entre Alain Seban, président du Centre Pompidou et Patrick Bouchain, architecte du Centre pompidou mobile*, video, min 08:24. Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de création industrielle, Service audiovisuel du Centre Pompidou, Centre Pompidou / SCEREN/CNDP/CRDP, 2012. Translated by author. Accessed June 2, 2016: https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/ressource.action?param.id=FR_R-47614466f1d34d071229410b1369f7d¶m.idSource=FR_E-2b4cbe1f48411e291ce4e114b8db6f

⁶³ Florence Evin, "Dernier tour de piste pour le Pompidou mobile," *Le Monde*, June 7, 2013.

⁶⁴ Valérie Duponchelle, "Le Centre Pompidou Mobile a vécu," *Le Figaro*, May 17, 2013. Accessed June 2, 2016: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/2013/05/17/03004-20130517ART-FIG00601-le-centre-pompidou-mobile-a-vecu.php>

building. The nomadic tent of the Centre Pompidou Mobile could simply remain unassembled, even after attracting 18% of visitors who had never set foot on a museum before (a value which amounts to only 2% in the case of the Centre Pompidou in Paris).⁶⁵ As Seban put it, “The Centre Pompidou Centre was conceived by Georges Pompidou, President of the Republic, as a machine to modernize France.”⁶⁶ In pursuing this national mission, to reach the French society and therefore France as a whole, the Pompidou Center was conceived as a “decentralized center that was able to leave Paris, go beyond the Île-de-France to meet the entire population; as an institution dedicated to contemporary art, and therefore dedicated to forms of culture that are generally considered of difficult access and yet are aimed to reach a popular audience, the widest possible audience.”⁶⁷ The Centre Pompidou Mobile, conceived by the French Minister of Culture and Communication, Frédéric Mitterrand, supports this mission to democratize culture by arriving to every corner of the country and expanding the audience for modern and contemporary and to even those who are not used to visit a museum. “I thought it was reserved for smart people!,” explained a 9-year-old girl following her visit to the Centre Pompidou Mobile, according to *Le Monde*.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the plans to reach new territories and audiences both in France and overseas are still intact, and after the closing of the circus tent, the Pompidou has envisioned a circulating institution economically more viable and with a fairly more neoliberal than republican approach: the so-called Pompidou’s Provisional Centers, which would be installed for three or four years in various places, in France and abroad, starting, the Pompidou announced, “with an exhibition of masterpieces under a tent at the headquarters of oil giant Aramco in Dhahran (Eastern Saudi Arabia).”⁶⁹ The Pompidou Mobile was a testing ground where to rehearse strategies for itinerant, climate-controlled structures through which to circulate works from the collection in places that are not museums, such as universities and shopping centers.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Transcript from Pauline Cathala and Nicolas Valode (Directors), *Centre Pompidou mobile: Entretien entre Alain Seban, président du Centre Pompidou et Patrick Bouchain, architecte du Centre pompidou mobile*, video, min 00:20. Translated by author.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Florence Evin, “Dernier tour de piste pour le Pompidou mobile,” *Le Monde*.

⁶⁹ Valérie Duponchelle, “Le Centre Pompidou Mobile a vécu,” *Le Figaro*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

02.

Roving Pedagogical Missions

02. ROVING PEDAGOGICAL MISSIONS

The projects analyzed in this chapter—the Misiones Pedagógicas, the Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, and the Laboratorio di Quartiere—share the mission of bringing education to rural and disconnected areas to mitigate the growing imbalance between the cultural condition of the countryside and that of the metropolis. In these examples, mobility is an instrument serving different political ideologies in a time of transition: the newly formed Second Republic in Spain, the Francisco Franco dictatorship that followed, and, in Italy, the Italian Republic forged after years of a fascist regime. Traveling architecture became a means through which to structure territories undergoing major political changes and upon which it proved difficult to exert control by the central government; simultaneously, education was a vehicle to expand and promote the values of those political regimes. Although the missions remain similar, the projects serve very different political ideologies.

Through the case studies, this thesis aims to unpack the ways in which itinerant architecture is conceived as a form of communication—and therefore of education—at a time when technological developments and advanced information systems had not yet reached rural areas. The management of information is one of the main forms of power and control over a territory. In the examples studied in this chapter, the regimes in power aim at controlling rural areas to prevent possible outbreaks of dissent movements, an objective that is usually addressed through education, culture and promotion of new patterns of behavior for the local population. In addition, the traveling architectures associated with these initiatives were not only a form of information but also lay the ground for future architectural and urban developments that would construct national identities.

02.01 Mobile classrooms and street workshops: architectures for the democratization of the metropolitan cultural condition, and propaganda machines. From the Misiones Pedagógicas (Spain), 1931–1936, to the Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco (Spain), 1939–1977

I.

A team equipped with fourteen paintings, gramophones, a projector, a cinema camera, books, and several phonograph records travelled from village to village through rural Spain between 1931 and 1936. Spending one week in each village, the ensemble covered an important part of the territory of the country.⁷¹ El Museo Circulante (The Ambulant Museum), also known as El Museo del Pueblo (People's Museum), arrived by truck.

In the 1930s, Spain registered high levels of illiteracy and 1,697,000 out-of-school children, which concentrated largely in rural areas with limited access to the daily press, radio, and other forms of communication and cultural knowledge.⁷² In its first months of life in 1931, the new government of the Second Spanish Republic responded to the need to reformulate the national educational system and propose a modern

⁷¹ *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), XXI, 107. Pedagogical Missions Board. Activity report from September 1931 to December 1933. Translated by the author.

⁷² In Spain there were, in 1931, 1,697,000 out-of-school children. See Eugenio Otero Urtaza, *Las Misiones Pedagógicas: una experiencia de educación popular* (A Coruña: Edición do Castro, 1982) 22. See also Valerio Bozal, "Las Misiones Pedagógicas en el marco de la cultura republicana," *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936* ed. Eugenio Otero-Urtaza (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales/ Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes, 2006), 116. Translated by the author.

Misiones Pedagógicas, Cristóbal Simancas on a ladder, hanging the screen for a movie projection, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Modesto Medina Bravo, a street in La Baña (Léon), one of the villages visited by the Misiones Pedagógicas, 1934. Collection of Isabel Rodríguez Gutiérrez.

Puerta del Sol, Madrid, 1930s. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Misiones Pedagógicas, José Val del Omar photographing the village of Pitres in Alpujarras Granada, 1933. Archive of María José Val del Omar and Gonzalo Sáenz de Buruaga, Madrid.

Misiones Pedagógicas, arrival of a mission. n.d. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Antonio Oliver, Misiones Pedagógicas, itinerary, 1935. Archive of the Patronato Carmen Conde-Antonio Oliver, Cartagena.

cultural model. In doing so, the government wanted to prompt, among the Spanish people, a new collective awareness of its own identity that would be consistent with values of the Republic. Educational reform was the main instrument to facilitate the development of this transformed collective consciousness, and the struggle was particularly relevant in the countryside, a territory over which the Catholic Church exerted primary control; a dominion achieved precisely with the missions developed in the previous decades, in response to threat posed by the proliferation of revolutionary and anticlerical movements.⁷³

El Museo Circulante was one of the itinerant cultural institutions created under the umbrella of the Misiones Pedagógicas (Pedagogical Missions), the ambitious initiative of the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes of the Second Spanish Republic, for which some of the most renowned educators, artists and writers of the time mobilized, among them Manuel Bartolomé Cossío (Board Director), Domingo Barnés, Luis A. Santullano, Rodolfo Llopis, Antonio Machado, Luis Bello, Pedro Salinas, Angel Llorca and Oscar Esplá (all members of the Central Commission).⁷⁴

Officially approved by decree on May 29, 1931 by the Pedagogical Missions Board, the Misiones Pedagógicas proclaimed the urgency of making people “participate in the patrimony that the State, which should reach everyone equally, putting an end to unfair institutional abandonment and fostering the highest cultural stimuli.”⁷⁵ The Republic recognized that all citizens of Spain should enjoy equal status and rights, and be regarded as equal; for this to happen, the Republic sought to overcome the gap between the urban population with easy access to culture—in the shape of libraries, museums, universities, cinemas, and theaters—and those who lived in isolation and misery in rural areas, but were equally relevant in the construction of a new Spanish identity. Once all the Spaniards no longer feel hunger, but are instead hungry for literature and cultural enjoyment, Cossío argued, there would be “a new Spain.”⁷⁶

The Misiones Pedagógicas were born as a conglomerate of cultural projects aiming to facilitate the dissemination of culture in rural areas; places that had hardly been served by primary schools, and were claimed to be affected by the simultaneous “absence of cultural resources and presence of egotisms, and harmful interests in keeping people in ignorance”.⁷⁷ It was therefore an itinerant institution with the goal of democratizing culture. Much like the Centre Pompidou Mobile would do eighty years later, the Misiones Pedagógicas envisioned mobile architecture as a means to spread Republican values throughout the territory.

A system of libraries, both stable and circulating, and a program of reading sessions that would be relevant for the illiterate population, were developed to stimulate the enjoyment of literature. Maria Moliner selected the books, starting with a collection of one hundred titles from different fields. In addition, a series of traveling cultural institutions would be founded to reach the most neglected territories of the nation:

⁷³ Maria García Alonso, “Necesitamos un Pueblo. Genealogía de las Misiones Pedagógicas,” *Val del Omar y las Misiones Pedagógicas*, 75. Translated by the author.

⁷⁴ Maria García Alonso, “Necesitamos un Pueblo. Genealogía de las Misiones Pedagógicas,” 78, 79. Translated by the author.

⁷⁵ *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), 153. Translated by the author.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁷ BOE (BOE Official State Gazette) Madrid, May 30, 1931. Bulletin nº 150. Pg.1033 to 1034. Department: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes. Translated by the author.

2

1 Ramón Gaya, poster of the Museo Circulante (also called Museo del Pueblo), 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

2 Milicias de la Cultura, poster by the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública, 1937. Universitat de Valencia.

3 Frente Cultural Antifascista, poster, 1937. Universitat de Valencia.

1

3

El Coro (The Chorus) directed by Eduardo M. Torner; El Museo Circulante (The Ambulant Museum), with Sánchez Barbudo, Ramón Gaya, Luis Cernuda; El Servicio de Cine (Cinema Service), with José Val del Omar; and El Servicio de Música (Musical Service) with Oscar Esplá, that lent gramophones and records to the population. Later additions were the Teatro del Pueblo (People’s Theater) organized by Marquina, and later Alejandro Casona; and the Retablo de Fantoques (Puppet Theater) by Rafael Dieste, created to bring theater to those areas where it was not possible to arrive with a truck carrying a demountable stage.⁷⁸ The Board and Commission of the Misiones Pedagógicas, with headquarters in the Museo Pedagógico in Madrid, determined the list of collaborators (almost five hundred individuals between 1931-37), the chosen routes throughout the country, and the particular structure of each institution.

Misiones (Missions), however, was a misleading name for what its director Cossío conceived as institutions with “no pedagogical character.” The team of the so-called “missionaries” was urged to be humble, emphatic, and cautious—politically as well—to not indoctrinate people with specific particular political ideas or to impose knowledge.⁷⁹ Rather, the aim of the Misiones Pedagógicas was to establish links between modernity and tradition, and to build a common space where metropolitan culture could meet with cultural traditions.

The first report mentions seventy missions taking place in three hundred different villages in the provinces of Alava, Almería, Avila, Badajoz, Burgos, Cáceres, Cádiz, Ciudad Real, Cuenca, Galicia, Granada, Guadalajara, Huesca, León, Lérida, Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo, Palencia, Segovia, Soria, Teruel, Toledo, Valencia, Vizcaya and Zamora, where the missionaries arrived either in trucks, carried by donkeys, or in the case of the most remote and disconnected villages, by foot.⁸⁰ From 1931-1937, the missions arrived to almost seven thousand villages throughout Spain.

Among all of the institutions created under the Misiones Pedagógicas, Cossío showed a stronger devotion to the Museo Circulante, the materialization of a proposal that, decades ago, the founder of La Institución Libre de Enseñanza (The Free Educational Institution) and Cossío’s mentor, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, made for the creation of “itinerant missions,” and which Cossío finally realized as the Misiones Pedagógicas director.

The Museo Circulante owned two collections: fourteen copies of paintings from the Prado Museum, and other fourteen from masterpieces exhibited at the Prado Museum, Academia de San Fernando, and Cerralbo Museum. The works by Berruguete, Sánchez Coello, El Greco, Ribera, Velázquez, Zurbarán, Murillo, and Goya, which were reproduced by Ramón Gaya, Juan Bonafé, and Eduardo Vicente, young talented painters selected in a 1932 competition.⁸¹

Cossío’s aim was to bring the “treasures” that Spanish people own to those who had never seen them because, as he claimed, they “also belong

78 Maria García Alonso, “Necesitamos un Pueblo. Genealogía de las Misiones Pedagógicas,” 79, 80. Translated by the author.
 79 Ramón Gaya, “Mi experiencia en las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936). Con el Museo del Prado de Viaje por España,” *Val del Omar y las Misiones Pedagógicas*, 23. Transcript of a conference by Ramón Gaya, at the Residencia de Estudiantes, on April 24, 1991, Madrid. Translated by the author.
 80 *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas*. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933 (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), XXI, 17 ff. Translated by the author.
 81 Nigel Dennis, “El Museo del Pueblo,” *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936* ed. Eugenio Otero-Urtaza. 330. Translated by author.

to them.” The director rejected pursuing any other intention, and he refused to elaborate on the outcome of the initiative. For Cossío, culture could be a celebration; he wanted the Museo Circulante to merely “exist.” It was a disinterested gift to the population.⁸² Cossío didn’t have pre-conceived ideas on the ways the museum would function; he was solely interested on how it would be presented and communicated to the local population.⁸³ “I just wanted to show them,” he explained, “to let them know that the paintings exist, and that even if they are enclosed within the Prado Museum, the paintings are also theirs.”⁸⁴

For a period between two and three months, a team composed of Cernuda, Dieste, Gaya, Sánchez Barbudo, and Azcoaga toured each of the Spanish provinces with the Museo Circulante, staying one week in each village. They were sometimes received with suspicion, and others with the joy produced by the arrival of “a circus company.”⁸⁵ Every week, they would dismount the exhibition, load the truck with wooden boxes containing the paintings, unload it and install the museum again, in a different location and for a new audience. Rather than having their own vehicle fleet, their trucks were generally rented in each village, something that, according to the missionaries, would also encourage the collaboration of the population in the installation process.⁸⁶ With a similar aim, a different local family hosted each of the missionaries, to facilitate mutual understanding.⁸⁷

The size of the paintings, too big for the spaces available in the smaller villages, determined the museum’s itinerary, prioritizing the main clusters of each region and encouraging the inhabitants of surrounding areas to visit the Museum, the presence of which would sometimes overlap with local fairs and festivities.⁸⁸ White sheets covering the walls would transform any available space in the village into a makeshift gallery. The improvised white cube, an attempt to bring a temporary modernity to these places, was also meant to stimulate the “aesthetic experience,” as Cossío demanded. Next to the paintings, the missionaries displayed smaller reproductions of other works from the same author, installed flowerpots and background music. In the village of Pedraza, the paintings resulted to be too high for the room that was prepared to show them, and were exhibited from the balcony to a congregation of the village’s inhabitants.⁸⁹

In addition to the reproductions, the itinerant museum was completed with a set of gramophones, projectors, cinematographs, music records, and a program of activities that could be adjusted to each location. Each morning, the exhibition would open its doors to everyone, free of charge, between 12 and 1PM. In the afternoon, from 4PM onwards, the missionar-

Museo Circulante, exhibition inside a school in Cebreros, Ávila, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Misiones Pedagógicas, presentation of Lope de Rueda's *La Carátula* in front of the Palacio de Riofrio, Segovia, 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

ies would give lectures on the paintings and their historical context.⁹⁰ Right before dinner, a time when work in the fields would have ended for the day, local inhabitants would attend music and cinema sessions, groomed and dressed for the occasion with their Sunday clothes.⁹¹ White sheets hanging from a wall would transform patios, stables, and open spaces into movie theaters, assisted by cinema projectors in some occasions donated by the Sociedad de Industrias Eléctricas Españolas,⁹² and generators or even flares used to bring artificial light in those villages where electricity had not yet arrived, and where many discovered the moving image for the first time.⁹³ In the smaller villages, 16 mm projectors would be the instrument of choice, having the audience stand or sit on stones; other locations enjoyed bigger projectors and proper seats.⁹⁴ For both scenarios, missionaries were advised to “not to praise life in the city,” or “dazzle the rural audience with scenes of Paris or New York,” as it would widen the gap between village and cities; instead, they were instructed to show also the “perils and difficulties associated with life in the big metropolis.”⁹⁵

The Museo Circulante did not disappear upon its departure. A library of one hundred books, a gramophone alongside music albums, and photographic reproductions of paintings would stay in each of the villages for “the encouragement of progress,” and “to ensure that the peoples of Spain, even those who are disconnected, share the benefits and noble joys that today are reserved and dedicated only to urban centers.”⁹⁶ The legacy of the institution would be, therefore, an incipient common cultural ground between rural and urban Spain or, making use of Benedict Anderson’s expression, an “imagined community” for an otherwise socially, economically and politically fragmented country.

There were, however, conceptual clashes within the Misiones Pedagógicas. For Cossío, it was only through the free circulation and communication of ideas that progress was possible. He understood culture as a collective, universal, and transnational endeavor, influenced by a humanistic regenerationism, and by the theories of German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause. Cossío believed in the potential of culture and education to improve the living conditions of populations and bridge distances between cultural traditions, thus becoming a key medium in the modernization of the country.⁹⁷ For Central Commission member Santullano, however, the isolation of rural areas was not the main cause of their intellectual abandon; in his view, these communities had been destructured, and consequently had lost their identity, being now recipients of the debris of civilization.⁹⁸ For some of the missionar-

82 Ramón Gaya, “Mi experiencia en las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936). Con el Museo del Prado de Viaje por España,” 27. Translated by the author.
83 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
84 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
85 María García Alonso, “Necesitamos un Pueblo. Genealogía de las Misiones Pedagógicas,” 77. Translated by the author.
86 Ramón Gaya, “Mi experiencia en las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936). Con el Museo del Prado de Viaje por España,” 29. Translated by the author.
87 “Algunos recuerdos de Gonzalo Menéndez-Pidal,” *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936*. 411 (Excerpt from an interview to Gonzalo Menéndez-Pidal by Eugenio Otero, Paloma Sarasúa and Alfredo Valverde in October 2006). Translated by the author.
88 Ramón Gaya, “Mi experiencia en las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936). Con el Museo del Prado de Viaje por España,” 22. And Manuel B. Cossío, “Significación del Museo,” in *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933*, (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), 109-115. Translated by the author.
89 *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), 108. Translated by the author.

90 Gonzalo Sáenz de Buruaga, “Val del Omar en las Misiones Pedagógicas de Murcia,” 46, and Nigel Dennis, “El Museo del Pueblo,” 338.
91 Ramón Gaya, “Mi experiencia en las Misiones Pedagógicas (1931-1936). Con el Museo del Prado de Viaje por España,” 23. Translated by the author.
92 Eugenio Otero Urtaza, “Los marineros del entusiasmo en las Misiones Pedagógicas,” *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936*. 87. Translated by the author.
93 Eduardo García Maroto, “De *Aventuras y desventuras del cine español*,” except from *Aventuras y desventuras del cine español* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 1988) 70-72, republished in *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936*. 408. Translated by the author.
94 “Algunos recuerdos de Gonzalo Menéndez-Pidal,” *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936*, 411. Translated by the author.
95 Carmen Conde “El cinematógrafo educativo en las Misiones Pedagógicas de España,” first published in *Revista Internacional del Cinema Educativo*. Vol 5. N.7, Rome, 1933. 501-504. Republished in *Las Misiones Pedagógicas 1931-1936*, 406. Translated by the author.
96 BOE (BOE Official State Gazette) Madrid, May 30, 1931. Bulletin n° 150. Pag.1033 to 1034. Department: Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes. Translated by the author.
97 María García Alonso, “Necesitamos un Pueblo. Genealogía de las Misiones Pedagógicas,” 86. Translated by the author.
98 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Misiones Pedagógicas, unloading a truck with the copies from the Museo Circulante. n.d. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Museo del Pueblo, possibly in Cebreros (Ávila), 1932. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

ies, and other sectors of the Spanish society, the Misiones Pedagógicas were not bringing social justice to a rural Spain beset by poverty and with urgent needs, including the reform in land ownership. The initiative was positioned not as a substitute, but as a complement to that reform.

In addition, the public activities of the Misiones Pedagógicas aimed to stimulate Republican ideals and to “affirm the democratic values of modern countries,” promoting the reading of the new Spanish Constitution.⁹⁹ This triggered suspicion among particular sectors, which would come to depict the initiative as a political propaganda machine. The Board of the Misiones Pedagógicas, for instance, produced its own films and documentaries due to what they considered “the misleading or partial representation of Spain in existing ones,” and to fully embrace the opportunity to use documentary film as a medium to circulate information, as well as document and archive the activities of the Misiones Pedagógicas.¹⁰⁰

In this context, the work of José Val del Omar, who integrated the Misiones Pedagógicas as a cameraman, photographer, film technician, and director, sheds light onto how the initial aims of the Board were largely appropriated and recoded by each of the missionaries, whose works in the form of literary works, paintings, or films, would become an important legacy of the initiative, ensuring its continuation and appreciation by future generations. Val del Omar produced more than forty films and nearly nine thousand photographs, many of them published in the reports of the Misiones Pedagógicas and the Residencia de Estudiantes journal *Residencia*, where were mostly attributed and predominantly credited to Misiones Pegadógicas.¹⁰¹ For Val del Omar, the cinematographer was the “liberating machine” that “would substitute the book and the teacher.”¹⁰² He documented realities encountered during the trips: some of his films documented festivities, such as *Fiestas Cristianas / Fiestas Profanas*, rituals and environments of mystery, invoking the transformative and transgressive spirit of the carnival.

However, his best known works—and the most widely circulated images of the Misiones Pedagógicas—are probably the photos of the rural audiences, depicting expressions of delight, surprise and amazement as they watched movies. Mobilized as the evidence of how social justice could reach “the farthest corners of the huts where darkness has its seat,” places in need of “even just a burst of that abundant spiritual light that cities enjoy so easily and comfortably,” Val del Omar’s amazed faces were received as the daring transformation achieved by the Misiones Pedagógicas—otherwise conceived by Cossío as gifts free from any utilitarianism and preconceived outcome.¹⁰³

“If the Mission would not achieve any result, or leave any other mark on the people, it would suffice to justify its existence with the usual excitement of surprise, joy and gratitude that awakens in the inhabitants of the villages upon realizing that the nation, or as they used to say, the government finally remembers them, and sends them several gentlemen

99 *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), 155. Translated by the author.

100 Gonzalo Sáenz de Buruaga, “Val del Omar en las Misiones Pedagógicas de Murcia,” 49. Translated by the author.

101 Gonzalo Sáenz de Buruaga, “Val del Omar en las Misiones Pedagógicas de Murcia,” 41. Translated by the author.

102 Val del Omar as quoted by Víctor Erice, “El llanto de las máquinas,” *Insula Val del Omar: visiones en su tiempo, descubrimientos actuales* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas/ Semana de Cine Experimental de Madrid, 1995), 110. Translated by the author.

103 Manuel B. Cossío, “Las Misiones Pedagógicas,” *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, n. 889 (May 31, 1934), 97-104. Translated by the author.

Misiones Pedagógicas, movie session, Andalucía, 1934. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

Misiones Pedagógicas, movie session, c. 1931-1933. Archive of the Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid.

who, living together with them for some days, tell them stories they enjoy; show things they had not seen before; amuse them with poetry, music and exciting shows; and upon their departure, leave them books with which they can continue learning and having fun.”¹⁰⁴

The screen became a mediator between rural and urban Spain, and its different forms of seeing. “Architectural monuments,” Cossío claimed, “can’t travel,” and have to be shown “in reproductions or projections.”¹⁰⁵ In contrast, the assemblage of people, ideas and technologies that composed the architecture of the Misiones Pedagógicas did travel. An architecture that resembled the culture of the initiative: open, diffuse, manifesting in the spontaneous realm of life, capable of triggering new relationships. If the education promoted by the Misiones Pedagógicas and the Institución Libre de Enseñanza sought to produce an emancipated autonomous individual who was able to participate in the construction of a common space, its architecture followed the same aims. For the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, societal transformation was achieved through education, rather than through violent or revolutionary means. It was a slower process, but one they considered deeper: a process that would first change people, and then the structures external to them.

In a moment in history when communication technologies compressed time and space, transforming the lives of millions of people around the globe, a new architecture arrived to rural Spain in the form of a temporary technology, triggering the entanglement between modern and rural life. These were its elements: a blank sheet covering old walls, the radio waves that would cross them, and the new territory created by the camera, the screen and electric power. What the Misiones Pedagógicas left in each town upon once it departed was a seed of inevitable modernization and associated urban development. This itinerant cultural institution, as others that followed and reclaimed its legacy, may be apparently “modest,” and even those technically sophisticated and with strong financial resources, would follow similar aesthetic politics; their power is in their capacity to infiltrate, occupy and transform the regimes of public space.¹⁰⁶

Beyond the striking visual material he generated, Val del Omar also created the graphic design of campaigns against illiteracy, and collaborated with the government in producing the propaganda in support of the Republic after general Francisco Franco’s 1936 coup that marked the beginning of the Spanish Civil War (1936 - 1939). That year, for the Republican government, culture became primarily a weapon against fascism. They created the “cultural militias” in 1937, which brought libraries to the military front to foster literacy and political education. The Misiones Pedagógicas were dismantled that same year, and their materials confiscated by the National Forces. Some of its members were executed; others went into exile, and some enlisted in Franco’s forces. Meanwhile, Val del Omar’s images were exposed at the Spanish Pavilion in the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne.

The Misiones Pedagógicas and other contemporary initiatives including Federico Garcia Lorca’s traveling theatre troupe La Barraca, would

104 *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), XII. Translated by the author.

105 Manuel B. Cossío, “Significación del Museo,” *Patronato de Misiones Pedagógicas. Memoria de actividades desde septiembre de 1931 a diciembre de 1933* (Madrid: S. Aguirre Impresor, 1934), 113-114. Translated by the author.

106 For an extended account of the regulations that dictated the architecture of the libraries of the Residencia de Estudiantes, see *Bibliotecas Populares* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la residencia de Estudiantes, 1918).

survive as the seed for future initiatives of itinerant cultural institutions in Latin America, much like the Misiones Pedagógicas were influenced by previous initiatives launched by the Soviet's People Commissariat of Education (Narkompros) under Anatoly Lunacharsky. As this thesis shows, the aims of the Misiones Pedagógicas are shared with previous and future initiatives for itinerant cultural institutions, such as the Centre Pompidou Mobile and the BMW Guggenheim Lab, but are mobilized to respond to different political ideologies.

After the Spanish Civil War, the Misiones Pedagógicas were first dissolved, and later re-launched and reprogrammed around the political ideas of Franco's regime. The name remained similar, yet its spirit, the belief in the importance of culture, education and democracy in eradicating oppression, was completely dismantled.

II.

In 1946, the first Cátedra Nacional Ambulante (National Itinerant Classroom) started its trip around the Spanish province of Guadalajara. Composed by four trucks and four trailers donated by the Head of State and Government of Spain—general and dictator Francisco Franco—the Cátedra Ambulante or Cátedra Francisco Franco was the itinerant architecture and cultural institution under the auspices and at the service of the new political regime: a roving, temporal rural institution equipped for the delivery of a comprehensive training that would have a permanent ideological impact on the rural poor, which has also been called “School on Wheels” and “Embassies of Love.”¹⁰⁷

Having taken power in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship led to the eradication of the constitution of the Second Spanish Republic, which had established freedom of speech and association, introduced women's suffrage, recognized divorce, and deprived the nobility of special privileges that favored distinctions of social class. The new regime, imposed a Falangist, Catholic, nationalist and traditional culture, through strategies of indoctrination that found in the educational system one of its main vehicles of dissemination. A new educational apparatus was set in place, while mass media—including press, radio, and television—and artistic and cultural manifestations—such as literature, theater, and cinema—were the object of control and censorship. This new apparatus, however, required the dismantling of the Republican educational and cultural programs, among them the Misiones Pedagógicas.

On June 19, 1939, Tomás Domínguez Arévalo, Head of the regime's National Service of Elementary Education, drafted an order to dismantle the Misiones Pedagógicas Board, and create, instead, a new body called Popular Culture Board:

“In accordance to the urgency of the reorganization of the so-called Pedagogical Missions Board, due to the pernicious effect it has exerted on people, developing an anti-national endeavor that is atheistic, Marxist and foreigner-centered, I decree that:

(...) The Reorganizing Commission will propose, as soon as possible, to the leadership, a new structure and activity for the Board, based on

¹⁰⁷ Heliodoro Manuel Pérez Moreno, *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva* (1956-1977) (Huelva: Diputación Provincial de Huelva, Servicio de Publicaciones, 2004), 38-39. Information quoted from the Report from the course in La Atalaya-Riotinto (A.H.P.H., Subfondos de la Delegación Provincial de la Sección Femenina, 66). Translated by the author.

the need to bring the spirit of the Glorious National Movement to all the peoples of Spain, making them feel the unity, as well as the discipline and loyalty to the Caudillo savior of Spain.”¹⁰⁸

And yet, the idea of itinerant institutions traveling through rural Spain still appealed to the aim of the regime to control and seek support in the countryside. Excluded from the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and subjected to economic restrictions, Spain, under Franco, suffered the consequences of the regime’s international isolation and domestic policy of autarky, including misery, scarcity, and a severe rationing system until the first years of the 1950s. A large part of the population had fled into exile, and emigrated, while internal and external processes of migration were resulting in the depopulation of rural areas.

In this context, a new system of roving *missions* to serve and promote the regime was formed in an intimate relationship between architecture, circulatory processes, propaganda and political ideology: the Cátedra Ambulante. Designed as an instrument to contain the abandonment of the Spanish countryside, in particular its most remote areas, as well as to connect with and intervene in its population, the Cátedra Ambulante was a territorial network able to articulate and take control of the territory, an architecture for the dissemination of the regimes’ “religious and Falangist truths”.

Such ambition demanded the right instrument for its implementation: the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S. (Traditionalist Spanish Phalanx of the Committees of the National Syndicalist Offensive), the sole legal party during the dictatorship. In particular, Franco commissioned the ideological control and formative role of the Cátedras Ambulantes to the Sección Femenina, the women’s branch of the Falange, the official institution of the regime that promoted the Catholic feminine archetype associated with principles of subordination and self-sacrifice, with limited social participation unless affiliated to the Sección Femenina, where women could have an active role in politics and be granted with authority and responsibility to spread the values of Franco’s regime.

“The Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco is a new, attractive and effective medium to bring the care, culture, advances and practical knowledge to the Spanish land for its material and moral existence. And collecting the problems of the towns and learn from them, also from their virtues—hidden many times in a rough appearance—of austerity, sobriety, moral force, which have retained their strength precisely in those who live more closely to the earthbound.”¹⁰⁹

This new ideologically reoriented *mission*, for which the Cátedras Ambulantes targeted specific regions of the Spanish territory, was the education, training and assistance to the rural population, towards the economic, social and cultural development of the community. The only criteria that the National Delegation of the Women’s Section would establish for the election of the villages that would become nodes in the network of the Cátedras Ambulantes was based on their population’s number: villages of less than 5,000 inhabitants. Yet, as the number of Cátedras

108 Boletín Oficial del Estado núm. 184, de 03/07/1939, página 3641. Departamento: Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Translated by the author.

109 Ana Belén Gómez Fernández, “La llegada de las Cátedras Ambulantes de la Sección Femenina a Sierra Mágina,” *Revista de estudios sobre Sierra Mágina, Sumuntán* 28 (2010), 100. Translated by the author.

Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, team leaders stand in the door of the 'Carromato-vivienda' used as living space, in the area of Riotinto, Huelva, 1962-63. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Huelva.

Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, one of the vehicles of the fleet, Huelva. n.d.

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1 Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, closing ceremony, Niebla, Huelva, 1965. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Huelva.

2 “El quehacer y los días. La Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco,” *Revista de Educación*, 49, 1945, p. 65.

3 Ideas Circus by Archigram (project authors: Peter Cook and Dennis Crompton), model, 1968. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

4 Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, trucks and trailers parked in a “colonization town,” *Revista Agricultura*, (insert on “Colonización”), 1948.

Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, authorities presiding the closing ceremony, Almonaster la Real, Huelva, 1966. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Huelva.

Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco, youth physical education performance during the closing ceremony, Sanlúcar de Guadiana, Huelva, 1962. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Huelva.

Ambulantes, staff, and associated resources were not sufficient to serve all towns that would meet the criteria, additional requirements were set by each provincial Delegation in relation to the extent of their cultural, social and economic need. The guidelines privileged small villages, of maximum 5,000 inhabitants, most of the time materializing as smaller rural communities of 500-2,000 inhabitants, that were disconnected, neglected, partly abandoned and with economic, social, and cultural difficulties. Villages lacking these extreme conditions were also considered, if they didn’t have access to cultural institutions and lacked good communication systems to connect them to the capitals. Another criterion was the expected receptivity and participation of citizens. This, according to the reports by the National Council, was the area where better results were expected.¹¹⁰ For this purpose, there was a standardized questionnaire, filled in order to analyze the candidates to become a stop in the Cátedras Ambulantes’ itinerary, that covered aspects ranging from the general characteristics of the population to their needs, aspirations and concerns as a initial diagnosis on the effects that the training would have.

The initial and main audience of the Cátedras Ambulantes were women, who were instructed according to the national, Catholic female role promoted in the dictatorship, but this was was soon extended to children and men, ultimately reaching the entire village’s population, all educated in the political and religious values of Francoism. As such, the Cátedras Ambulantes have been also described as “local delegations of the Women’s Section” that reproduce and implement the structure and functions of the organization, on a smaller scale, in order to influence the lives of remote and disadvantaged populations and capture sympathies.”¹¹¹

The Cátedras Ambulantes were generally divided in two main groups: Motor Classrooms and Non-Motorized Classrooms. The Motor Classrooms had four trucks and four trailers, which were enhanced with the necessary infrastructure for housing, classrooms, and related educational activities. Four trucks harbored three classrooms—Escuelas de Hogar (Household Schools), Hermandad de la Ciudad y el Campo (City-Countryside Fraternity) and Instrumental Sanitario (Health laboratory)—and the living space. Two of the trailers were used for the generator and the kitchen. The other two trailers formed the main classroom by abating the walls and adding a canvas roof.¹¹² The truck-home could host up to six people, and included a living room with three bunk beds, a small table, couch, chairs, folding table, butane gas kitchen, sink, wardrobe, washing machine and a bathroom with toilet and shower. Water was stored in a deposit regularly filled by a water pump, and electricity was sourced from the general electricity network of the town; electric stoves also provided heating.¹¹³ The team of teachers would reside in the Motor Classroom, or in a house given by the City Hall for the time of their stay.¹¹⁴

The Provincial Non-Motorized Classrooms, in contrast, generally

¹¹⁰ Informe de la labor de las Cátedras del Consejo Nacional, 1968 (A.G.A., Fondos de la Sección Femenina). See also Heliodoro Manuel Pérez Moreno, *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva* (1956-1977), 143. Translated by the author.

¹¹¹ Sección Femenina de F.E.T y de las J.O.N.S (1965a), 4. See also *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva* (1956-1977), 38. Translated by author.

¹¹² El quehacer y los días. La Cátedra Ambulante Francisco Franco,” *Revista de Educación*, 49, 1945, p. 66. Translated by author.

¹¹³ Sección Femenina de F.E.T y de las J.O.N.S (1965a), 10-11. See also *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva* (1956-1977), 136. Translated by author.

¹¹⁴ “Informe sobre Cátedras Ambulantes,” R.A.H., Biblioteca, Fondos de la Sección Femenina, July 1977, 6. See also *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva* (1956-1977), 135. Translated by author.

“Spain: Democracy Wins. Spain’s Premier Adolfo Suárez,” cover, *Times Magazine*, June 27, 1977. Cover: Daniel Maffia.

used spaces of diverse nature (including schools, public squares and private houses) available in the villages where the activities were developed. Depending on the conditions of the local houses, it was required to carry out reforms in the spaces. Manuals provided a reference for the necessary conditions in the houses, stating they “must always be clean and tidied up, decorated with simplicity and good taste, to serve as an example to the neighbors,” and that they should be an open space for all inhabitants, without distinction.¹¹⁵ The guidelines also raised awareness on the perils of butane gas cooking, cautioning for maximum precautions with coal and wood kitchens, the iron, the electricity, and the heaters; “The comrades,” it continued, will “take care of their homes with great care,” being particularly careful with doors, cabinets, drawers to assure their preservation and durability, and will make sure that once the Cátedra Ambulante leaves the village, the houses are completely clean.¹¹⁶

The itinerant architecture of the Cátedras Ambulantes inherently included all the material and personal resources that would be mobilized from one village to the next. It was a circulating architecture of people, objects, resources, ideas, and knowledge, strategically deployed throughout the Spanish countryside to meet the target groups. Upon arrival, trucks and trailers would be installed in the main town square or in a similarly public and central space, following the advice and indications of the local authorities, and always avoiding, as stated in the installation guidelines, to be placed in open fields and empty lots. The recurrence of the installation and reinstallation every few months prompted the design of very specific guidelines to be followed by the head of each Cátedra Ambulante and her team. There was also a protocol on how the architecture of the Cátedras Ambulantes would land and unfold in each village. Indications included how to connect the trailer’s electricity to the general street line, which had to be done by a professional electrician; how to isolate wheels from the ground using wooden wedges; how to protect the water pump in winter with a cloth; how to lock the space where the butane cylinder was installed; and how to connect the water discharge to a sewer, or through a corrugated tube to a custom-built septic tank.

Once installed, the team would have to proceed to the necessary visit and introductions to, first the local authorities—who were invited to actively participate and take responsibility over some of the activities—and later the entire population of the village—who were urged, through a bulletin posted in a visible public location, to join the first collective gathering in which the Cátedra Ambulante would be presented. This gathering generally took place in theaters, cinemas, stores, bullfighting arenas, soccer fields and bars. The Cátedra Ambulante was presented as the village’s new meeting place.

The Cátedras Ambulantes would stay a minimum of two months in each town,¹¹⁷ during which they would educate the local population on political, religious, cultural, and moral matters; provide professional training; promote best practices in nutrition and hygiene; train in writing and reading; and recover traditions and popular folklore. The staff would also provide the means and training to local teachers, who would ensure

115 Sección Femenina de F.E.T y de las J.O.N.S (1965a), 61-62. See also *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva (1956-1977)*, 71. Translated by author.

116 Sección Femenina de F.E.T y de las J.O.N.S (1965a), 57-60. See also *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva (1956-1977)*, 69. Translated by author.

117 *Una Escuela Viajera: La Cátedra Ambulante de la Sección Femenina de Huelva (1956-1977)*, 143. Translated by author.

the continuation of the educational effort once the Cátedra Ambulante left the village, and would continue to gather data on the town and its inhabitants. Furthermore, the Cátedras Ambulantes triggered urban development projects in the towns they visited, leaving a legacy of permanent transformation based on the regime’s political ends, not only in its inhabitants, but also in the built environment.

Between 1954 and 1965, the Cátedras Ambulantes reached all Spanish provinces including Rio Muni, a province of Spanish Guinea. In 1968, the number of Cátedras Ambulantes was seventy-two. In 1977, the last year of the project, Spain—which after Franco’s death in November of 1975 had started a transition from the dictatorship towards democracy—celebrated the first free general election since 1936.

From 1962 to today, the atmosphere experience by the villagers has largely changed. First was the radio, then the television; immigrants returning to the villages during their holidays and talking about what they have seen and experienced; access to communications. All this has helped to awaken the inhabitants, especially young people, and to change their mindset. There are still villages where dressmaking, craftwork classes are still successful. However, today there are new needs, and there where these new needs are not demanded, they have to be aroused. The cultural and educational level is still very low. The economic level has increased, and yet, the ignorance of the inhabitants prevents them from taking advantage of the new benefits and gives them the appropriate destination. They aim at earning and having more money to cover their basic needs, but do not feel the need for hygiene, culture, the spiritual and artistic goods.¹¹⁸

118 *Ibid.*, p.144.

02.02 Home-delivered architecture: Laboratorio di Quartiere, Urban Travelling Regeneration Workshop by Renzo Piano (Otranto, Italy, 1979)

Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, public announcement, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

The most easterly town in southern Italy, Otranto, where the country's heel touches the Adriatic, hosted the first—and the last—UNESCO Urban Travelling Regeneration Workshop, originally the Laboratorio di Quartiere, in June 1979. After a period of prolonged economic expansion—the so-called Italian “economic miracle”—the country was facing a gradual decline of its growth rates, which never again returned to its post-Second World War levels. Between 1955 and 1971, about nine million people were involved in inter-regional migration, especially in the Italian industrial triangle located in the north (Milan, Turin, and Genoa).¹¹⁹ In addition, the transport and energy infrastructure policy that Italy developed between 1950 and 1960 resulted not only in a stronger connection between cities, and its consequent growth, but also in the isolation, degradation, and abandonment of its rural areas and historical centers. The Laboratorio di Quartiere was created “to bring town centers back to life.”¹²⁰

It has been calculated that in Italy's historic city centers there are about eight million rooms either under-used or completely abandoned because they are in such poor condition,” reported an article

¹¹⁹ Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 219.

¹²⁰ “Per il recupero dei centri storici. Una proposta: il laboratorio di quartiere,” *Abitare* 178 (October, 1979), 87.

Instant city by Archigram, elevation drawing (right half) by Peter Cook, 1969. Collection du Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain du Centre, Orléans, France. Photo by Philippe Magnon.

on Otranto's Laboratorio di Quartiere published in the Italian magazine *Abitare* in October 1979.¹²¹ “In addition,” it continued, “there are millions of houses which are occupied, but urgently need extraordinary maintenance, if not real renovation.”¹²²

In response to this sociocultural and economic context, Italian architect Renzo Piano and professor Gianfranco Dioguardi—commissioned by Wolf Tochtermann, Co-President of the UNESCO-UIA Validation Council—developed the idea of a mobile laboratory, to be set up in the main center of villages and teach the population how to recover and preserve their surrounding built environment. Instead of applying the conventional techniques of renovation and conservation of buildings, which require “the occupants to move out while work is under way,” Piano and Dioguardi developed a system to “keep down costs, to avoid even temporary evacuation of the occupants by working gradually over time and thus spreading the economic burden, and to teach the population and local building workers the latest technologies, while preserving specific methods and skills drawn from the local memory and culture.”¹²³ The role of the group of experts who participated in this itinerant Laboratorio di Quartiere was, therefore, to help to diagnose, design, and control the works developed by an empowered population.

A poster exhibited in Otranto, which at the time was an old historic center inhabited by nearly 500 people, communicated the scope of this experiment in the words of mayor professor Salvatore Miggiano:

During the week of June 12 to 18 the Laboratorio di Quartiere will be assembled in the Piazza del Popolo at Otranto, to make minor interventions in the historical city center. (...) The proposal has the support of UNESCO and the CNR. The presence of the laboratory in our historic center is predominantly an experiment. The possibility of giving the experiment an unlimited value and translate it into effective conservation and renewal of housing, with the help of the necessary social services that could be housed in old buildings like the Castle, depend in large measure on our direct participation and the interest of regional and central administrations. (...) During the week in which the Laboratory stays in Otranto, a movie will be filmed for UNESCO and RAI television.¹²⁴

In June 12, 1979, a truck entered Otranto's historical center carrying a cube-shaped mobile container that, after being unloaded in Piazza del Popolo, unfolded its parts, creating a temporary working and exhibition space that would last for a week, after which it could travel to a new place. By looking at the sequence of images that show significant moments of the Laboratory's assembly, “we could not escape”—as Archigram would write about their Instant City—“the loveliness of the idea” of an itinerant structure “appearing out of nowhere, and after the ‘event’ stage, lifting up its skirts and vanishing,” a structure whose “primary interest was spontaneity, and the remaining aim to knit into any locale as effectively as possible.”¹²⁵

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ “Per il recupero dei centri storici. Una proposta: il laboratorio di quartiere,” 87.

¹²⁵ Archigram, *The Archigram Archival Project* website. Accessed March 21, 2012: <http://archigram.westminster.ac.uk/project.php?id=119>

Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, model of the mobile unit, 1979. © Fondazione Renzo Piano.

In one day, and with the collaboration of the local population, a textile roof—which owes much to the idea of the circus—already stretched over the cubic container that was organized into four sections, one in each of its sides: analysis and diagnostics, information and education, open project, and construction work.¹²⁶ Otranto's Piazza del Popolo was transformed in a classroom, but also into a congregation of bodies, a newly formed political space. In its aim to become a medium by which education and culture would land into existing and disconnected villages, the Laboratorio di Quartiere inserted itself in a genealogy of itinerant architectures that also include Archigram's work, in particular *Ideas Circus* and *Instant City*, as well as other case-studies analyzed in this thesis, among them the Misiones Pedagógicas, the Cátedras Ambulantes, and the more recent Centre Pompidou Mobile and the BMW Guggenheim Lab.

A decade before the Laboratorio di Quartiere would enter the Piazza del Popolo in Otranto, and while writing on the educational facility called *Ideas Circus* published in *Archigram* magazine 8 (1968), the architect Peter Cook had envisioned an architecture—folded in “a standard package of five or six vehicles”—that would circulate between “provincial centers, tapping local universities, bleeding-off from them personalities, documentation and such things as film of laboratory experiments; then carrying on to the next town.”¹²⁷ The *Ideas Circus*, which in Cook's words was rendered a mechanism intended to suck dry the existing resources of city centers, was as an attempt to create an accumulative information network in which the knowledge and ideas gathered and developed in each place would be shared with the next one. Bearing an inescapable, and paradoxical, resemblance to the trucks of the *Cátedras Ambulantes*, the models and drawings represent a fleet of vehicles and components that would allow to construct instant libraries, seminars, print shops and communications centers. The design of architectures enabling the circulation of information, and its particular aesthetics, was, as these projects show, the preoccupation of the architectural avant-garde as well of totalitarian regimes.

Archigram's preoccupations around the conflict between local, culturally isolated centers and the well-serviced facilities of metropolitan regions, also manifested in their *Instant City* project. “The City arrives, (...) the city stays for a limited period, (...) it then moves on to the next location,” states Archigram while describing the twelve-step protocol to be followed for the *Instant City's* development, which beautifully challenges not only the traditional concept of the city, but also of the architecture itself.¹²⁸ Developed in the same year as the *Ideas Circus*, *Instant City* is the result of an investigation on “the effect and practicality of injecting the metropolitan dynamic into these centers by means of a mobile facility carrying the information—education—entertainment services of the city.”¹²⁹ Here as well, as in Renzo Piano's project in Otranto, architecture travels to rural or disconnected areas, functioning as a form of storytelling that unfolds differently depending on the context in which it is placed, and whose meaning is constructed by the practices that take place around and within it.

126 Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, *Fondazione Renzo Piano* website. Accessed May 1, 2012: <http://rpf.ice.spill.net/project/98/otrant-urban-regeneration-workshop/genesis/>

127 Peter Cook, “*Ideas Circus*”, *Archigram* Magazine 8 (1968).

128 Archigram, *The Archigram Archival Project* website. Accessed March 21, 2012: <http://archigram.westminster.ac.uk/project.php?id=119>

129 *Ibid.*

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1 Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, information meeting between the workshop's specialists and the residents of the historic district, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

2 Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, interior of the mobile unit, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

3 Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, intervention in a domestic interior, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, intervention in a façade in the historical city center, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, intervention in a domestic interior, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

Otranto Urban Regeneration Workshop, installation of the mobile unit in the center of the city's historic district, Otranto, Italy, 1979. © Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

As these projects demonstrate, the consequences of the arrival of media technologies, such as cinema, to rural areas that thirty years before had carried the hopes for a more egalitarian relation between the village and the metropolis, were reimagined and reassessed in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Recalling the words of Archigram when writing about Instant City, “whilst much is spoken about cultural links and about the effect of television as a window on the world (and the inevitable global village), people still feel frustrated.”¹³⁰ Communications technology and the instantaneous movement of information is not enough to enhance democratization of culture, Archigram pointed out, in what might be understood as a response to McLuhan’s theories. In “most civilized countries, localities and their local cultures remain slow moving, often undernourished and sometimes resentful of the more favored metropolitan regions,” claims Archigram.¹³¹ “If only,” the group continues, with what could serve as slogan for a home-delivered traveling architecture, “we could enjoy it but stay where we are.”¹³²

In Otranto, Piano was able to materialize the unrealized aspirations of the previous generation of architects, namely Archigram and Cedric Price. Simultaneously, the diffuse architecture of the Misiones Pedagógicas and the literal architecture on wheels of the Cátedras Ambulantes take, with the Laboratorio di Quartiere, a new step forward in the entanglement between architecture and technology. The Laboratorio di Quartiere was not only a vehicle. The white sheet that in the Misiones Pedagógicas covered the existing walls evolved to become a textile roof above a cubic structure that unfolded into a series of metal grid walls. Piano designed an itinerant institution, architecture for the circulation of people, ideas, technologies and materials, and also built a traveling architectural object that occupied the main public space of the town: a mediator that had the capacity to transform the surrounding built environment. In addition, the courses, meetings, and talks delivered inside the laboratory would not only have educational purposes, but very specific architectural ones, by articulating the techniques that would be applied in the rehabilitation of the historic fabric, and the conservation and renewal of housing stocks. The urbanization and development processes, for which the Misiones Pedagógicas and the Cátedras Ambulantes were only a seed, become an intrinsic part of the Laboratorio di Quartiere project.

On June 18, 1979, a truck again entered Otranto’s historical center. This time without being caught on film, the itinerant architecture of the Laboratorio di Quartiere was set in motion again. The textile roof and the cubic unit continued on their way, leaving no traces except the knowledge and skills acquired by the population during the workshop. Similarly to other ambulant structures, easily transported and installed to temporarily occupy central public spaces and transform them into prime cultural and political sites, the ephemeral architecture of the Laboratorio di Quartiere generated a lasting common space for assembling around shared concerns, as well as permanent redevelopment of the town. In Otranto, “the city” didn’t leave; it was, rather, transformed and revalorized.

However, the Laboratorio di Quartiere did not unfold in any other context than Otranto. Despite the fact that this was not the last time

¹³⁰ Archigram, *The Archigram Archival Project* website.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

Ideas Circus by Archigram (project authors: Peter Cook and Dennis Crompton), collage and lettraset on board, 1968. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

Renzo Piano would work on the reconstruction of historical centers, the itinerant workshop did not travel to any other location. Intended to provoke a significant transformation using a minimum of matter, time, and energy, the mobile laboratory was ultimately an ephemeral dream. As the mayor of Otranto foresaw, the possibility of transforming a temporary experiment into a lasting process “depends in large measure on our direct participation and the interest of regional and central administrations.”¹³³

However, the spirit of Otranto did persist. It would have its most celebrated expression in the Centre Pompidou, a project that Piano co-authored with Richard Rogers, which would be recalled, decades later, with the unveiling of the Centre Pompidou Mobile. “Renzo Piano was an example,” said Patrick Bouchain while speaking about the traveling circus tent designed for the French institution. “He was 34 years old when he won the competition for the Pompidou, and designed a ‘building open to all uses, transformable.’” This was an “architecture that is joyful and cheerful,” Bouchain continues, noting how its “playful spirit had been forgotten.” It is surprising, Bouchain concluded, that we had to “wait for forty years to see a part of the Pompidou on the road.”¹³⁴

In the cases studies analyzed in this chapter, itinerant architecture undergoes a process of formalization: from trucks and white sheets used to cover existing walls during the Misiones Pedagógicas, to the fleet of vehicles of the Cátedras Ambulantes, and finally to the Laboratorio di Quartiere, where architecture is understood not only as a network of circulating resources, ideas, and bodies but also as a temporary and mobile building. It is in Renzo Piano’s project that the relationship between education, temporary architecture, and urban transformation is more evident; a connection that will be further inspected in the next chapters.

Instant City by Archigram, *Daily Express*, front and back pages, 1968. The Archigram Archival Project, University of Westminster.

03.

Portable Agoras

¹³³ “Per il recupero dei centri storici. Una proposta: il laboratorio di quartiere,” 87.

¹³⁴ Transcript from Pauline Cathala and Nicolas Valode (Directors), *Pompidou mobile: Un projet architectural, muséographique et culturel*, video min 02:13 - 04:20. Musée national d’art moderne / Centre de création industrielle, Service audiovisuel du Centre Pompidou, Centre Pompidou / SCEREN/CNDP/CRDP, 2012. Translated by author. Accessed June 2, 2016: https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/ressource.action?param.id=FR_R-417a46cd-679d6a13e88765a997aee83c¶m.idSource=FR_E-2b4cbe1f48411e291ce4e114b8db6

03. PORTABLE AGORAS

03.01 Global democratic imaginaries: the Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, 2005.

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "Outside view, Pneumatic Parliament," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "Applications, Pneumatic Parliament," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

In 2005, Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen presented a proposal for a Pneumatic Parliament at the exhibition "Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy," curated by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel at the ZKM Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe. The project consisted in a transparent and inflatable parliament building to be dropped from a cargo plane to any grounds, able to create, "in a mere one-and-a-half hours, a protective shell for parliamentary meetings," and, additionally, within the space of twenty-four hours, an interior ambience that "can be made as comfortable as an agora."¹³⁵

In the decades since 1992, a year marked by the start of the Bosnian War, an increasing number of foreign interventions aimed at reshaping post-conflict societies. The outcome of the military interventions carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo, alongside the effects on the 9/11 attack on U.S. foreign policy and military strategy, boosted self-confidence in the capacity, legitimacy, and urgency of the

¹³⁵ The two primary sources of information connected to the Pneumatic Parliament and used in this thesis are: Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, "Pneumatic Parliament," *G-I-O* website. Accessed May 1, 2012. Translated by author: <http://g-i-o.com/pp1.htm>. And also Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, "Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament," in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Centre for Art and Media, 2005).

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "The Pneumatic Parliament is dropped from a transport aircraft," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "The Pneumatic Parliament's module lands with a parachute," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "Inflating the Pneumatic Parliament," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

The Pneumatic Parliament by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Haegen, "The Pneumatic Parliament installed," Global Instant Objects, 2005. © GIO.

international community—led by the U.S. and its allies—to intervene to protect civilian populations from mass atrocities and terrorism, and to create stable democratic governments in foreign countries. “With the right strategy, resources, and confidence,” policymakers believed, “a state could be built almost everywhere.”¹³⁶

The Pneumatic Parliament is a critical reaction to that culture of intervention and nation-building projects, in particular the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, which ignore the actual context in which these operations took place. The project sees the parliament as the ultimate symbol of Western democracies and the architecture that houses the legislative body of government, or as the project states, the “holy symbol of the Western crusades against the so-called ‘regimes’.”¹³⁷

This pneumatic structure for parliamentary assemblies travels through the air, detached from the physical and sociocultural ground, until it reaches its final destination. Then, the Pneumatic Parliament, which is folded in a module resistant to impact and attached to a parachute, is dropped in, emulating the delivery of humanitarian aid. An image that, inevitably, also resembles the technologies and forms of intervention associated to the global so-called “War on Terror,” such as drone warfare—a remote-controlled war carried out on the name of democracy, founded on the rhetoric of the lawlessness, remoteness and insecurity of the territories of terrorist hideouts, and the consequent need for an alternative to the deployment of troops on the ground.¹³⁸

Once it lands, the Pneumatic Parliament automatically unfolds, and inflates with the assistance of a DC fan blower connected to photovoltaic cells and a charge controller, shaping up to become a shiny dome. With minimum internal adjustments, the architecture of this “instant democracy” is ready to function and be occupied by a maximum of one hundred and sixty representatives.¹³⁹ The interior of the Pneumatic Parliament is kept at constant slight overpressure, ensured by a pneumatic lock-up. Thus, despite its transparent bivalve outer skin, this traveling structure is independent from its context, creating an immediate segregation between those who are inside are able to participate in policymaking and decision processes, and those affected by these decisions and kept outside the structure. The structure is also self-sufficient in terms of energy supply and climate control, and includes cooling systems and mechanisms that regulate air temperature and the possible effects of solar radiation with a highly insulating effect.

With this project, Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen shed light on the narratives compiled in nation-building manuals and their strategies for the dissemination of Western political culture. The conditions of isolation in which the Pneumatic Parliament thrives resemble the premises around which nation-builders develop their programs of democratization in foreign countries, sheltered in highly guarded com-

pounds—such as the so-called Green Zone in Baghdad—and developing policies and taking decisions that often ignore local tradition and history, and disregard “the practical details of local politics in the name of universal (and often contradictory) models.”¹⁴⁰ The Pneumatic Parliament triggers reflections on the general and universal theories of nation-building, such as those compiled in *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building*. Published in 2007 by the biggest think-tank in the U.S., RAND Corporation, this “practical how-to manual” provides a series of guidelines for the “conduct of effective nation-building” to be applied almost on every country.¹⁴¹ Taking this ethos to an extreme, the Pneumatic Parliament is designed as a device capable of delivering instant democracy in any post-conflict situation, being the color of the air inside the structure, the only country-specific parameter that could be adjusted for each country; an aestheticized democratic atmosphere.

In fact, Sloterdijk’s contention, which he articulates as “atmospheric politics” is that Western democracy, from the *polis* to the parliamentary chambers, has depended on artificial conditions enabling political assemblies and cohabitation. What the early philosophers named *polis*, Sloterdijk claims, could be defined as an “artificial construct ruled by *nomos*.”¹⁴² He continues to point out how the public sphere “is not just the effect of people assembling but in fact goes back to the construction of a space to contain them and in which the assembled personas are first able to assemble.”¹⁴³ The Pneumatic Parliament, thus, is more than a sarcastic representation of Western democracies’ claims of exporting their own political models and representative technology to other states of the world, but a reflection on the very nature of the Western construction of the public sphere.

The construction of these conditions and spaces of assembly is mediated and facilitated by particular agents. The Pneumatic Parliament serves as a simultaneously fictional and real representation of how institutions generally develop nation-building projects, in collaboration with a limited number of foreign contractors, who take control of the process with no interaction with local agencies and entities. Matching these type of procedures, the Pneumatic Parliament creates a fictional set of companies and institutions through which the project would be implemented: the International Society of Development and Democracy Equipment (ISDDE) was commissioned as prime contractor, with the logistics, marketing, and economic development of the Pneumatic Parliament. The architecture and engineering would be developed by G-I-O Global Instant Objects. Based on its fictional developers’ claims, the Pneumatic Parliament forecast an expanding market for their product in twenty to thirty years from its release. As per their expectations, eighty to one hundred countries will become part of their clientele.¹⁴⁴ Among them, so-called “failed states” that while might not be not ready for the full parliamentary experience, are equally targeted: the project acknowledges

¹³⁶ Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, *Can Intervention Work?* (London and New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2011), xi. See also chapter 2, “The Rise and Fall of Liberal Imperialism.”

¹³⁷ Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, “Pneumatic Parliament,” *G-I-O* website. Also available in Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, “Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament” in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Centre for Art and Media, 2005), 952-57.

¹³⁸ See Marina Otero Verzier, “Spaces of Exception.” *Drone. Unmanned, Architecture and Security Series*. Issue #01 Ethel Baraona Pohl, Marina Otero, Malkit Shoshan (eds.) (Barcelona: dpr-barcelona, 2016).

¹³⁹ Instant Democracy is a term used by Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, in their essay “Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament.”

¹⁴⁰ Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, *Can Intervention Work?*, xvii, xviii.

¹⁴¹ James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane and Beth Cole DeGrasse, *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007). Accessed June 4, 2016: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG557.html>.

¹⁴² Peter Sloterdijk, “Dyed-in-the-Wool Citizens. Atmospheric Politics,” in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Centre for Art and Media, 2005), 946.

¹⁴³ Peter Sloterdijk, “Dyed-in-the-Wool Citizens. Atmospheric Politics,” 948

¹⁴⁴ Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, “Pneumatic Parliament,” *G-I-O* website. See also Peter Sloterdijk and Gesa Mueller von der Hagen, “Instant Democracy: The Pneumatic Parliament,” 952.

Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal, "New World Embassy: Rojava," preliminary design of the temporary embassy of Rojava in the Oslo City Hall, surrounded by the universalist symbols of stars and flags from the autonomous Rojava region, commissioned by the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016. © Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal, 2016.

Reichstag, New German Parliament by Foster+Partners, sketches, Berlin, 1992 – 1999. © Foster+Partners.

Reichstag, New German Parliament by Foster+Partners, exterior view, Berlin, 1992 – 1999. © Foster+Partners.

Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal, "New World Summit – Rojava," design of the new public parliament and surrounding park in the city of Derik, commissioned by the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava, (Northern Syria), 2015-16. © Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal.

"Volkshalle, Halle des deutschen Volkes" (German people's hall), by Albert Speer, model of the Great Dome, 1939, (unbuilt).

the possibility of a second market for the Pneumatic Parliament, in what they call "Demotainment," or theme parks for civic entertainment, dedicated to different forms of governments including democracy, monarchy, aristocracy, and outright tyranny.¹⁴⁵ As this thesis discusses, theme parks are actually one of the common destinations where traveling architectures enjoy a second life.

One of the devices that facilitates the transference between parliamentary experience and the theme park is architecture. The selection of the dome as the architectural element defining the Pneumatic Parliament allows a reflection about how architectural form, and domes in particular, have been long associated with and mobilized in the construction of political assembly and spaces for entertainment, in itinerant and temporary environments as well as permanent ones.

The Pneumatic Parliament inscribes itself in a lineage that includes very different political ideals and forms of government, from Albert Speer's unbuilt Volkshalle to Norman Foster's Reichstag. The latter, a representation of a contemporary imaginary of the German democratic process, takes the form of a transparent dome through which people ascend above their representatives in the chamber. For Bruno Latour, this symbolic gesture of constructing "a transparent dome—in effect, fully opaque—as Foster did, doesn't seem nearly enough to absorb the new masses that are entering political arenas," a claim that is also implicit in Sloterdijk's project.¹⁴⁶

Instead, Latour articulates the concept of new political assemblies, different "forums and agoras in which we speak, vote, decide, are decided upon, prove, are being convinced," and compares its speech machineries, procedures, its forms of inclusion and exclusion, and the architectures and matters of concern that bring people together; furthermore, he expands on how parliaments – with a small "p" – could be enlarged, connected, modified, or redrawn.¹⁴⁷ A parliament, in this object-oriented conception, is, according to Latour, "a technical term for 'making things public', among many other forms of producing voices and connections among people."¹⁴⁸ For Latour, assembling "is no longer done under the already existing globe or dome of some earlier tradition of building virtual parliaments" and "no longer limited to properly speaking parliaments."¹⁴⁹ Paradoxically, in all these different forums and possible assemblages, the dome seems to retain its relevance as an architecture for alternative political assemblies, even for a stateless democracy, as in the case of the parliament that the artistic and political organization New World Summit, an organization founded by artist Jonas Staal, is building since 2014 in collaboration with the revolutionary autonomous self-government of Rojava, West Kurdistan in Northern Syria. A stateless parliament for a stateless democracy for which Staal "approached ideology as a morphology," taking the form of the *agora* of ancient Greece as a form "to be performed."¹⁵⁰ The New World Summit opposes "the misuse of the concept of democracy for

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Karlsruhe, Germany: ZKM/Centre for Art and Media, 2005), 21

¹⁴⁷ Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," 21

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁰ Jonas Staal, "IDEOLOGY = FORM," *e-flux journal* #69, January 2016. Accessed July 22, 2016: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/ideology-form/>

Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal, "New World Summit - Rojava," public arriving for the celebration of the new public parliament and surrounding park in the city of Derik, commissioned by the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava, (Northern Syria), 2015-16. Photo Ernie Buts. © Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal.

Reichstag, New German Parliament by Foster+Partners, interior view, Berlin, 1992 - 1999. © Foster+Partners.

expansionist, military and colonial gains to which the organization refers as "democratism," offering the so-called "War on Terror" as one of its examples—tracing a common line of concern with the ultimate aim that drives the project of the Pneumatic Parliament—, and "explores the field of art as a space to re-imagine and act upon a fundamental practice of democracy."¹⁵¹ The practice of stateless democracy, nevertheless, occupies, appropriates and recodifies the architectural forms long associated with the construction of the nation-state while defining a new set of procedures for the articulation of speech. As such, Rojava's parliament is designed as a public communal space, organized around a series of metallic arches supporting three partial, fragmented domes that overlap avoiding the construction of a perfect hemisphere, and which protect from the elements but are open in all of its sides, allowing air to circulate freely—avoiding Sloterdijk's notion of parliaments as hermetically sealed environments. Similarly, the floor plan is shaped to privilege communal discussions rather than focal conversations. In addition to the dome, The New World Summit embraces the idea of pop-up parliaments, which we have seen in Sloterdijk's project, by building temporary "alternative parliaments" that host stateless, blacklisted, parliamentary excluded political organizations inside cultural institutions and public spaces around the world, including in Berlin, Germany (2012); Leiden, the Netherlands (2012); Kochi, India (2013); Brussels, Belgium (2014); Rojava, West-Kurdistan, Northern Syria (2015), and Utrecht, the Netherlands (2016).

The Pneumatic Parliament shares the promise encapsulated in other traveling architectures: in exchange for an occupation of sociocultural, economic, and political environments and taking advantage of their existing resources, these institutions provide local populations with access to knowledge, culture, information, entertainment and, in this case, Western values in the form of democracy.

However, as Latour wonders while discussing how UNESCO literature portrays a world that "aspires to become one under the aegis of democracy, transparent representation and the rule of law," what would happen if "every time this inflatable parliament was being dropped in, many other voices were raised: "No politics, please!", "No representation!", "Not with you", "No democracy, thanks", "Would you please stay as far away as possible?", "Leave us alone", "I'd rather not", "I prefer my king."¹⁵²

This thesis further explores how itinerant architecture participates in the construction of gatherings and assemblies where agreements, disputes, and passionate discussions around, as Latour would put it, "matters that matter," take place.¹⁵³ It analyzes what are the political implications of these assemblages. In particular, the project of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, a traveling parliament with no walls, or air-conditioning, where the architecture of the political chamber becomes the entire city, constitutes a case study through which to reflect on how the democratic imaginaries that are critically portrayed in the Pneumatic Parliament are embedded in the agendas, instrumentalized, and materi-

¹⁵¹ *New World Summit*. Accessed June 12, 2016: <http://newworldsummit.eu/about/>. See also *New World Academy Reader #5: Stateless Democracy*, Renée In der Maur and Jonas Staal in dialogue with Dilar Dirik, eds (Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, 2015).

¹⁵² Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," 62, referring to a Isabelle Stengers, "The Cosmopolitical Proposal," in the same volume, chapter 15.

¹⁵³ Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," 16.

alized in the architectures of global cultural institutions. The aim of this thesis, thus, is to explore what are the instruments, material infrastructure, behavioral patterns, management mechanisms, and technologies of inclusion and exclusion—the architectures—of these parliaments, assemblies of bodies and places “where people meet to discuss their matters of concern.”¹⁵⁴ These are not hermetically sealed chambers, but rather public spaces where “the political” takes different forms.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

03.02 Itinerant architecture and participatory processes: the mobile pavilion of the BMW Guggenheim Lab (New York, Berlin, Mumbai), 2011-2013

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow, New York, 2011. © Paul Warchol/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

In 2011, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which has previously been associated with the creation of landmark museum buildings—from Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1959 headquarters on New York’s Fifth Avenue to Frank Gehry’s 1997 Guggenheim Bilbao Museum—in-augurated a new piece of architecture that, in contrast to the preceding works, was not intended to last. The building for the New York BMW Guggenheim Lab, designed by Atelier Bow-Wow, was a temporary and mobile structure, or rather, a pop-up gathering space located in an East Village lot, the First Park on Houston Street at 2nd Avenue. Typically associated with commercial enterprises, pop-up structures have been used by companies to test concepts and brands without the need to make a long-term commitment, and by developers to find temporary uses for an empty and otherwise unprofitable site. The BMW Guggenheim Lab represented the first initiative of a major New York museum to develop a pop-up strategy for cultural purposes.¹⁵⁵ With the sponsorship of luxury carmaker BMW and the support from the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, the Guggenheim Foundation, at the same time, laid the foundations for an alternative role of contemporary museums within society.

¹⁵⁵ The MoMA has organized important temporary exhibition houses since 1949, when Marcel Breuer set up the “House in a Museum Garden”. However, these temporary structures were built inside the museum.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow behind closed gates at night, New York, 2011. © Paul Warcol/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

Over 53 days, the New York BMW Guggenheim Lab offered fifty-eight talks, forty-eight workshops, twenty-eight screenings, twenty-four special events, twenty-one excursions, and nine fieldwork sessions, aiming to explore urban issues and strategies relating to the theme of *Confronting Comfort*.¹⁵⁶ All these programs and events, free and open to the public, attracted 54,000 visitors from sixty countries, and 329,000 users from more than one hundred and fifty countries to the Lab’s website.¹⁵⁷ On October 16, 2011, the BMW Guggenheim Lab closed in New York and started its long-term commitment:

During a six-year run, which will conclude in late 2016, the BMW Guggenheim Lab will travel to nine cities in three successive cycles, each with its own distinct theme and architectural structure, to help raise awareness of important urban challenges and yield sustainable benefits for cities around the world. Berlin is the next stop for the Lab, in late spring 2012, to be followed by Mumbai in late 2012.¹⁵⁸

While the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s structure vacated the First Park in New York, its legacy remained, and its debates, discussions, and informal talks gave rise to the proposal for a new Arts Community Park—initially funded by BMW—that would continue the participatory spirit of the Lab. This was an initiative that likely answered one of the questions that the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation posed at the event “Whose Park Is It? Financing and Administering New York’s New Parks”—“In an era of budget cuts and declining revenues, how is the city paying for its new parks?”¹⁵⁹

I. The mobile laboratory

The New York BMW Guggenheim Lab was not a museum, but a “combination of think tank, public forum, and community center” whose aim was to explore the challenges of today’s cities.¹⁶⁰ In recent years, these labels have been adopted by public and private organizations in order to emphasize an innovative and collaborative approach to their work, while the term “Lab” introduced the idea of an experimental research more than a goal-oriented process.

Inaugurating a new phase in the Guggenheim Foundation’s global strategy, this “mobile laboratory travelling around the world to inspire innovative ideas for urban life” did not aspire to become a site, or a new headquarters.¹⁶¹ Instead, it was an off-site program, an extension of the Guggenheim Museum and its architecture, to be tested and set up in new and different environments, in the spirit of the Misiones Pedagógicas

¹⁵⁶ “BMW Guggenheim Lab Ends Successful New York City Run with More than 300,000 Participants from Around the World,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, October 28, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2011: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/4311-bglnyclosing>.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ “BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens In New York,” First Park News, *City of New York Parks & Recreation* website. Accessed August 8, 2011: <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/M124/dailyplant/22478>.

¹⁶⁰ “BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens Aug 3 in New York, Launching Six-Year Worldwide Tour,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, August 2, 2011. Accessed August 2, 2011: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/4200-bglaug2>.

¹⁶¹ “BMW Guggenheim Lab,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed October 7, 2011. <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/>

and Federico García Lorca's Barraca, but boosted by multi-million sponsorships.¹⁶² The museum, "taking its commitment to education, scholarship, and design innovation one step further," went beyond its limits to inspire ideas for urban life.¹⁶³ Thus—following a tradition in all major major New York City museums—the word "architecture" was not used in the initiative's title, to avoid a specialized character in favour of implying a general knowledge for a general audience.¹⁶⁴ In addition, questions regarding the material construction of the city were superseded in order to place the emphasis on the practice of "urban life," or rather, on "lifestyle."¹⁶⁵

II. The Neo-Globalism ¹⁶⁶

"Global institutions are increasingly interested in engaging with the urban reality. Aware of the challenges that accompany rapid urbanization, they have the power and reach to develop solutions to them. But how does a global entity become involved in local practices to address public problems? To what extent are global actors capable of dealing with specific issues?"¹⁶⁷

In 2009 the BMW Group, ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, launched a call for proposals in order to celebrate forty years of its international cultural program with a project inclusive to topics such as sustainability and the city. The Guggenheim Foundation's entry would become the BMW Guggenheim Lab, a network of institutions and individuals with clearly distinct aims and responsibilities.

For the Guggenheim Foundation, whose commitment to the discipline of architecture has been more focused on the construction of buildings that in its exhibitions, it was an opportunity to make the museum engage with the city, and to strengthen the role of architecture and urban design in its program. The exhibition, *Frank Lloyd Wright: From Within Outward*—organized in 2009 in order to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Guggenheim and awarded Best Architecture/Design Show for 2008-2009 by the International Association of Art Critics United States (AICA-USA)—represented a turning point in the Museum's ambitions. Following the success achieved by the exhibition, the curatorial team—María Nicanor and David van der Leer—would propose a further

¹⁶² The inspiration in the Misiones Pedagógicas and Lorca's Barraca was confirmed in a conversation with BMW Guggenheim Lab curator María Nicanor.

¹⁶³ "BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens Aug 3 in New York, Launching Six-Year Worldwide Tour," press release, *Guggenheim* website, August 2, 2011.

¹⁶⁴ "For instance, I almost never use the word architecture in the show's title (e.g. Light Construction, Tall Buildings, etc.) as I think it implies specialized rather than general knowledge." Terence Riley et al "Exhibiting Architecture: The Praxis Questionnaire for Architectural Curators," in *Praxis*. 7 (2005): 116.

¹⁶⁵ The term "lifestyle" was coined by Austrian psychoanalyst Alfred Adler: "We see a style of life under certain conditions of environment and it is our task to analyze its exact relationship to the existing circumstances in as much as mind changes with alteration of the environment," explained Adler in 1929. Alfred Adler, *The science of living* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1930), 98.

¹⁶⁶ Neo-Globalism is a term used by Elma van Boxel and Kristian Koreman of ZUS [Zones Urbaines Sensibles] to describe the forces and possibilities of global initiatives for urban causes. "Neo-Globalism: An Introduction to Week 3 at the Lab by ZUS," *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed December 2, 2011. http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/whats-happening/calendar/past-newyork-lab-events/event/neo-globalism?instance_id=519.

¹⁶⁷ "Neo-Globalism: An Introduction to Week 3 at the Lab by ZUS," *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website.

course of action to promote architectural debate inside the institution.¹⁶⁸ With the Guggenheim’s agenda shaped by different forces, topics and interests, the idea of organizing off-site architectural exhibitions gained strength, and the participatory-based model became an effective means to legitimate the institution as a real forum for ideas. As van der Leer stated:

It is more and more essential for museums to bring their architecture and design programming out of the confines of the gallery’s white box and into the realities of everyday urban life. The BMW Guggenheim Lab allows us to zoom out from the design fields to a more expansive, post-disciplinary view of the city, and then back in again on the problems, challenges, and chances offered by urban landscapes around the world.¹⁶⁹

This strategy resulted in various projects, such as the audio-tours of city neighborhoods, Stillspotting NYC, and the BMW Guggenheim Lab. While the former sought to identify, create, or temporarily transform the city’s landscape, the Lab aimed leave behind permanent improvements to the city-owned lot where it was to be placed, through the paving of the park, the replacement of sidewalks, and the construction of new wrought-iron fencing and gates. Thus, the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s experiment became not only—as Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg put it—“an opportunity for New Yorkers to connect and share ideas,” but also a mechanism for private investment to take part in the construction of public space.¹⁷⁰

Beyond the aforementioned major institutions, other agents were involved in the BMW Guggenheim Lab. The project’s New York team included an inventor, a journalist, an environmental justice activist, and an architecture duo, all of which led “an investigation into innovative concepts and designs for city life in response to the theme *Confronting Comfort*.”¹⁷¹ In addition, there was an Advisory Committee of renowned experts from various disciplines, including Daniel Barenboim (conductor and pianist, Argentina), Elizabeth Diller (architect, U.S.), Nicholas Humphrey (theoretical psychologist, U.K.), Muchadeyi Ashton Masunda (mayor of Harare, Zimbabwe), Enrique Peñalosa (former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia), Juliet Schor (economist and professor of sociology, U.S.), Rirkrit Tiravanija (artist, Thailand), Wang Shi (entrepreneur, China).

A particular understanding and representation of urban reality, its problematic present, and its future, would arise from this multifaceted and heterogeneous group of institutions, curators and advisors, in a collective effort that was intended not just to enrich the experiment, but to dissolve the prominence of the possible market forces.

The theme *Confronting Comfort* that lead the inaugural BMW Guggenheim Lab discussion, which would also characterize the first cycle of the initiative, was defined differently depending on the diverse team

¹⁶⁸ María Nicanor, Assistant Curator, Architecture, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Personal conversation held in New York, September 2011.

¹⁶⁹ “Guggenheim Foundation and BMW Group Announce a Major New Global Initiative. BMW Guggenheim Lab,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, October 1, 2010. Accessed October 1, 2010: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/3730-bmwguggenheimlabrelease>

¹⁷⁰ “BMW Guggenheim Lab Opens Aug 3 in New York, Launching Six-Year Worldwide Tour,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, August 2, 2011.

¹⁷¹ “Roberta’s to operate pop-up cafe at BMW Guggenheim Lab in New York City’s East Village, August 3–October 16, 2011,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, August 2, 2011. Accessed August 2, 2011. <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/4200-bglaug2>.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow, Pfefferberg complex, Berlin, 2012. © Christian Richters /Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow, New York, 2011. © Marcelo López-Dinardi.

member’s interests. Thus, *Confronting Comfort* triggered discussions on “segrification” (a simultaneous process of urban segregation and gentrification) and its relationship to urban politics, the infrastructural challenges of waste and water in the city, the practice of democracy as a part of our daily life, and the link between urban design, emotions, and human behaviour. Lectures, workshops, and discussions were combined with screenings, yoga classes, and participatory games.¹⁷² The BMW Guggenheim Lab became a live handbook of how to survive in our cities, or rather, how to survive in the public space of the city today. Private modes of inhabitation and the quality of indoor spaces were never challenged, as neither were conditions of lighting, ventilation, and hygiene, effectively mobilizing an idea of city that would end with the border of our private environment, or if, as Walter Benjamin suggested while theorizing Modernity, the street would have become “a true dwelling.”¹⁷³

III. The aesthetics of participation

The architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab did not have doors or windows. It voluntarily renounced those features that generally define a traditional architectural interior space, such as walls—the protection against natural forces—and climate control systems. The Lab could be seen not as a piece of architecture but, rather, as a representation of a contemporary ideal principle for architecture. In this context, the “forward-looking” structure of the Lab was not all that far removed from the image of Marc-Antoine Laugier’s primitive hut as an abstract concept of architecture as much as its material construction. “A building of free-standing columns carrying an entablature needs no doors or windows,” Laugier argued in his *Essay on Architecture*, “but, being open on all sides, it is uninhabitable.”¹⁷⁴ The BMW Guggenheim Lab was placed between two existing buildings, which constituted the Lab’s counterpart and the limits of two of its sides. The Lab was not an inside but an outside, a public space in which to confront comfort, or—in the words of the Guggenheim Foundation—a “present-day version of the Mediterranean loggia.”¹⁷⁵

The BMW Guggenheim Lab was not only an open structure but also a mobile one. The ambition of the Lab was to become a piece of stage machinery, a fly loft that housed a “flexible rigging system wrapped in a semitransparent mesh” that was capable of magically transforming an urban void into an gathering space. This interest in the transformative aspects of the architecture drew from the concept of behaviorology in which the architects, Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kajima from Atelier Bow-Wow, saw a means of reinforcing the participation of the individual in the configuration of the space. The architecture becomes, then, an

¹⁷² For a detailed explanation of the events, see the BMW Guggenheim Lab Calendar: <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/whats-happening/calendar/past-new-york-lab-events?reset=1>.

¹⁷³ Walter Benjamin, “The Return of the Flâneur”, (1929), trans. Rodney Livingstone, *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings*, vol.2, 1927-1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.:Belknap,1999), 263-264.

¹⁷⁴ Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, tr. Wolfgang and Anni Herrmann (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1977), 32.

¹⁷⁵ “BMW Guggenheim Lab: Architecture,” *Guggenheim* website. Accessed October 7, 2011: <http://www.guggenheim.org/guggenheim-foundation/collaborations/bmw-guggenheim/architecture>.

infrastructure, a device that can be used and transformed, “giving back a sense of autonomy of special practice to citizens.”¹⁷⁶

This type of exploration has been generally related to architecture practices of the 1960s and early 1970s that called for flexibility, public participation, interaction with technologies and transformable environments, refusing any understanding of architecture as a fixed material. Apparatus of environmental effect, screens, moving units, prefabricated and changeable components and feedback mechanisms such as games transformed the space into a laboratory or, rather, a popular theatre. The *Fun Palace* by Cedric Price, or in a built example, the Centre Pompidou by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, illustrate this search for an architecture that engages with social and political questions through a radical confidence on structure and technology. The *Fun Palace* project, as Mary Louise Lobsinger suggests, was “a free-wheeling exploration arising from a cross-disciplinary committee that entertained extreme notions of what a building might be and how or why it was necessary to educate the masses for a new technological culture.”¹⁷⁷ In the case of the Centre Pompidou, as Jean Baudrillard notes, all these searches culminated in “the ultimate gesture toward translation of an unnamable structure: that of social relations consigned to a system of surface ventilation (animation, self-regulation, information, media).”¹⁷⁸ Paradoxically, the humanistic approach towards a more flexible and transformative space mobilized in search of a more democratic space creates, as the analysis of the Lab unveils, a bureaucratic and controlled environment.

The Centre Pompidou and the *Fun Palace* differ in another important aspect, which also define the character of the BMW Guggenheim Lab: temporality. While Price claimed that “the structure should stand only as long as it was successfully useful,” the Centre Pompidou still stands in the center of Paris.¹⁷⁹

IV. Domesticating environments

A group of activists led by John Penley protest gentrification at the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York, August 2011.
© 2007-2016 Laura Goggin Photography.

On August 6, 2011, a group of activists broke into the BMW Guggenheim Lab and protested against gentrification, arguing that the exhibit failed to address the needs of the community, and questioning if the Lab was really connected to the space that it occupied. The history of the museum is the history of the appropriation of otherness representing its authenticity.¹⁸⁰ Although the increasingly complex means of presentation of cultural artifacts are changing the museum’s experience and the conditions of display, museums still transform objects and agents of cultural difference into commodities.

And yet, the BMW Guggenheim Lab was not a museum. It did not have an exhibition gallery or rooms where a particular accumulation of

176 “Yoshiharu Tsukamoto,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed December 2, 2011: http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/whats-happening/calendar/past-new-york-lab-events/event/yoshiharu-tsukamoto?instance_id=488.

177 May Louise Lobsinger, “Cybernetic Theory and the Architecture of Performance: Cedric Price’s *Fun Palace*,” in Sarah Williams Goldhagen, and Rejean Legault, eds., *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 133.

178 Baudrillard, Jean (1982) ‘The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence’, Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson (tr.), *October* 20 (Spring, 1982), 3

179 Lobsinger, “Cybernetic Theory and the Architecture of Performance,” 128.

180 See Gyan Prakash, “Museum Matters”, in *The End(s) of the Museum* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1996), 53-66.

“BMW Guggenheim Lab Tuesday Night: Confronting Comfort on Houston Street,” opening party at the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York, August 2011. Images posted by Bob Arihood on July 31st, 2011, *Neither more nor less* blog.

knowledge was displayed. On the contrary, it created a website, a blog, and set up a space where to receive specific information from different professionals. Rather than a container, the BMW Guggenheim Lab was a context of social relations, and those digital platforms—blog and website—were storehouses and the places where the practices of urban life were conserved and exhibited. In this respect, the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s curators, María Nicanor and David van der Leer, argued: “Our greatest resource in reimagining urban space is right beneath our noses—the people.”¹⁸¹

Being “people” the intended structure of the Lab, and once sent back to the institutional space of the museum, the more radical means to engage with the public space, our body and our ideas, and its performance through local communities and collective actions might come to be officially validated, categorized, and reproduced.

V. The uncompromising vision of the architecture

In this domestication of the environment, the architecture of the structure takes a prominent role. The mobile and transformative architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, described as “lightweight and compact, with a structural skeleton built of carbon fiber,” can find its place in dense areas, existing interiors, or rather, become a “traveling toolbox” that can be transported from city to city.¹⁸² In fact, as the Lab’s team declared, this portable structure is the only element of the BMW Guggenheim Lab that lasts but does not remain in any place:

“One of the most exciting parts about this project will be to watch the different faces that the Lab takes on as it moves from city to city. Though the physical structure will remain the same for the first three cities, its relatively naked, unassuming aesthetic is no accident: the personality of the Lab will ultimately be defined by what happens inside and around it.”¹⁸³

While the architecture moves forward to the next city, a newly formed community remains. Thus, the temporal and vanishing condition of the BMW Guggenheim Lab reveals the role of its architecture as a powerful transformative agent of change, even if it does not last, even if it—as in a magic trick—disappears leaving only its effect and its memories. In this context, we should question whether the architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab is that “unassuming” and ephemeral structure, or if it is instead its physical effects on the environment.

In 2010, Japanese firm Junya Ishigami + Associates was awarded the Golden Lion for best project at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition People meet in architecture, directed by Kazuyo Sejima, and organized by the Biennale di Venezia, chaired by Paolo Baratta. The installation *Architecture as Air: study for Château la Coste*, built out of thin and delicate carbon fiber pillars, collapsed hours after the

181 “New York Conclusions,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed December 2, 2011: http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/whats-happening/calendar/past-new-york-lab-events/event/bmwguggenheim-labanother-analysis?instance_id=638.

182 “Architecture,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed October 7, 2011: <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab/architecture>.

183 Christine McLaren, “Less Talking, more making as the Lab takes its next Step,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website, November 14, 2011. Accessed November 17, 2011: <http://blog.bmwguggenheimlab.org/2011/11/less-talking-more-making-as-the-lab-takes-its-next-step/>

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow and SDM Architects, satellite pavilion, Bollywood-inspired painting by Balkrishna Vaidya during one of the activities of the Lab, Mahim Beach, Mumbai, 2013. © UnCommonSense/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow and SDM Architects, satellite pavilion, Battiboy Compound, Mumbai, 2013. © UnCommonSense/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

opening of the press preview on August 26. Nevertheless, the international jury acknowledged “the unique and uncompromising vision of its author,” Junya Ishigami, as it “pushes the limits of materiality, visibility, tectonics, thinness, and ultimately of architecture itself.”¹⁸⁴ Once the installation had unintentionally collapsed, what the visitors found were the almost invisible ruins of an architecture that, aiming to blur the limiting boundaries between space and structure, gave prominence to the surrounding environment: not only a group of interested and simultaneously confused people, but also the impressive presence of the Venetian Corderie dell’Arsenale’s spatial order. The architecture, then, materialized not only as a framework for social interaction—the place where “people meet in architecture”—but as the image of the political, economic and cultural structures of the power that shaped what was once the largest center of pre-industrial production in the world.

Behind the search for fragility in architecture, which is arguably “against traditional mentality or monumentality,” and the dynamics of creation and destruction that defines the architecture of installations and temporary pavilions—such as those commissioned by the Serpentine Gallery in London—there is the assumption that, as Jean Baudrillard pointed out while writing on the “Beaubourg-Effect,” “our age will no longer be one of duration, (and) our only temporal mode is that of the accelerated cycle and of recycling: the time of transistors and fluid flow.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, the power and success of exhibitions, installations, and temporary pavilion seems to be in their ephemeral condition that, simultaneously, attests to the relationship between architecture and capitalist forces. This might be the price that architecture has to pay in order to remain relevant.

In the case of the itinerant BMW Guggenheim Lab, however, architecture has found a way to survive its devastation. In the Lab, architecture has been able to become temporal without being ephemeral, and to become permanent despite not remaining in place. Architecture altered the First Park, which will no longer be “a dilapidated pile of rat-infested rubble that neighbors described as a dark and depressing void.”¹⁸⁶ Cleaned up, paved, enclosed and, after the Lab’s closure and departure, managed by the community members, the lot has been transformed into a structured public park.

This is a double achievement. On the one hand, architecture learned, by adopting the mobile and dynamic condition of capitalist forces, how to achieve a global impact through an impermanent structure; on the other hand, the structures of power have been able to make use of architectural strategies to affect the cultural, social, and political environment. In this context, we should question whether the unassuming architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab questions the monumental buildings promoted by the Guggenheim Foundation or, on the contrary, if it supports dialogue with them. Ultimately, the BMW Guggenheim Lab still raises a variety of questions:

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow and SDM Architects, satellite pavilion, Priyadarshini Park, Mumbai, 2012. © UnCommonSense/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

184 “Official Awards of the 12th Int. Architecture Exhibition,” *La Biennale di Venezia* website. Accessed December 2, 2011: <http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/news/arch-awards.html>.

185 Baudrillard, Jean (1982) ‘The Beaubourg Effect: Implosion and Deterrence’, Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson (tr.), *October* 20 (Spring, 1982): 5.

186 Christine McLaren, “What’s next? First Street Green and the future of First Park,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website, December 9, 2011. Accessed December 13, 2011: <http://blog.bmwguggenheimlab.org/2011/12/whats-next-first-street-green-and-the-future-of-first-park/>

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow, section, 2011. © Atelier Bow-Wow.

Can architecture and adequate urban infrastructures promote, enhance, and develop personal and collective growth at a physical and intellectual level, specifically by encouraging involvement with urban systems? And how can comfort be customized geographically, without the imposition of homogenous systems throughout the globe?¹⁸⁷

As the architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab unfolded as it moved from city to city, the interactions between public and private sponsorship defined new branded experiences of urban space.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow and SDM Architects, workshop at the satellite pavilion, Priyadarshini Park, Mumbai, 2012. © UnCommonSense/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow and SDM Architects, film screening at the satellite pavilion, Sambhaji Park, Mumbai, 2012. © UnCommonSense/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

187 "Theme," *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed October 7, 2011. <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab/theme>.

04.

Global Corporate Territories

04. GLOBAL CORPORATE TERRITORIES

04.01 Opportunity, matter and energy. The search for the old dream of immateriality: IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano (twenty European cities), 1982-86

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, traveling technology exhibit, drawing by Shunji Ishida/Renzo Piano. © Fondazione Renzo Piano.

In 1982, three years after his experience with the UNESCO Laboratorio di Quartiere in Otranto, Renzo Piano worked on what would be his first traveling architecture that actually traveled: the IBM Traveling Pavilion. Having the opportunity to experiment again with concepts of itinerancy and educational purposes, Piano developed a project that served, however, new ambitions.

The pavilion for the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) was designed to display a traveling exhibition of computer technology that would “promote the knowledge of technology, especially among young people,” to be shown in twenty European cities.¹⁸⁸ Rather than installing the exhibition in preexisting local buildings, the ambition of IBM was to be represented by an architecture that was easily assembled, disassembled, and transported to every new site, “like a circus from town to town.”¹⁸⁹ The pavilion was conceived as an exhibition mechanism and its advanced technology served to communicate the qualities and capacities of IBM’s products throughout the world by occupying prominent locations, or in other words, to aesthetically

¹⁸⁸ “IBM Traveling Pavilion,” *Fondazione Renzo Piano* website. Accessed May 1, 2012: <http://rpf.ice.spill.net/project/96/ibm-traveling-pavilion/genesis/>.

¹⁸⁹ Renzo Piano, *Renzo Piano and Building Workshop: Buildings and Projects, 1971-1989* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 68.

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, York Museum gardens, York, 1986. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome, 1983. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

construct the global representation of a corporate identity.

Writing about the IBM manufacturing and training facility in Minnesota, designed in 1958 by Eero Saarinen, Reinhold Martin points out how IBM sought to expand their corporate presence to new territories.¹⁹⁰ This was a strategy developed through various projects that illustrated their “systematic effort to solicit the approval of the local community.”¹⁹¹

Between 1982 and 1986, the IBM Traveling Pavilion traveled to major cities in Europe—among them Milan, London, Oslo, Berlin, Rome and Paris—where it inhabited prominent public spaces for no more than a month at a time. A collection of postcards of the structure in front of some of Europe’s most famous local monuments attests to the many stops in the pavilion’s tour. Each city in this collection would become a node in a created network of potential operations and relationships, allowing the temporal condition of the event to have a lasting and profitable effect: the production of future IBM consumers.

While UNESCO’s Laboratorio di Quartiere—in line with the projects of the Misiones Pedagógicas, the Cátedra Ambulante, and Archigram’s Ideas Circus and Instant City—was conceived as a platform to give access to information and knowledge to local and isolated communities, the IBM Traveling Pavilion was designed to create a global, comprehensive identity through which to domesticate an increasingly accessible and global world. Piano’s ability was, therefore, to transfer these conceptual operations into concrete realities.

“Each time the exhibition was moved,” notes an IBM statement, “a specific project had to be developed in order to allow it to be inserted within the new context, while the functionality of the building itself only required a connection to a main electrical power source.”¹⁹² Renzo Piano, therefore, was able to skillfully negotiate between the local and the global, and to design an architecture that unfolded differently in each of its locations. In fact, what his project shows, as Hal Foster points out in his book *The Art-Architecture Complex*, is an “ability to mediate the tension between the local craft of buildings and the global enterprise of business.”¹⁹³ And Piano does so, Foster continues, firstly, “through a refined use of materials” that “helps to ground his buildings in particular sites and, on the other hand, through a suave display,” which serves “to associate his designs with the contemporary world of advanced technology.”¹⁹⁴

The IBM Traveling Pavilion, molded together and assembled in a factory located in Paris, was built out of four modules of three pyramids each, juxtaposed thirty-four times in order to create an extruded arched space 157 feet wide and 23 feet high.¹⁹⁵ It was a building—following the same premises that Saarinen used to explain his own project for the company in 1958—“made up logically and appropriately for IBM of precise machine-manufactured parts.”¹⁹⁶ The system developed by Piano allowed, in addition, to “maximize performance and minimize material cost and erection time, all to maximum aesthetic effect.”¹⁹⁷ As result, the different devices presented in the exhibition—including the building—

190 See Reinhold Martin, “Computer Architectures,” *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 160

191 *Ibid.*

192 “IBM Traveling Pavilion,” *Fondazione Renzo Piano* website. Accessed May 1, 2012: <http://rpf.ice.spill.net/project/96/ibm-traveling-pavilion/genesis/>

193 Hal Foster, *The Art-Architecture Complex* (London and New York: Verso, 2011), 55.

194 *Ibid.*

195 Renzo Piano, *Renzo Piano and Building Workshop: Buildings and Projects, 1971-1989*, 68.

196 Reinhold Martin, “Computer Architectures,” 163

197 *Ibid.*, p. 161-163.

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1 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, exhibit typical transversal section, drawing by Shunji Ishida/Renzo Piano. © Fondazione Renzo Piano.

2 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Bonn. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

3 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Paris. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

4 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, travel itinerary, 1982. © Fondazione Renzo Piano.

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5 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, section. © Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

6 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Parco Sempione, Milan. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

7 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Schlossgarten Charlottenburg, Berlin. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

8 IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building Workshop. © Gianni Berengo Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano
Building Workshop, exterior. © Gianni Berengo
Gardin/Fondazione Renzo Piano.

were examples not only of technical progress, but of image-based-communication, and presented a common commitment to postindustrial capital and media technologies, both realms in which IBM was prominent.¹⁹⁸ Surprisingly, both the pavilion and the devices that were displayed within it embodied the same ambitions of mobility. The architecture, for the first time, rode ahead in achieving a portable nature.

Materialized in “an almost immaterial pavilion”—made of polycarbonate and plywood on aluminum frame—the project became, as Piano claims, “an almost provocative blend of advanced technology and nature.” “It was such a light building,” he continues, “that it could fit anywhere and adapt itself to any of the cities in which it was erected.”¹⁹⁹

The IBM Traveling Pavilion had a particular relationship with the context and with the land that was not based on ownership but on temporal occupation, which was feasible, in part, due to the technological capacity of its parts to be easily assembled and disassembled. What could be interpreted as a sustainable and environmental approach might be also considered an attempt to position the architecture outside the normal juridical order governing public space. In fact, norms and legislations that those architectures attached to the ground generally have to meet simply do not apply to itinerant architectures. Their festive character, therefore, makes us lose sight of their capacity to challenge conventional urban, social, and political structures, or rather, their ability to generate new ones by the imposition of an ephemeral state of exception. Indeed, this is why Lefebvre and the Situationists saw in festivals the potential to become spontaneous reactions that transgress the control and order burdening our monotonous everyday life, or as Lefebvre put it, “the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption.”²⁰⁰

The difference between the IBM Traveling Pavilion and most of these itinerant architectures through which people reappropriate the street—such as traveling theaters, fairs, and urban festivals—is that the latter are condemned to be just summer romances. In the hands of global corporations, what otherwise would be seasonal structures are implemented through complex systems that ensure their permanence—even after the summer. Thus, through a “precise microclimate control for the interior space,” as previously seen in Sloterdijk’s *Pneumatic Parliament*, the IBM Traveling Pavilion was able to set up in various different climates and sites where to exhibit the company’s sophisticated electronic equipment.²⁰¹

Not a cargo plane, but twenty-three trucks were needed to transport the components of the pavilion from one city to other, as well as to its unknown final destination. Since it was dismantled following the completion of the exhibition in 1986, the IBM Traveling Pavilion has never been reassembled. However, as Renzo Piano points out, “the Traveling Pavilion was a great success: the exhibition was seen by a million and a half people. In the container, visitors could read the contents: the pursuit of an ancient human dream of immateriality.”²⁰² In addition, IBM’s strategy to invest in a traveling architecture that integrated technology, design, and flexibility resulted in a customer turnout of four times above expectations.²⁰³

198 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

199 Renzo Piano, *The Renzo Piano Logbook*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 84.

200 Henri Lefebvre, “The Bureaucratic Society of Controlled Consumption,” *Everyday in the Modern World*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), 68.

201 Fondazione Renzo Piano website, accessed May 1, 2012: <http://rpf.ice.spill.net/project/96/ibm-traveling-pavilion/genesis/>

202 Renzo Piano, *The Renzo Piano Logbook*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 84.

203 Robert Kronenburg, *Portable Architecture: Design and Technology* (Basel, Berlin and Boston: Birkhauser, 2008), 24.

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano Building
Workshop, Champ de Mars, Paris, 1984. © Gianni
Berengo Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

IBM Traveling Pavilion by Renzo Piano
Building Workshop, interior. © Gianni Berengo
Gardin/Renzo Piano Building Workshop.

04.02 Landings and strategies for occupation.
Architectures outside the legal order:
Chanel Mobile Art by Zaha Hadid (Hong Kong,
Tokyo, New York, Paris) 2008-2011

Chanel 2.55 Bag Special Edition, *Chanel Mobile Art* website: www.chanel-mobileart.com

“Karl Lagerfeld and architect Zaha Hadid in the Mobile Art container,” *Vanityfair*, June 2008, © Todd Eberle.

In 2011, Chanel Mobile Art, a contemporary art container designed by the architect Zaha Hadid, arrived in Paris. Since 2008, the pavilion had been traveling all over the world—to Hong Kong, Tokyo and New York—until reaching its final destination at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. “It is the first time that a building is traveling; normally architecture is not traveling,” said Karl Lagerfeld, head designer and creative director for the fashion house Chanel, in an interview at MoMA in 2008. “It was not done before,” he continued.²⁰⁴

However, the pavilion designed by Hadid to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the iconic Chanel 2.55 bag—a handbag originally designed by Coco Chanel and inspired in military accessories, to free up the hands of women—is but one of the many examples that constitute a long genealogy of itinerant architectures, from the nomad’s tent to an inhabited spaceship navigating in outer space. It shares with the previous built examples of itinerant architectures included in this thesis a direct relationship with the established political, economic, and cultural structures of power. In the Chanel art pavilion, as in the IBM Pavilion designed by Piano, mobility is a means to achieve a stronger effect on the market and customer turnout.

²⁰⁴ Chanel Mobile Art website. Accessed March 1, 2012. <http://www.chanel-mobileart.com>

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion by Zaha Hadid,
Tokyo, May-July 2008. © François Lacour.

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion by Zaha Hadid,
Central Park, New York, October-November 2008.
© John Linden/ Zaha Hadid Architects.

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion by Zaha Hadid, Central Park, New York, October-November 2008. © John Linden/ Zaha Hadid Architects.

Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion, Central Park, New York, October-November 2008. © Kaufman.

With the aim of preserving “the work designed by one of today’s greatest contemporary architects,” Chanel donated the Mobile Art to the Institute du Monde Arabe.²⁰⁵ The pavilion, which showcased a collection of contemporary artworks inspired by Chanel’s iconic handbag, was then transformed into an additional exhibition space for the institute, designed by Jean Nouvel, in which contemporary art from Arab countries was displayed.

There is always a moment in which traveling architectures come to the end of their journeys. When they do, most of them are dismantled, while others desperately try to slow the passage of time by staying out of public life in a stable and secure location where, as Hannah Arendt would put it, they satisfy the need for a “sense of belonging.”²⁰⁶ Transformed into involuntary artworks in private collections or even public funfairs, the itinerant architectures finally take possession of the land they occupy. Until this happens, these vanishing structures that are constantly in flux display a particular performative character that generates an apparent loss of all sense of monumentality in the architecture or, rather, in the space it creates.

The last site of the Chanel Mobile Art pavilion, now an extension of the Institute du Monde Arabe in Paris, has not only lead to the preservation of Zaha Hadid’s work, but also to the site’s greater development potential. Without any consideration of the scope of planning permission or regulations, the Chanel Mobile Art achieves what other architectures legally can’t: to extend the buildable area permitted on a given piece of land without legal, political, or social impediment.

The Chanel Mobile Art pavilion creates, as UNESCO’s Laboratorio di Quartiere or the IBM Traveling pavilion before it, a state of exception within the city. Never inscribed in the social, political, and economic structures of the context they temporary occupy, these structures are alien objects that make it possible for the institutions and companies they represent to occupy places where their permanent architectures would never be placed.

²⁰⁵ Chanel Mobile Art website. Accessed March 1, 2012. <http://www.chanel-mobileart.com>
²⁰⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 64.

04.03 Circulation and accumulation: the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions by various authors, (various locations), 2000-2016

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by SelgasCano, proposal, 2015. © Steven Kevin Howson / SelgasCano.

In May 2015, Kensington Gardens awaited the premiere of its next Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, designed by Spanish architects SelgasCano in celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of this international commission. The project's image, however, had long been circulating in the media. It depicted an armor of transverse bands and a variable section, sewn in a multicolor fabric that constricts and ties it to an irregular terrain.²⁰⁷ On the lower corners, where the garden revealed itself as a green mat over a wood surface, there was a promise: like its predecessors, the SelgasCano pavilion—funded by Goldman Sachs—would lift its skirts and disappear at the end of summer. With this image, the architects had built homage to the history of past designs and, simultaneously, manifested the articulation of these architectures with the contemporary processes of global circulation and accumulation.

The architectures produced by the Serpentine Gallery are dismantled at the end of each summer, but they don't disappear. They are sold. As there is no budget allocated for the commission, it is financed by sponsors and the sale of the finished work that, according to the organizers, covers

207 "Serpentine Pavilion 2015 Designed by SelgasCano," *Serpentine Gallery* website. Accessed April 3, 2015: <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/serpentine-pavilion-2015>

no more than forty per cent of the costs.²⁰⁸ Architecture offices, which in most of these cases do not take part in the reinstallation of the pavilions, affirm that the sales process is independently carried out by the Serpentine Gallery—directed by Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich-Obrist—and the sales agents Knight Frank.²⁰⁹ An official report revealed that the first six pavilions had been sold for between 250,000 and 500,000 British pounds. In 2006, shortly after Obrist joined the gallery, the sale price was more than 750,000 British pounds.²¹⁰ Unofficial sources indicate that the actual numbers are much higher.

According to the inventory realized by the Serpentine Gallery, most of the pavilions have been acquired by collectors who prefer to remain anonymous. In 2012, for the first time, the buyer's name was officially announced by the Serpentine: Usha and Lakshmi N. Mittal. With this gesture, the gallery responded to media speculation over the second life of the pavilions, then revived by the ambition of Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei's proposal, which was to move away from the object nature of the previous structures and, in its place, to establish a dialogue with the traces and effects on its surroundings.

"Taking an archaeological approach," the press release for the 2012 pavilion explained, "the architects have created a design that inspires the visitors to look beneath the surface of the park, as well as back in time across the ghosts of previous structures."²¹¹ The idea of digging in search of the history of these architectural works was as fascinating as it was paradoxical; close to the gallery its spirits were invoked, and far away, eleven previous pavilions were enjoying a second life with new identities. Both the Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei and SelgasCano projects invited visitors to look under the Kensington Gardens "carpet" and explore the history of the Serpentine Gallery architecture.

What would later become the first Serpentine Gallery, designed by Zaha Hadid in 2000, was originally intended as a structure for a fund-raising dinner to celebrate the gallery's thirtieth anniversary.²¹² Personalities such as Sting, Steve Martin or the Duke of York were invited to this 600 square meter space, protected by a triangulated canvas surface over a metallic structure, with which Hadid aspired to radically reinvent the accepted idea of a marquee.²¹³ The structure was to last one week, but generated so much interest that the Culture Secretary, Chris Smith, persuaded the gallery to keep it up for three months, thus creating one of the most important international architecture commissions.²¹⁴

Hadid's work also established another precedent: the sale, disassembly, and reutilization of the structure. The pavilion was bought by the Royal Shakespeare Company and reassembled in a parking lot of

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Herzog & de Meuron + Ai Weiwei, Kensington Gardens, London, 2012. © Iwan Baan. Courtesy of Serpentine Galleries.

208 "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 Designed by Herzog & de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei," press release, *Serpentine Gallery* website. Accessed March 16, 2012: <http://www.serpentinegallery.org/Serpentine%20Gallery%20Pavilion%20Press%20release%202012-03-15.pdf>

209 Tomoko Fukuhara, Press SANAA, in a conversation held by email, 02-04-2012. "Unfortunately, we have no information on the sales process since it was conducted by the serpentine in secret, we cannot provide you anything from our end." Following the departure of Julia Peyton-Jones, Yana Peel has been named as the new CEO of the Serpentine Galleries in London in July 2016.

210 Steve Rose, "The Gas Ceiling," *The Guardian*, July 2, 2006. Accessed March 15, 2012: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2006/jul/03/architecture>

211 "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 Designed by Herzog & de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei," press release, *Serpentine Gallery* website.

212 Philip Jodidio, *Serpentine Gallery Pavilions* (Cologne: Taschen, 2011), 1.06.

213 Rowan Moore, "Ten years of the Serpentine's star pavilions," *The Observer*, May 22, 2010. Accessed April 21, 2012: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/may/23/serpentine-pavilions-ten-years-on>

214 *Ibid.*

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Zaha Hadid, renamed as The Summer House, and relocated in the parking lot of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon in 2001. Reassembly process. Photo courtesy of Peter Bailey.

Stratford-upon-Avon in 2001. Renamed Summer House, the pavilion served to draw the public from the gardens toward the theater. The program included a cafeteria, an event area providing approximately one hundred seats, and new electrical, lighting, and plumbing installations.²¹⁵ “It was the perfect space,” claimed Dean Asker of the Royal Shakespeare Company, as “it attracted a lot of visitors that otherwise would not have been interested in going to the theater.”²¹⁶ According to the Serpentine Gallery, the pavilion was dismantled at the end of the summer.

The following year’s pavilion, Eighteen Turns, designed by Daniel Libeskind Architects with Arup in 2001, reappeared four years later when it was released by its unknown owner and transported to Ireland for the celebration of the European Capital of Culture in Cork. Rebuilt under the supervision of Keogan Architects, the pavilion occupied a site in Fota House, Arboretum & Gardens between May and December 2005.²¹⁷ There, it was presented among politicians, real estate developers and planners as an “icon of contemporary Cork, as well as an expression of the creative architecture possibilities for the city’s future,” particularly for the then imminent urban development of the port area.²¹⁸ After rendering its services, Eighteen Turns slipped back into anonymity.

The acquisition of the pavilion designed by Toyo Ito in 2002, by the magnate Victor Hwang and his company Parkview International, received ample media coverage. It functioned as a visitor center and flagship for one of the many proposals for the redevelopment of London’s Battersea Power Station. As Hwang recalls, after visiting the pavilion in Kensington Gardens with his daughter in 2002, he concluded that it was “exactly what new architecture should be.”²¹⁹ In that moment, Hwang—who has recently acquired the works of other architects such as Andrés Jaque—decided to buy the Ito pavilion and “take it to Battersea, to remind him of how creative they have to be there.”²²⁰ Later, it would be transported by road to Le Beauvallon, a hotel also belonging to Hwang and located just a few minutes from Saint-Tropez, to be converted into an exclusive tourist destination. Under the guidance of Cecil Balmond along with a large team of architects, designers, and energy consultants including Jane Withers, Tom Greenall, Jordan Hodgson, or Zebra 3—a team where the name of Toyo Ito was amiss—the structure has been reassembled and adapted to occupy a privileged place within the private club: on the beachfront where the clients enjoy “complete privacy away from the limelight, and yet all the excitement of the Côte d’Azur.”²²¹

Surprisingly, and despite Ito’s Serpentine Gallery pavilion being the architect’s first built work in the United Kingdom, it is not the only one to enjoy retirement in the South of France.²²² Neither is it the first to have allowed its owners to combine their interests in real estate investment

215 Information provided by Liz Thompson, Director of Communications, Royal Shakespeare Company, and Peter Bailey, Deputy Technical Director, Royal Shakespeare Company, February, 2012.

216 Steve Rose, “The Gas Ceiling...”

217 Fota House, Arboretum & Gardens website. Accessed March 21, 2012: <http://www.fotahouse.com>

218 Cork 2005 Archive. Accessed April 21, 2012: <http://www.cork2005.ie/programme/strands/architecture/eighteenturns.shtml>

219 Serpil Barrington-Serle, from Parkview International, in a conversation held at Le Beauvallon in July, 2012. Also published in Jonathan Glancey, “The Power and the Glory,” *The Guardian*, July 10, 2005. Accessed March 4, 2012: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2005/jul/11/communities.arts>

220 *Ibid.*

221 Five Star Alliance website. Accessed March 21, 2012: <http://www.fivestaralliance.com/luxury-hotels/beauvallon/lebeauvallon-hotel>

222 According to the information provided by the curators of the Serpentine Gallery in 2012, some of the pavilions are currently owned by Maja Hoffmann (LUMA Foundation).

Eighteen Turns, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Daniel Libeskind with Arup, Kensington Gardens, London, 2001. © Sylvain Deleu.

Music Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Frank O. Gehry, Château La Coste, France, 2012. © Marina Otero.

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1 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Herzog & de Meuron + Ai Weiwei, Usha and Lakshmi Mittal's estate in Surrey, 2015. Courtesy of: *The Guardian*.

2 Serpentine Galleries Summer House by Barkow Leibinger available for sale at *The Modern House*, 2016. Screenshot from <http://www.themodernhouse.com/sales-list/>

3 Eighteen Turns, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Daniel Libeskind with Arup, Cork, Ireland, 2005. © Ludwig Abache.

4 Music Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Frank O. Gehry, Kensington Gardens, London, 2008. © John Offenbach.

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5 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Smiljan Radic, Kensington Gardens, London, 2014. © Serpentine Galleries.

6 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Smiljan Radic, Hauser & Wirth Somerset, 2015. © Hauser & Wirth.

7 Music Pavilion, Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Frank O. Gehry, handrail detail, Château La Coste, France, 2012. © Marina Otero.

8 Serpentine Galleries Summer House by Asif Khan available for sale at *The Modern House*, 2016. Screenshot from <http://www.themodernhouse.com/sales-list/>

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Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup in transit from London (United Kingdom) to Sainte Maxime (France). © James Whitaker. Courtesy of Parkview International London Plc.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup in transit from London (United Kingdom) to Sainte Maxime (France). © James Whitaker. Courtesy of Parkview International London Plc.

and collection of *auteur* architecture. The 2008 pavilion, entitled Music Pavilion and designed by Frank Gehry, landed a few kilometers from Le Beauvallon. It was bought by the Irish developer Patrick McKillen and rebuilt at Château la Coste, a winery that has repositioned itself and maximized its market value by juggling its wines with a collection of art and architecture pieces. In approximately an hour and a half, and after paying the admission fee, visitors can enjoy art and architecture in a landscape scattered with works by Ai Weiwei, Jean Nouvel, Frank Gehry, Norman Foster, Renzo Piano, Oscar Niemeyer, Richard Serra, Louise Bourgeois, or Paul Matisse. In this place of “wine, art, and architecture,” the Music Pavilion still shows the scars left by the reconstruction process. In a scene not very different from the Château la Coste, we can find the pavilion designed by Smiljan Radic in 2014. It was installed in the Oudolf Field, a garden designed by Piet Oudolf in the Hauser & Wirth Somerset art center in Bruton—the last of the spaces belonging to the global network of the Hauser & Wirth gallery, with centers in Zurich, London, New York, and Los Angeles.

The ex-Serpentine pavilions inhabit beautiful landscapes, outside the city, and close to the coast; they land or bloom in private spaces where they appear free from the rules and regulations generally applied to permanent constructions; they create “spatial products,” heirs to the tradition of the landscaped garden and the park of pavilions now implemented with a strong dose of corporate image and architectural prestige.²²³ On a journey through the territories in which these Serpentine Gallery pavilions circulate and accumulate, the workings of one of the most efficient machines for the production, reproduction, and consumption of *auteur* architecture are revealed. The trajectories of these architectures also show the relationship between financial capital, cultural capital, and real estate speculation, while simultaneously building a series of touristic-cultural landscapes in which real estate development and culture collide thanks to the mediation of the symbolic capital of architecture. Here, real estate magnates and architecture collectors are a single figure and, in some cases like that of the Herzog & de Meuron with Ai Weiwei project, the sponsors of the pavilion coincide with the last owner, questioning the motivations leading to the choice of architect and the design of this international commission.

Aware of these controversies, Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei tried to “elude the problem of creating an object, a concrete form,” or simply a transportable, collectable object for the design of the pavilion.²²⁴ Instead of adding another entry to the architectural catalogue of different forms and materials produced since 2000, their project sought to build a landscape formed by the traces of previous pavilions. With this gesture, the Serpentine Gallery’s commission itself was questioned and the future sale of the resulting architecture compromised. However, as we have previously seen, even this “jumble of convoluted lines” guaranteed the existence of a desirable object for collectors.²²⁵

Notwithstanding, there are exceptions to be found at an amusement park located in Western England. There stands dirty, covered

²²³ The term “spatial products” is used by Keller Easterling in her book *Enduring Innocence: Global Architecture and Its Political Masquerades* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), where Easterling analyzes outlaw “spatial products”—resorts, information technology campuses, retail chains, golf courses, ports, and other hybrid spaces that exist outside normal constituencies and jurisdictions.

²²⁴ “Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 Designed by Herzog & de Meuron, and Ai Weiwei,” press release.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup at the Hotel Le Beauvallon's beach club, now turned into an exclusive holiday home for rent, in Sainte Maxime, France, 2012. © Marina Otero.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup, Kensington Gardens, London, 2002. © Sylvain Deleu.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup, Battersea Power Station, London, 2004. © Thomas Volstorf.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup at the Hotel Le Beauvallon, Sainte Maxime, France, 2015. © James Reeve.

with a gray canvas, and ignored by cultural and communication media, one of the first works of the 2004 Pritzker prize winner: the Serpentine pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid in 2000. All the while its remains and sub-products continue to feed the publications, exhibitions and texts in architecture.

The multiple lives of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions, both in different physical locations around the world as well as in circulating texts, drawings and photographs, exemplify the transformation in the relationship between architect, work, and audience, facilitated by the media. As Beatriz Colomina argues, photography, the illustrated magazine, and tourism have altered the modes of reception of the architectural work by expanding its audience, thereby changing the nature of the main agents through which the work acquires meaning, from the actual user of the space to the observer or consumer (the tourist, the reader of the magazine, the viewer of an exhibition).²²⁶

Hadid's pavilion was not dismantled. After its stay at Stratford-upon-Avon it was passed on to an intermediary agent who supervised the transport of the structure to Flambards Fun Park in Helston Cornwall, a theme park belonging to the Hale family.²²⁷ Now known as Kingsford Venue, the structure not only survived but was equipped with audio-visual equipment, lighting, and heating, and it's available to rent for weddings, parties or concerts for 950 British pounds a day. This must be what the Serpentine Gallery refers to as "dismantled."

In their multiple assemblies and disassemblies, the Serpentine Gallery pavilions are subject to continuous material transformations as well as changing receptions and practices. Their adventures resonate with our imaginaries of continuous innovation and adaptation, but also render evident the implications of the circulatory regimes of the current global economy, particularly regarding the articulation between architecture, permanence, and belonging. The processes of circulation and global accumulation in which the Serpentine Gallery is inscribed—and which it also promotes—destabilize the traditional understanding of context and the relationship of architecture with the land, since they both undermine notions of spatial and temporal permanence as well as the values associated with this relationship. However, as we have seen example after example, these processes translate into specific "productions of locality."²²⁸ What the Serpentine Gallery pavilions attest to is that within these processes of assembly and disassembly, material and spatial redistributions are produced in the form of private enclaves where new systems of capital accumulation and extraction are tested.

According to its commissioners, the SelgasCano pavilion traveled across the Atlantic by the end of the summer of 2015. It is to be installed in Los Angeles, and serve as a flagship space for Second Home, a cultural institution and work space for entrepreneurs, open twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, and where membership is free as long as you demonstrate to belong to a select group of creative agencies in the

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Zaha Hadid, Kensington Gardens, London, 2000. © Hélène Binet.

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Zaha Hadid, renamed as Kingsford Venue, Flambards, Helston– Cornwall, 2012. © Marina Otero.

area.²²⁹ Its London headquarters in Shoreditch district, also designed by SelgasCano, have been celebrated by the press as the new paradigm of co-working spaces, or the workspace of the future.

Similarly, in 2016, the commission was extended to include four Summer Houses by Kunlé Adeyemi, Barkow Leibinger, Yona Friedman and Asif Khan, each creating an architectural folly in addition to the main pavilion designed by BIG. Yona Friedman's "space-chain" and Barkow Leibinger's Summer House were put for sale for 125,000 British pounds plus VAT (building only) each at the real estate agents for British modern architecture property named "The Modern House." "This spectacular Summer House by Yona Friedman," they state in their website, "is one of four unique structures designed for the Serpentine Galleries, as part of their summer architectural commission. It is being exhibited in Kensington Gardens until 9th October, at which point it will be de-installed and delivered to its new home. This is an exciting opportunity to purchase a one-off piece of art-meets-architecture."²³⁰

226 Beatriz Colomina, "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction," in Beatriz Colomina, ed., *Architectureproduction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 9-10, 19.

227 Information provided by Liz Thompson and Peter Bailey, from The Royal Shakespeare Company, in 2012.

228 The concept of "production of locality" is described by Arjun Appadurai in "The Production of Locality" *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

229 Information provided by Emma Enderby, curator of the Serpentine Gallery, during a meeting in London on June 15, 2015.

230 *Modern House* website. Accessed August 15, 2016: <http://linkis.com/themodernhouse.com/tJEpt>

05.

Conclusions

05. CONCLUSIONS

I. Circulating borders

Even before landing in Berlin, in the summer of 2012, the BMW Guggenheim Lab encountered opposition. Residents and activist groups prevented its installment in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg, where it was seen a subterfuge to speed-up gentrification processes. Alleging the existence of threats against the project, the Guggenheim Foundation decided to withdraw, prompting Berlin mayor, Klaus Wowereit, to publicly promise the development of a “protection plan.”²³¹

The Lab finally found a site in Pfefferberg, a complex of galleries, bars, and artist studios at the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg. Inside, workshops, conferences, and meditation classes were free and open for all those wishing to participate. On the day of the opening, breaking through raised arms and protest posters, and in front of a police barrier, a young woman revealed a message on a self-made white T-shirt: “We don’t need New York to teach us how to talk.” Images of people performing in outdoor events, doing fitness, cycling, making prototypes,

²³¹ “Guggenheim to Withdraw BMW Guggenheim Lab Berlin from Planned Site in Kreuzberg.” Press statement, March 19, 2012, accessed May 1, 2012: http://cdn.guggenheim.org/BMW/press/2012/BGL_Kreuzberg_statement_FINAL_English_3-19-12.pdf

Protests at the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin, on 15 June 2012. © Björn Kietzmann.

robots, or solar coffee-bean roasters were suddenly confronted by scenes of political disagreement. “Protests are a symptom of a healthy and equitable society,” argued Atelier Bow-Wow’s Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, when asked about the demonstrations.²³² Intended to create a platform for active participation and to produce a spectator with a more complex engagement, the Lab succeeded in involuntarily conceiving a place in which protests by uninvited critical voices, threats of violence, and vigorous debate took place. When, in front of the police barrier, the protesters started to congregate, the institutional territory and its bounded spaces—the architecture and the conversations that take place within and around it—suddenly materialized.

The itinerant condition of the cultural institutions analyzed in this thesis accelerate processes that generally take part in the construction of a built and consolidated piece of architecture. Itinerant architectures “land,” and their landings generate an augmented and intense response in the social, cultural, economic, and political context and, therefore, reveal an underlying state of affairs. At the same time, transformed into traveling parliaments, these structures render possible a social and political space where to voice concerns, bringing the virtues of the political body to wherever they arrive. Architecture becomes, making use of Bruno Latour’s theorization of object-oriented democracy, the “issue that brings people together because it divides them.”²³³ Each of the traveling structures, in their landing, generates “a different pattern of emotions and disruptions, of disagreements and agreements,” as well as “new occasions to passionately differ and dispute.”²³⁴ In some cases, as the inflatable parliament imagined by Sloterdijk, these architectures not only trigger opposition by the local population, but also bring them together as a community that loudly proclaims: “Leave us alone!”

Following the protests against the Lab, Police President Margarete Koppers appeared at Berlin’s Parliament. “Criticism and demonstrations are part of our democracy,” claimed when announcing that police would protect the Lab as much as the demonstrators; “Berlin had a reputation as a city of diversity and freedom that must be protected,” she contin-

²³² Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, in an interview conducted by the author in New York on April 18, 2012.

²³³ Bruno Latour, “From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public,” 23.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13

BMW Motorrad gives 20 new BMW R900RT “Authority” motorcycles to the Berlin Police, in front of the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin, March 29, 2012. Courtesy of: BMW Motorcycle Magazine.

ued.²³⁵ Two months before her intervention in the Parliament, and this time at the Brandenburg Gate, Koppers would accept a symbolic key from a BMW—the same company sponsoring the BMW Guggenheim Lab—from Plant Manager Hermann Bohre in front of twenty BMW R900RT “Authority” motorcycles, a model especially designed for authority use, given as a present to the Berlin Police by the company.²³⁶ The friction between the scene in the Parliament and the one in the streets enacts the circulating borders of contemporary institutions as they extend beyond the limits of the architectural objects to the sponsored structures and mechanisms of social order governing the space. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, when referring to the “Architecture of Position,” protection is no longer achieved through fortifying walls, but through the capacity to circulate.

Institutional borders circulate and mediate policies, social constituencies, legal frameworks, and aesthetic and economic regimes. As the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab unveils, when the high walls of cultural institutions seem dismantled with the proliferation of public participation and citizen empowerment initiatives, other bonded spaces and material arrangements emerge for the appropriation of the political and the public character of the urban space; other forms of control and consumption appear on the public sphere, and define changing conditions for inclusion and exclusion.

II. Evanescent Institutions and the global turn

The architectural forms of cultural institutions, as Michel Foucault’s work has unraveled, embody relationships between knowledge and power.²³⁷ In fact, as Foucault argues, museums and galleries played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state and are fundamental to its conception as, among other things, a set of educative and civilizing agencies.

Building on Foucault’s framework, sociologist Tony Bennett discusses the history of what he has termed the “exhibitionary complex,” and suggests reading it alongside the history of disciplinary institutions. “The institutions comprising ‘the exhibitionary complex,’” Bennett claims, “were involved in the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they had previously been displayed (but to a restricted public) into progressively more open and public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a different type) throughout society.”²³⁸

Following that argument, it could be claimed that the public impermanent spaces of cultural production and display discussed in this thesis are

²³⁵ Alexander Forbes, “Further Police Protection for Guggenheim Lab,” *Blouin Artinfo*, March 28, 2012. Accessed September 3, 2012: <http://blogs.artinfo.com/berlinartbrief/2012/03/28/further-police-protection-for-guggenheim-lab/>

²³⁶ “BMW Gives 20 R900RT Motorcycles to Berlin Police,” *BMW Motorcycle Magazine*, March 29, 2012. Accessed January 20, 2013: <http://bmwmcmag.com/2012/03/bmw-gives-20-r900rt-motorcycles-to-berlin-police/>

²³⁷ See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

²³⁸ Tony Bennet, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4, Spring 1988, 74.

part of the exhibitionary complex and the processes described by Bennett. As we have seen in the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab and its relation to the Berlin police, the architectures of cultural institutions and spaces of display define the bases of forms of surveillance and control. The Lab's interior-without-walls is, paradoxically, confined within political boundaries that extend to the city. Similarly, the image of the Centre Pompidou Mobile, a playful mobile tent surrounded by fences, tubed and wired with climate control systems, security, fire control, and surveillance mechanisms, unveils the tensions embedded in the architecture of contemporary institutions.

The architecture of itinerant cultural institutions presented in this thesis has experienced a gradual formalization. The Misiones Pedagógicas didn't need a building; their architecture was a logistical and aesthetic networked system. The missions used existing spaces, but brought their own white walls in the form of sheets covering existing stone surfaces. The white walls of museums, therefore, were in that context a temporary architectural act, that nevertheless brought a particular aesthetic regime that would trigger a series of urban development processes over the years in rural Spain. Years later, and serving a different political ideology, the Cátedra Ambulante would replicate the project of a mobile architecture traveling through the Spanish countryside, but still in the form of a vehicle. The trucks and trailers composing the Cátedra included bedrooms, toilets, kitchens, installations and spaces for classes and exhibitions. They also served as show homes promoting a particular aesthetic regime, disseminating specific positions on family, gender, and social structures. Additionally, the Cátedra would also make use of, renovate, and refurbish existing buildings. This idea of a standard package of vehicles that can be attached or work in relation with existing buildings, to which some other temporary spaces could be added, bears a fascinating resemblance to Archigram's projects such as *Ideas Circus*, highlighting the possibility of an architecture tailored to serve a particular political ideology.

It is probably Renzo Piano's IBM Traveling Pavilion the one that best represents the aspiration of contemporary cultural institutions, largely aligned with those of the global companies and corporations. The IBM Traveling Pavilion successfully took architecture beyond the confines of the company's headquarters, reaching new audiences. A successful formula that had an impact on the number of IBM users, and that proliferated, since 2000, in the form of removable and transportable pavilions linked to companies such as Puma and H&M. Furthermore, it was also appropriated by the fashion house Chanel, when in 2008 Karl Lagerfeld commissioned Zaha Hadid to design a project to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the iconic Chanel 2.55 bag. Hadid then designed a temporary building that would travel for two years to the capitals of Chanel's main markets, including Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York, London, Moscow, and Paris. The initiative followed a new strategic impulse by the brand, which since 2000 had expanded its presence in the U.S., Hong Kong, and Tokyo with new boutiques and shops generally located in prime locations within the city. Hadid's portable architecture became a tool to represent and promote the very product it celebrated. With an architecture freed from the land and its associated regulations and legislations, Chanel strategically planned its world campaign to target new consumers and maximize its reach.

Similarly, the Centre Pompidou Mobile and the BMW Guggenheim Lab were designed as a counterpart to the headquarters of its respective museums, in order to reach wider publics—and, in the case of the

Police protecting the BMW Guggenheim Lab, Pfefferberg complex, Berlin, June 2012. The image shows three of the main agents and institutions which had a role in the landing in Berlin: The Lab, the police, and BMW here represented by the motorbike. © Marina Otero.

BMW Guggenheim Lab by Atelier Bow-Wow, Pfefferberg complex, Berlin, June 2012. © Marina Otero.

BMW Guggenheim Lab, potential BMW product consumers—during the financial market meltdown, a moment when museums felt under pressure to keep visitor numbers, memberships and donations.²³⁹ To combat a shortage of affluence, these institutions designed structures and free programs that would travel in search of new publics, supported by sponsors instead of private philanthropists. These strategies resulted in collecting architectures, pop-up gathering spaces or “Global Art” initiatives, designed not only as a temporary and mobile structures, but also as a “Major New Global Initiatives.”²⁴⁰

Furthermore, these traveling structures had to be designed to display a friendly, welcoming demeanor and an “unassuming” aesthetic, a strategy that became evident in the case of the tent of the Centre Pompidou Mobile.²⁴¹ They are designed to be, using Hal Foster’s formulation to describe Renzo Piano’s work, a “sublimated architecture” in search of the old dream of disembodiment, yet able to still convey a distinct image, visible symbol, and propaganda tool for companies and brands, as well as the ubiquity and technical supremacy of their global empires.²⁴²

This tension was inextricably embedded in the architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, aimed to foster accessibility and to construct an institution in constant flux that would be able to span across three continents and democratic systems—something that its “naked aesthetic” was meant to facilitate.²⁴³ After its assembly in New York and later in Berlin, the carbon fiber structure was replaced, for its stay in Mumbai, by multiple bamboo structures conceived to be “responsive to the cities the Lab visits,” constructing a sense of belonging and cultural binding to the territory it occupied, after the protests and demonstrations that the project triggered in its previous iterations.²⁴⁴ “Modeled after the Indian *mandapa*,” the Guggenheim Foundation explained in their website, “a raised outdoor pavilion traditionally used for public celebrations and events, the Mumbai Lab structure was constructed primarily of bamboo and evoked a light, open and transparent quality.” “A second, traveling version of the Mumbai structure,” the article continues, “was also adapted for ‘pop-up’ assembly at a variety of satellite sites throughout the city.”²⁴⁵

In this disappearance act, the edifice of these cultural institutions experiments a simultaneous process of materialization and evanescence, which advances new relations between the architectural object and its context, and new roles of architecture within contemporary aesthetic and economic regimes. Many times undifferentiated from their associated standing structures, cultural institutions are rendered, through the itinerant architectures, as a temporary constellation of bodies, data,

²³⁹ Carol Vogel, “Museums Fear Lean Days Ahead,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2008.

²⁴⁰ As David van der Leer, curator of the project, stated: “It is more and more essential for museums to bring their architecture and design programming out of the confines of the gallery’s white box and into the realities of everyday urban life.” *Guggenheim* website, press release, October 1, 2010: “The Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative will identify and support a network of curators and artists from South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa in a comprehensive five-year program involving curatorial residencies, acquisitions for the Guggenheim’s collection, international touring exhibitions, and far-reaching educational activities.”

²⁴¹ Christine McLaren, “Less Talking, more making as the Lab takes its next step.”

²⁴² Hal Foster, *The Art-Architecture Complex* (New York: Verso, 2011), 52–67

²⁴³ Christine McLaren, “Less Talking, more making as the Lab takes its next step.”

²⁴⁴ “Architecture,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed February 1, 2013: “The architecture of the BMW Guggenheim Lab structure is designed to be responsive to the cities the Lab visits. For the Lab’s recently concluded Mumbai presentation, Atelier Bow-Wow of Tokyo, working with Mumbai’s SDM Architects, designed a structure uniquely suited to the densely populated environment of Mumbai.” <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-thelab/architecture>

²⁴⁵ “Architecture,” *BMW Guggenheim Lab* website. Accessed February 1, 2013: <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-thelab/architecture>

images, spaces, technologies, and mechanisms of social order, structures that establish recurring behaviors, at multiple scales. The transformation of their architecture gives way to other forms of collectivities and constituencies, including forms of education and government.²⁴⁶

In fact, as the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab demonstrates, its journey is not only an expansionist operation. It might be polemically claimed that is also the first realized architectural manifesto of the twenty-first century, one that was proclaimed in trivial statements written on banners advertising the Guggenheim Museum collection at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle in Bonn in 2006, and has been eventually built:

1. “The Guggenheim is a point of view.”
 2. “The Guggenheim is an agent for popular culture.”
 3. “The Guggenheim is not a place.”
 4. “Imagine a museum in constant motion.”
 5. “Imagine a museum with no walls.”
- (...)

Alain Seban, President of the Centre Pompidou, also situates the Centre Pompidou Mobile as part of the attempts to create a “new museum model for the twenty-first century,” one in which “there might be less large buildings, less interest in constructing thousands of square meters” in order to accommodate the ever growing collections, the associated management and bureaucratic efforts, and instead propose a more dynamic vision of the institution.²⁴⁷ One of the challenges of contemporary museums is, according to Seban, globalization. “The museum has to be global,” he states, “because art is global;” for this, he continues, “the museum has to multiply its ability to project and envision initiatives that allow for its development, focusing in innovation and on the future.”²⁴⁸

Thus, the lasting effects of this transformation in the architecture of cultural institutions has to be found in and beyond buildings; these architectures are the result of processes of mediation between a variety of spaces, agents, and an interaction of interests and forces that shape not only the institutional space, but also the public space.

III. Lasting effects

Through the different case studies and chapters, this thesis has analyzed the relocation of contemporary cultural practices from the interior of institutions to the public spaces of cities, and the new institutional spaces that this transformation carries as a result. It has also investigated how itinerant architectures, once carrying a subversive potential, now embrace the dynamic condition of finance capital—to achieve a global impact through impermanent interventions—and are similarly affected by the volatility of the markets.

²⁴⁶ A larger research on this question and its spatial consequences has materialized in the outcomes of the 2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale, curated in collaboration with Lluís Alexandre Casanovas, Ignacio G. Galán, Carlos Mínguez, Alexandra Navarrete, and the author of this thesis. The Triennale’s curatorial framework has been influenced by the previous research projects developed by the author of this thesis, and other projects by the members of the curatorial team. Similarly, the curatorial process of the 2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale has had an impact in the development of the introduction and conclusions of this thesis.

²⁴⁷ Alain Seban, from Pauline Cathala and Nicolas Valode (Directors), *Centre Pompidou mobile: Entretien entre Alain Seban, président du Centre Pompidou et Patrick Bouchain, architecte du Centre Pompidou mobile*, video, min 02:01. Translated by author.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

The lot at First Park, on Houston Street at 2nd Avenue, before the landing of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, New York, 2011. © Kristopher McKay/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

The lot at First Park transformed in a open air cultural space after the BMW Guggenheim Lab’s departure, New York, 2011. © Alisha Levin/Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

The different case studies have shed light into how itinerant cultural practices, its architectures and aesthetics present a direct relationship with the established economic and cultural structures of power. Mobilizing the dreams of the “pipeless, wireless, trackless” architecture in the spirit of the technologies that “deploy man around the Earth surface as well as in space,” these cultural institutions are as unstable as the markets they serve.²⁴⁹ In fact, in 2013 the trips of the BMW Guggenheim Lab and the Centre Pompidou Mobile came to an unexpectedly early end, allegedly due to the global financial crisis, which also frustrated the ambitions of the Chanel Mobile Art tour—Hadid’s project never made it to London or Moscow.²⁵⁰ “Considering the current economic crisis, we decided it was best to stop the project,” said a Chanel spokeswoman; “We will be concentrating on strategic growth investments,” she concluded.²⁵¹ Praised for its advanced technology, and made of reinforced curved plastic panels, the structure was supplanted by a replica to be able to stand permanently and resist the weather conditions of its final destination, in the courtyard of the Institute du Monde Arabe in Paris where it is located since 2011.

The analysis of these itinerant architectures has unveiled the lasting implications of an apparent ephemeral itinerant architecture, their occupation strategies, their ability to find sites of “opportunity,” and to produce a transformative and permanent effect on them. These architectures enable the institutions and companies they represent to reach places and communities where their corporate buildings would never be installed permanently. Each of the previous chapters has unpacked the ways in which itinerant institutions transform urban cultural space by means of the materialization of their architecture beyond the institutional building, and what are the resulting reconfigurations of the relations between space, power, and politics in the urban environment. In the town of Boulogne-sur-Mer, for instance, the installation of the Centre Pompidou Mobile in an abandoned maritime station triggered the rehabilitation and revitalization of the entire neighborhood and the formation of a new gathering space, as the responsible of cultural affairs of the municipality, Silvia Becquelin, explained to *Le Monde*.²⁵² Similarly, in Le Havre, the arrival of the Centre Pompidou Mobile was supported by the business conglomerate Partouche, which donated 200,000 euros to the initiative, while the municipal government committed to permanently renovate the space between two social housing blocks in Caucriauville, an unprivileged area on the outskirts of the town, and transform it into a green corridor. This operation brings to mind the way in which, in New York, the BMW Guggenheim Lab triggered the cleaning and of the space between two building blocks in First Park, as well as the development of a new open air cultural space, after the Lab’s departure.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Buckminster R. Fuller, “World Design Initiative. Mexico Lecture / 1963,” *Your Private Sky: The Art of Design Science* (Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 1999), 10-11.

²⁵⁰ Charlie Porter, “Designer open house. Luxury labels to target a new audience — the public,” *Financial Times*, October 9, 2015. Accessed May 6, 2016: <https://www.ft.com/content/628e7b3e-66a8-11e5-a57f-21b88f7d973f>

²⁵¹ Robert Murphy, “Chanel Cancels Mobile Art Tour. Chanel on Friday said it would pull the plug on its costly Mobile Art exhibition, conceived by Karl Lagerfeld and Zaha Hadid,” *WWD*, December 19, 2008. Accessed May 6, 2016: <http://wwd.com/eye/people/chanel-cancels-mobile-art-tour-1899292/>

²⁵² Florence Evin, “Dernier tour de piste pour le Pompidou mobile, *Le Monde*, June, 7, 2013

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

All these case studies open new possibilities for understanding the relationship between architecture and land, architecture and permanence, while simultaneously serving as a lens through which we can look into the construction of public space, as well as transnational territories, corporate identities, and sponsored urban spaces. In the movement, distribution, and transmission of capital, ideas or practices through these architectures and their technical, logistical, and information systems, new sociocultural and spatial arrangements emerge, which generate other forms of accumulation and, therefore, a different paradigm of cultural production and reproduction. The multiple assembly and disassembly processes, and the constant renegotiation of the position, results in an architecture that changes as the ground changes. The so-called “naked, unassuming aesthetic” mobilized in most of these structures, is what facilitates its “ability to continuously adapt and re-imagine itself during its continuing journey through the world’s metropolises,” and establish a cultural binding to a particular land.²⁵⁴ In some cases, the process of nomination facilitates a illusion of stability, in some others, the structures, as they move from location to location, are renamed and even no longer attributed to their authors.

Finally, this thesis aims at playing a critical role in shedding light on alternative forms of understanding and practicing architecture, in a moment in which the discipline is faced with demands to preserve the forms or organizations and promote the illusion of stability of the institutions it serves, and simultaneously calls for their ultimate transformation on the face of the increasing circulatory processes, growing conflicts and inequalities, and the imaginaries and aspirations that continue to provoke the movement of people, images, information, capital, and architecture, and encourage the construction of new forms of collectivities and political agency.

254 “BMW Guggenheim Lab Mumbai to Open December 9, 2012 at Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, With “Pop-Up” sites throughout the city,” press release, *Guggenheim* website, October 22, 2012. Accessed December 1, 2012: <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/releases/pressrelease-archive/media-releases-2012/4982-mumbai-pre-opening>.

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