

Contemporariness of contemporary architecture

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Comentarios

For ambitious contemporary architects it almost goes without saying that architecture should reflect the Zeitgeist of its epoch. Following trends and building up-to-date seem to be a must if someone doesn't want to be labelled as conservative or old-fashioned. Young architects are regularly following the trail of services like Archdaily or Dezeen. They are carefully analysing forms and plans of buildings which are still in planning or those which will never be constructed (non-awarded competition entries) more cautiously than even most successful buildings of last century, not mentioning anything what was done before.

Architectural trends are constantly evolving, but today's pace of changes is probably unrecorded in the history of architecture. Solutions popular last year are now already out of date. Architects have to acquire the skills of fashion designers – predicting what will be popular next season. A comment I heard during an internal office discussion about a project was: "It is so 2006". This was supposed to be a sort of criticism to a solution which was no longer trendy. But what changed our knowledge about the world in which something popular four years ago is now already out-dated? Did we learn something new about the way societies work? Did we discover some new material that solves problems of the past?

Contemporary architects are obsessed with creating contemporary buildings; they are not interested in lessons which history has already taught them. Buildings which will be in use during the following decades (or even centuries) are designed to fit into very narrow but in vogue tendencies. By seeking for contemporary solutions for problems which have already been solved in the past, aren't we trying to force open unlocked doors? Does sheer 'contemporariness' make buildings any better? Or is it just another architectural dogma?

Cada ciudad quiere tener su pieza de colección, su jarrón de Ming que pueda exhibir como la mejor pieza de una sala. El problema está en la falta de caracterización de esta arquitectura singular en contextos realmente frágiles como el latinoamericano. El ego se vuelve materia y la materia en objetos del deseo. Las ciudades cada día más se convierten en plataformas que nutren esta idea, y al final quedaremos con ciudades *sexys*.

Calvin
Los objetos del deseo

"(...) La sobrevaloración de la novedad se inscribe dentro de una concepción historicista: el arte es una historia, una sucesión de obras y estilos regidas por leyes. La expresión más inmediata de lo nuevo es el arte instantáneo pero asimismo es su refutación: en el instante se conjugan todos los tiempos sólo para aniquilarse y desaparecer." Octavio Paz, *El pensamiento en blanco* [Austin, 1969]

cavillare
Sobre lo nuevo

In Liquid Modernity Zygmunt Bauman, describes the contemporary by relating to the concept expressed by Plato who was already quoting Heraclitus: "All things move and nothing remains still". So, if it is undeniable that we live in a fluent world of "melting solids", where a continuous change is requested to keep up with times, it is also true that forgetting history in the name of "contemporariness" will not help create better architecture.

ADA
Fluid architecture for a liquid world

A mis-reading as unfortunate as its content. A shallow misplaced understanding of contemporary 'trends', equating trends to fashion. Such a reading is due to either a naïve appropriation of trend over form, or even worse, to stylistic concerns. A much required critical reevaluation would reveal links between 'trends' to methodologies and systems and ultimately to performance, rather than surface treatments.

Kayzad Shroff
Cronic Mis-Reading