THINGS I LEARNED IN BARCELONA FROM OTHER PLACES

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**José María Torres Nadal**

Architect’s José María Torres Nadal work is not about formal intentions but about rethinking life, our way of living, ordinary things and the way they should be approached through design. His proposals are admirable because they stimulate thought and urge one to deeply analyze the works and to conclude that his discourse can only be understood from the perspective of the small and seemingly insignificant items, which are precisely what are responsible for deviating from all pre-existing architectural notions.” (Torres Nadal, 1998) The relation between Torres Nadal and the pop culture is that “the repetition of gestures is of great value [...] It serves to affirm the intention that people are capable of recognizing themselves in them.” (Torres Nadal, 1998).

**Andy Warhol**

There are a lot of ideas relating between Warhol, Guixé and Torres and Nadal. But the most evident one is the use of repetition as a way of reflecting ideas about massive production and consumption and the way that society identify themselves in this ordinary things. “The ambition of a designed object in not to be a singular one [...] but to take part in the repetitive and mostly practical activities that we describe as everyday life.” (Guixé, 2002)

**Martí Guixé**

Martí Guixé wouldn’t like himself to be defined as a designer of products because he is more a Designer mediator in the sense that he makes an effort to “achieve the formal, functional or symbolic potentials of everyday objects, so, in a way, they can be regarded as unfinished design objects, or in other words, as a raw material waiting to be transformed by the designer’s activity.” (Guixé, 2002) . With his work he is not just designing objects, but also trying to make us rethink design, rethink ordinary objects and design. Is not only about presenting new designs but to explain us how to use them or experience them. It is about capturing experiences.
While studying the projects of Torres Nadal I found the collage of the 'Viviendas sociales en Cieza' which instantly made me think about the idea of repetition, massive production and therefore in the concept of high density housing design. A repetition of an image of the 'Catalan Masia' was made to evoke the universal concept of housing and of the ordinary. The same concepts that are captured when observing Warhol's work for CocaCola.
When investigating Martí Guixé's work, I was struck by the use of the expression 'Aura Comes' in several of his sketches. I related it with an anecdote from a user thanking Torres Nadal for the design of 'Vivienda Social in Cieza'. I focused my project on this idea that is linked to the heavenly pleasure that is felt when enjoying everyday things like arriving home and perceiving it with all the senses.
**Jaques Hondelatte**

The architect had the opportunity to work the 'Maison Farques' with a high degree of user participation. The proposal implements new design methods that do not only consider the function but take shape due to the physical characteristics of the site and the method of construction emplaced. As a result highly qualified spaces are obtained, allowing a free, fluid and random use: it tries to be an inhabited landscape.

**Gilbert Garcin**

The proposal of this photographer is to build a fake world based on tricks and montages, but instead of relying on the show, he uses dreams and ‘the impossible’ to deepen and philosophize about existence. He always appears in his photographs taking action in the scene. His images are inspired by primitive cinema, but Garcin is above all a surrealist, closer to the dreamlike and melancholic magic.
One of the things that most interested me in the design of the 'Maison Fargues' is the arrangement of the cubes which contain the private areas of the house so that they form suggestive spaces between them. I recreated the house in a model and found the best angle. The house, being so horizontal and the materiality so tied to the earth, could be dark. But the use of large windows creates a strong contrast between light and shadow.
Chamberlin, Powell and Bon

A British firm of architects whose work involved designing the Barbican Estate. One of the most important modernist architectural firms in post-war England. Residents of the Barbican speak of the excellent quality of life they enjoy there; architecture critic Jonathan Glancey spent four years living in the estate, and proclaims that “there is nothing like [it] in scale, intelligence, ingenuity, quality, urban landscaping and sheer abstract artistry anywhere else in Britain, perhaps even the world.”

Assemble

Assemble are a collective based in London who work across the fields of art, architecture and design. Assemble’s working practice seeks to address the typical disconnection between the public and the process by which places are made. Assemble champion a working practice that is interdependent and collaborative, seeking to actively involve the public as both participant and collaborator in the on-going realisation of the work.
The intervention consists of a Winter Garden that is also a cafeteria and is developed using a bridge-like wooden structure. This structure takes advantage of the grandstands in front of the Church of St. Giles and the level change that is generated to create a space suspended above the water. The space seeks to be a place for social encounter and activity.
Like the Assemble projects, this construction can be temporary or permanent. It is made of modular wood and boards in an arrangement in L that takes advantage of a flat area of grass and the existing stairs in front of St. Giles Cripplegate Church in the Barbican.
Herman Hertzberger

The concept for the Centraal Beheer building involves the consistent application of a single repeated spatial unit of 9 x 9 metres as a basic building block. With the floors articulated as so many ‘islands’ interlinked by elements acting as bridges and surrounded by open space (voids), the whole was an open-work system with its different levels linked spatially. The large articulated communal space this creates has the ambience of a community workplace. Permanent adaptability is a precondition of the design.

Droog

Droog is a conceptual design company. They focus on matters that affect society and its people. The process is key. Their work is anti-disciplinary. And the outcome can be anything that contributes to society. They invite the users to rethink design so that daily used products can become into something extraordinary.
The intervention seeks to generate a space for leisure and resting in the offices of Centraal Beheer taking into account that it is an insurance company. The project is called ‘Leisure in a Bubble’. The concept plays with the idea of putting people into a bubble in order to protect them against external risks but also provides an idea of lightness and comfort for users.
The idea is to create molded acrylic bubbles that can be fixed to the wall at different heights. Inside, they carry textile cushions in blue tones. In this way, suspended niches are created that provide users with privacy and comfort. The shapes of the bubbles are varied with the purpose of allowing different activities.
Epilogue

Personally, I consider that one of the biggest challenges that architects face in our creative process is the materialization of our ideas and concepts into architecture. While developing this exercise I understood that art is a valuable tool that serves as an intermediate step to help us express the abstract, emotions and concepts.

It was very interesting to see how the same exercise was approached in very different ways by each of my classmates considering that we come from different backgrounds. This highlights the way in which culture influences the art and architecture that each produces. Our way of understanding art and architecture is full of references to our past and our environment.

Whenever I feel that I am running out of creativity or that I have some difficulty designing I will return to this. Emulating being another person is not the same as copying another person's work. As we have seen during this process, emulating allows one to discover completely different things about the objects and subjects studied, but also about oneself.
Bibliography

