**SEVERAL NARRATIONS AND TWO REPRESENTATIONS. From Lanzarote to the City in the Space.**

by Emili Manrique Diaz

The so called “tourism boom” in Spain during the 60’s and 70’s radically transformed a country that was, so far, focused on ostracism, leading it to a whole new series of architectural experiences with a kind of epic and experimental character.

Tourism became a new flow of influences that opened opened the doors to a new reality in a social, political and cultural way, that new designers were exponentially joining from different disciplines craving for a freedom of creativity that didn’t exist at that moment.

 The new economic situation offered the possibility to carry out architectural experiences linked to tourism that otherwise would have been hardly possible to realize. This was the seed to formalize new kinds of utopian ideas. A huge capital boost to the tourism sector and an extraordinary cultural and creative momentum both combined with a positive social reaction that looked favourably on any modern proposal.

The coast of the Iberian Peninsula suffered a radical transformation that is still very questionable nowadays, but, among the overwhelming amount of architectural interventions that were executed, there were some exemplary solutions that offer interesting guidelines to define architectural models linked to tourism these days.

Some of these interventions came from a previous voice that had a certain utopian tone and thus the new political, social and economic situation allowed to formalize architecturally.

In very different contexts two stories emerged, almost opposite. In Lanzarote César Manrique’s voice put in value the natural environment of the Atlantic island; in Alicante, Ricardo Bofill formalized the theoretical proposals of the City in the Space in an environment of fast urbanization on the shores of the Mediterranean sea.

Both of them have points in common:

* They are a product of their authors’ (almost-epic) tenacity to project them in nearly-virgin and apparently reluctant to experimental proposals places.
* They also are representations of a utopian narration, which wasn’t necessarily related to tourism but took advantage of it to develop them.
* Over the time, they have become formal and social references in their environments.

Manrique designed and built various landscapes in Lanzarote that became representations, almost like an scenography of a dreamt Arcadia. Nature, water, earth, the subsoil and the horizon as raw materials for viewpoints, auditoriums, restaurants and recreational spaces for leisure time, being this last one still considered a noble aspiration of men’s relation with nature.

Bofill articulates his narration around the city in the space. At the Muralla Roja, new social approaches are formalized in an architecture with vernacular references on an artificial landscape. A multi-storey building which is also a representation of a utopian narration, a scenography of a new way of community living. A political narration linked to tourism.

Therefore, we have two antithetical narrations, with opposite approaches: Natural landscape vs Artificial landscape; the individual in nature vs the individual in (a) community.

Over time, two references related to tourism experiences in the devastated environment of the tourism architecture which still nowadays provide a meaning, a narration and an action guideline.

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