

The Inter-Media Space

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This paper explores the juxtaposition between architectonic space and virtual environments. It establishes the hypothesis that the intersection of virtual environments with our common life causes a break-up of time and space.

Virtual environments are the last and most integral part of the technological revolution, becoming a parallel world, an unlimited extension of our limited world. The spatial and temporal juxtaposition of these two realities creates a new reality of being “in-between”, it reveals the “inter-media”. This “inter-media” reality is an issue for architecture of our time, and it still lacks of responses.

Keywords: *Inter-media; in between, real and virtual environments*

Introduction

“In 1962 a television came to my house. This was a real event since the waves of information on that black and white screen brought me closer to other children both near and far.” (Antonino Saggio, 2000)

This event related in the introduction of the “Natural Born Caad Designers” (Pongratz / Perbellini, 2000), is a relevant fact in our lives. The television penetrates in our house and transforms the way to be related with the world forever.

From then on the technological evolution has not stopped to surprise us: telephony, multimedia and internet. This progress conform a global world, of the instantaneous thing, of information and of speed. In this context of culture of media is where the virtual environments constitute the culmination of the technological revolution, contributing to our lives the experience of artificial, interactive and integral environments. An incommensurable, apparent and immaterial extension of our visible or invisible physical world.

This relationship man and technology has questioned the role of the contemporary architecture.

The traditional definition of architectural space is questioned in the proposal of architects of all latitudes. This work outlines a reflection on the context of architecture and it is framed in an investigation on the juxtaposition of the space-time of the architecture and the virtual environments.

Tendencias

The architecture is a manifesto of our time. In the last decade we can find diverse built projects, non built experimental work and theoretical works on the impacts of the era of information. Facts that tell of a moment of strong reflection and critic.

These proposals outline new definitions of contemporary architecture. On one hand, the “screen effect” that far from being a tendency, it is the most recurrent analogy to explain the work of several architects around the world. Projects like the Cartier Foundation or the Endless Tower (Nouvel, 2000) and the Palace of Fine Arts in Lille (Ibos & Vitart, 1997) propose architectural objects as ghosts or illusions of an intangible and immaterial architecture. This condition defines a superficiality and transparency

of the facade that explains itself in an architecture that doesn't make reference to anything outside itself and is not remitted to the intellect, it prioritizes the direct experience automatically, the sensorial experience of space, of materials and of light. (Ibelings, 1998).

This analogy questions the traditional concept of context, an architecture that is opposed to the ideology of place like something static and unalterable, but it rather interprets place like a space in constant transformation (Eisenman, Tschumi, Koolhaas, Ito, etc.) and for some other it contracts the decomposition of the project in a flexible space structure and an encircling superficial structure as a membrane or skin. The "screen effect" is the tip of the iceberg that defines a search that is born from the own theoretical and creative vision of the architects in the era of the information and that he/she becomes to its projects manifestos of an media architecture. Many of the works exposed in the exhibition Light Construction in the MOMA of New York (Riley, 1995), group under this metaphor.

In this sense the definition of "Hyper-Architecture" (Prestinenza, 1999; Bouman, 2000), outlines the possibility that the building is not only a metaphor but it rather builds its own history. Proposals that investigate in the possibilities of an architecture in movement, of spaces that flow through an electronic "continuum" and of the building like a terminal of a digital world. In this premise there is an heterogeneous group of architects, of different nationalities that outline through their projects

an architecture idea that goes but there of the "screen effect", granting new meanings and languages that redefine the role of contemporary architecture in a narrow relationship with technological advances and the virtual means. Positions like the "Water Pavilion" (Nox, 1997), "Glass Video Pavillion" (Tschumi 1990) and the project "Trans-Port" (Oosterhuis/ Bouman, 2000), are examples of an architecture that is changing the representation of the immaterial or superficial by the incorporation of multimedia systems from television and digital images to electronic skins that transform architectural space into a space "on-line" and interactive.

Lastly the thesis of an "Intermedial Architecture" (Pongratz / Perbellini, 2000) exposes an architecture that is intelligent, interactive and virtual in its organization, that exposes two interesting definitions : an architecture of "de-formation" and another of "information". The first one is based on the formal innovation that arises of the advances of science and computing technology and in this group it analyzes the positions of the architecture of Karl Chu, Greg Lynn and Reiser + Umemoto. The second one includes a diversity of approaches that re-define the space as an interface between architecture and media-mass, as fluid architectural space, flexible and dynamic that will potentially substitute reality. In this group it outlines the proposals of Marcos Novak, Diller + Scofidio and Asymptote.

These tendencies are sustained in research of space and formal relationships among the architecture and the virtual environments, as a new language

Figure 1. Fundación Cartier, Paris, Francia, 1994, J. Nouvel.

Figure 2. Palacio de Bellas Artes, Lille, Francia, 1992-97, Ibos & Vitart





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through buildings metaphors or buildings chips, that appear in all the latitudes and bet to a ghastly and illusory architecture that invests the relationships of the real thing and the virtual thing. On the other hand, it is sought to assume the cyberspace like a new design field refers to new parallel worlds, to new experiences of the body and of the being. But there some unconcluded questions and that architecture must reformulate. Understanding a complementary among the real and virtual space. How is the architectural space between this two worlds? How is the man that inhabits or will inhabit this architecture?.

The Inter-Media Space

“The house is among the first things man needs to maintain his existence in nature: Initium vitae hominis aqua et panis et vestimentum et domus protegens turpitudinem (Sirach XXIX 28)” (Van der Laan, 1983)



Figure 3. Glass Video Pavilion, 1990 Bernard Tschumi.

Figure 5. Embryologic Space, 1998 Greg Lynn

Architecture as an event is artificial. And it is in essence an intermedia space. Although this condition goes back to the origins of architecture, it is intrinsic to its own nature. The sense of the intermedia tells of a space that is between two and of the transition from one state to another. Between the world and our body.

The investigation settles down as a hypothesis the fracture of the relationship between space and time that arises from the atemporal interaction of the media-mass and our daily life and that it questions the classic conception of the architectural space. It establishes the absence in the program of contemporary architecture of new space relationships that respond to the juxtaposition between the real world and the virtual world.

The juxtaposition of a virtual environment and architecture results in a break up of space and of time. The break of “here” and “now” in benefit of the



Figure 4. Trans-Port, 2000 Kas Oosterhuis y Ole Bouman.

Figure 6. Data Driven forms, 1997-98 Marcos Novak

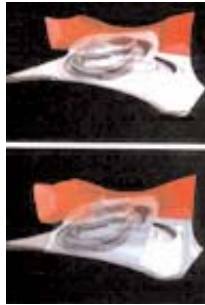


Figure 7. *The Virtual Guggenheim Museum, 1998*
Asymptote (Rashid + Coutore)

“now”, that bring the gradual lost of the near world, of the relationships person to person and of the essence of the Being to be “here” and “now” (Virilio, 1997). This juxtaposition determines an ambiguous space and of interferences given by simultaneity of relationships of different order and that confront radical ideas of space and time (continuity-discontinuity / materiality-immateriality). Where the audiovisual stimulus that the mass-media incorporates in the architectural spaces alters its perception and finishes transforming its own nature (Mantzou, 1998). This space intersection and storm of these two realities defines a new reality that reveals being in-between, reveals the Inter-Media.

The Inter-Media space explores an ambivalent espaciality that questions the concept of limit between the real thing and the virtual thing. The Inter-Media space as an interstitial space reality and storm of parallel relationships between an interior and an media exterior. A space that determines the transition between the real thing and the virtual thing as a connection space and transition. And that it assumes a new concept of architectural space that is characterized by the simultaneous presence of contrasting and opposed valuations.

An approach to this concept is the project “Connections Theater” (Pancoast, 1999) in the Science Cranbrook’s Institute, in the city of Detroit, Michigan. An architecture where a space is created inside an architectural interior, an immersion space that generates to a narrow relationship between the

Figure 8. *Connections Theater, Cranbrook institute of Science, Detroit, Michigan. 1999, Douglas at.*

body, the object and a virtual atmosphere. An Inter-Media reality between the architecture and a virtual atmosphere. Using pre-cost materials, images and materials that flow.

Conclusion

The Inter-Media space has as a context the place that it is created by the duality space-time of architecture (tangible context) and the virtuality of the media (intangible context) and it reveals thinks about for an hybrid man that on one hand wants to be nearer nature (its own nature) and on the other hand wants to be always connected. In this sense the Inter-Media space expose and explores a new poetry through the architectural program. A connection space and transition between virtual architectures and the essential things of the architecture like main need to maintain our existence.

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