

IDEAS VS. OCCURRENCES

The dream of reason produces monsters

PUBLISHED IN

Poetica Architectonica. Ed. Mairea. Madrid. 2014

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It is easy to see that architecture magazines publish more and more astonishing things every day. They seem more like sculpture magazines, full of agitated and whimsical forms, than of the logic and serenity that befits architecture. There is no building twisted, agitated or folded that is not published. Nor is there any building published that is not twisted or agitated or folded. In such a way that someone who only saw these magazines could believe that the force of gravity has disappeared in the world, and that the world has been filled with artifacts with capricious, arbitrary and twisted forms that some call architecture.

And, on the other hand, this Society of ours, which is every day more uneducated and ignorant, consumes every day basically only images. And its architectural food is only these images of extravagant artifacts. Now that with the computer media culture should be more within everyone's reach, it seems that the opposite is happening. Fed by a television that seems to be made for imbeciles and by social networks that increasingly resemble a monopodium playground, our society is amazed, astonished and excited by any of these new bizarre buildings. And like the apes in 2001 Space Odyssey, they kneel before them as if they were new gods. Or, as in Samaniego's fable, they all admire the pretended wisdom of the bespectacled ass.

And all of them encourage an architecture -architecture? that seems impossible by dint of being extravagant and capricious and, I insist, outlandish. Before any of these new monsters all kneel, as if they were cathedrals of a new religion.

I know that the other architecture, the edible as a friend of mine says, the one that feeds many speculators and many architects, is not better. That most of the time this other architecture is crude, vulgar and boring.

And between these two banks runs the river of architecture.

Artistic creation has always presupposed a certain amount of originality. Every self-respecting creator tries to be original. But it is one thing to have new ideas and quite another to have witty, ingenious occurrences.

The idea is what you want to do. An idea in architecture must also be able to be built because if not, it is not valid. In architecture an idea is arrived at, not had. It is arrived at as a result of an operation of synthesis of multiple ingredients: the place, the function, the construction, the economy, the regulations, etc. One could say that, as with good wine, it is a long distillation.

On the contrary, an occurrence is the first, or the last thing that comes to the mind of the ingenious architect who, in order to be original or provocative, does anything, the first thing that comes to mind. The occurrences do not usually solve any of the problems posed by architecture. As thanks to new techniques such as steel, glass, waterproofing, air conditioning and others, everything is possible, feasible, the architect who has the

occurrence, knowing that even with an exorbitant cost can put it up, carries it out. And he also receives the applause of the people.

And just as an occurrence in literature is not very dangerous, so are the occurrences in painting or music harmless. But not so in architecture. Architecture is always expensive to build, and buildings cannot be thrown in the wastebasket like an unfinished poem or a wrong score or a bad painting.

In recent years much of the architecture that we see published in the media is the result of the ideas of many architects who are or want to be famous at all costs.

And so, if an architect comes up with the idea of making a building with the shape and size of a mountain (sic), he goes and does it. Of course, with a contest in between where ignorant politicians advised by blind architects have the gall to reward such unreasonableness. And, after squandering public money, the building is built. Even if only half of it is built, it was so big. Such an occurrence.

And so, if it occurs to another architect that in order to implement his brilliant idea, he has to change the topography of the historic city, he goes and changes it. And everyone obeys and devoutly cuts and saws and fills to end up giving birth... to a mouse. Of course, in this case it was a very big, very expensive and very ugly mouse. And no one has yet dared to raise their voice or make the slightest criticism.

And if another architect comes up with the idea of making a building in the shape of a hedgehog one day, he goes ahead and does it.

Of course, if an architect from the opposite team comes up with the idea of building a block of apartments and repeats it 20 or 200 times, there he goes and builds it. And there he goes and with the same effort, little, he makes a fortune. And he will be very proud of his discovery of the effectiveness of the multiplier effect of the money of his creative work.

Of course, if another architect of this band has the idea of building an auditorium, spending money that the city does not have, then the city or the town will have to deal with the animal, without having thought about whether they need it or not. And also in the name of culture. They only reconsider when they do not know how or with what to fill it. There is no money left.

So, given the two shores, it is preferable to continue swimming on your own in the river of Architecture until you find an island where you can rest, which there are.

Because if this text is provoked by the excess of capriciousness and superficiality of this society and of some architects who have set up in recent years this outlandish architecture, the last thing that would occur to me is to act as a defense lawyer for those of the mediocre cause.

Not everything goes. Not everything goes. Those who think that a witticism is an idea are confusing their asses with their temples, as they say in Spanish. Nor is all reality true,

as Pieper teaches us. The capacity of today's technology to make any nonsense come true does not mean that it is true. Plato already taught us that Beauty was the splendor of truth. And the fact is that those buildings, neither the mamarrachos nor the mediocre ones, have nothing of truth.

An idea in architecture is not an idea in a flash. Far from being a flash in the pan, such is the number of factors that concur in the architectural fact, that what most resembles the genesis of a project is a distillation that needs a lot of time to integrate well its many ingredients, all its factors. Time and wisdom.

And we will have to take into account the place, the site, the history, the function, and the structure, and the light, and the orientation, and the sustainability, and the economy, and the common sense, and so many other things. And the fact is that architecture takes a lot of time. A lot of time and a lot of wisdom.

I will never tire of repeating it, reason has been, is and will be the first and main instrument of an architect. "You lack imagination," a good friend of mine was accused. "Imagination?" he said, "I have plenty of it. But I've got it in good hands".