

# PALIMPSESTO #20

## PALIMPSESTOS

Architecture, against all odds, preserves the story, with thought before action and built by it. Inseparable except in the worst sense of the academic, unmistakable except if we speak of literature. Neither a catalogue of things, nor speculation of ideas, Palimpsesto is born conscious of this delicate balance wrapped in the soup of letters and ideas that draws the contemporary architectural panorama. During its first 20 issues published since 2011, the magazine has sought to attest the link between narration and architecture, between text and project from a varied profile without being eclectic, heterogeneous without being superficial. A balance between doing and thinking, Palimpsesto rewrites the meaning of the White Chair of Barcelona that has been deployed for 20 years now by the ETSAB, proposing, forming and writing a look at the architectural and academic panorama.

Contemporaneity places architecture on the verge of its disappearance, between chance and accident as an action without substratum, a mere reflection of the inevitable. The insistence on the value of the word to which we ascribe ourselves claims a renewed discipline, integral to the excesses of the material and geometric consistency of the last techno-liberal architecture prior to the crisis, and integrator of the new sensibilities of a society in transition. This acquired multiplicity, also recovered from decades such as the 1960s, to which we have paid special attention during these issues, is the basis of Palimpsesto's editorial commitment, as shown by the list of sections that nourish it. In the diverse and deliberately diffuse template on which each issue is rewritten, the ambivalence of spaces coexists for reflection that appear and disappear with the constant pendulum presence of an interview and an academic back cover.

It is precisely the cultivation of the genre of the interview, marriage of word and action, that ferments the link between project and thought. The 20 pictures of architects and engineers illustrate the collective story we needed in "Words with architects", when we collected the first twelve in a publication. Clotet, Tuñón, Mendes Da Rocha, Gallego, Manterola, Lacaton, Kuma, Siza, Nieto&Sobejano, Souto, Perrault, Ferrater, Campo Baeza, Eberle, Abalos, Riewe, Balmond, Pigem and Bohigas (and the most mediatic of them, Le Corbusier) speak of architecture from within, and read as a whole are paradoxically an antidote to the particular and the door to a shared construction. Manuel Gallego pointed out that "architects talk more about what they build, and architecture is not replaced or supplanted by words. Other times it happens that between what is said and what is done I only see contradictions and disagreements. The important texts, those that have seemed important to me, ask themselves about architecture from the personal need to do it". The choice therefore passes inexorably, as a necessary condition, by the professional recognition of the work made; four Pritzker prizes, five national architecture prizes and innumerable work prizes and competitions both national and international.

In this ephemeris we substitute the word for the drawing, for four of them, emerged in an informal way from one of the most educated and restless hands that has given the architecture and thought of the twentieth century in Catalonia, that of Oriol Bohigas. The selection of these sketches made together with Beth Galí, speaks of an unpublished production, without commission or format that radiographs his longings for architect and draughtsman claiming this condition before the intellectual glossary and cultural manager. "Don't look at what I'm doing but at who I've looked at", said Luis Barragán. Let's look at what Oriol Bohigas drew almost unintentionally, and let's reflect on it not only to understand the architect, but also a period and a way of seeing the world from the discipline. The interpreters of these traces of the *flâneur* of architecture are Lluís Clotet, Enric Granell, Juan José Lahuerta and Antoni Llena, contributing four lucid visions almost off the top of their heads that dialogue with each other without knowing it and illuminate from a flash a foundational period that built the Barcelona School, both professionally and academically.

Louis Kahn said, "there are no architects, there are architectures". Aware of this warning, the summaries of each issue, their editorials, deliberately build a thought freed from private obsessions. "Doing is thinking", "Memory and invention", or more evocative titles such as "Cheshire's Smile" or "The Right Word" have tried to describe collective territories of contemporaneity that develop through each index. Sections where architecture is presented almost anonymously from the material, where academic production comes from traditions and schools and where criticism has been produced in the most scientific way possible. *Publish or perish* seems to be the main principle of our academic environment, leading us to unavoidable indexing procedures that, without being a guarantee of quality, establish a common level of demand. Conversely, it is essential to contemplate exceptions: today the fundamental texts of architecture would not be recognized by these standards. In order to publish an indexed magazine, it could be enough to have a digital platform as a vehicle of varied contributions conveniently distributed, for its revision and management without even needing consistency in the calls to originals.

*Arquitecturas Bis* emerged in the mid-1970s away from these concerns with an apparently unstructured proposal that stimulated debate and criticism. Its format, uncomfortable and closer to a diary, contrasted with the consistency of Enric Satué's design. Claiming the value of paper, tactile and visual today in an indexed magazine may seem an extemporaneous provocation. We insist on this as a fundamental value that can be transferred to architecture that does not strip itself of its material condition, not only in the edition of each issue but also in Palimpsestos, a publication that will soon group together the first twenty issues. If the procedures in the construction of an academic journal allow one to distance oneself from personalisms, automatism does it from consistency, as happens in architecture in the dilution of the modern object or in the supposed disappearance of the author, through a theoretical project without an architect. Thus, in the digital and social era, we claim (also) an architecture that is neither immaterial nor processual.

In the sway between the individual and the collective, and within the freedom of its contents collected in the author's original language, the magazine always moves from the interview to its counterpoint on the back cover, which closes the issue with a reflection on learning. Aware of its origin in the White Chair of the ETSAB, it opens a space for contributions usually recovered, rewritten, by thinkers, pedagogues

and teachers of architecture such as Frampton, Fernández-Galiano, Puig, Llovet, Mansilla, Martí-Aris, Nervi, Montejos, Rubert de Ventós, Granell, Alsina, Montaner, Nadal, Quetglas, Bohigas himself, Hernández de León, Campo Baeza, Lleó, Vitale, and in this issue Federico Correa.

Here too drawing, in its famous bench exercise, replaces the word. The task assigned to first-year students marked many generations in the ETSAB and bears witness to a model of School that the Chair has cultivated and renewed during these twenty years. The bench (the project), as a drawing, represents once again the balance between educated thought and sensitive action that we illustrate here with the proposals of Ignasi de Solà-Morales, Manel Brullet and Albert Viaplana rescued from the archives of the School Library.

The necessary renewal of this model is not incompatible with the consistency of its foundations. Architecture offers resistance and autonomy in the face of the ups and downs of the changing times, just as the university has always been concerned with its approach to the social and productive reality of its surroundings. The model represented by the White Chair exemplifies the debate between intellectual autonomy and dependence on the vicissitudes of reality, positioning itself in favour of the necessary connection between architectural studies and constructive reality. A hundred years ago the celebrated Bauhaus wielded the integration of the arts through architecture. Today integration is multipolar and demands renewed attention to its technical condition.

More than two thousand students and fifty teachers and assistants have built this collective project at the Barcelona School. Their trajectories, and profiles, draw a portrait of the profession from which we have sought to highlight its main points through ten contributions by architects such as Eva Prats, Anna Puigjanner, Estel Ortega, Stella Rahola, Cecilia Obiol, Francisco González de Canales, Pau Sarquella, Jorge Vidal, Xavier Vilalta and Iván Shumkov. The variety of their stories, the interest of their projects, updates the pendulum condition of our discipline and opens architecture to diversity. We rewrite about this portrait gathering a conversation precisely with the six most recent professors of the White Chair, Olga Felip, Judith Leclerc, Mara Partida, Julio Mejón, Ramón Godó and Eduard Gascón.

From the pooling of the ten contributions and the conversation, one can glimpse a photograph of the architectural and academic panorama of the Barcelona School taken by referents such as Bohigas and Correa. Between the vernacular and innovation, between memory and invention, with architecture and with words, that generation of architects formed in political resistance dedicated its best years to teaching. It forged a School, born out of the profession in the 19th century, and transferred to the contemporary panorama, diversified, but resilient and vindictive of the vision of architecture of which Palimpsesto wants to be yet another manifestation. It is the School (and the architect) that we recognise and that we will continue to promote from these pages, although the gaze is very far away.

*The architects who without theory, and only with practice, have dedicated themselves to construction, have not been able to obtain any credit with their works, just as they did not achieve anything other than a shadow, not reality, those who relied only on theory. On the other hand, those equipped with both things, like soldiers equipped with all the necessary weapons, have arrived sooner and with greater applause to their ends.*

Vitruvio, first of *Ten books on architecture*, Editorial Iberia, Barcelona, 1986.

Carlos Ferrater and Alberto Peñín

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Dulcinea

Unknown Bohigas

Lluís Clotet, Enrique Granell, Juan José Lahuerta, Antoni Llena

White chair. Ten profiles

Transfers. From the studio to the classroom, from Barcelona to Venice

Eva Prats

DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8951

In the classroom, as in our study, each project makes appear and develop interests that help it move forward and go beyond the specific solution, beyond the specific circumstances, of the urgency of the assignment. This allows developing long-distance topics, where each project sets a reflection that will have an echo in the next. In the classroom we wanted to transfer these reflections and bring them closer to the students with an exercise where they can share and contrast other possible ways of interpreting and acting.

The re-use of buildings, their adaptation to host new programs is one of the issues that concern and fascinate us at the same time, and we have brought it to the ETSAB classrooms and other schools where we have been teaching during these last years. We thought it was a good time to show it in this gigantic showcase that is the Venice Architecture Biennale, where each participant, in addition to responding to the Biennale commissioners manifesto, has their own reflection topics to share in an international debate field.

**Key words:** Transfers; Re-use; Barcelona; Venice Architecture Biennale.

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Bang Nong Sang

Pau Sarquella

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The text takes three experiences from the author to develop three different topics as layers of architectural interest.

The first, references new young practices and their ephemeral architectures, which due to their freedom, are seen as a key point in architectural speculation and advancement.

The second uses Persiana Barcelona, an industrial product designed out of an architectural competition, to talk about different and non-standard ways of making architecture. It also states the need of our society to learn again how to inhabit the spaces we dwell.

The third and last, talks about the experience the author had when living and working for four years in a tropical country highly influenced by its climate. He also presents some of the aspects and ideas behind a community project he developed in that area.

**Key words:** Ephemeral architecture; Persiana; Tropical architecture.

PAU SARQUELLA. Architect (U.P.C.) and Professor at the international program INDA de la Universidad de Arquitectura Chulalongkorn (Bankok).

Confessions

Estel Ortega Vázquez

DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8895

At a time when, facing of a new reality, architecture is exposed more than ever to its elastic capacity, having the need to define new professional profiles that have blurred the classic figure of the architect beyond the pure building, I take the invitation of this magazine on the 20th anniversary of Cátedra Blanca to share a vision of the profession, as an opportunity to review the impact, value and influence of art and the mixture between architects, thinkers and artists, through ephemeral architecture. The lack of art complexes to formulate uncomfortable questions and find new expressive languages, allowed many architects to see in their free nature the opportunity to discover all kinds of synergies by mixing with each other, thus building bridges between seemingly independent disciplines when betting on transversality. From this experience resulted in many cases

the definition of new postulates that changed the way of understanding contemporary architecture. From Jackson Pollock to Mark Rothko, through the mutual influence between the members of the Independent Group or the CoBra group, and the value of their work together in the form of ephemeral spaces (and their ability to establish those as *manifestos*), in which the challenge it is to give palpable form to knowledge.  
**Key words:** Architecture; Art; Ephemeral; Knowledge; Transversality.

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### The Silicon Dawn and the resignificance of craftwork today

Stella Rahola Matutes  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8953

Faced with a material culture that promotes consumerism as a way of obtaining satisfaction, I wonder if craftwork can also be applied to modern forms of work and, in general, to the ways of 'doing' things in our commitment to material culture. From my point of view, if we get involved with our work in a deeper sense, we could also have a greater empathy with the way others work, perhaps moving from a society of "consumers" to a society of "producers", as interested and concerned about the skills and working conditions of those who produce things for us, as we expect them to be with ours. This argument focuses on a sustainable material culture and an economic system characterized by a less passive consumerism and a more active production, making, adapting, repairing, sharing where there is much more potential for novelty and pleasure.  
**Key words:** Craftwork; Consumerism; Material culture; Production.

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### Kitchenless

Anna Puigjaner  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8954

There is something provocative and at the same time revealing in the act of eliminating the kitchen from the house. The generalized social refusal that this action often provokes allows us to understand the deep affection and assumptions that this domestic space arouses. Ideologically speaking, the kitchen has had a main role in the historical definition of the idea of home and the family, and subsequently, in the creation of gender biased relationships within the domestic sphere. In that sense, an image has been forged of the kitchen as a space where women could take responsibility for domestic work alone, thanks to factors such as its proper design and adequate arrangement amidst a care-based system of social value, rather than economic gain.

The kitchen is where domestic work has progressively lost its economic value and become instead a labor of love, as Silvia Federici names it. Such transformations not only made an entire sector of society (women) economically dependent on others and particular forms of social relations but also, through progressively isolation, lose political agency. But beyond the idea of the kitchen as an apparatus for the perpetuation of clichés, being aware that this type of domesticity is a construction can allow us to understand its reversibility or ability to change. Home values are always in permanent mutation, and today, those which deal with the kitchen are precisely the most capable of radically changing preset gender roles and domestic labor structures.

**Key words:** Kitchenless; Domestic Labor; Collective Kitchen; Shared Kitchen; Architecture.

ANNA PUIGJANER. Doctor in Architecture (U.P.C.) and Associate Professor at the Department of Architectural Design of Columbia GSAPP.

### Knowledge fractals

Xavier Vilalta  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8767

One of the most important lessons of the White Chair with Carlos Ferrater and Alberto Peñín, was how to find strategies to synchronize with the landscape through geometry. This way of understanding architecture has matured over time along with the projects, from a small nursery in the Alamús, Lleida, to a hotel in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil through a high-rise market in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Still in this process, which as a fractal is still open, it is proposed each project seeks to find ways of doing Architecture that can improve the relationship between the communities and their environment. Fractal geometry has its origin in the ancestral knowledge of the territories where it is projected and serves us to incorporate in a contemporary way the tradition, the local culture and the existing resources, seeking through Architecture a better relationship between us and nature.  
**Key words:** Fractal; Geometry; Territory.

XAVIER VILALTA. Architect (U.P.C.). He has been Professor at the Department of Architectural Design of the E.T.S.A.Barcelona.

### Architecture and Entrepreneurship

Ivan Shumkov  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8950

In this phase of my life, I'm a New York based entrepreneur, architect, educator and the Founder of Build Academy. Below is a snapshot of a bit of my journey and my work that hopefully can be of inspiration to others. Looking back at my journey, I try to connect the dots, see how I got here and where I'm heading. Architecture has the unique capacity to manifest new realities and raise people's consciousness. It opens so many paths that can make a positive difference in the world if followed thoroughly with passion and perseverance.

My life and work maintain a bridge between architecture, entrepreneurship, research, teaching, leadership and social activism. I demonstrate the non-traditional path of an architect and highlight the potential within the realm of architecture. The impact of my work can be seen from the social impact projects that I was involved with, to the thousands of people that he has educated and inspired through my teaching in universities and online. My work as entrepreneur went beyond into starting a global movement for resilient, sustainable, inclusive and conscious communities and cities. I am willing to collaborate with anyone who shares the same passion for discovering the world and making a positive difference into it.  
**Key words:** Fractal; Geometry; Territory.

IVAN SHUMKOV. Doctor in Architecture (U.P.C.). Adjunct Professor at the New York University. He has been Professor at the Department of Architectural Design of the E.T.S.A.Barcelona.

### The construction of a narrative in space

Jorge Vidal  
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During these years I have focused my work on the construction of narratives in space. A search based on the understanding of what is around us. What shapes us both as people and in relation to a certain place. They are trips that go from the softest part of architecture, dreams or intuitions, to the toughest and most real, the built. A journey from the abstract to the concrete that during its process undergoes the necessary transformations to create its body, its essence, what things are. There are people who talk about the soul of things, about their will to be, maybe they are right. I try to find it at the end of the process. All this is about stories that end up talking about sites, cultures and techniques.  
**Key words:** Narrative; Space; Built.

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### Devil is in the details

Francisco González de Canales  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8757

It wasn't even my third week in Barcelona when Carlos asked for a facade section at 1:10 scale of the project idea. That was a surprise. Not only in terms of changing the usual order in the development of the project, but because I came from a context in which the enemy was the mannerism already present since the 70s; in such context, starting the project by the detail seemed highly suspicious to me. I could not understand how going back to detail could make sense in a world that we already recognized as changes and flows in constant circulation. What resistance to it could "the detail" detail? In this my last career course, my training until then based on diagrams and strategies seemed much more coherent to me, and that other thing seemed to me like a kind of self-absorption in the excessively particular, or worse, as a casting of the architects about themselves and their own 'styling' in the face of convulsing times. But the insistence was huge. Carlos repeated as a mantra that what interested him most in architecture were 'the 3 centimeters', those in which the materials are found, and he expressed this in the talks with which he presented his work, in the construction visits that we made throughout that year ... In these 20 years since that course, this need for coherence across the different scales of the processes has led a good part of my informational, academic and professional career.  
**Key words:** Detail; Scale; Form.

FRANCISCO GONZÁLEZ DE CANALES. Doctor in Architecture (U.S.) and Professor at the Department of Architectural Composition of the U.S.

### Occasions

Cecilia Obiol  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.8955

Life and architecture share that condition intrinsically linked to the occasions presented to them, which are nothing other than "opportunities to understand and establish active relationships with the world".

My father always says that he found a lot of queue at the Faculty of Medicine, where he planned to enroll, and decided to go to Architecture. The essentially random condition of that first great occasion seems promising and, at the same time, it transmits a certain lightness to me, so necessary for the lucky ones whose opportunities have allowed us to exercise architecture, in any of the many ways in which it can occur.  
**Key words:** Occasion; Lightness; Palimpsest.

CECILIA OBIOL. Architect (U.P.C.). Editor-in-chief of Palimpsesto. She has been Professor at the Department of Architectural Design of the E.T.S.A.Barcelona.

### Conversation

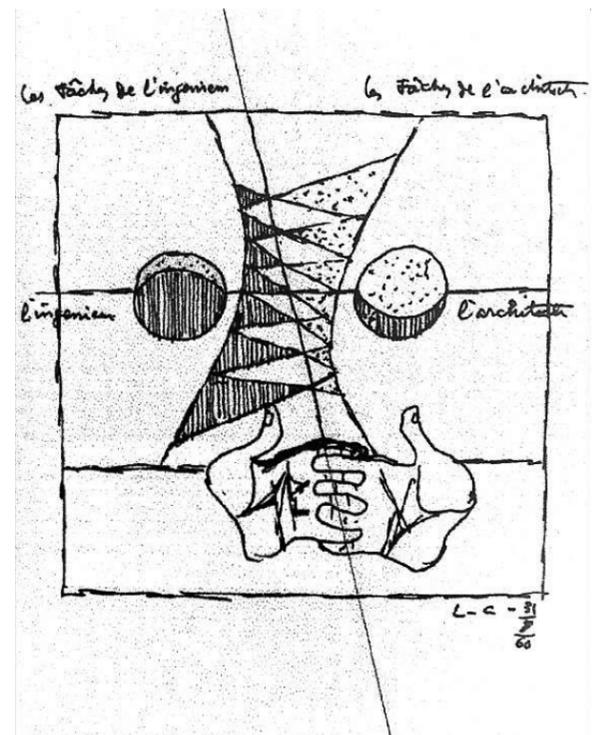
Olga Felip, Eduard Gascón, Ramon Godó, Judith Leclerc, Julio Mejón, Mara Partida  
DOI: 10.5821/palimpsesto.20.9013

Barcelona, June 11, 2019; under the pretext of Ramón Godó's last day of class at the School, the seven professors of the White Chair of Barcelona gathered around a table. The course ends and with the first heats of summer the chair (on its 20th anniversary) has to face new challenges such as its passage to the ETSAB master's degree, after 13 courses in the third year of the career. The atmosphere of change, after a long sweet and fruitful period, is the ideal context to discuss two or three questions, about our origins, our concerns, about the future of students, the profession and the School.  
**Key words:** Education; Teaching; Future.

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# CALL FOR PAPERS



The continuous process of review of the discipline in which contemporary architecture moves leads to the redefinition of its own limits. If during the nineteenth century one of the most relevant of these limits was created, the one that segregates it from engineering, today it seems appropriate to question, far from the legal frameworks, the sharpness of this supposed disagreement. The relationship between architecture and engineering, and among its protagonists, architect and engineer, has been key in the history of recent architecture. The modern movement gave numerous examples of collaborations that have not always received the deserved interest of researchers. Thus, this field of study, in which Palimpsesto focuses his call to originals for number 21, will look back but also towards the future, exploring, probing and proposing fruitful fields of collaboration.

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**Language:** Latin original or english

**Procedure:** External authors peer review

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**Phase 1 (26.10.2018)**

Elaboration and delivery of 1 abstract of 250 words

Author's identification: name, surname, academic affiliation, condition, e-mail adress.

**Phase 2 (23.11.2018)**

If accepted for text elaboration, delivery of 3.000 words text and 3 images.

Commitment to publish at least 1 article in PALIMPSESTO 21.