Architecture and engineering

Carlos Ferrater, Alberto Peñín
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The history of technology accounts for how engineers and architects have shaped their working relationship through a long process that after the original conflict of the 19th century and the period of idealization of the modern movement tended to an inevitable confluence. Since the second half of the 20th century, there are many examples of this fruitful relationship that leads us to underline the collective aspect of construction that it will not be possible to conceive individually from then on. The appearance of profiles of engineers close to design, or of architects with sufficient technical solvency help to blur that limit that a visionary like Le Corbusier anticipated in his famous drawing published in the preface of the book “Precisions regarding a current state of architecture and urbanism ”in 1960. The cases of Rice and Piano, Utzon and Waschmann, Kommendant and Kahn or even as late as the end of the 19th century, Adler and Sulivan are examples of these couples that cannot be separated to understand their work.

Key words: architecture; engineering; technology.

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The shadow of the La Olmeda

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In1968, a casual discovery brought to light the remains of a late Roman country-villa that dates back to the 4th century. Its mosaics are among the most complete and rich to be found in Roman Empire. Toward the mid 90’s started the more thorough work on preservation and valorisation of the site that required a roof for the excavations, the protection of the mosaics in situ, and building an exhibition and study centre for visitors and archaeologists. The villa now is protected by a wide metallic structure of four vaulted modules and one lowered plane module. Four freestanding pillars and 110 pilasters situated outside the facade in polycarbonate support all the structure and permit a homogenous lighting of the interior as an uneven shadow. The rhomboidal roof structure is situated in light contact with the upper part of the translucent facade while on the visitor´s level a white concrete plinth encloses the perimeter of the Villa.
The desire to find an integrated solution between the exterior and the landscape and between the interior and the archaeological area is extensive in La Olmeda to architecture and structure. The conceptual difficulty that represents the reconstruction of an unknown architecture that existed more than 1,600 years ago leads either to an exercise in constructive invention and historical fabulation or to build an architectural solution capable to evoke an architectural space that shelters time. With this premise, architecture and engineering must necessarily go beyond a mere collaboration but rather work together, each discipline with its own tools, in the common goal of building that great shadow.

Key words: roman villa; olmeda; structure; mosaics.

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Twenty micro-stories

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The paradox of architecture is also the multiplicity of its reasons. Palimpsesto has paid attention to them through its different sections, as reflected in the event held at the ETSAB on December 17, 2019 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary, with Oriol Bohígas and Federico Correa as witnesses and protagonists.

Key words: Betancourt; engineering; Illustration.

PALIMPSESTO EDITORIAL..

Illustrated inventiveness: Agustin de Betancourt by Javier Rui Wamba

Javier Rui Wamba
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Seldom can a single person be identified as the architect of relevant social initiatives. Agustín de Betancourt would be one of them. An exceptional and transcendent character, who still influences us today, because of the intellectual infrastructures that he created and his contribution to the configuration of a strong and competent, effective and honest Administration model are still felt. Its genes shape our present and have shaped our collective for more than 200 years, giving it personality and coherence.

Key words: Betancourt; engineering; Illustration.

JAVIER RUI WAMBA. Engineer. Premio Nacional de Ingeniería 2016.

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