

MUSEUM TAMAYO - NEIGHBORHOOD

TLATELOLCO AND THE LOCALIZED NEGOTIATION OF FUTURE IMAGINARIES

Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City
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In approaching the subject of neighborhood or barrio, we address this topic by defining a barrio as a multifaceted, fluctuating structure that contains within it not only a particular identification with a site, but also with a set of human relationships, ideals, and visions about what a particular space is and can possibly become. We recognize this collective identification as representing shared desire or desires and as such the notion of barrio inherently involves the projection of a future imaginary or potentiality.

Our interest in Tlatelolco arises from its historical cultural relevance as a repeated site of imaginings of the future and various collective ideals and relationships while we concurrently look to explore Tlatelolco's contemporary status as an increasingly active context for cultural production. A site rich in the complex layering of constructed histories that define contemporary Mexico, our interest is not as historicizing, self-exoticizing one, but a desire to investigate the continued role of this context in the construction of future possibilities for Mexico today, as it looks to define its place within an increasingly globalized world. Tlatelolco provokes these desires, in that it involves the perpetual negotiation by its inhabitants and its visitors with various pasts and futures, and questions about the continued potentialities of this site as a generator of future models.

Filled with the aspirations and anxieties of cultural development, Tlatelolco has been a significant cultural site since the Aztec period. In the twentieth century, it was closely identified with modernist urban planning ambitions of Mexico during the early 1960s, and student demonstrations and killings at the time of the Olympics in 1968. During the earthquake of 1985, it suffered dramatic casualties, as its architecture proved unsound and resulted in many fatalities. In recent years there has been increased cultural attention placed upon this planned neighborhood, both by governmental agencies that look to articulate or reconcile various interpretations of its past, as well as by artists from both Mexico and abroad that have engaged the site. Our presentation seeks to reflect on this resurgence of interest and the new significations, brandings, and ideologies it brings to this neighborhood.

The project combines preexisting networks related to Tlatelolco with works commissioned specifically for the Museum as Hub. Film screenings, artist talks and workshops, discussions with cultural critics from Mexico, and informal discussion groups will take place over the course of the presentation. With this structure we hope to develop a discursive space that allows visitors to engage more fully in the reflections that the project generates regarding one neighborhood's continual negotiation of future imaginaries.

MARIO PANI'S TLATELOLCO VS. CIUDAD NEZA: HOUSING, COMMUNITY, AND THE DIALECTICS OF PLANNING AND NON-PLANNING IN MEXICO CITY

Jose Castillo

In the mid-twentieth century, Mexico City was a power capital in the making, rapidly undergoing important social changes that were sustained by high economic growth and a modernizing process that embraced transformations in education, health, and housing for the urban masses. While at the beginning of the twentieth century Mexico City had a population of approximately 300,000 people, by 1950 it had risen to 3.1 million and occupied an area of 250 square kilometers. Fueled by both rural to urban migration and high birth rates, this massive demographic growth became reflected in the built landscape of the city, in its infrastructure as well as in its housing.

From 1952 through 1966, the appointed mayor Ernesto Uruçurtu, known as the "Iron Mayor" for his severity, ruled the city with a combination of populist and socially conservative urban policies that focused on urban growth control, slum clearance, and the construction of large-scale

projects involving housing, infrastructure, and various services.

At that time, Mexico City faced two radically different positions in relation to urban development. On the one hand, there was modern architecture and planning's understanding of the city and its techniques to address and resolve the problems of housing, infrastructure and services. On the other hand, however, there was the pervasive reality of informal urbanization, as characterized by urban processes which take place outside the "legal," planned and regulated development of the city.

The Tlatelolco Housing Project, built by Mario Pani between 1960 and 1964, represents the most extreme example of modern architecture and urban planning addressing the problem of housing in Mexico City during the twentieth century. As an urban project comprised of 147 buildings planned for 15,000 units of housing and close to 100,000 inhabitants, this was one of the largest and most polemic urban renewal operations this country has ever seen. On the other end of the urban spectrum, the peripheral community of Ciudad Neza, under development since the 1950s, became the paradigm of informal development, a city-suburb that grew in only forty years, into what is now a 4,000 hectare and 1.5 million inhabitant city.

How was it possible that at its most optimistic and projective moment, the practices of architecture and urban planning were being challenged by the brutal reality of informal urbanism? How effective were these two modalities of city-making in addressing the changing sociopolitical conditions of a country in transformation?

This essay will question the reasons and the effects of this paradoxical condition, to propose that both Mario Pani's Tlatelolco and the self-grown Neza, if considered together in

their dialectical failures and successes, radically transformed the urban landscape of Mexico City and most importantly, the understanding of housing, community, and planning, as socio-political tools.

MARIO PANI AND THE INVENTION OF MODERN HOUSING IN MEXICO

Mario Pani was a prominent Mexican architect and urban planner of the twentieth century. Through talent and shrewdness, he was able to translate avant-garde architectural strategies to the particular conditions of Mexico, convincing both private and public clients to accept his visions of urban planning and architecture while he transformed the ideas of housing and community more than anyone else in the city.

After completing his studies in France under the Beaux-Arts system, he returned to Mexico at the age of twenty-four. His first buildings were both small private commissions, as well as larger public works, achieved in part, with the support of his uncle Alberto J. Pani, a cabinet minister at the time.

Pani was certainly not the most radical, nor the most socially engaged, or arguably even the most talented architect of his generation. But what is certain is that no one could understand better than him the particularities of political and economic power in Mexico and use them to his advantage to pursue a broad architectural and urban agenda. During the 1940s, he built important public projects such as the Music Conservatory and the National School for Teachers, but a defining moment in his career was when he was commissioned by the Federal Pensions Agency to design a housing project known as the President Alemán Urban Center or CUPA.

For the CUPA, although Pani was asked to design 200 detached houses for public workers, he instead developed a scheme with over 1,000 units in a high-rise and high-density development. He proposed, for the first time in Mexico, a scheme of multi-family housing: one large superblock, with a zig-zag scheme of interlocking high-rise buildings on a minimum footprint, leaving large areas of open space for the dwellers. In addition, the CUPA had retail space on the ground floor, day-care facilities, communal spaces, and a pool, as well as centralized administration.

While clearly borrowing from Le Corbusier's ideas, both from the Ville

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MODERNITY AS RESURRECTION

Cauhtémoc Medina

In the summer of 1962, U. S. President John Kennedy made a much-publicized state visit to Mexico. A highlight in the campaign for the Alliance of Progress, and despite the apparent tensions between Mexico and the U.S. in relation to the Cuban Revolution, the visit also helped President Adolfo López Mateos to stage, both for locals and foreigners, the victory of the modernizing project of the post-Revolutionary regime in Mexico. The Kennedys were given a royal reception, a full-fledged visit to the glories of the Mexican past and present: the pre-Columbian ruins. President Adolfo López Mateos, who was obsessed with upgrading the role of Mexico in the Cold War diplomatic arena, could triumphantly boast that the United States had at last come to understand the Mexican Revolution as a libertarian tradition parallel to the Democratic lineage of Lincoln and Roosevelt. López Mateos also took the chance to assert the perspective of the Mexican State regarding the relation between modernization and its historical roots, fully aware of the historical distrust Mexicans felt at the U.S. agenda. At a gala dinner that the Kennedys hosted in the María Isabel Hotel on June 30, 1962, López Mateos gallantly praised Jackie Kennedy for having displayed an "extraordinary female sensibility" of a "cultured woman" when, during one of her tours, she voiced her concerns that progress could put in peril the "eternal values of Mexico."

"We can assure Mrs. Kennedy"—López Mateos said in his official speech—"that there is no danger that progress will lessen or diminish the eternal values of the Mexican spirit. That those who built the pyramids of Mitla or Teotihuacán, Chichen Itza, or Uxmal, (...) [and] those who first taught the world the value of human freedom and dignity, the likes of Morelos and Juárez, will be immortal amongst us."

One of the most striking characteristics of the Mexican post-Revolutionary ideologies of the twentieth century is the little role that the notion of "the future" had both in the rhetoric of power and in the fabric of Mexican modern culture. This fact alone explains, to a great extent, the oddity of Mexican modernism. No matter how much Mexican intellectuals and writers busy themselves with the referents posed by the narrative of progress and development of the West, the symbolic weight of its Revolutionary ideology has involved a continuous negotiation with a number of claims and images referring to a number of historical pasts. It may be that, in fact, except for the Mexican communists, the concept and imagery of "the future" played a small part in the public discourses of the Mexican twentieth century.

This framework was, in fact, what in 1963 Daniel Cosío Villegas, one of the most prominent critics of the regime, addressed through an ironic reference to modern music. According to Cosío Villegas, the temporality inhabited by the Revolutionary Institutional Party regime that had ruled Mexico since 1929 behaved in a manner akin to an unfinished composition, as a fragment that provoked the anxiety of its incompleteness but was nonetheless irredeemable:

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LA MODERNIDAD COMO RESURRECCIÓN

Cauhtémoc Medina

En el verano de 1962, el presidente de Estados Unidos, John Kennedy, realizó una visita de Estado a México muy publicitada. Un hecho muy relevante en la campaña para la Alianza por el Progreso, la visita—a pesar de las tensiones aparentes entre México y Estados Unidos a propósito de la revolución cubana—le dio también la oportunidad al presidente Adolfo López Mateos de escenificar, para propios y extraños, la victoria del proyecto modernizador del régimen posrevolucionario. A los Kennedy se les recibió por todo lo alto, con todo y una visita a las glorias del pasado y el presente mexicanos: las ruinas prehispánicas. El presidente López Mateos, obsesionado con intensificar el papel de México en el ámbito diplomático de la Guerra Fría, podía presumir ya de que Estados Unidos finalmente había entendido la Revolución Mexicana como una tradición libertaria paralela al linaje democrático de Lincoln y Roosevelt. López Mateos también aprovechó la oportunidad para reafirmar la perspectiva del Estado mexicano en lo tocante a la relación entre el proceso de modernización y sus raíces históricas, totalmente consciente de la desconfianza histórica de los mexicanos hacia las intenciones de los estadounidenses. En la cena de gala ofrecida por los Kennedy en el hotel María Isabel el 30 de junio de 1962, López Mateos alabó galantemente a Jackie por haber exhibido la "extraordinaria sensibilidad femenina" de una "mujer cultivada" cuando, durante una de sus excursiones, ella expresara su preocupación de que el progreso pudiera poner en peligro los "valores impercederos de México".

Podemos asegurarle a la señora Kennedy que no hay peligro de que el progreso merme o disminuya los valores impercederos del espíritu mexicano. Que aquellos que construyeron las pirámides de Mitla o Teotihuacán, Chichen Itza o Uxmal, (...) [y] aquellos que, como Morelos y Juárez, revelaron al mundo por primera vez el valor de la libertad y la dignidad humanas serán inmortales entre nosotros.1

Una de las características más sobresalientes de las ideologías mexicanas posrevolucionarias del siglo XX es el papel insignificante que tuviera la noción de "futuro" tanto en la retórica del poder como en la trama de la cultura mexicana moderna. Este hecho por sí mismo explica en gran medida la rareza del modernismo mexicano. No importa cuánto se esmeren los intelectuales y escritores de este país con los referentes planteados por la narrativa del progreso y el desarrollo de Occidente, el peso simbólico de su ideología revolucionaria ha conllevado una negociación continua donde abundan los alegatos e imágenes que se refieren a igual

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Corbusier's Ville Radieuse. This group of apartment buildings sought to regenerate an area occupied by illegal development and to provide housing for 70,000 people (mostly civil servants), and also included green spaces, shops, and services that were meant to give residents a better standard of living. Pani conceived Tlatelolco as the solution to life in the city, proposing it as an action¹ within the urban fabric, building "a city inside the city" so residents' need to commute—and hence additional traffic—would be reduced to a minimum. In 1962, as a finishing touch, Pani designed the Torre Insignia (or Insignia Tower), an enormous solid-concrete pyramid-shaped building that in a sense, set as it was against an adjacent archaeological

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Current and in-depth information about the Museum as Hub project and partnership is available online at museumshub.org.

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site, attempted to lend the area a measure of national identity. With this project, Pani not only gained recognition as an urban thinker, but as the instigator, to a great extent, of the transformation of Mexico City on its way to modernity.

The complex was built on the site occupied in pre-Hispanic times by Tlatelolco market—the center of social and economic life in ancient Mexico. It is also where Spaniards captured the Aztec emperor Cuauhtémoc on the night of August 13, 1521, while he attempted to defend the city of Tenochtitlan. This event marked the fall of the powerful Aztec empire and the beginning of a lengthy, conflict-ridden process of colonization. In a candid institutional attempt at lending harmony to a present still troubled by its past, a plaque remains to this day at Tlatelolco that states that it was the site that witnessed the painful birth of a mestizo nation. From that moment on, the history of Mexico, America, and Europe would undergo a process of drastic changes, including religious conquest and countless campaigns aimed at territorial expansion. Years after the fall of Tenochtitlan, a research center was established at Tlatelolco—the first college in the New World and the first academic library in the Americas—that sought to establish connections between the Mexica and Spanish cultures. Tlatelolco is also where the indigenous farmer Juan Diego informed Bishop Juan de Zumárraga of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the years following Mexico's independence, the College of Santa Cruz was vacated and turned into a prison where several distinguished intellectuals and notorious revolutionaries were incarcerated. Until a little less than a year ago, Tlatelolco also housed the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where bureaucrats made attempts at forging Mexico's foreign policy.

To commemorate the "melding" of cultures and further emphasize the site's symbolic significance, after the housing complex was built, Pani designed the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Plaza of Three Cultures) where three periods of Mexican history can be seen at a single glance: pre-Hispanic ruins, the colonial-era Church of Santiago Tlatelolco and the modernist tower of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs built by architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. Today, this archetypal building—where Mexico's image abroad was conceived and where it is suspected that the massacre of students that took place at Tlatelolco in 1968 was at least partly planned—is a cultural center run by the National University of Mexico and shelters one of the country's most important private collections of modern art. Appropriately, it also features a memorial to those violent days in October 1968, a memorial whose existence, only ten years ago, was unthinkable.

1968 was a decisive year for the development of Mexican democracy and in

establishing the identity of Mexico City as a modern metropolis. The government had accomplished its goal for the city to host the XIX Olympics, and in addition to the effervescence and excitement caused by this event, the country faced a moment of transformation: following decades of the same party in power, new generations were seeking change and had begun to demand it publicly. Autumn of 1968 witnessed intense mobilizations and demonstrations; on the afternoon of October 2, a large group of students made their way to the plaza in Tlatelolco where a rally was planned. Concerned about foreign powers' perception of the public demonstrations, the government reacted harshly to make sure that the image that Mexico cast before the international community remained unblemished. A few days before the opening ceremonies of the Olympics, hundreds of students died and others were imprisoned without trial in what remains to this day the most tragic student massacre in Mexican history.

Yet another painful birth rite. A national consciousness was born and a large sector of Mexican society saw that a persistent smokescreen had dissipated to reveal a harsh reality: there was no possibility of dialogue with the government, there was no democracy or freedom of expression. The regime, in spite of its idiosyncrasies, was indeed a dictatorship. The event also led to the *guerra sucia* (or "dirty war"²) and the proliferation of guerilla groups across the country.

Though perhaps more symbolically than factually, Tlatelolco was once again the stage of a violent rupture, of the beginning and end of something. A generation of university students had contended with the government and lost the battle. But in various ways, other struggles were brewing within the system, as well as outside it, openly and violently clashing with it. Over the years, many leaders of the 1968 student movement have kept participating in decisive ways in the country's process of democratization.

As if the site had not played an important enough role in history—and a largely tragic one—a major earthquake destroyed or damaged vast sections of Mexico City on the morning of September 19, 1985. The Nuevo León tower in the heart of Tlatelolco collapsed—it was one of the earthquake's most dramatic and most publicized after-images—and many other buildings in the complex were irreparably damaged. As the government failed to respond adequately, there was a never-before-seen societal effort at self-organization in order to rescue survivors and get through the crisis. The earthquake clearly showed

that civil society had matured in the face of a chronically ailing political system.

After the rubble had been cleared there came the public trial, first against Mario Pani, who was blamed for faulty construction, and then against government institutions responsible for determining building materials and their quality, and finally, against the Dirección Nacional de Pensiones (or National Pension Bureau), which had been responsible for the complex's upkeep for over twenty years. The tragedy led to powerful new initiatives: residents formerly dependent on the National Pension Bureau formed their own association, taking over the building's administration and the maintenance of common areas and green spaces. They also restored the area's historical dignity as a place of change and transformation rather than as the site of tragedy.

Besides being a location that has witnessed critical episodes in the country's history, the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Housing Complex has also been a clear reflection of the government's failure to achieve modernity by issuing decrees and erecting buildings. As a ruin, it stands as proof of haphazard attempts, of the omnipotent presidential gesture that tries to summon forth the future with tons of cement. Though the effort was well-intentioned, it met with failure and came to form part of a problematic context. There have been two sides to every event that has taken place on this terrain: tragedy and hope, Thanatos and Eros. This duality—apparently more contradictory than complementary—along with Pani's archetypal (and now fashionable) modernist aesthetic and the site's inescapable symbolic burden make Tlatelolco an area of recurrent interest to writers, visual artists, filmmakers, and even publicists—and also to the merely curious, who claim to find in this site the keys to an identity that indeed seems to be encrypted in history, or in the history of multiple tragedies.

Endnotes

1—At the same time as Tlatelolco was under development, Ciudad Satélite was being planned, also meant as a solution to living and working in the city; however, it was an action conceived outside the city as an independent suburb or, literally, a "Satellite City."

2—A period during which then-presidents Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970) and Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) repressed social, student, and labor movements.

—MALLET, CONTINUACIÓN DE LA PÁGINA 1

de distancia, pretendía infundir a la zona de cierta identidad nacional. Con este proyecto Pani no sólo se alzaba como un pensador urbano, sino como el generador de una parte importante de la

transformación de la ciudad de México en su camino hacia la modernidad.

El conjunto fue erigido en el mismo sitio que durante el periodo prehispánico ocupó el gran mercado de Tlatelolco—centro de la vida económica y social del México antiguo. También fue ahí donde la noche del 13 de agosto de 1521 cayó Cuauhtémoc, defensor de la gran Tenochtitlán, en manos de los españoles. Este evento marcaría la caída del poderoso imperio azteca y el comienzo de un prolongado y conflictivo proceso de colonización. En un cándido e institucional afán por armonizar un presente aún convulso precisamente por su pasado, una plaza que todavía existe en Tlatelolco señala que ahí tuvo lugar el parto doloroso de una nación mestiza. A partir de ese momento, la historia de México, de América y de Europa, se enfrentaría a un proceso de cambios drásticos, entre los que están el inicio de múltiples campañas de expansión territorial y la conquista religiosa. Años después de la caída de Tenochtitlán surgió ahí mismo en Tlatelolco un Centro de estudios—primer colegio del nuevo mundo y primera Biblioteca académica de las Américas—que buscaba establecer puntos de contacto entre la cultura mexicana y la española. También en Tlatelolco fue donde el indio Juan Diego le reveló al Obispo Juan de Zumárraga las apariciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe. En los comienzos del México independiente, el Colegio de la Santa Cruz fue desalojado y sus edificios se convirtieron en una prisión, donde algunos ilustres intelectuales y revolucionarios estuvieron encerrados. Hasta hace poco menos de un año, en Tlatelolco estaba también la sede de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, desde donde se intentaba a política exterior mexicana.

Para conmemorar la "fusión" de culturas y destacar aún más la riqueza simbólica del sitio, al finalizar la construcción de la unidad habitacional, Pani realizó la Plaza de las Tres Culturas en la que a golpe de vista pueden verse tres periodos de la historia de México: las ruinas prehispánicas, la Iglesia de Santiago Tlatelolco que data de la colonia y la moderna torre de Relaciones Exteriores construida por el arquitecto Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. Hoy, ese emblemático edificio desde donde se planeó la imagen de México al exterior y desde donde se sospecha se fraguó al menos en parte la matanza estudiantil que sucedió ahí mismo en 1968, es un centro cultural manejado por la Universidad Autónoma de México que alberga una de las colecciones privadas de arte moderno más importantes del país. Contiene, también, un oportuno memorial que recuerda aquellos violentos días de octubre de 1968, un memorial cuya existencia sería impensable hace apenas una década.

1968 fue un año decisivo para la construcción de la democracia mexicana y la definición de la identidad de la ciudad de México como una metrópolis moderna. El gobierno había conseguido que la capital fuera la sede de la edición XIX de los Juegos Olímpicos, además de la bulia y la excitación que causaba dicho evento, el país enfrentaba

un momento de transformación: tras años del mismo régimen político, las nuevas generaciones buscaban cambios y comenzaron a alzar su voz para exigirlos. El otoño de 1968 fue de intensas movilizaciones y marchas; la tarde del 2 de octubre un contingente de estudiantes llegó a la Plaza de Tlatelolco donde se realizaría un mitin. Precupado por las movilizaciones sociales ante la mirada extranjera, el gobierno optó por la mano dura para mantener impecable la imagen de México ante la comunidad internacional. A unos días de inaugurar las Olimpiadas, cientos de jóvenes murieron y otros desaparecieron en lo que hasta hoy, ha sido la masacre estudiantil más dramática de la historia de México.

Otro parto doloroso. Nacía una conciencia nacional, despertaba una parte de la sociedad mexicana ante una realidad ahora evidente y antes disimulada: no había espacios de diálogo con el gobierno, no existía la democracia ni la libertad de expresión. Se vivía, con las particularidades que uno desee, bajo una dictadura. Surgirían también de ahí la guerra sucia y los movimientos guerrilleros en el país.

No en términos reales quizá, pero sí a nivel simbólico, Tlatelolco volvía a ser el escenario de una ruptura violenta, del inicio y del fin de algo. La generación de jóvenes universitarios se había enfrentado al gobierno y había perdido una batalla. Pero de diversas maneras, se iniciaban otras luchas; desde dentro, desde fuera y abierta y violentamente en contra del sistema. Muchos de los protagonistas del movimiento estudiantil del 68 han tenido, con los años, una participación determinante en los procesos de democratización del país.

Si acaso ese lugar no había tenido suficiente protagonismo histórico, en buena medida trágico, la mañana del 19 de septiembre de 1985 un fuerte terremoto arrasó con una parte significativa de la ciudad de México. Entre los derrumbes más dramáticos—y mediáticos—estuvo el del edificio Nuevo León, situado en el corazón de Tlatelolco, complejo que además sufrió daños irreparables en muchos otros de sus edificios. A falta de una respuesta del gobierno, la sociedad, como nunca antes, se organizó para rescatar sobrevivientes y superar la crisis. El terremoto reveló a una sociedad civil que maduraba frente a un sistema político que envejecía irremediablemente.

Una vez levantados los escombros vino el juicio público, primero a Mario Pani a quien se le achacaba una mala construcción, luego a las instituciones gubernamentales encargadas de decidir el tipo y la calidad de materiales, por último a la dirección nacional de pensiones que había sido la responsable del mantenimiento del conjunto por más de 20 años. La tragedia trajo nuevas y poderosas iniciativas: los vecinos, antes dependientes de la dirección nacional de pensiones, decidieron organizarse y conformar una asociación que al tiempo de hacerse cargo de la administración de los edificios, del buen estado de sus jardines y sus espacios públicos, devolviera a la zona su dignidad histórica no como sitio de tragedia, sino como lugar de cambio y transformación.

Además de estar ubicada en un sitio que ha atestiguado episodios críticos en la historia del país, la unidad Nonoalco-Tlatelolco ha sido en parte nítido reflejo del fracaso gubernamental de pretender alcanzar la modernidad con decretos y edificaciones. Como ruinas, es la prueba del intento desarticulado, el gesto presidencial omnipotente que pretende conjurar el futuro con toneladas de cemento. Si bien es muestra de un esfuerzo bienintencionado, resultó infructuoso y terminó sumergido en un contexto inclemente. Cada acontecimiento sucedido sobre esos suelos ha presentado siempre dos caras: la tragedia y la esperanza; tanatos y eros. Esta dualidad, aparentemente más contradictoria que complementaria, junto con la emblemática estética modernista de Pani—ahora reivindicada por la moda—y las ineludibles cargas simbólicas del lugar, hacen de Tlatelolco un área de interés recurrente para escritores, artistas visuales, cineastas y hasta publicistas. También para simples curiosos, que pretenden hallar ahí las claves de una identidad que en efecto pareciera cifrarse en la historia o en la historia de múltiples tragedias.

Al mismo tiempo que se desarrollaba Tlatelolco se estaba planeando ya Ciudad Satélite que se planteaba también como una solución para la vida y el trabajo en la ciudad pero se planteaba como una acción fuera de la ciudad.

TIMELINE

- 1325 Founding of Tenochtitlán, later the capital of Aztec civilization and present day Mexico City.**
- 1338 Founding of Tlatelolco, neighboring city to Tenochtitlán.**
- 1428 Founding of the market of Tlatelolco, the most important market of pre-Hispanic Mexico.**
- 1492 Christopher Columbus arrives in America on October 12.**
- 1515 Cuauhtémoc becomes ruler of Tlatelolco, and later, of the whole Aztec empire.**
- 1521 On August 13, Aztec civilization is defeated after a major killing in Tlatelolco following a long siege. Cuauhtémoc is jailed and the day is remembered as the Spanish conquest of Mexico.**
- 1522 The city is divided into the Spanish neighborhood of San Francisco and the Aztec neighborhood of Santiago Tlatelolco.**
- 1527 Franciscan missionaries build the Church of Santiago Tlatelolco.**
- 1776 Reconstruction of Tecpan, the previous government building, as an arts and crafts school.**
- 1811 Santiago Tlatelolco convent becomes a jail.**
- 1912 Pancho Villa is captured in the Temple of Santiago Tlatelolco.**
- 1944 Reopening of the Church of Santiago and discovery of the site of the ancient mayor temple of Tlatelolco. The mural project Cuauhtémoc Against the Myth by David Alfaro Siqueiros is proposed.**
- 1955 Architect Mario Pani begins the study of the zone of Tlatelolco.**
- 1958-64 Construction of the Nonoalco-Tlatelolco Housing Project by Mario Pani in collaboration with Luis Ramos, designed to house 120,000 residents and provide a variety of services, including hospitals, schools, and sports and cultural centers.**
- 1968 During a student demonstration on October 2 in the Plaza of The Three Cultures, one week prior to the opening of the Olympic games in Mexico City, military and judicial forces open fire in an attempt to stop the demonstration, killing student protesters.**
- 1984 The Tlatelolco International Treaty is signed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Tlatelolco, establishing the de-nuclearization of Latin America and the Caribbean.**
- 1985 The Nuevo León building in Tlatelolco collapses in the earthquake of September 19. Two additional buildings must be demolished later, due to structural damages. Approximately 1,000 people are killed.**
- 2007 The National University (UNAM) opens a cultural center in the buildings formerly of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The new complex includes a memorial to 1968 movements around the world, an art museum, a language center, and an archive.**

—MEDINA, CONTINUACIÓN DE LA PÁGINA 1

cantidad de pasados históricos. Es de hecho muy posible, haciendo a un lado a los comunistas mexicanos, que el concepto e imaginaria del "futuro" jugara un papel menor en los discursos públicos del siglo XX en México.

Este marco de referencia es precisamente al que Daniel Cosío Villegas, uno de los críticos del régimen más prominentes, recurriría en 1963 al hacer una referencia irónica a la música moderna. De acuerdo con Cosío Villegas, la temporalidad habitada por el régimen del Partido Revolucionario Institucional, que había gobernado México desde 1929, se comportaba de la misma manera que una composición inacabada, como un fragmento que provocaba la ansiedad de su incompletud pero que resultaba, sin embargo, irredimible:

La Revolución Mexicana, no importa cuánto haya destruido o cuánto haya creado, es una obra incompleta: como la sinfonía "Inconclusa" de Schubert se quedó en el segundo movimiento... mucho de lo que pretendía lograr se quedó a medias una vez que su vitalidad original, la propiamente revolucionaria, menguó para ser reemplazada por un cambio más holgado. Con todo, el grupo en el poder se rehúsa a admitir este hecho y por el contrario, se obstina en afirmar que hay un tercer movimiento (...) aún por escribirse.⁷

Seis años más tarde, durante el mismo discurso a la nación en el cual se hiciera responsable de la sangrienta represión del movimiento estudiantil de 1968, que el gobierno había presentado como una oscura conspiración soviética patrocinada por la influencia de los "filósofos modernos de la destrucción" sobre la juventud, el presidente Gustavo Díaz Ordaz prácticamente confirmó el diagnóstico de Cosío Villegas al manifestar que la superioridad de la Revolución Mexicana residía de hecho en su estado perpetuo de inacabamiento. Hablando con toda la presunción esotérica de la infalibilidad presidencial, Díaz Ordaz definió la Revolución Mexicana como una perpetuidad sin vencimiento, opesta a la demagogia de instaurar el futuro en el presente:

Forma parte del espíritu de una verdadera revolución el permanecer por siempre incompleta e interminada. Aquellas revoluciones que nieguen esto admitiendo una naturaleza episódica son falsas, pretenden hacer creer que el mañana impera hoy. Son mera demagogia.⁸

A pesar de las notas kitsch de su oratoria, las palabras de Díaz Ordaz eran un intento de aguijonear a los marxistas. La fórmula clásica de la dictadura del proletariado de Lenin, expuesta en su obra *El Estado y la revolución* (1917), había descrito el objetivo del comunismo en términos de una temporalidad vanguardista, en la que el partido se convertiría en "la vanguardia de los oprimidos como clase dominante para aplastar a los opresores", cumpliendo así esa lectura de las teorías de Marx como augurios del "inminente colapso del capitalismo" y el "desarrollo posterior de un comunismo futuro".⁹ No es casualidad que en las contadas instancias en que los comunistas mexicanos plasmaron "el futuro" en imágenes y conceptos lo hicieran refiriéndose al modelo soviético, como se ve en los fragmentos de los murales de Diego Rivera en Palacio Nacional (1934-1935), los cuales muestran a Marx señalando el paraíso industrial soviético como objetivo de una "segunda revolución" que derrotaría al capitalismo, al régimen mexicano posrevolucionario corrupto y al fascismo. En términos generales, cuando los ideólogos mexicanos luchaban por definir la lógica de la Revolución Mexicana, la veían como una validación de viejos reclamos, como el programa secular de los liberales del siglo XIX en su intento de liberar al país del dominio de la Iglesia y los poderes imperiales europeos, o como respuesta a las demandas comunales de tierra del levantamiento indígena zapatista. En los textos clave de la llamada "filosofía de la mexicanidad", como *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950) de Octavio Paz, la Revolución Mexicana se compara con la idea moderna de progreso occidental en términos de un esfuerzo constante para reconciliar el pasado del país:

(...) la Revolución Mexicana (...) consiste en un movimiento tendiente a reconquistar, asimilar y hacer que nuestro pasado perviva en el presente. (...) Gracias a la revolución el mexicano pretende reconciliarse con su historia y sus orígenes.¹⁰

En este contexto ideológico, que de hecho acompañó a un régimen que utilizó el mito de sus orígenes en una serie de rebeliones populares para llevar a cabo el proceso de la modernización capitalista, los íconos de la modernidad urbana y arquitectónica mostraron la tendencia a negociar con la iconografía de la historia nacional. En las obras de los arquitectos más prominentes de la segunda mitad del siglo XX—como Luis Barragán, Teodoro González de León, Agustín Hernández, Abraham Zabludovsky, Ricardo Legorreta y Pedro Ramírez Vázquez—la identidad nacional se formula a partir de varios artilugios historicistas que incorporan elementos estilísticos, formales y funcionales de las arquitecturas prehispánica y colonial para consolidar la "mexicanidad" de sus edificios y proyectos. Esta clase de arqueo-arquitectura, que constituye el género artístico oficial más importante en México después del muralismo, tiende a producir obras que hacen las veces de resumen alegórico de la historia mexicana.¹¹ Entre todos, el conjunto conocido como *Nonoalco-Tlatelolco* (1964) es probablemente el más explícito.

Aunque este proyecto fuera en gran medida una aplicación tardía de los principios de la tabula rasa de la regeneración urbana que Le Corbusier propusiera en su *Voisin Plan*, de 1925, al sugerir que se tirara una parte significativa del centro de París para erigir rascacielos y multifamiliares dentro de una ciudad-jardín con una división radical de los espacios para la circulación de peatones y de automóviles,¹² el desarrollo habitacional de Tlatelolco integraba en diferentes estadios la intención de servir como modelo visual de la continuidad entre el pasado

*The Three Cultures Plaza carries in its name the ambition of recognizing that in it the monuments of the pre-Columbian and colonial ages converge, legacies that bloom and now become alive in the buildings and dwelling units.*¹³

So, rather than the future, modernity appears in all these verbal and architectural discourses as the resurrection of a glorious past, the reinstallation of the ghosts of the past defeats of the people, inhabiting an unaccomplished revolution. All this phantasmagoria was there to counteract a deep anxiety towards historical change, the fear that modernization may deprive the regime of its historical ideological foundations, and thus the fear of a loss of identity. The function of places like the Tlatelolco project was to dispel the fear of the idea that history could in fact continue: That very same fear that President López Mateos had gallantly tried to dispel in Jackie Kennedy's "Good neighbor" concerns regarding the fate of Mexican modernization.

Ideologies, however, are a means of political distortion. The skyscrapers in Tlatelolco were not so much a means of securing the continuity of the Mexican pre-Columbian and Colonial legacy, but the theological structures of the continuous re-erection of presidential power on the top of his contemporary subjects. A few weeks before the Kennedys made their trip to Mexico, on May 15, 1962, a cartoon by a forgotten artist, Ramón Silveira, titled "Ideal en acción" (Ideal in action) and published in *El Nacional*, the official newspaper, decodes the architectonics of power better than any discourse. In between the two Mexican volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, a rising sun emerges in the guise of the head of President López Mateos, the man that commissioned both the Tlatelolco housing project and the Anthropology Museum.

This quasi-Stalinistic leader, growing in between skyscrapers, looms above the small Mexican people. The phantom of the pyramid rising again with the modern skyscrapers was nothing but a disguise of growth of the Leviathan of presidential power. Architecture, as much as industrial and agricultural progress, appears here as a mediator between the people and the ruler, who actually scrapes the sky. It is in fact his personal rule, and not the ghosts of the past, that is invigorated by the dazzling spectacle of progress.

Footnotes

1—"Los valores del espíritu mexicano son impercederos." Discourse improvised by the first mandatory in response to a U.S. colleague at a party at María Isabel Hotel in Mexico City on June 30, 1962. In *Documentos*, serie 2, April-June 1962, no. 25, p. 139.

2-Daniel Cosío Villegas, "México y su izquierda" (abril 1963), en *Daniel Cosío Villegas. Ensayos y Notas*, México, Editorial Hermes, 1966, Vol. II, p. 19.

3-Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, "5º Informe de Gobierno," México, Septiembre 1, 1969. In *México a través de los informes presidenciales. Tomo I: Los mensajes políticos*, México, Secretaría de la Presidencia, 1976, p. 858.

4-Vladimir Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, (1917). English Translation available at: marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch05.htm#1

5-Octavio Paz, *México en la obra de Octavio Paz* (3 Volumes), I, *El Peregrino en su patria. Historia y política de México*, ed. Octavio Paz and Luis Mario Schneider, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987, p. 218.

6-I have developed this argument in full in C. Medina, "La lección arquitectónica de Arnold Schwarzenegger," *Miguel Adría et al., Arquitectura moderna en México*, México, Nubuko, Librerías Juan O'Gorman, 2007, pp. 173-94. The text was originally printed both in

de México y su modernidad. Las torres habitacionales más importantes no solamente adoptaron un diseño cuyo techo remedara el teocalli o templo que se hallaba encima de las pirámides prehispánicas,¹⁴ sino que el diseño total de la urbanización culmina en una plaza donde convergen los vestigios del convento y la iglesia de Tlatelolco del siglo XVI con la silueta de los rascacielos de la unidad habitacional y la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores diseñada por Ramírez Vázquez y el "reciclado"¹⁵ de las ruinas arqueológicas de la antigua ciudad de Tlatelolco. Esta Plaza de las Tres Culturas atrajo al régimen mexicano y a sus intelectuales orgánicos, precisamente porque, recurriendo a la frase de Salvador Novo, "representa de forma dramática la vida de México en sus tres etapas".¹⁶ Antes que pretender construir una vida nueva desde el principio, como lo sugerían las fantasías modernas y vandálicas de Le Corbusier, los arquitectos e intelectuales mexicanos modernos derruyeron los barrios bajos en la esperanza de que la ostentación de la modernidad resucitara las glorias del pasado. Nadie articularía este pensamiento mejor que el mismísimo Novo, un poeta homosexual moderno que por varias décadas fuera el "cronista oficial de la Ciudad de México":

La Plaza de las Tres Culturas lleva en su nombre la intención de reconocer que en los monumentos de las eras prehispánica y colonial convergen los legados que hoy florecen y cobran vida en los edificios y unidades habitacionales.¹⁷

Por lo tanto, más que como el futuro, la modernidad aparece en todos estos discursos verbales y arquitectónicos como la resurrección de un pasado glorioso y la reinstalación de los fantasmas de las pasadas derrotas del pueblo, que habitan una revolución no lograda. Toda esta fantasmagoría estaba ahí para contrarrestar una angustia profunda respecto al cambio histórico: el miedo a que la modernización privara al régimen de sus fundamentos históricos e ideológicos y por ende, el terror a la pérdida de la identidad. La función de sitios como el conjunto habitacional de Tlatelolco fue la de erradicar el miedo a la idea de que la historia pudiera continuar; ese mismo miedo que el presidente López Mateos había tratado de disipar tan gentilmente cuando Jackie Kennedy expresó su preocupación de "buen vecino" con respecto al porvenir de la modernización mexicana.

Las ideologías, sin embargo, son un medio de distorsión política. Los rascacielos de Tlatelolco no eran precisamente un instrumento para asegurar la continuidad de los legados prehispánico y colonial sino, más bien, la de las estructuras teológicas de una reedificación del poder presidencial sobre sus súbditos contemporáneos. Unas semanas antes del viaje de los Kennedy a México, el 15 de mayo de 1962, una caricatura de un artista ya olvidado, Ramón Silveira, titulada "Ideal en acción" y publicada en *El Nacional*, el periódico oficial, decodifica la arquitectura del poder mejor que ningún discurso. Entre los volcanes Popocatepetl e Iztaccihuatl, emerge el sol naciente como la cabeza del presidente Adolfo López Mateos, el hombre que ordenara la construcción del la unidad Tlatelolco y el Museo de Antropología.

Este líder, casi estalinista, va haciéndose más grande entre los rascacielos y flota sobre los ciudadanos minúsculos. El espectro de la pirámide, irguiéndose una vez más con los rascacielos, no es más que el disfraz que oculta el crecimiento del Leviathan del poder presidencial. La arquitectura, así como el progreso industrial y agrícola, aparece aquí como mediador entre la gente y su gobernante, quien de hecho rasca el cielo. Es, sin duda, su gobierno personal y no los fantasmas del pasado lo que se aviva con el deslumbrante espectáculo del progreso.

Plat de pàgina

1—"Los valores del espíritu mexicano son impercederos." Discourse improvised by the first mandatory in response to a U.S. colleague at a party at María Isabel Hotel in Mexico City on June 30, 1962. In *Documentos*, Serie 2 (abril-junio 1962), núm. 25, p. 139.

2-Daniel Cosío Villegas, "México y su izquierda" (abril 1963), en *Daniel Cosío Villegas. Ensayos y Notas*, México, Editorial Hermes, 1966, Vol. II, p. 19.

3-Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, "5º Informe de Gobierno," México, Septiembre 1, 1969. In *México a través de los informes presidenciales. Tomo I: Los mensajes políticos*, México, Secretaría de la Presidencia, 1976, p. 858.

4-Vladimir Lenin, *El estado y la revolución*, 1917. Traducción al español disponible en: marx2mco.com/M2M(SP)/Lenin(SP)/SR17a.html

5-Octavio Paz, *México en la obra de Octavio Paz* (3 Volumes), I, *El Peregrino en su patria. Historia y política de México*, Octavio Paz y Luis Mario Schneider, editores, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987, p. 218.

6-Ve el desarrollo completo de este argumento en C. Medina, "La lección arquitectónica de Arnold Schwarzenegger" en *Miguel Adría et al., Arquitectura moderna en México*, México: Arquitectura, Nubuko, Librerías Juan O'Gorman, 2007, pp. 173-194. El texto se publicó originalmente

en inglés y en español como C. Medina, "La lección arquitectónica de Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Architectural lesson of Arnold Schwarzenegger." *Arguine. Revista Internacional de Arquitectura*, no. 23, México, Primavera 2003, pp. 68-85.

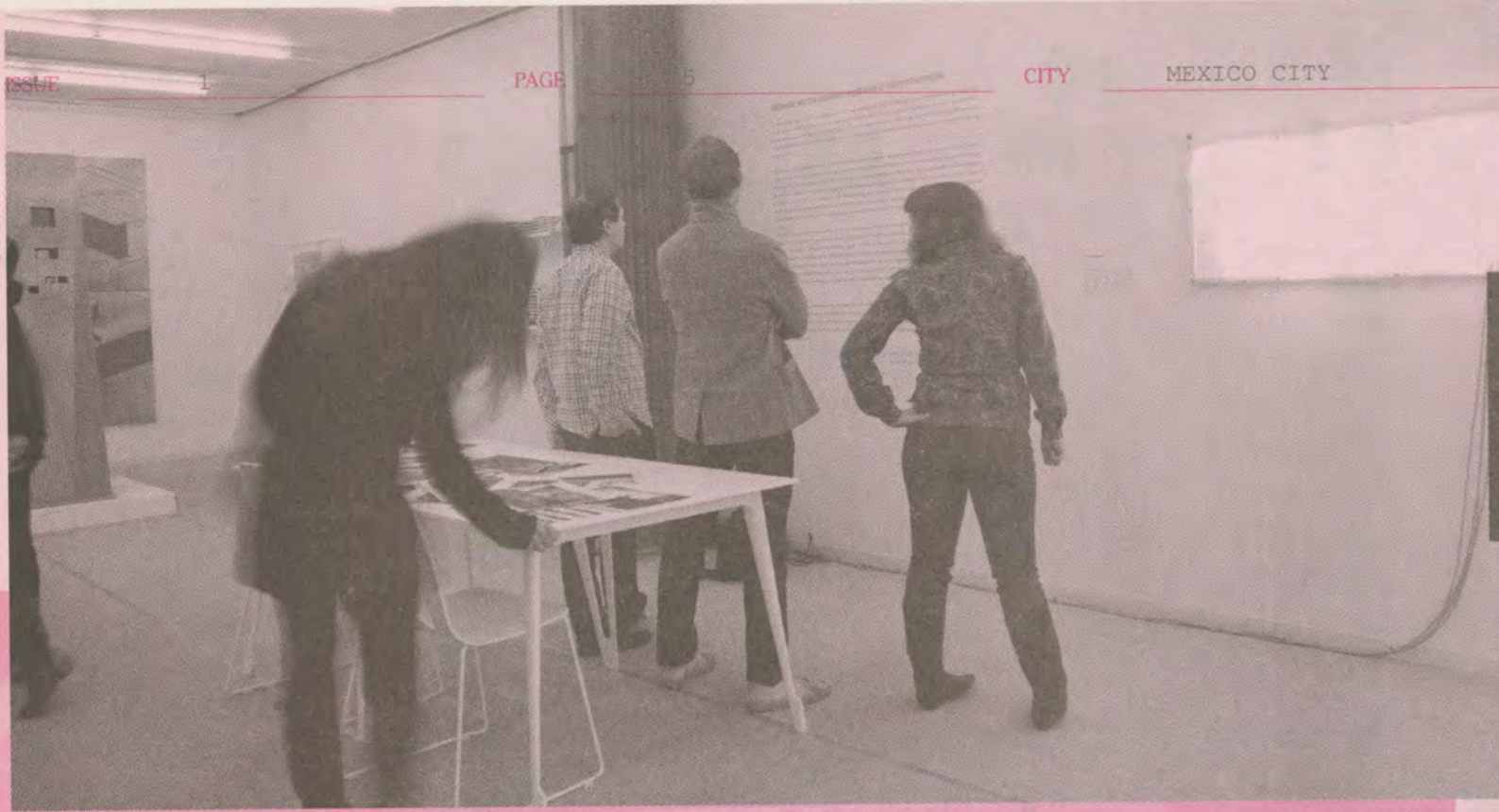
7-Ve Miguel Adría, "Mario Pani y la vivienda colectiva," *Arquitectura moderna en México*, p. 248.

8—Una metáfora visual debidamente registrada, por ejemplo, en los pies de foto de los libros de lujo sobre la Ciudad de México realizados por Fernando Benítez, al comparar con pretensiones poéticas y el reflejo de los edificios modernos sobre los estanques ornamentales del centro urbano con la manera en que "las pirámides se desdoblaban sobre el agua". (Fernando Benítez, *Historia de la ciudad de México*, México: Salvat, 1984, Vol. 8, p. 18)

9—"La zona histórica Tlatelolco fue 'reciclada' como un ejemplo significativo del rescate y la revaloración de sus monumentos", Manuel Larrosa, *Mario Pani. Arquitecto de su tiempo*, México: UNAM, 1985, p. 118.

10-Salvador Novo, *Nueva granada mexicana*, México: Petróleos Mexicanos, 1967, p. 139. Salvador Novo, *México. Fotografías de Rodrigo Moya*, Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1968. (Guías de América), p. 62.

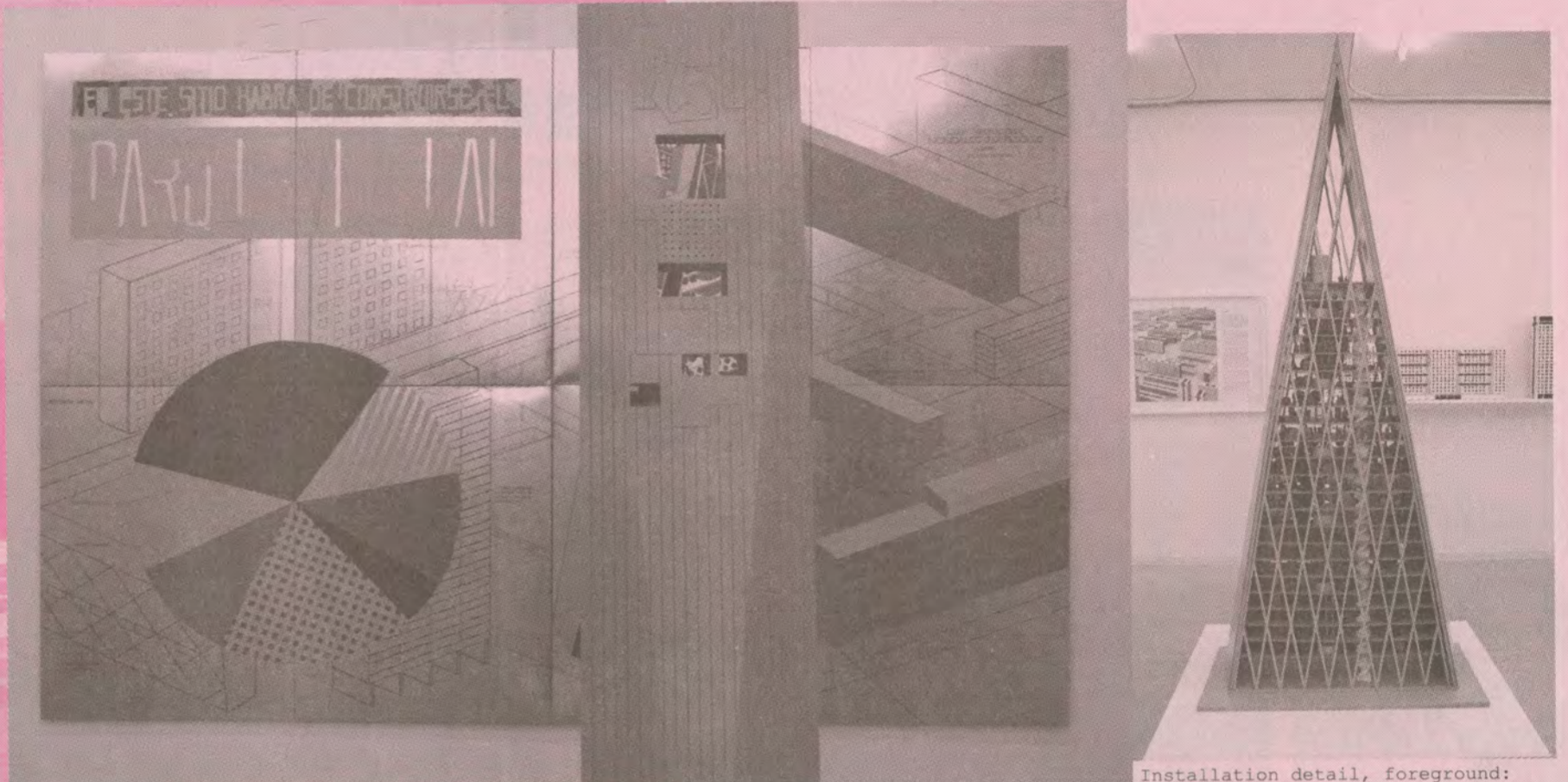
11-Salvador Novo, *México. Fotografías de Rodrigo Moya*, Barcelona, Ediciones Destino, 1968. (Guías de América), pp. 357, 359.



Installation view, "Tlatelolco and the localized negotiation of future imaginaries," February 21–May 4, 2008. Photo: Alison Brady

TLATELOLCO

Christoph Draeger, *Tlatelolco*, 2005, neon sign. Collection Hotel Habita, Mexico City. Courtesy the artist and Magnus Müller Gallery, Berlin

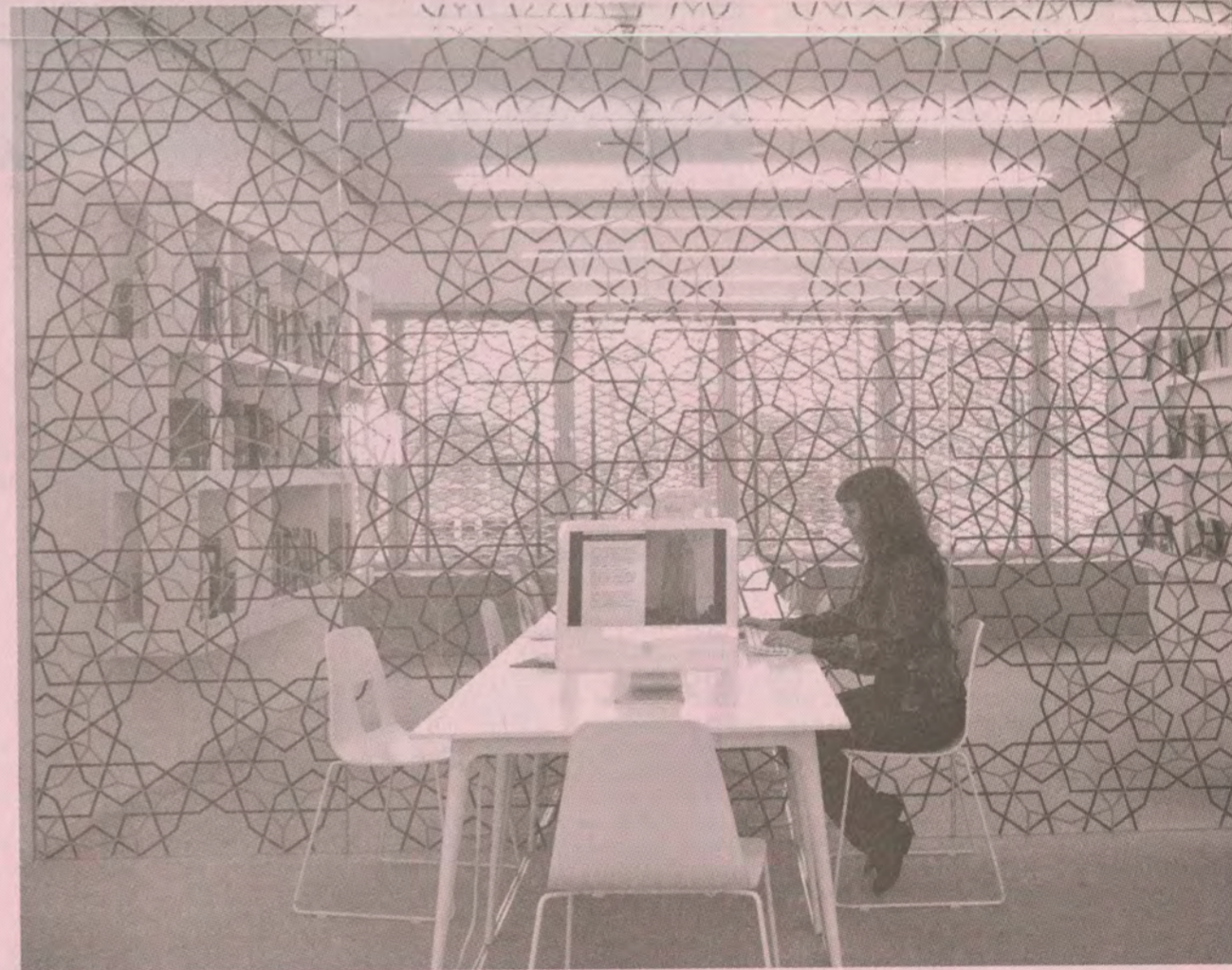


Pedro Reyes, *Parque Vertical*, 2002–08, architectural model and billboard. Courtesy Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York. Photo: Alison Brady

Installation detail, foreground: Pedro Reyes, *Parque Vertical*, 2002–08. Background: Terence Gower, *Tlatelolcena* (prototype), 2005–07, framed digital print, digital print on cardboard, and wood. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Alison Brady



Installation view, Mark Powell, *Tlatelolco edition*, 2008. Photo: Alison Brady



Installation view, Thomas Glassford, *Quasicrystals Screen*, 2008, cut vinyl on glass. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Alison Brady

Detail, Mark Powell, *Tlatelolco edition*, 2008, 25 digital photographs. Courtesy the artist

strategies to approach the problems of housing and community throughout the city as a whole. Even within the Tlatelolco project, some buildings and housing units have been transformed and retrofitted to new modalities of living that were ignored in the name of rationality and modernity. The same could be said of the current active social organization in Tlatelolco, deployed most notably after the earthquakes of 1985.

Neza's model of single-family housing, in spite of the fact of being "almost" suburban, has shown an incredible adaptive capacity in terms of growth, household size, type, and use, by transforming over time from a substandard bedroom community to a huge economic, cultural, and social engine. Community and neighborhoods have been created because of this, and not independently of it. This issue of an ecology of time, the constant consolidation and the unfinished condition of the contemporary city is also at the core of recognizing that it is probably more important to consider the way cities and communities perform than what they look like.

Another "oblique dialogue" between Neza and Tlatelolco has to do with the sociopolitical implications of the provision of housing. Somewhere between the paternalistic, welfare-state-oriented provision of housing, and self-building and self-management, there was a transformation in the late 1960s in the way that housing came to be understood as a productive activity in both economic terms and social benefit, too important for citizens not to be involved and for the state to see it only as a product to be delivered for political gain. After the failures and successes of Tlatelolco and Neza, autonomy, decentralization, and the understanding of housing as process rather than product became a central tenet for any sensible urban policy.

It would be crude to dismiss Pani as someone only concerned with forms and aesthetics, especially since he was also instrumental in articulating the legal, financial, and even political

frameworks to put forward new modalities of living. But at the same time, his concern at Tlatelolco with an iconography of modernity, hygiene, and progress, resulted in an abstract, stripped down aesthetic of the buildings, one that could not allow for difference, individuality, or even more sophisticated forms of "community-building."

In a sense, the way to construct community happens as much through the architectural and urban forms as through procedures in something that can be called the human-architectural symbiosis. Pani for example, in his rationale, was unaware that the street, as an urban category, was not only the space for motor vehicles to occupy, but rather a social space where relationships took place. Contrary to that, in Neza the use of small blocks and its absence of "formalized" traditional urban open spaces, made the street the public space par excellence. Not only a place for cars (and for pedestrians to move), but also a space for leisure, sports, economic empowerment, and political action.

Finally, it's useful to remember another aspect of the Neza-Tlatelolco dialectic, similar to some of the urban debates happening in New York City in the early 1960s. By the time Pani was building Tlatelolco, urban renewal as the privileged technique of city planning was already in crisis in NYC. Jane Jacobs and her form of neighborhood organization and urban activism had been able to stop the Lower Manhattan Expressway in 1962. Though projects such as Penn Station South Housing complex were being finished at the time, where 300 families had been displaced, other projects such as Washington Square Southeast and South Village, which would have dramatically changed the character and morphology of Greenwich Village, were downscaled and even stopped. Pani in a sense was a kind of "Mexican Robert Moses," believing that the only way to face urban crisis was through sium clearance, large-scale top-down infrastructure,

and housing projects, and centralized design decisions. On the other hand, the anonymous planners, community organizations, and inhabitants of Neza, in a similar fashion to Jacobs, believed that it was only through autonomy, self-organization, and activism that one could truly resolve the problems of the city, face authoritarian decisions, and reclaim a legitimate and effective role in the creation of community.

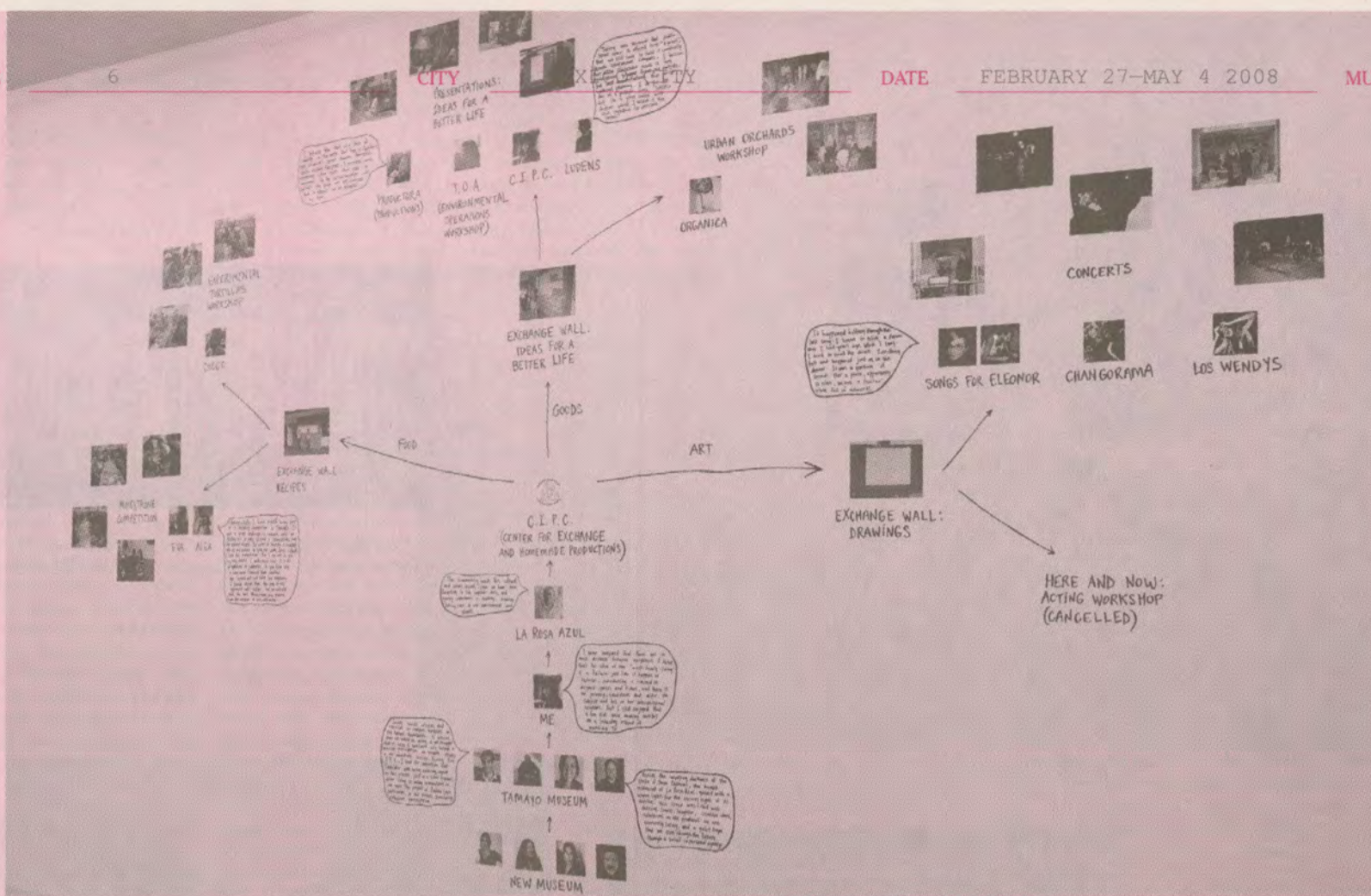
It's of course now a truism to accept that communities thrive in the spaces between the public and the private, the individual and the collective, the physical and the social, but it is less accepted that the constant exposure to those fault lines, and to the way that conflicts are engaged (if not resolved), are what construct a productive and thriving public sphere as well as a fertile cultural milieu. Tlatelolco and Neza, in their correlational existence and their (silent) dialogues, in their persistence to accept conflict, shortcomings, and limitations, have exposed more about the possibilities of the city as a sociopolitical matrix, than any other urban condition, project, or fact in Mexico in the twentieth century.

Endnotes:

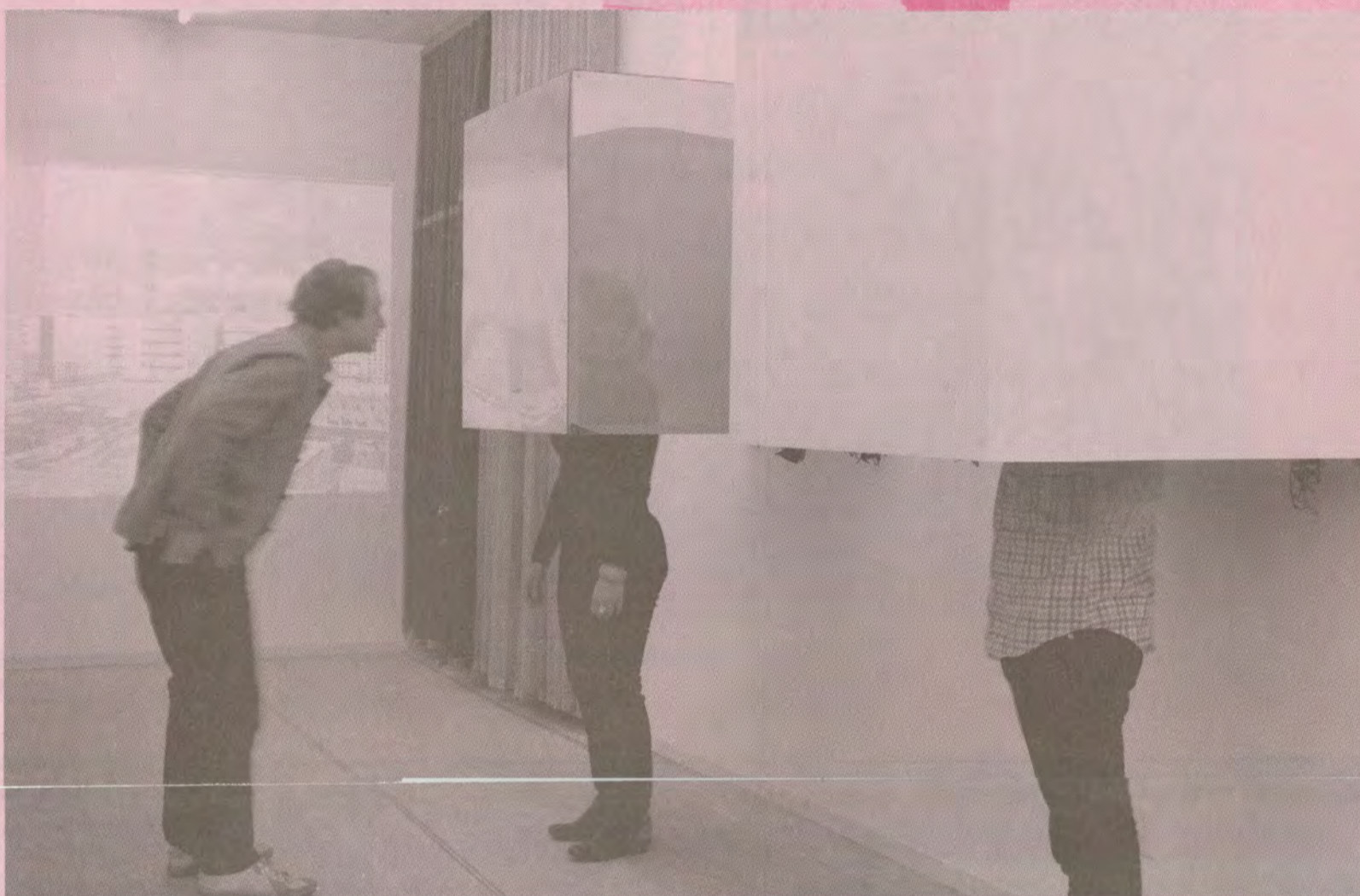
- 1-Mario Pani, *Los Multifamiliares de Pensiones*, Editorial Arquitectura, Ciudad de México, 1952, p. 57.
- 2-Lilia Gómez and Quevedo Miguel Ángel, Interview with Mario Pani, *Testimonios Vivos, 20 arquitectos*, SEP, INBA, p. 109.
- 3-Ibid.
- 4-Enrique De Anda, *Historia de la arquitectura mexicana*, Gustavo Gilli, Ciudad de México, 1995, p. 228.

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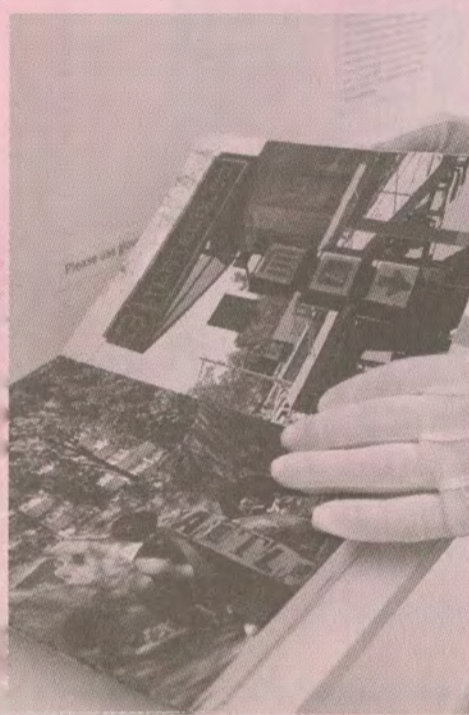
- Gómez, Lilia and Quevedo Miguel Ángel. Interview with Mario Pani. *Testimonios Vivos, 20 arquitectos*. SEP, INBA. De Anda, Enrique X. *Historia de la arquitectura mexicana*. Gustavo Gilli. Ciudad de México 1995. Pani, Mario. *Los Multifamiliares de Pensiones*. Editorial Arquitectura. Ciudad de México. 1952. Adria, Miquel. *Mario Pani. La construcción de la modernidad*. Ciudad de México. 2005. *Revista Arquitectura*. No. 100. Ciudad de México. 1968.



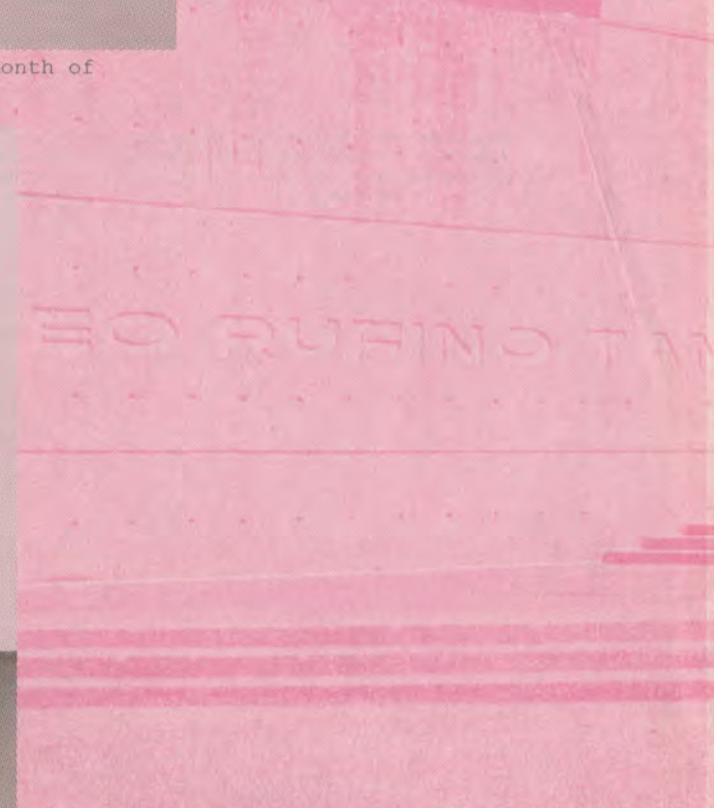
Installation view, Paulina Lasa, *Center for exchange and homemade productions*, 2007, social diagram, one month of weekend activities at the restaurant La Rosa Azul, Tlatelolco. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Alison Brady



Installation view, Tatiana Bilbao, *Production of Space*, 2008. Photo: Alison Brady



Detail, Tatiana Bilbao, *Production of Space*, 2008, research. Private collection. Photo: Alison Brady



Terence Gower, *Tlatelolco* (prototype), 2005-07, framed digital print, digital print on cardboard, and wood. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Alison Brady

TATIANA BILBAO
Production of Space, 2008
Research
Private collection

Tatiana Bilbao's proposal explores notions of public and private space in Tlatelolco. The housing complex was originally built and administered by the government, which was in charge of maintaining its public spaces: the parks, community centers, cinemas, and other communal structures that were built as part of its master plan. Over the last several decades, the apartments have been privatized and government responsibility for maintaining the site has decreased, resulting in the deterioration of the majority of these communal areas. The site includes numerous police surveillance stations, currently owned by the Secretary of Public Security, that are no longer used. Bilbao's project proposes the restructuring of six of these stations, removing their roofs and filling their interiors with sensual, playful materials, such as plants, mirrors, or geometric forms. Her project seeks to inspire Tlatelolco's inhabitants to reoccupy structures in their neighborhood, reactivating them as open, democratic spaces.

CHRISTOPH DRAEGER
Tlatelolco, 2005
Neon sign
Collection Hotel Habita, Mexico City

Christoph Draeger's neon sign displaying the text "TLATELOLCO" uses the font designed by the U.S. graphic designer Lance Wyman for the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. On October 2, one week before the Olympics, the Mexican military shot and killed students protesting in the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Tlatelolco. Draeger's piece comments on the fact that while the 1968 Olympic games and its iconic font continue to be remembered internationally, the student massacre is still little-known or remembered outside of Mexico. His sign grafts these two historic events onto one another, to create a glowing logo, one that serves as a memorial for the tragic event that took place at the site during this infamous year.

THOMAS GLASSFORD
Quasicrystals Screen, 2008

TERENCE GOWER
Tlatelolco (prototype), 2005-07

The project by Terence Gower includes four architectural models of several buildings of the urban housing complex of Tlatelolco and an image of the installation of these same models, shown as if repeating indefinitely. With these elements, Gower reflects upon the mass production of architecture that existed during modernism and the extensive promotion of this kind of governmental housing complex. The design, production, and installation of these models is a small-scale reproduction of the process of planning and constructing the original urban development, and serves as an homage to the architects and urbanists involved. The piece invites the audience to enter into this game of modular repetition and to reflect on how it can specifically effect ways of living.

PAULINA LASA
Center for exchange and homemade productions, 2007

Social diagram; one month of weekend activities at the restaurant La Rosa Azul, Tlatelolco
Courtesy the artist

Paulina Lasa responds to the historical role of Tlatelolco as a site of economic, political, and cultural exchange. For her *Center for exchange and homemade productions*, Lasa rented La Rosa Azul, a small restaurant on the Plaza of the Three Cultures. For three weekends she organized activities around three themes: a.) food, b.) tools, and c.) art. These non-monetary exchanges involved swapping copies of food recipes, drawings, music, and "ideas for a better life." These included ecological strategies, housekeeping tips, and proposals for negotiating urban life. The artist describes these deliberately naive acts of sharing as proposals of resistance within a world where violent or ironic attitudes toward contemporary economic systems and social problems are common and no longer effective.

MARK POWELL
Tlatelolco edition, 2008
25 digital photographs

Over the course of several months, photographer Mark Powell spent time at Tlatelolco getting to know its inhabitants and photographing the area. He has produced images of the homes, the families, the shops, and the recreational activities that form a part of this community. The photographs document the proximity to this community and the trust he was able to develop with it, culminating in an intimate series of portraits of how this housing complex is currently lived in. The project

critiques the notions of this site as a failed utopian living experiment by investigating the ways in which its current population continues to adapt this space to their individual needs, imaginations, and ambitions.

PEDRO REYES IN COLLABORATION WITH JORGE COVARRUBIAS
Parque Vertical, 2002-08

Architectural model and billboard
Courtesy Yvon Lambert Gallery, New York
This two-part project by Pedro Reyes engages the iconic Insignia Tower at Tlatelolco, a highrise designed in the shape of a tall triangle. Originally housing government offices, the building was abandoned after the 1985 earthquake. The artist's proposal involves the transformation of this structure into a vertical park, where neighbors could apply for plots in which hundreds of hydroponic units would be used to grow food. The project includes the installation of solar panels on the sides of the building, which would generate power to pump water through the building into hydroponic units. Reyes has produced an architectural model that displays his proposal. Lately, it is rumored that the building has been sold for private development. The second part of the project is a billboard that appropriates strategies used to sell corporate building projects to promote the artist's idea for a "green skyscraper" to the inhabitants of Tlatelolco and to the new developers of the building.

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