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2016 Venice Biennale: the "unfinished" Spain

Paesaggio spagnolo con rovina, Julia Schulz-Dornburg, "Moderne Ruinen, eine Topografie der Bereicherung", mostra, ottobre 2013

Interview with Iñaqui Carnicero, co-curator of the Spanish Pavillion with Carlos Quintáns Muxía

The curator of the 15. Biennale Architettura 2016, Alejandro Aravena, has proposed "Reporting from the front" as general theme of the exhibition in Venice. Can you comment the title and the first declarations given by Aravena?

He is inviting the curators from every country with representation at the Biennale to share what we think it has been the major issue that Architecture has suffered in the past years. By doing this after visiting the pavilions one get have a wider perspective of major issues affecting different cultures and communities around the world. The proposal calls for a reflection on the mistakes in order to share solutions that may allow other countries to anticipate and avoid similar situations

What will be the answer of Spain and the Spanish Pavilion?

During the last period of economic growth in Spain, construction became the main driving force

of the economy. Today, reality reveals us the built presence and the unfinished remains of what once was the largest edificatory enterprise in Spanish history, leaving behind a difficult situation in which to deal with partially constructed large volumes which are not consolidated. Under the title "Unfinished", the exhibition in the Spanish Pavilion draws attention to these unfinished architectures in order to discover virtues that can become design strategies. "Unfinished" wants to be a reflection on the architectures born out of the resignation to respond to certain aspects. In order to do so, the exhibition will promote creative speculation about how to subvert the past condition into a positive contemporary action.

As a young architect, what are your experiences on the relations between architecture and society today? how architecture can give the right answers to the difficult challenges of our times?

If we really want to become relevant for our society we need to find strategies to engage with problems that we can solve by means of design. My experience designing Hangar 16, an intervention in an abandoned building at the former Slaughterhouse in Madrid, was very successful in terms of returning the building to the community. With a very small budget we were capable to transform the space that was neglected for years by designing a very simple mechanism of rotation that allowed movable panels reconfigure the space in multiple ways. This helped the client to held very different events such as contemporary art exhibitions, concerts, fashion walks, spaces for artists, etc, making the investment really profitable, but what it is more important activating the space with daily life activities.

Last semester at Cornell University we worked in collaboration with the World Bank Group to design a series of crisis centers in India to help women who have suffered from gender based violence. It was a fascinating experience studying the specificities of indian culture and the material qualities of vernacular architecture in the state of Kerala to give an answer to a cultural problem architecturally.

The great thing about architecture is that we can contribute in solving the big challenges of our times by means of design.

Per approfondire

Active in both the academic field and a professional practice, **Iñaqui Carnicero** is an internationally awarded architect, European PhD and Visiting Professor at Cornell University. He has built projects that engage with contemporary issues at different scales and programs such as: CEU University building, Social housing in Madrid, the Arab tower in Guadalajara, Hangar 16 Matadero-Madrid at a former slaughterhouse of Madrid, and the Pitch´s house. His work has been recognised with international awards such as: the AIANY Housing Award 2015, Design Vanguard Award 2012, Hauser Award 2012, Emerging Architecture Award Architectural Record 2011, Rome Prize 2009, COAM Award 2012, FAD Spanish Architecture and Public Opinion Award 2012, 2013 Barbara Cappochin Award (Honorable Mention), BSI University of Mendrisio (selected) 2007, shortlisted Architectural Digest award 2009, Luigi Cosenza 2004 and exhibit at the RIBA exhibition International Emerging Architects 2011, Architecture week in Prague, GA Gallery Japan 2012. Since 2012 he runs the office Rica Studio with her partner Lorena del Rio, with offices in Madrid and New York.

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