

docomomo Conference Mexico 2010: “Living in the Urban Modernity”

By Louise Noelle

THE 11th docomomo International Conference took place in Mexico City from the 19th to the 27th August 2010, under the title “Living in the Urban Modernity”, allowing participants to analyze the issues that transformed the city and its architecture during the first part of the 20th Century. Urban area growth brought up an environment that favored the presence of Modern Architecture, in which new materials and developing techniques took new forms. Likewise, and in relation to working and leisure spaces, social changes had a visible transformation influence over education, health, hygiene and housing. In order to explore and to analyze the different elements that transformed the city and its architecture, a workshop was organized and the Conference was divided into five subjects developed in fifteen sessions and five round tables. Three Master Conferences by Barry Bergdoll, Victor Pérez Escolano and Ricardo Legorreta, which dealt with interesting contributions on modernity, also took place.

The Workshop took place between the 19th and 24th August at Casa Barragán Ateliers in Tacubaya, a Modern Movement privileged and stimulating environment, fostered by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. The tasks were coordinated by professors Alejandro Ochoa, Ricardo Pita and Rodolfo Santa María from UAM—Xochimilco, with the participation of Theodore Prudon, Jorge Sánchez Antuñano, Mariano Arias and Miguel Ángel Ronquillo. Roberto Eibenschuz, Louise Noelle and Óscar Terrazas presented conferences on urban and architectural issues. The twenty-student group was divided in four teams in order to elaborate conservation and adaptation proposals for the Melchor Ocampo Square urban space which preserves buildings by distinguished architects of the Modern Movement such as Augusto H. Álvarez, Luis Barragán, Max Cetto, José Creixel and Enrique del Moral.

The inauguration of the Conference took place at the Museo Nacional de Antropología on the 24th August and the events development took place at the *Ciudad Universitaria* of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, two Modern Movement emblematic works which gave a particular meaning to

the conference's theme: living in urban modernity. The formal presentation counted with the participation of Consuelo Sáizar, President of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes; José Narro Robles, Rector of the UNAM; Louise Cox, President of the International Union of Architects; and Lisandro de la Garza, President of the Federación de Arquitectos de la República Mexicana. docomomo was represented by Ana Tostões, Louise Noelle Gras and Sara Topelson de Grinberg. Mauricio Rivero Borrel, Vice-President of UIA; Sergio Alcocer Martínez del Campo, Secretary General of the UNAM; the directors of the architecture faculties that participated in the organization of the event and other leaders of architectural institutions also took part in this opening event.

The first theme, “Modern Living” referred to the relevance of modern society multi-family dwellings and how organization was the instrument that sought solutions to the incipient proletariat and the developing middle class. Four sessions were introduced: “Housing as a state affair” conducted by Henrietta Moravcikova; “Cultural liberation and architectural diversification”, conducted by Carlos Eduardo Comas; “Images of modern living” conducted by Raquel Franklin; and “Modernity and tradition” conducted by Manuel Berumen.

The importance of the “Civic and Social Infrastructure”, considered an essential consequence of modernity, allowed an appreciation of the different circumstances in which modern buildings were built. Together with social, political and economical issues, also ideological and urban project significance was discussed in three sessions: “Conservation and Design Issues” coordinated by Maristella Casciato; “Urban Scales” coordinated by Horacio Torrent; and “Education and Recreation” coordinated by Gustavo Luis Moré.

The third theme analyzed the triumphs and failures of urban modernity, considering both architecture and planning: “The Modern City”. The ideal city design, where progress and technology were the main statements, and the unbounded growth of some metropolis in this process, gave back answers based on a desire for welfare which was present in the four sessions that took place: “Planning the

Modern City” conducted by Catherine Ettinger; “Temporality and Transformation” conducted by Emilié d’Orgeix; “City and Nature” conducted by Louise Noelle Gras; and “The Modern City from a Contemporary Perspective” conducted by Gabriela Lee.

The essence of the Modern Movement, based on material and technological innovations, is also the origin of docomomo’s discussions on philosophical and physical conservation challenges. The theme “Technology for a Modern Habitat”, approached theoretical and practical aspects regarding building protection and preservation. It was divided into two sessions: “Conservation Issues for the Modern Habitat” organized by Susan MacDonald; and “Building Climates and System Analysis for Modern Habitat” organized by Kyle Normandin.

The Campus of the UNAM *Ciudad Universitaria*, declared World Heritage Site, also offered the opportunity to introduce a fifth theme, that of University Campus, significant to most countries not only because of the intrinsic architecture and art issues, but also because they have been the melting pot of education and knowledge that have allowed a specific academic richness. These ideas were studied in two sessions: “Evolution and University” led by Janneke Bierman; and “The University and the City” led by Eduardo Luis Rodríguez.

The round-table debates counted with a large number of participants that made them very interesting: “Architectural Magazines, Documental Foundation for Modern Heritage”, coordinated by Patricia Méndez; “Movie Theatres, Modern Heritage to be Rescued” coordinated by Alejandro Ochoa Vega; “Brasília: Limits of the Urban Project” coordinated by Carlos Eduardo Comas and Silvia Ficher; and “Modern Movement Architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa” coordinated by Ana Tostões. A fifth round-table on the fundamental issue “Architectural Practice and Conservation” took place in the main auditorium and was organized by Hubert-Jan Henket with the participation of Maija Kairamo, Wessel de Jonge, Gabriel Mérito and Theodore Prudon.

Regarding the diffusion of the 11th **docomomo** International Conference Minutes, a summary of the Papers which had been presented was edited. A DVD with the complete papers and posters presented at the round-tables, together with the coordinator’s presentations, was given to the participants at the end of the Conference. The International Specialist Committees on Registers, Technology, Urbanism and Landscape, and Education and Theory have organized working sessions with their representatives and their conclusions were presented at the Council Meeting.

Guided visits around the *Ciudad Universitaria*, declared World Heritage Site in 2007 by UNESCO,

were also offered to participants during the three days of the congress as well as the four Docotours that took place after the congress. The latter were coordinated by Juan Ignacio del Cueto, who personally guided the three visits to works by Félix Candela, Juan O' Gorman, Mathias Goeritz and Enrique de la Mora, and other dwelling projects, together with Raquel Franklin. Louise Noelle Gras was in charge of showing and explaining the works of Luis Barragán. The participants deeply appreciated this activity because it allowed a rapprochement with important buildings and urban areas of Mexico City.

It is important to stress that we are proud that this conference was supported fundamentally by the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, specially the Architecture Faculty and the *Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*; the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, specially Campus Xochimilco; the *Universidad Iberoamericana*; and the *Universidad*

Anahuac del Norte. We also counted with the generous organizing participation of the *Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes* and the *Gobierno del Distrito Federal* through Seduvi. Many people voluntarily collaborated in the academic part of the event, including foreign members of the Scientific Committee: Janneke Bierman, Maristella Casciato, Carlos Eduardo Comas, Wessel de Jorge, Natalia Dushkina, Carlos García Vázquez, Miles Glendinning, Susan Macdonald, Enrique Madia, Rahul J. Mehrotra, Raúl Monterroso, Henrieta Moravciková, Gustavo Luis Moré, Alona Nitzan-Shifan, Kyle Normandin, Theodore Prudon, Eduardo Luis Rodríguez, Dennis Sharp and Horacio Torrent; and Lourdes Cruz, Catherine R. Ettinger, Raquel Franklin, Gabriela Lee and Alejandro Ochoa from Mexico. The Organizing Committee was formed by Louise Noelle and Sara Topelson as Co-Chairs; Iván San Martín as Secretary; Lourdes Cruz as Treasurer; Alejandro Ochoa and Rodolfo

Santa María regarding the Workshop; Juan Ignacio del Cueto, Lourdes Díaz, Raquel Franklin and Catherine Ettinger, together with María García Holley, in the Secretariat; Jordi Messeguer Gally with the organization; Gabriela Gutiérrez Saucedo with the accounts and register; Claude Constant as the computer technician; and Celia Facio with the design, among many others. I also want to emphasize the support of Maristella Casciato, former Chair of docomomo International, and her team in Paris, as well as that of the present Chair, Ana Tostões, and the Barcelona team with Ivan Blasi and Laura Arenas.

With nearly 400 people from around 50 countries attending and participating in the events, we were able to come closer to understand the real dimension of the significance of what to live, to act and to enjoy Modern Movement Urban Areas means, emphasizing the importance of its adequate conservation and safeguard for future generations.



Figure 1. Inauguration of the Conference at the *Museo Nacional de Antropología*. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 2. Master Conference by Ricardo Legorreta. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 3. Ana Tostões with students at the Conference Workshop. Photo: Ana Magalhaes.

Figure 4. "Architectural Practice and Conservation" round table. Photo: María García Holley.

Figure 5. Docotours: Louise Noelle presenting Casa Gilardi by Luis Barragán. Photo: Ivan Blasi.

Eleventh **docomomo** Council Meeting. August 26, 2010, Mexico City, Mexico

By Ivan Blasi, Secretary General, **docomomo** International

ANA Tostões, Chair of **docomomo** International, welcomed all representatives and auditors to the 11th **docomomo** International Council Meeting. She asked Hubert-Jan Henket, honorary president, to say some words in remembrance of Dennis Sharp. Next to an image of the “architect, scholar, critic, writer, teacher, bookseller, cook and walking encyclopedia” dancing in the tango competition at the 4th International **docomomo** conference in Sliac, Slovakia, he finished his tribute with Dennis’ words: “While I breathe, I hope.”

After a one minute silence in remembrance of Dennis Sharp (UK) and Eliana Cárdenas (Cuba), Ana Tostões invited Maristella Casciato, former Chair of **docomomo** International, to say some words. She thanked the assistance of Émilie d’Orgeix and Anne-Laure Guillet during her chairmanship and summarized the two main issues that **docomomo** International in Paris had dealt with between 2008 and 2010; on the one hand the organization of the 11th Conference in Mexico, and on the other hand, the relocation of **docomomo** International’s headquarters from Paris to Barcelona, including the on-line vote to choose Ana Tostões as Chair and Ivan Blasi as Secretary General of **docomomo** International. The corresponding reports and budgets had been presented to **docomomo** members on July 2010.

The representatives of the Chapters that assisted to the Council Meeting were welcomed by Ana Tostões: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada-Quebec, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iberia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and United States. Peru and Ecuador, provisional chapters after the 10th Council Meeting that took place in Rotterdam in 2008, together with Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela which presented their candidacies during the meeting, were also welcomed.

The chapters with voting rights, according to the **docomomo** Constitution were: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Greece, Iberia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands,

United Kingdom and United States. Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela were also given voting rights, recognizing their new Chapter status.

Four new Chapters had sent their complete candidacy to **docomomo** International in 2010: Egypt, Serbia, South Africa and Venezuela. Egypt was not able to assist to the meeting so it was considered a provisional chapter until the formal candidacy presentation which will take place in the next Council Meeting. The new candidacies were presented by Tanja Conley regarding Serbia, Laura Robinson in relation to South Africa and Hannia Gómez presenting Venezuela. The three chapters were unanimously accepted and welcomed. Ecuador and Peru were also accepted as chapters with full rights and it was agreed that Uruguay would continue being a provisional chapter until its attendance to the next Council Meeting.

Institutional, Individual and Student membership fees were not changed although they will be revised in the next Council Meeting. Institutional sustaining membership fees were increased and a new membership called Corporate was agreed. Reductions, both for new chapters and existing ones, were not changed but they will be discussed in the next Council Meeting.

Regarding **docomomo** International memberships, the Advisory Board decided at its meeting in Mexico that, those people interested in becoming **docomomo** members who live in countries or regions where a **docomomo** Chapter does not exist, may be accepted as **docomomo** International members. Those members interested in becoming **docomomo** members who live in countries or regions where a **docomomo** Chapter already exists will be directed towards the existing Chapter. **docomomo** International in Barcelona will contact the Chapter and if it does not receive an answer in 3 months, it may accept the applicant as an International member. This point was introduced into the Council Meeting Agenda and it was accepted. The fees regarding Corporate, Institutional Sustaining and Institutional memberships can be consulted by the Chapters.

The 2008–2009 **docomomo** International in

Paris Report was approved as well as the **docomomo** International in Barcelona January–July Report of Activities, read by Ivan Blasi. Ana Tostões presented the **docomomo** International in Barcelona Plan of Action 2010, which was voted unanimously. Horacio Torrent and Silvia Ficher, guest editors of **docomomo** Journal 42 and 43 respectively, were thanked by the Chair.

The new Executive Committee for the next two years was also unanimously voted for: Ana Tostões, Chair; Ivan Blasi, Secretary General; Panayotis Tournikiotis, representing the International Specialist Committees; and Timo Tuomi, as representative of the next **docomomo** Conference. Ola Wedebrunn and Louise Noelle’s close, strong and important collaboration with the Executive Committee in the last years was also appreciated by Ana Tostões.

During the Conference in Mexico, the Finnish Chapter presented its proposal to hold the next Conference in Espoo, Finland, in August 2012 under the title The survival of Modern. From coffee cup to plan. The proposal was voted positively with acclaim by the Chapters with voting rights at the Council Meeting.

No proposal to hold the Conference in 2014 was received at the Council Meeting and we would like to take the opportunity in this summary to invite Chapters to present their proposals.

The Advisory Board members in the next years will be Wessel de Jonge (The Netherlands), Theodore Prudon (US), Scott Robertson (Australia), Hiroyuki Suzuki (Japan), France Vanlaethem (Canada-Quebec) and Louise Noelle (Mexico).

The International Specialist Committees also had the opportunity to present their reports and plans of action during the Conference in Mexico. The new members which were chosen in each committee were all also accepted after the corresponding vote.

Voting Rights were also discussed. It was agreed that in the next Council Meeting changes regarding the homework could be introduced for those Chapters that organize an international major event or produce a major effort such as publications or international conferences.

Finally an amendment was introduced to the Constitution. Point 2.3 of the appendix will now say “The membership fees are administered by the Associació **docomomo** Internacional Barcelona” and point 4.1.2 will say “The **docomomo** International Association is a legally established Association in Barcelona, Spain, in accordance with Spanish and Catalan law.”

Ana Tostões concluded the meeting at 11:00pm on August 26, 2010, at Hotel Diplomático, Mexico City.

World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize 2010



Photos by Wessel de Jonge

THE World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize 2010 was awarded to Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge for their work on the Zonnestraal Sanatorium. The jury was chaired by Barry Bergdoll, The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and included Kenneth Frampton, Jean-Louis Cohen, Sheldon H. Solow, Dietrich Neumann, Theo Prudon, and Karen Stein.

The Zonnestraal Sanatorium was conceived by Johannes Duiker (1890-1935), Bernard Bijvoet (1889-1979); and structural engineer Jan Gerko Wiebenga (1880-1974). Founded by the Diamond Workers Union of Amsterdam, the sanatorium was part of a larger aftercare colony for tubercular patients. It was funded by Union dues as a facility that would train members who had been afflicted with the disease for their return to society.

After the Second World War it fell from public and academic notice and into disuse, nearly disappearing into its surrounding landscape. In the 1960s, the building was rediscovered and deemed by architectural critics and historians to be a major monument of modern architecture. Its physical survival was assured in 1995 when it received landmark protection. In 1982 the Dutch government commissioned Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge, already leading experts in the field, to develop a solution for saving and restoring the country's rich

Modern heritage, using Zonnestraal as the prototype. This led not only to a conservation program for Zonnestraal, but also inspired Henket and de Jonge to create **docomomo**.

Prior to beginning work on Zonnestraal, extensive research was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the complex's rationale. The architects then developed a conservation program that was predicated on a thorough structural analysis of all of the building's elements: framing, construction technology and materials, building installations, and the interrelation of all of these.

The conservation project aimed at the reconstruction of the sanatorium's design scheme, including its original facades, partitions, and finishes; however, there was little conservation or restoration of authentic materials, many of which had literally disappeared. Some lost parts were reconstructed such as the steel window-casements, the sheet glass, and such finishes as the linoleum and terrazzo flooring. Some components, like window glazing and hardware that had been industrially produced in the 1920s, were no longer in production and had to be hand crafted.

One of the significant components of the Zonnestraal program was the successful re-purposing of the facility for contemporary use: The re-creation of the original layout of the buildings now accommodates several health-care providers. The original workshops of 1928 have been restored and expanded in size in order to serve as an obesity clinic. The main building accommodates a sports-injury rehabilitation clinic and a conference center.

More information:
www.wmf.org/node/2088
www.wesseldejonge.nl
www.biermanhenket.nl

The demolition of the addition to the Marine Biology Station in Montemar, Chile

A *AGAINST Winds and Tides. A Critical Review of the Alterations and Extensions to the Oceanographic Institute (Enrique Gebhard, 1941) at Montemar, Chile*, was the title of Maximiano Atria's case study presentation at **docomomo's** 9th International Conference in Rotterdam in 2008. Two years later **docomomo** Chile announced the demolition of the ongoing but suspended addition to the building, one of the brightest examples of modern

architecture in Chile which has suffered several interventions during its lifetime. The last one was a big addition that would have blocked its open side towards the ocean, in a bad try to emulate its forms and structural system.

After big efforts from **docomomo** Chile, Maristella Casciatio and Ana Tostoes' chairmanships, lectures in **docomomo** conferences and **docomomo** Chile seminars, meetings with the

university authorities and with journalists and professors working at the station, as well as the inclusion of the building in the World Monuments Watch list for 2008, this promising situation has been achieved. From now on actions for its restoration will take place, for which **docomomo's** joined efforts will be needed.

The Marine Biology Station was built between 1941 and 1959 under extraordinary construction, assignment, program definition and location circumstances, responding to a landscape condition that is today considered one of Latin-America's most relevant contributions to the development of a universal modern architecture.

The interventions made to the station not only transformed the character of the project but they also changed the environment and its relationship with the coastline inlet. The building is nowadays occupied by the Valparaíso University which expressed its support to restore its original state.

With Maximiano Atria's words we wish to thank **docomomo** Chile's efforts and those of all our members worldwide: "I see this moment as a worldwide success on the part of our organization, and I take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped in any way to reach this day."

Montemar, 2011



Montemar, 2005

Montemar ca. 1977



Safeguarding project at New Gournia Village, part of Ancient Thebes World Heritage site



Photos by Laura Arenas

THE village of New Gournia, which was partially built between 1945 and 1952 by architect Hassan Fathy, is possibly the most well known of his projects because of the international popularity of his book, *Architecture for the Poor*, published nearly twenty years after the experience and concentrating primarily on the ultimately tragic history of this village. Fathy wrote "In Nature, no two men are alike. Even if they are twins and physically identical, they will differ in their dreams. The architecture of the house emerges from the dream; this is why in villages built by their inhabitants we will find no two houses identical. This variety grew naturally as men designed and built their many thousands of dwellings through the millennia. But when the architect is faced with the job of designing a thousand houses at one time, rather than dream for the thousand whom he must shelter, he designs one house and puts three zeros to its right, denying creativity to himself and humanity to man. As if he were a portraitist with a thousand commissions and painted only one picture and made nine hundred and ninety nine photocopies. But the architect has at his com-

mand the prosaic stuff of dreams. He can consider the family size, the wealth, the social status, the profession, the climate, and at last, the hopes and aspirations of those he shall house. As he cannot hold a thousand individuals in his mind at one time, let him begin with the comprehensible, with a handful of people or a natural group of families which will bring the design within his power. Once he is dealing with a manageable group of say twenty or thirty families, then the desired variety will naturally and logically follow in the housing."

While the project proposals are extremely compelling and ultimately persuasive, New Gournia is still most significant for the questions it raises rather than the problems it tried to solve. UNESCO, in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Culture and the Governorate of Luxor, held the first Scientific Committee meeting on the safeguarding project of New Gournia Village in Luxor, on the 2nd and 3rd October 2010. The Scientific Committee was formed by Mr. Benno Albrecht (Venice University's Institute of Architecture), Ms. Erica Avrami (World Monument Fund), Mr. Baba Alpha Ismail Cisse (Bu-

reau d'Etudes d'Architecture et d'Urbanism), Ms. Leila El-Wakil (University of Geneva), Mr. Hubert Guillaud (CRATERRE-ENSAG), Mr. John Hurd (ICOMOS), Mr. Joseph King (ICCROM), Ms. Adelina Picone (Federico II University of Naples), Ms. Jana Revedin (Jana Revedin Architect), Mr. James Steele (University of Southern California), Ms. Ana Tostoes (docomomo International) and Ms. Gihane Zaki (Ministry of Culture-Egypt), with the assistance of Mr. Francesco Bandarin (Assistant Director-General, Culture Sector), Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo (World Heritage Centre, Chief Africa Unit), Ms. Franca Miglioli (World Heritage Centre, Programme Specialist) and Mr. Francesco Siravo (Aga Khan Trust for Culture).

The initiative aims to assist the Government of Egypt in its efforts to preserve this precious heritage and to rehabilitate this important architectural heritage, as well as to valorize Fathy's ground-breaking ideas and revive their relevance to contemporary sustainable architecture. The three-year project will be implemented within the framework of the World Heritage Earthen Architecture Program, which was launched in 2007.