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ÁGORA
AGORA

FUNDAÇÃO CASA WABI: TADAO ANDO, ÁLVARO SIZA E KENGO KUMA NO MÉXICO
CASA WABI FOUNDATION: TADAO ANDO, ÁLVARO SIZA, AND KENGO KUMA IN MEXICO
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V!22

REVISTA V!RUS
VIRUS JOURNAL

issn 2175-974x
julho . july 2021



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How to quote this text: Oliveira, T. P.; Zonno, F. V., 2021. Casa Wabi Foundation: Tadao Ando, Álvaro Siza, and Kengo Kuma in Mexico. Translated from Portuguese by Annabella Blyth. *V!RUS*, 22, July. [online] Available at: <http://www.nomads.usp.br/virus/_virus22/?sec=4&item=14&lang=en>. [Accessed: 17 July 2021].

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON MARCH, 7, 2021

Abstract

This paper presents an approach about the consideration of *loca* in contemporary architectural practice, drawing on the encounter of Tadao Ando, Álvaro Siza and Kengo Kuma around the projects for the main building and two pavilions of the Casa Wabi Foundation, located in Oaxaca, Mexico. The Foundation was created in 2014 by Mexican artist Bosco Sodi with the aim of promoting the integration of artists and local communities through social programs of stimulus to the arts. Considering the theme of valorizing diversity and local cultures in Latin America, as well as the impacts of the dynamics of globalization on contemporary architectural production, the aim of this paper is to analyze the projects resulting from the relationship of Oaxaca region's specificities with the individual languages of these foreign architects. This study is permeated with debates on the *regional* by Kenneth Frampton in the 1980s and Marina Waisman in the 1990s, and the recognition of theoretical-critical debates on processes of cultural exchanges and hybridization in contemporary practice, by authors like Néstor García Canclini.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, Educational territories, Social inequality, Childhood and the city

1 Introduction¹

The Casa Wabi Foundation² is a non-profit association created in 2014 by Mexican artist Bosco Sodi, with the aim of promoting a space for the stimulus to the arts through social programs that foster the encounter of artists-in-residence with local communities. Presently, the Foundation has two exhibition spaces and two residential areas for artists. In this paper, we have as a case study the Foundation's main building, located on an area with over 27 hectares on the coast of Oaxaca, near Puerto Escondido, Mexico. It has a broad architectural program, with a gallery area aimed at exhibitions, residences, and production ateliers, besides other settings and pavilions. The Foundation also has a second residence place, named Casa Nano, located in a traditional district of Tokyo; its objective is to enable young Mexican artists to have an immersion in the contemporary Japanese artistic culture. Moreover, residents can take part in activities of Tokyo galleries, cultural institutions, and museums linked to the Foundation. With the aim of presenting the work of these young artists and strengthening the local artistic scenery, the Foundation created another exhibition space, located in Santa Maria La Ribera, Mexico City.

The project for the main building of Casa Wabi Foundation in Oaxaca, shown in figure 1, was designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando with the collaboration of local architect Alfonso Quiñones and the team of the Mexican office BAAQ' for the development of the executive project and construction works. After the conclusion of the first pavilions in 2014, Alfonso Quiñones continued collaborating with the other projects, designed by architects Álvaro Siza and Kengo Kuma³.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of Casa Wabi Foundation. Source: Edgar Gonzalez - VOL.VER Studio, 2020. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/vol.ver_estudio. Accessed 04 Jun 2021.

Our interest in the works of Tadao Ando, Álvaro Siza, and Kengo Kuma is due to the encounter in Mexico of three non-native architects who are recognized for the ability to express in their design what they read from the landscape and interpret from the values and culture pertaining to the region where their projects are inserted. In this study, our objective is to analyze the design of the pavilions in their singularity and discuss the limits between the possible recognition of the individual language of each architect, construed from the identification with his own culture – but not solely – and the ability to absorb the local architectural culture when working elsewhere. Thus, in these works, we can identify project opportunities that present the challenge of a hybrid production, such as what we wish to investigate.

How do these two Japanese architects and a Portuguese architect design their projects in a Mexican maritime coastline that houses fourteen Oaxaca local communities? The projects for the Casa Wabi Foundation may provide significant help to the understanding of cultural flows' effects on mixture and hybridization. This is also a study about the practice of contemporary architecture in favor of cultural diversity, broadening the creative and enriching possibilities in the face of new and complex relationships between global and local. Considering the theme of cultural diversity and the importance of identifying singularities and specific conditions, this study is based on the critical-theoretical assumptions produced from debates held in the 1980s and 1990s, especially the contributions of theorists Cristián Fernández Cox (1991) and Marina Waisman (2013) concerning the valorization of a Latin American architectural production that is more connected to regional characteristics.

The debate around the concept of *critical regionalism* started in the 1980s with Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in the European context and later it received the contribution of Kenneth Frampton in the North American scenery. Frampton defended that the concept sought to identify *regional schools* with the objective of "representing and assisting in a critical sense the specific populations in which they were inserted" (Frampton, 1983, p. 505, our translation). In 1985, the first Seminar on Latin American Architecture (SAL) was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, having as its main theme the cultural identity of Latin American countries. Most of the publications that analyzed the arguments of *critical regionalism* pointed to the limits of this discourse.

In this context, the contribution of Chilean architect Cristián Fernández Cox highlights the semantic inefficacy of the term *critical regionalism*. According to Cox (1991), the terms *regionalism* and *critical* respectively implied *local exclusivism* and a way of thinking directed to its own rules. The concept of *appropriated modernity* would be, according to the author, more suitable to elucidate the search of an architecture related to reality and open to the diversity of each situation, finding in the integral context of society the material and poetic inspiration for the architectural form. In consonance, in the book *El Interior de la Historia*, originally published in 1990, historian Marina Waisman (2013) states that Frampton's vision was inadequate because it evoked a character of resistance regarding the effects of the internationalization process, a desire of rescuing a local identity that would have as motivation a romantic, nostalgic *anti-centrist feeling*. Waisman understands this interpretation as *static* because by taking refuge, keeping from the invasion, *periphery* and *margin* still tend to establish "positions subordinated to a center" (Waisman, 2013, p.96, our translation).

Differently from this, Waisman proposes a *dynamic* interpretation, substituting the idea of *margin* for that of *the region*, manifesting cultural production through the sense of divergence: the intention of finding alternative paths to those delimited by the global society, through projects that may undertake unprecedented courses, which may develop from what the actual being is and what it can manage to become. The author proposes that each culture should be situated based on a system of the plurality of regions, in which there can be no hegemony or the institution of a universal validity model, and which respects more adequate and possible models for the achievement of each historical trajectory.

Regarding history writing, Waisman (2013) criticized central historiography which presented a system of values that was not suitable for the understanding of peripheral architecture, positioning Latin American production out of context. Waisman already pointed to the understanding of *cultural pluralism*, in substitution to the totalitarian idea of a superior culture, that operates in a way as not to produce value judgments that allow "globally qualifying or disqualifying a regional culture in regard to another" (Waisman, 2013, p. 96, our translation). Therefore, this understanding provides a displacement of the viewpoint that re-signifies episodes of the new architectural historiography and praxis.

In this sense, one can accept the regionalist approach as a way to understand the local circumstance, in the most varied aspects [...], with no implication on being limited inside a strict localism or on freezing historical development, but rather as a way to affirm and construe a cultural world upon an own model (Waisman, 2013, p. 97).

Anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (2008) states that the studies on hybridization transformed the way of referring to cultural identity, difference, and inequality. The theorist presents a definition of hybridization as "sociocultural processes in which structures or discreet practices that existed in separate ways combine to generate new structures, objects, and practices" (Canclini, 2008, p. xix, our translation). Currently, such combinations may be easily understood as cultural interaction processes and one should no longer think of *discreet practices* as essentialist sources of identity or cultural purity. In the anthropologist's understanding, we pass through hybrid processes all along history's trajectory, at times more homogenous, other times more heterogeneous, with no *discreet form* being *pure or fully homogenous*. In the context of the ambiguous character of globalization, cultural historian Peter Burke (2003, p. 84, our translation) advocates that "even more significant among the forces of resistance to global culture is that which may be named 'resilience' of local traditional mentalities".

When reflecting on this theme in relation to the study case of the Casa Wabi Foundation, we can investigate the reinterpretation of regional specificities of the coast of Oaxaca and the recent architecture with a *regional* character in Mexico, by architects from different cultures, therefore considering a reflection on architectural culture in a broader sense. We reaffirm Waisman's contribution to the search of alternative paths to those delimited by the global society, valorizing the regional, not in a nostalgic manner but as a source for the project; with Canclini, beyond the polarity *universal* versus *regional*, we recognize cultural processes as hybrid and occurring among processes of acculturation and transculturation. We should also consider recent reflections on the issue of identities and local in the context of globalization, besides the architects' imaginative creation promoting a broader architectural culture.

Presently, we have the clarity that together with the tendency to global homogenization there is the valorization of difference, i.e., the impact of the *global* has engendered a new interest in the *local*. This *local* then performs within the logic of globalization and will no longer be mistaken for identities that are rooted in the place or delimited in their locality. According to Stuart Hall (2015, p. 45, our translation), "it seems unlikely that globalization will simply destroy national identities. It is more likely that it will simultaneously produce new *global* identifications and new *local* identifications". Canclini (2008) states that hybridization processes have redefined, revalued, and, in some cases, devalued local cultures. According to this author, the term *hybridization* is suitable for particular mixtures occurring in processes of miscegenation, syncretism, and fusion. However, the decisive question would not be the definition of which is the broadest of these concepts, but rather "continue to construe theoretical and methodological principles that help us to make this world more translatable" and, also, reflect on what "each part gains and loses when hybridizing" (Canclini, 2008, p. xxxix, our translation).

There is still another particular aspect of the project dedicated to the Casa Wabi Foundation: the institution reflects the special attachment of artist Bosco Sodi with the Japanese culture and has as philosophical principle the Japanese concept *wabi-sabi*, which expresses the aesthetic value of simplicity appreciation. The meaning of *wabi* is the abstinence of luxury and is more associated with the use of more accessible means. In architecture, this principle is manifested in the simplicity of forms, the absence of inner ornaments, and the valorization of materials in their natural character. The aesthetic value of *sabi*, complementary to *wabi*, is more associated with the value of the ancient, besides the appreciation of solitude, isolation. Used as an ensemble, the *wabi-sabi* aesthetic value suggests simplicity, antiquity, and solitude in artistic expressions. Therefore, added to the challenge of design there is the interpretation of this concept by the architects – Ando and Kuma, Japanese, but also Siza. Furthermore, the consideration of creating a space of artistic and cultural valorization and production, by incentivizing local actors.

2 The Casa Wabi Foundation's main building, by Tadao Ando

Architect Tadao Ando's work is known for creating architectural sites that connect the human being with nature and arouses spiritual sensibilities from this relationship, valuing the Japanese culture. Ando (1991, p. 479, our translation) explains that in his works he seeks an essential logic, intrinsic to the place, valuing the "formal aspects of a site, its cultural traditions, climate, environmental features, life patterns, and ancestral customs". Ando's project for the Casa Wabi Foundation reaffirms the architect's interest in the natural elements – water, wind, light, and sky – and for the Japanese tradition, own of your culture. The sophisticated simplicity of Casa Wabi is associated with an implicit sense of order that resonates on the extensive plain concrete walls and on the arrangement of rooms and circulation areas.

As presented in figure 2, the project defines an axis parallel to the coast, demarcated by a concrete wall that separates the more private and individual activities looking at the sea from the collective and public activities looking to the nature reserve and the mountains. At the western extremity of the axis parallel to the sea, there are the rooms blocks for the artists-in-residence and at the eastern extremity, there are the main art atelier and an observatory. When moving from the western extremity of this axis towards the observatory, one walks through a sequence of spaces where there are distinct intensities of light, shadows, unevenness, and texture of materials, valorizing the place's typical soil and vegetation. By dusk, the reflection of the sunset on the concrete walls produces new tones on the surfaces' colors and intensifies the experience. The monochromatic aspect of the entire building is also the architect's way of reading this region; the enhancement of colors is subject to the Sun's position changes and to the effects of shadow and light on the soil and on the construction.

A second axis, perpendicular to the sea and intersecting the first one, crosses the entire vegetated area demarcated by the soil ground, reaches the central building, and continues pointing in the direction of the Pacific Ocean. On this axis, there is central access to the Foundation, the main path between the botanical garden and the pools' leisure area. When the barrier defined by the concrete wall parallel to the sea is traversed by the perpendicular path, curiously it seems to become neutral before the landscape's force.

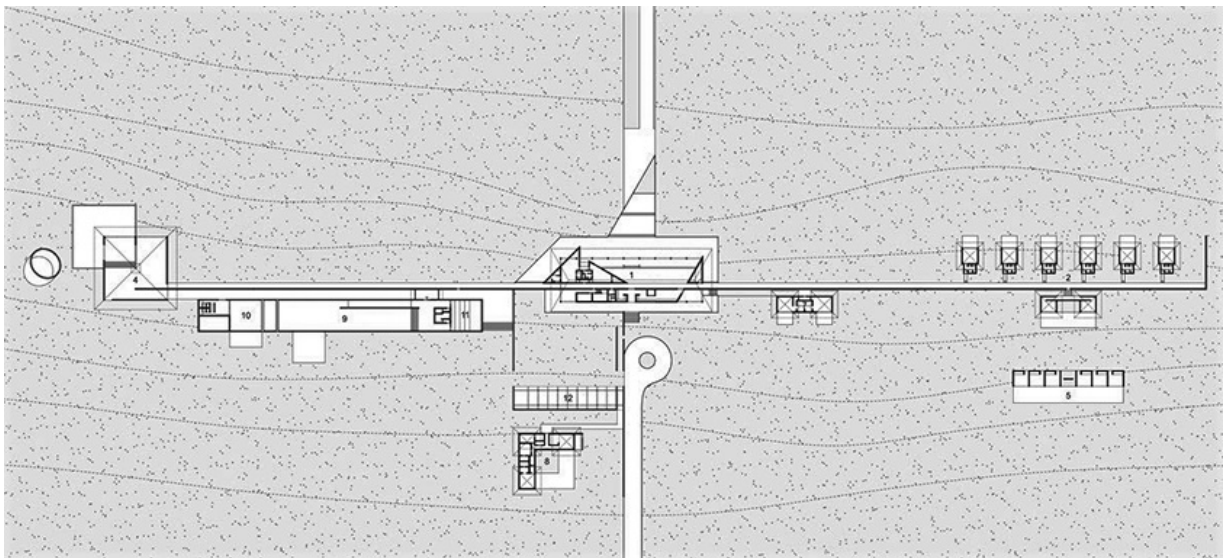


Fig. 2: Floor plan of Casa Wabi's main building developed by the BAAQ' Office. Source: BAAQ' Office Team, 2016. Available at: https://www.baaq.net/proyectos/casa_wabi/casa_wabi.html. Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

The huge roof of the main structure is repeated in a smaller proportion over each concrete block of the residents' rooms. It is the element of closer approximation with Oaxaca's rural architecture and its preexistences due to the materials used. The use of dried leaves as roofs is common in all Mexican seashore. The Guano Palm composes the typical Mexican rural house, its harvest occurring mainly in the dry seasons. This practice in construction is ancient, referring to the shelters of the Mayan peoples. Along time, the Guano Palm was substituted by grasses, and presently the use of dried leaves in construction is carried out by workers specialized that art, who are known as palaperos (Caballero, Pulido, Martínez-Ballesté, 2008, p. 54). Palapas, the local name for the roof tile made with dried palm leaves, as shown in figure 3, was also used on the clay pavilion designed by Álvaro Siza.



Fig. 3: Frontal view of the *palapa* thatched roof and access to the main building designed by Ando. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://www.sergiolopez.mx/houses/casa-wabi>. Accessed 02 May 2021.

In the interior of the building, in the space under the large roof, we can find traits recognizable of Tadao Ando's language, with the use of concrete surfaces and elements, exposed in their bareness and to the effects of light. The inside of ambiances designed by Ando, as portrayed in figure 4, expresses the encounter of the Mexican *palapas* with the traditional Japanese house. The wooden structure under the dried palm leaves refers to the structure under the leaves of rice straw; carefully, Ando places the roof on wooden supports, these onto

the concrete structure, and detaches it from the walls. The difference of materials and constructive expressions creates a contrast that intensifies the experience.



Fig. 4: View of the main building's interior. The roof is detached from the concrete beams and pillars. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://www.sergiolopez.mx/houses/casa-wabi>. Accessed 02 May 2021.

In his reinterpretation of the Japanese culture, the architect uses few pieces of furniture and, as in the aesthetic and philosophical wabi-sabi principle, the interior of the building presents visible influences of the traditional Japanese tea house⁴. Simplicity is suggested, surfaces are ample and opened to the exterior, integrating to the natural landscape. One of the most relevant aspects of Tadao Ando's works is the way he brings architecture and nature close together; there is also his particular ability, drawing on modern architectural culture, to reinterpret places by looking at individual or collective traditions and costumes. Furthermore, in his works, it is noteworthy that the architect's posture regarding architectural creation is based on critical action. According to Ando (1991, p. 496, our translation), geometrical abstraction clashes with human concreteness in many of his projects, and then "the apparent contradiction dissolves in the incongruence".

The feeling of tension is also provoked when his architecture confronts humans and nature through the abstraction of natural elements like rain, light, and wind; the presence of nature is thus felt by the human being in these architectural places. For Ando (1991, p. 497, our translation), this "permanent state of tension" may arouse "the spiritual sensibilities that are latent in contemporary humans". As one can see on figure 5, Ando's architecture in Casa Wabi promotes tensions, not only between the architecture's geometric lines and the surroundings, making nature's presence be felt, but also in relation to typically local architectural elements and materials, producing a certain estrangement.



Fig. 5: The estrangement caused by the encounter of the concrete volume with the roof of Casa Wabi. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://www.sergiolopez.mx/houses/casa-wabi>. Accessed 02 May 2021.

Ando's architectural production was interpreted by Kenneth Frampton in the 1980s in the light of the *critical regionalism* concept and compared to the practice of Mexican architect Luis Barragán, whose work is relevant in the scenery of the creation of a modern language related to the local context, especially as from the 1950s, when he values the tactile experience and the contact of human beings with nature. In the article 'Mexico: Alternative Expressions', published in 2007 in *Docomomo Journal*, researchers Louise Noelle and Sara Topelson recognized in Barragán the originality of a new plastic language drawing on *local concerns and feelings*, in which it is possible to notice the relationship with both traditional values and the *founding ethics of the modern movement*.

The relationship between Ando's and Barragán's works is also observed by historian William Curtis (2008), when relating Ando's houses of the late 1970s with the Mexican architect's residences produced a quarter of a century earlier. According to Curtis (2008, p. 641), Ando's houses functioned within the discretion of undecorated but emotionally filled walls, like those by Barragán. Both explored the experience of reestablishing contact with the inner life and the rhythms of seasons. In fact, Barragán's ample and abstract planes situated in the Mexican landscape and the intense encounter of his works with earth, water, and vegetation in the surroundings is part of the architect's imaginary, seeking an approach with the local. Tadao Ando's design for the Casa Wabi Foundation may have received, consciously or not, the influence of Barragán. But undoubtedly in this place, the Mexican architect's work crosses the attentive mind.

3 The Clay Pavilion, by Álvaro Siza

The pavilion designed by Álvaro Siza is located nearer to the road, as can be seen in figure 6, and receives children from the region for art and handcraft workshops for the apprenticeship of the local production technique of utensils and other objects. These activities perpetuate the teaching of a local tradition and incentivize the knowledge and practice by the new generations.



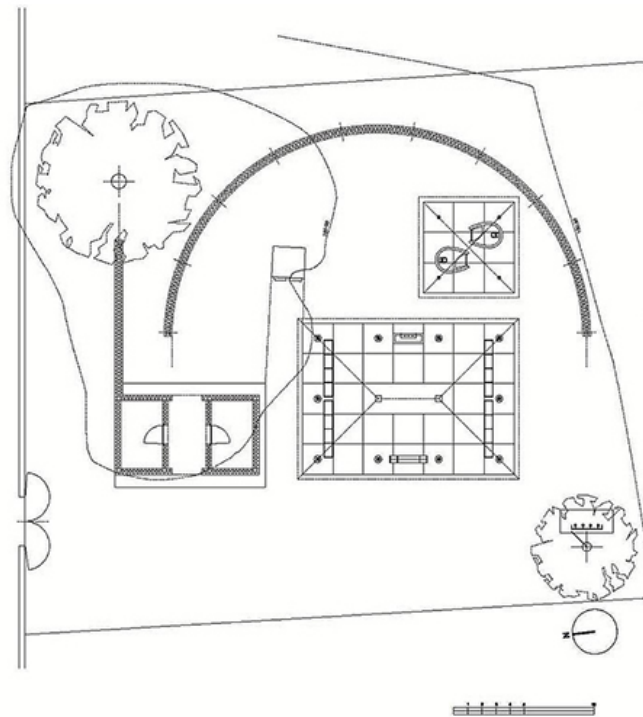
Fig. 6: Situation of the Siza Pavilion, the building of Casa Wabi Foundation with the nearest access to the main road. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://www.sergiolopez.mx/8246090-aerial/casa-wabi-aerial>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Siza arranged the activities and uses in three volumes and designed a wall on the delimitation of the patio for collective activities – this wall differs from the one designed by Tadao Ando in its materiality and dimensions. If Ando's strategy for the project was to define an axis that crosses all activities of the complex, Siza's strategy was to involve the pavilion with the wall, embrace and bring closer the people who use the space. We can also observe in Siza's architectural proposal for this pavilion the valorization of the local culture in the aspect of form and materiality as well as from the viewpoint of its social use. The objective of Siza's pavilion is to serve as the space for teaching the technique of manipulating clay, a local art existing for generations in the communities of Oaxaca. The study of local traditional construction materials and techniques was crucial for the development of the project and had the direct contribution of architect Alfonso Quiñones to the research and practice of the utilization of clay bricks⁵.

Referring to the set of achievements of communities and the revitalization of practices that endure and characterize a given culture, Waisman (2013, p. 205, our translation) points to a type of "patrimonial wealth" of these groups of villages that keep their own architectural features and have great relevance concerning the capacity to maintain and preserve local cultures. The choice to use red recooked bricks in the pavilion's construction alludes to the use of local material and technique which reminds us of Siza's interest in the work of Alvar Aalto. Frampton (1985, p. 385, our translation) stresses the approach that is clearly "tactile and

tectonic, more than visual and graphic” in most of the Portuguese architect’s works. According to Frampton, Siza demonstrates full sensibility in relation to the transformation of fluid and specific reality. The author highlights the influence of Alvar Aalto in Siza’s works in his respect for local materials, without excluding the rational form and modern techniques.

Another aspect we can recognize in the pavilion as common to other projects by Siza is the “delicate” accommodation to the specific topographic features, to the local conditions of the terrain, the soil. The main edification, indicated in figure 7, is meant for the activity of clay manipulation and it is open to the outer space, having a large collective working table made in apparent concrete. The table is the meeting place of children from local communities with the artists-in-residence. The second volume is built in bricks and a watertight slab and it houses two storerooms of support to the pavilion; the slab is a reflecting pool for rainy days, having a water outlet fixed to the wall in the shape of a fountain.



Planta General

Fig. 7: Floor plan of the Clay Pavilion. Source: BAAQ’ Office Team, 2017. Available at: https://www.baaq.net/proyectos/taller_barro/taller_barro.html. Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Álvaro Siza’s works traverse references and use resources that go beyond the identification of similarities between projects and their authors. Some influences are transient and even unconscious; others belong to the architects’ personal background and permeate his entire trajectory, as the mentioned interest in Aalto’s works. Other approaches can be made, still more subjective, and may be only impressions about the work, as is the case of the pavilion wall in its relationship with the other elements, which recalls compositions between curves and straight lines from other projects by Tadao Ando himself, like Casa Koshino, concretized here in a completely singular way in the relation with the roof and chosen materials; or, still, perhaps as a citation, the small waterfall over the expressive wall, presented on figure 8, and the sand floor that suggest the remembrance of Luis Barragán’s works of *Los Clubes* (1964-1968), *Cuadra San Cristóbal* and *Fuente de Los Amantes*.

The value of tradition for Siza occurs by the accumulation of experience that is updated and replaced at each project. This means that Siza does not conceive architecture from a *telos*, of whatever order it may be. Experience is from the order of recurrent uncertainty, but this fragility has been faced as liberationist, i.e., it has led the Portuguese architect to face the making of architecture without taboos or absolute truths. (Kamita, 2019, p. 127, our translation).



Fig. 8: The pavilion designed by Álvaro Siza, highlighting the waterfall over the frontal façade wall. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://www.sergiolopez.mx/8246090-aerial/casa-wabi-aerial>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

4 The Pavilion by Kengo Kuma

The pavilion designed by Kengo Kuma, shown in figure 9, was built in 2018 and also had the participation of local architect Alfonso Quiñones, of the Mexican office BAAQ'. The structure was created to shelter a chicken coop, which is part of the spaces of Casa Wabi dedicated to the local community. According to the description of the project by Kengo Kuma's office⁶, the pavilion was conceived as a collective housing complex – the space at the center of this pavilion is used for the poultry's general activities, as can be seen in figure 10. The constructive system was designed as a grid made of wooden boards treated in a Japanese traditional technique named *Shou Sugi Ban* or *Yakisugi*, which is a method of charring the superficial layers of the wood and producing a black tone according to the intensity of the flame. This technique preserves the wood and makes it naturally more resistant to weather changes.



Fig. 9: External view of the pavilion by Kengo Kuma. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://kkaa.co.jp/works/architecture/chicken-coop/>. Accessed 04 Mar 2021.



Fig. 10: Internal view of the pavilion by Kengo Kuma. Source: Sergio López, 2019. Available at: <https://kkaa.co.jp/works/architecture/chicken-coop/>. Accessed 04 Mar 2021.

It is inevitable to recognize the aesthetic value of the pavilion with references to the architect's own culture, with allusion to the traditional Japanese house, either in the technique of wood charring and darkening, or in the choice of the transparency provided by the grid patterns and variations according to natural elements as light, shadow, wind, and rain. However, the depth of the wooden plates in the creation of a three-dimension structure is an adaptation of the architect to this pavilion, transforming the lines of the Japanese framing into niches and pergolas. The same-sized niches are repeated along with the entire building and remind us of Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta's projects, who is recognized for his abstract geometry, planes marked by grids and controlled effects of natural light, and the transparency in his works. In this pavilion, Kuma emphasizes the use of the grid pattern much present in the Mexican architecture, hence he creates a hybrid

between this local reference and his own Japanese culture, excluding the colorfulness of the Mexican grid and giving place to the monochromatic use of charred wood.

Theorists Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre revised the concept of *critical regionalism* in publications in the 2000s and added works and architects not mentioned in previous editions, though there had been criticism due to the term *regionalism* being too limiting in dealing with the *local* and *universal* synthesis in the architectural practice. Kengo Kuma's work is among those more contemporary examples cited by Tzonis and Lefaivre:

Before beginning to design, Kengo Kuma says he first "listens" as carefully as possible to the site. Only then does he place the building upon it, and in so doing manages to relate the structure to the scale of the surroundings in a manner that seems like a natural tribute to the centuries-old tradition of Japanese wood architecture [...]. Kuma has become a master of wood in all its forms, from timber to paper. Moreover, he combines new and traditional elements to produce an architecture that is truly Japanese. (Tzonis, Lefaivre, 2003, p. 110).

The great contribution to the region of Kengo Kuma's project was teaching local workers the traditional Japanese technique of wood charring; the aim was that it would be used in local dwellings since wood is much utilized in the region and this method provides more durability to the material. With the apprenticeship of the technique by the workers, the conclusion of the building occurred in a few weeks. The knowledge was incentivized among them due to the achievement of good results of material resistance for construction and better use of the raw material. The architect also incorporated into his project the use of the region's typical red brick blocks on the pavilion's floor and preserved part of the soil in its natural state, thus integrating it into the landscape.

The experience of the local community absorbing a foreign technique and the architect's exercise, as did Siza, of using the technique associated to the red brick blocks is meaningful from the viewpoint of *cultural exchange*. In the study of concepts around the theme of cultural interaction, the term "acculturation" could be used to define a "subordinated culture" that utilizes a technique of a "dominant culture". However, in the construction process of Kengo Kuma's pavilion, with the participation of the local community in the apprenticeship of a Japanese traditional technique, one does not recognize a one-way movement, but rather a two-way movement, when what is produced valorizes the encounter between different cultures. This exchange would exemplify the term "transculturation" created by Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz (Burke, 2003, p. 45, our translation).

5 Final considerations: thinking the local dimension, the hybrid, and transculturation

The architectural works of Tadao Ando, Álvaro Siza, and Kengo Kuma are cited by Frampton, Tzonis, and Lefaivre in the publications that dealt with the concept of *critical regionalism* and their revisions from the 1980s until the 2000s. The concept of *critical regionalism* was very opportune in the debate that problematized the question of local identities valorization in the face of the internationalization process that, according to these authors' critics, tended to *cultural homogenization*. In Frampton's view, the *phenomenon of universalization*, at the same that it was presented as an advance for humanity, was also subtle destruction of traditional cultures; and *critical regionalism* would describe critical architectural expressions motivated by a "strong desire to effectively achieve an identity" (Frampton, 1983, p. 505). However, we can identify the inadequacy of this theoretical model for contemporary architectural production, especially with regard to the recognition of the architectural culture and design practice in Latin America.

Taking as premises the reflections of Waisman, Canclini, and Burke, we reaffirm that *local* identifications do not confound with entrenched identities in delimited regions, especially by national boundaries. The globalization process, despite being differentiated in the world, presents effects everywhere and excludes the possibility of *enclosed* places, culturally untouched or traditionally *pure*. Such an understanding of culture is actually appropriate to think of diverse creative processes and in different moments of history. In the present case, there is the challenge of the participation of foreign architects who meet around a project situated in Mexico, with the definition of a program that valorizes the local culture of Oaxaca and a broader concept, typical of the Institution, that establishes identifications with the Japanese culture. The projects for the Casa Wabi Foundation designed by Tadao Ando, Álvaro Siza, and Kengo Kuma demonstrate the encounter of these architects with another culture, the exercise of designing with the adaptation to and assimilation of local traditions and, also, the double reaction between architect and the local community.

Although there are common aspects in the analyzed projects, there are recognizable differences. Siza, for instance, seems more concerned with the exploration of local materials explicit in the construction, but under a more rigid and geometrized design, even though the resource of simplicity can be understood as an

approach to the *Wabi-Sabi* concept. Besides the interpretation of local materials and techniques, Ando manifests his own language with the resource of extensive concrete surfaces, producing a contrasting effect that highlights the singular encounter between differences. Kuma, in his turn, gives protagonism to the structure that affirms the presence of tectonic explorations recurrent in his work but thinking the process, the teaching of a technique to treat a common material, perhaps creations – hybrid ones – may be recognized by the locals in the future. It is undeniable that there is a hybrid character in the analyzed works and the cultural interaction through an inclusive and participative architecture in the coast of Oaxaca, in Mexico, but also due to possible approaches with important Mexican architects, as Barragán and Legorreta. We can perceive in these projects that there is no intention of preserving the *purity* of the local culture. On the contrary, the projects promote a type of mixture near to a hybridization process, capable of highlighting diversities and re-signifying the relationships of identity and culture typical of a place.

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¹ This paper is part of the doctoral research process that discusses the consideration of local in contemporary production, in the graduate program of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

² Data collected from the website of the Casa Wabi Foundation, available at: www.casawabi.org. Accessed 02 May 2021.

³ The Casa Wabi Foundation has other pavilions designed by Latin American architects, such as Jorge Ambrosi and Gabriela Etchegaray, Solano Benítez and Gloria Cabral, and the landscape designed by Alberto Kalach. We

have selected the projects by non-Latin American architects to emphasize the question of considering the local in the face of cultural flows on a global scale.

⁴ According to Karpousas (2003, p. 26), the tea ceremony was introduced in Japan in the 15th and 16th centuries by Zen masters and contributed to the elaboration of a new concept in Japanese residential architecture. The roofs of Japanese traditional houses are made of tree bark, rice straw, wooden structure, and are not structured with walls, but with wooden pillars.

⁵ Data on the design development process obtained from the description of the project by the BAAQ' Office. Available at: https://www.baaq.net/proyectos/taller_barro/taller_barro.html. Accessed 02 May 2021.

⁶ Description data of the project by *Kengo Kuma & Associates* office available at <https://kkaa.co.jp/works/architecture/chicken-coop/>. Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.