

CONTRAVENTION IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL RUINS CONTRAVENÇÃO EM RUÍNAS ARQUITETÔNICAS CONTEMPORÂNEAS MAYRA DOS SANTOS, FRANCISCO SPADONI

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Abstract

The article discusses ruins as concept and substance: a construction that marks a time that no longer exists, by losing its substance and function, provokes unease with its incompleteness or abandonment, which repositions it in time, requiring a new comprehension. Understanding that their relationship with society is established in a plural manner — through nostalgia or trauma —, the article has the objective to understand the values that lead to their preservation or destruction, as well as the ways they are reinserted in the present. As such, the research is based on previously established concepts and theories (such as the concept of value developed by Alois Riegl) as well as contemporary ones (expressed here in Andreas Huyssen's approach to nostalgia and memory). Some highlighted examples - artistic and architectural works - contribute to this view: they are actions that are able to break with traditional readings, insofar as they intensify our experience and awaken critical capacity. The hypothesis introduced here is that the restoration of ruins, as discourse or as space for updated use, can be understood as a transgression of the natural course of time or the actual value attributed to them.

Keywords: Ruins, Memory, Architecture, Art

1 Introduction

Ruins span the history of art and architecture as records of a time that has vanished: the setting of human activities that portray eras, cultures and economies. This kind of construction loses the meaning of its material and historical existence until it is abandoned and possibly transformed into a second nature, without the commitment of the society that generated it. It is by this path that we can understand the possibility of transgression from its natural course - from construction to demise - which we will refer to as contravention. The idea of contravention also can be understood in terms of a possible anti-hegemonic vision, if we admit that there is a consolidated view of the matter. What we will attempt to develop in this article is that actions taken on ruins depend on the context in which they are placed and the value attributed to them, such that there will always be transgression to a hegemonic vision.

To think of ruins is to understand their incompleteness: vestiges of something which can be reconstituted from some blurry remembrance, that the collective imagination comes to construct. But it is there, like an inextricable part of a present that we need to reconstruct every day and which remains alive like a body in a state of agony that refuses to die. This is perhaps the central issue that this text proposes to analyze: The unease of the unfinished image that displaces us in time and causes us to reflect. Thinking about the work of art, French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman would say that, when we are in front of it, we are faced with a dilemma: we can adhere simply to what we see or we can look beyond the visible, opening up the field of meanings and senses, therefore, an image that criticizes our ways of looking at it, to the extent that it compels us to truly see it (Didi-Huberman, 1997). Displacing ourselves to the ruins based on their construction, we suggest that this compels us to view them critically as being necessary for us to position ourselves in terms of time, establishing an awareness of where we are and what we are.

It is probable - and we do so here freely - that this opening to reflection and unease to which we are subjected is only possible due to their negative condition, associated with death, the capacity for seduction and critical depth. Byung-Chul Han is the one who suggests this key in his short essay *Saving Beauty* (2017) and he does so by distinguishing the ideal perception of beauty from the smooth aesthetic that prevails in our time. According to the author, smoothness does not just allude to the surface material, but also refers to purity, the absence of resistance and the lack of capacity for reflection - in contemporary society, we are anesthetized; nothing impacts us anymore. Salvation, as expressed in the title, lies in positioning oneself before the beautiful in an active way: to the extent that we see it, we take it upon ourselves and the truth is revealed, capable of awakening creative action — so thus, in this key, we will establish connections with the work.

In the case of ruins, the negative condition is associated with the problem of time and what its actions insinuate about the material and function. Time marks the transition between creation and destruction — a movement that can only be measured based on the perception of the subject who, by situating his or her body in space, sees the transformation around them and the displacement of objects. In this sense, ruins have a dual role: They are a marker of a time that has vanished, like a

temporal reference, and a meeting point between the past and the present, close to the eyes and the culture. They are vestiges, at times identified and analyzed by archaeologists, who uncover ancient traces and reveal moments of existence. Simultaneously, ruins also make themselves present as part of everyday life, reconstructing values and identities, and developing new narratives for what has remained.

The aging gives them a patina. It marks the material with symbolic value, which, as it is defaced, broken, fragmented, shattered, acquires a new tone and texture until it is remade with a new present. According to Robert Ginsberg, the ruined state of a construction “liberates matter from its subservience to form” (Ginsberg, 2004, p. 1): the material crumbles, changing the original form, as if time had imposed a creative action that seduces us, since imagining it in its entirety also produces enchantment.

It is also essential to understand the loss of the original function in terms of the changes in the social, cultural, political and economic dynamics of a certain society. The perception of the work or its use is generally bound to a context, and our preferences are connected to a certain subjectivity. Architects and artists think of their works for the future, but they produce them according to a present context. Still, constructed works, at least works of architecture, last for decades. Depending on their artistic or historical value, they may be maintained, oftentimes adapting to current dynamic and modifying their functions. Otherwise, their only fate is to be forgotten and ultimately collapse.

Paulo Mendes da Rocha, on a visit with Jo Coenen and Luigi Snozzi to a 16th century fort located at Cartagena Bay in Colombia, recounts the impact that the magnificently beautiful architecture had, quoting Snozzi, who summarized it as such: “The architecture emerges when the function ceases” (Artigas, 2000, p. 173). Mendes da Rocha used this story as part of a speech about a work of architecture's power, with the intention to tell us that it doesn't matter when it begins or ends, but rather the extent to which we experience it. The ruins as a monument, in which we can understand this power, in a sense, is part of this recognition. It survives the transformations of the world and the action of man, as an indication of a previous architectural culture — of an artistic manifestation or technical knowledge — because it is still a physical spatial construction subject to perception and interpretation, even when it is no longer understood in its original mode.

2 Perceptions by Culture

Considering that ruins can recount the history of a civilization and are threatened by the actions of people who, in principle, should preserve them, we have a conflict there, as noted by art historian Alois Riegl. In his classic essay, *The Modern Cult of Monuments*, he affirms that the preservation of our patrimony is established by the value given to them in our time. In other words, we preserve a work when it makes sense to our culture. However, the culture of our time is subject to changing interests and it depends on the education of our gaze, historical value and the utility of the spaces, among other factors.

It is known that the cultural relationship with ruins gained momentum in the 18th century with the consolidation of archaeology as a field of scientific knowledge and, particularly, in architecture, for the relationship that it sought with the constructions of Greco-Roman antiquity. However, previously to this, there were registers and studies of ruins in manuscripts from the 11th century, as Miguel Egaña and Olivier Schefer (2015, p. 8) relate in the introduction to the book *Esthétique des ruines: poïétique de la destruction*, which features images of the ruins of Babylon. The emergence of this new sensibility, for science as well as nostalgia, made ruins part of the modern conscience, whether in literature or painting, and they began to capture the collective imagination.

During the Romantic Period, with the discovery of ruins in Italy and Greece, art began cultivating the presence of the past more and more (Macauley, 1953, p. 151-152). From the 18th century on, many paintings started depicting buildings and cities that had succumbed to time with enthusiasm and fervor, seeking to portray beauty, as exemplified by the paintings of French artist Hubert Robert (1733-1808) that illustrate picturesque Greek and Roman ruins populated by women and men at work or walking among the constructions. Or Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) in the documentation of the Roman ruins or in his series *Carceri d'invenzione* - as illustrated in Figure 1, *Le Carceri d'Invenzione* (1761) - which, in certain way, combines the representation of the construction of the architectural space with the images of the documented ruins. In this understanding, the beauty of ruins is established by their relation to antiquity.



Fig. 1: *Le Carceri d'Invenzione* (1761) by Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Source: Princeton University Art Museum. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3ARtCYM> >. [Accessed: 3 November 2022].

We can say that this perception changes with the Industrial Revolution and the transformation of cities, not only in terms of urban planning - with the introduction of rational outlines for public thoroughfares -, but also regarding the new constructions that emerged in the wake of modern necessities. This is an era in which the idea of progress was assimilated. People had faith in the future. The reconfiguration of cities brought an erasure of the experience of life in the past and, as such, its vision is indivisible from melancholy. We can cite, as an example, the poems of Charles Baudelaire on the Parisian landscape reformulated by the Baron Haussmann during the Second Empire, in the mid 19th century: "Paris has changed but in my grief no change. New palaces and scaffoldings and blocks, To me, are allegories, nothing strange. My memories are heavier than rocks¹." Seeing the city he had known in ruins, Baudelaire had no faith in the future. He did not believe that the world was moving toward a better state. On the contrary, in his view, if everything continued this way, it was doomed to catastrophe.

This is a new relationship between ruins and modernity, no longer connected to antiquity, to times past, but one that comes to recognize that a city in continuous transformation also produces its own ruins - in other words, these themes are not antagonistic or exclusive; they are themes of coexistence. Both relationships - to ancient ruins and to those that are the fruit of modernization -- contain an image of nostalgia related to the perception of the action of time and the natural transformation of constructions in way that provokes our admiration. Andreas Huyssen (2006, p. 9-14) would call them "authentic ruins." However, the possibility of understanding the past or supplanting it after the era of progress was gradually deflated by the

¹ Baudelaire, Charles, "The Swan," published January 22, 1860, English translation by Roy Campbell In: Baudelaire, 1952, p. 117.

abrupt destruction that occurs in war. After the two World Wars, the very notion of ruins begins to be viewed as a portrait of humanity's capacity for violence, of its atrocities, more than nature simply running its course. It's a third category, one no longer connected to nostalgia, but instead to violence and trauma.

So the question is: how do we evaluate, from the perspective of culture, what should we value as legacy and preserve? Preservation itself is a controversial concept, since the idea goes beyond the idea of keeping the work intact from the effects of time, conserving its original state: it seeks to establish the value of the "patina" in recognition of its own time. According to conservation-restoration theorist Cesare Brandi, the objective of restoration should be to reestablish the unity of the work, without incurring the loss of its artistic value or the disengagement of the work with its historical time (Brandi, 2005). In this sense, ruins can never absolutely be reconstituted to the original without becoming a falsification of itself.

3 The Present Manifesto

It interests us here to analyze the second category: ruins that result from the historical transformation of cities, that is, works that, starting with a certain process in time, had become obsolete, losing their original function until being abandoned - a dynamic that has appeared to run its course ever faster in recent decades. There are several reasons, but we can list the two main ones. The first is the transformation of the system of production, when the change of the economic profile of the city, or parts of it, makes it so these designated spaces lose their utility, like the industrial areas of consolidated neighborhoods. The second reason is the alteration of the social and political structure, determining the profiles of management and investment and, consequently, the pockets of poverty and abandonment of urban sections, like, for instance, the central areas of cities. These are issues present in virtually all cities, of any size - from small towns to large metropolises - and in any place, from the most distant outlying areas to the central nucleus. In Brazil, professor Beatriz Mugayar Kühl has stood out with her research on industrial heritage and its forms of preservation and thematic reinvention², as previously mentioned, which renders us equal to the world at the time of obsolescence in this age of capital.

In fact, this is a lens of how poorly we treat our past, even the recent past, to the point that we leave consolidated structures abandoned, like factories, warehouses, mansions and movie theaters, viaducts and run-down bridges, in a state of ruin. We build structures and infrastructures in hopes of making use of them for a long time, but the opposite occurs: the economic and social dynamics change, interests shift, initiating a process of neglect and disregard for that which was supposed to be considered patrimony. In the most extreme scenario, they become a kind of rip in the urban fabric, ever more embedded in its everyday life and less and less configured as a exceptional territory, causing a dual sensation of regularity and oddness.

It is a two-pronged feeling, an apparent paradox, that conceals a relationship with the process of obsolescence in contemporaneity. In a world that places priority on what is new and original, sustained by hyper-consumerism, everything loses value and meaning quickly and, as if in a sort of neutralization, we become accustomed to living without confrontation: we come to see ruins, for example, as an everyday value. On the other hand, the capacity for questioning the problems of cities and their constructed space consists precisely in the sight for their ruins and empty spaces. They are images that rattle and sensitize us precisely for being in opposition to what we understand as the ideal city.

In the contemporary context, where the present appears rarefied and we lose "focus on the image or the object," the rapture for ruins is recovered through a "puzzling mixture of destruction and creation" (Huyssen, 2007), in the hypothesis of that a reading of the past is capable of guarding against the sensation of loss or lack of perspective on the future. Close to this meaning, David Harvey (1990, p. 259) points to the contemporary reverence for museums, memorials and ruins, which he called "reversion to images of a lost past" at a moment marked by "time-space compression," in other words, by the acceleration caused by the implementation of new technologies that created other, more productive forms of social organization (Harvey, 1990, p. 296). As a counterpoint to the intense, superficial experimentation, we scour the past in search of a meaning that is an alternative to the perpetual present.

This contemporary obsession with ruins hides a nostalgia for an earlier age that had not yet lost its power to imagine other futures. At stake is a nostalgia for modernity that dare not speak its name after acknowledging the catastrophes of the 20th

² See: *Arquitetura do ferro e arquitetura ferroviária em São Paulo*. Cotia: Ateliê Editorial, 1998. *Preservação do Patrimônio Arquitetônico da Industrialização*. Cotia: Ateliê Editorial, 2018.

century and the lingering injuries of inner and outer colonization. Yet this nostalgia persists, straining for something lost with the ending of an earlier form of modernity. The cipher for this nostalgia is the ruin. (Huysen, 2006, p. 7)

But beyond the subjective perception of the person who observes them, between the unease and the nostalgia, is the artistic and architectural action in these works that has the capacity to multiply the experience upon the ruins, by way of artistic installations or projects to recover their social function, contributing to the neutral, seamless vision that the contemporary world offers us. It does not seem like a simple task to the extent that these actual works can be absorbed by the system of production by way of the hyper-realism and aesthetic influence of life. What it is intended, beyond the survival of matters fundamental to the fields of art and architecture - such as spatiality and inter-subjectivity -, is the deconstruction of the idea of nostalgia, creating a reflection of existing reality and reacting to the paralysis and conservatism of the world.

4 Interlocution with Art

In *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic*, Robert Smithson presents the constructions seen in the landscape: a bridge between Bergen and Passaic Counties, a water tower, open-air pipes gushing water, a parking lot, a construction site - in other words, pieces of infrastructures and the like that allow the city to function. With the work's publication in the magazine *Artforum* in December of 1967, with a tone of irony - at certain moments channeling Walter Benjamin in his depiction of Haussmann's Paris -, he calls these vestiges of modernization ruins, though they differ from the original idea, since they do not need the action of time, being that they are already born as ruins.

That panorama seemed to contain ruins in reverse, that is—all the new construction that would eventually be built. This is the opposite of the “romantic ruin” because the buildings don't fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise as ruins before they are built. (Smithson, 1967)

These constructions, deprived of a past or historical significance, form a portrait of urban bankruptcy, since they come out of a fragmented vision of the city that only foments its destructuring. The abandonment is the result of this vice. Smithson examines Passaic, an ordinary, unattractive city, in the 1960s. Still, we can talk about many other ruins from the present day in similar situations: Structures that emerged in response to urgent matters, in other words, from the population's needs, such as infrastructure, but presenting solutions unconcerned with the future and which are, consequently, relegated to abandonment with the passage of time.

Similarly, Gordon Matta-Clark's so-called *Building Cuts* serve as a criticism of the urban transformation imposed by capitalism - and, as a consequence, by the real estate market -, which was ever quicker in generating obsolete buildings. With architecture as a means of artistic communication, as well as criticism, it led to a reflection on the nature of the space itself, the appropriation of these buildings, in their re-elaboration, through the cuts and extractions effected by Matta-Clark. *Bronx Floors* (1972-73), for example, was the first artistic intervention in which he cut holes in abandoned buildings, the fruit of a reading of the urban transformation process in rundown areas of New York City, in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem, Queens and the port regions. With the high unemployment in the industrial sector in the 1970s, many apartments had been abandoned, ransacked or burned down for the insurance money. Using a simple hand saw, Matta-Clark made sections in the floors and walls, photographing the spaces and taking these pieces of the building to art galleries – actions displayed in his retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum in 1988, as seen in Figure 2.

Following this work, the artist developed *WallsPaper* (1972), a large panel with images of these same ruined places, *Splitting* (1974), an intervention in a house in suburban New Jersey that was to be demolished, and *Niagara Falls/Bingo* (1974), also in a condemned house, to mention but his first productions. They are works in buildings that suffered from obsolescence and had become urban ruins and which the artist later defined as *Non.u.mental* - a reflection on the poetics of ruins and the impermanence of architecture that, from his critical point of view, accompanies many of his works.

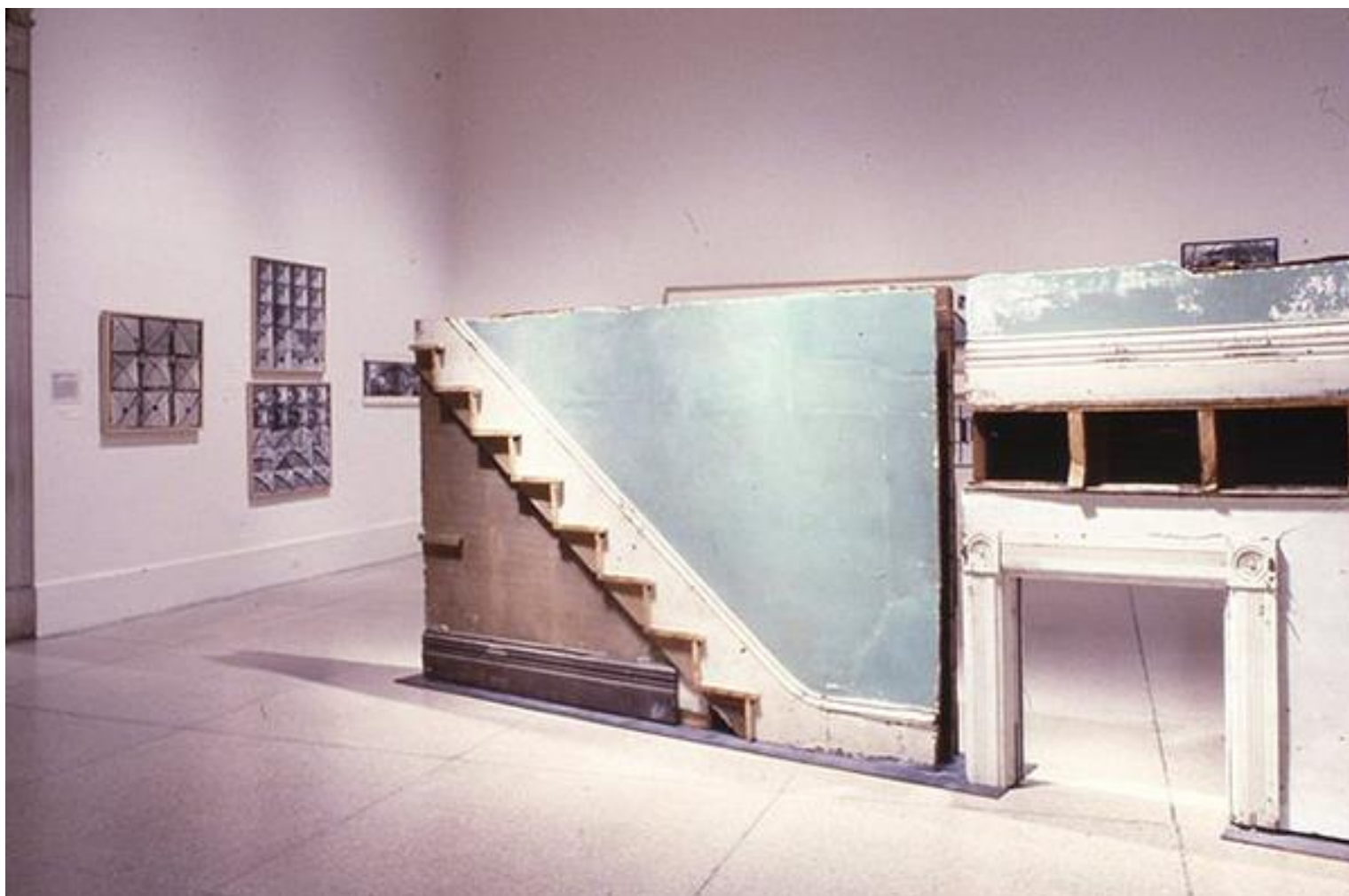


Fig. 2: Photo of the exhibition Gordon Matta-Clark: A Retrospective at the Brooklyn Museum. Source: The Brooklyn Museum, 1988. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3FacG2g>. [Accessed: 3 November 2022].

The comprehension of the real problems of the city, as a social, economic and political construction, led to a precise view of its effects on architecture, its spatial relationship, its dimension, in the structures, in the materials and in its fragments, ultimately resulting in interventions that emitted all the symbolic cargo that underlies these elements. The holes cut demonstrate the process of collapse to which the constructions were subjected. They sought to deconstruct the form and consequently the meaning of these constructions. They exposed the materiality and constructive fragility. They proposed new relationships of perception of the space by reconfiguring it, among so many other interpretations. But, above all, they stressed the “destruction/creative action” dichotomy, showing that, in truth, constructions in their final decline could be re-imagined and reconfigured, transcending the notion of the end.

In São Paulo, in the 1990s and 2000s, the project *Arte/Cidade* sought to discuss the dynamics of the city and the reordering of the urban space. Curated by Nelson Brissac Peixoto, it brought artists, architects and thinkers together to consider specific problems and generate actions of intervention that established a different vision and awakened a new sensibility among the population toward the city. In the book *Intervenções Urbanas: Arte/Cidade*, which presents the first three editions of the project, the ruins and abandoned constructions are mentioned as the keys of intervention (Peixoto, 2002). The third project, executed in 1997, is perhaps the one that comes closest to the theme, as it investigated old buildings along a railway line: the Estação da Luz train station, the ruins of the Moinho Central and the old Matarazzo factories. The latter two settings of the action were abandoned and the idea was to reconnect them to the city by way of the railroad line and the creation of access stairways and footbridges.

This third *Arte/Cidade* project, in a manner that is distinct from the previous examples, confirms the concern with reinserting these constructions into the population's everyday life by way of walking, in the experience of pedestrians, and to rediscover places that had been part of the memory of the city. In the old Matarazzo factory - now the Casa das Caldeiras, protected by the Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage - the intervention aimed to rediscover

these spaces, surveying them almost archaeologically: The rubble from the ruins were taken away and platforms were created for circulation with guardrails, inducing a look at the building. There was a mixture of artistic and architectural intervention, but perhaps the difference is that, in the architectural intervention, beyond the critical eye, we seek to reintegrate the space with everyday life, oftentimes giving it a new use, so that it survives longer.

There is, in fact, an almost inordinate concern with the reinsertion or demolition of these ruined buildings, at a moment in which we are questioning the actual idea of the architectural program. If we are going to reintegrate them into the life of cities, will we need to define a specific program for them? The idea of the program, as well as function, was, for a long time, decisive in the architectural design. However, it is likely that this determinism will be less and less evident, in light of the prevailing transformation of spaces and uses and the actual meaning of material duration that impacts the construction of cities.

5 In Search of Architectural Paradigms

Going beyond the subjects of restoration and heritage — about which we are not going to digress here —, it is worth reflecting on the role of architecture in terms of ruins. Though this is the probable end of all buildings, we tend to propose a reflection very little on how the works age, at least in the Brazilian experience. Perhaps the discussion of new materials and high-performance construction systems stretches beyond maintenance and involves the meaning of their longevity. But, for those who are already in a state of ruin, what can we do for them to retake their social and cultural role in cities?

We have some good examples that attempted to reutilize these structures giving them a new use, returning the space in the form of public facilities: an old drum factory transformed into a center for culture, sports and leisure (SESC Pompéia, Lina Bo Bardi, 1982), a railway station transformed into a concert hall (Sala São Paulo, Nelson Dupré, 1999), a power plant transformed into a museum (Tate Modern, Herzog & De Meuron, 2000), an elevated railway line transformed into a linear park (The High Line in New York City, Diller Scofidio and Renfro + Piet Oudolf, 2009), a monastery transformed into housing (Convento das Bernardas, Eduardo Souto de Moura, 2012). We view in a very peculiar way each project that attempts to return historical consciousness to the place, through a poetic language, but altering the way the space is experienced — which Alois Riegl described as use-value, a central concept for sustaining these buildings in the present.

A recent case to be considered is the perspective offered by the French firm Lacaton & Vassal, which states that we should never demolish or replace, but always transform and add on to. This implies defining strategies that strive for constructive rationality, economic viability and flexibility in the use of spaces, causing the minimum impact in the consumption of natural resources - for this reason, they opt for the reutilization of built structures. As an example, let us look at two projects concluded in 2013: the transformation of 530 housing units in the city of Bordeaux and the FRAC Dunkerque cultural center.

In the first case, three modernist buildings in a state of decay and deterioration were remodeled with the purpose of improving the quality of life of their residents and reinserting them in the urban landscape. The central idea was the creation of a new structure along with the facade, expanding the useful area of the apartments, in the form of winter gardens and verandas integrated with the existing space from a new system of frames. The juxtaposition of a transparent, light and subtle layer establishes a new relationship between interior and exterior and with the urban landscape. Few interventions were realized in the existing structure, except for certain installations and finishings, but almost nothing of it is perceived - it became something else.

The case of the old boat warehouse converted into a cultural center - FRAC Dunkerque, illustrated in Figure 3 - is distinct: The strategy consists in maintaining the building in disuse so that it presents and duplicates its form, with a new structure that houses the entire institutional program. There is no envelope or any renovation in the old building, or, in other words, in it, everything is kept almost untouched, conserving its factory atmosphere and the proximity between the vestige and the visual memory. This relationship is established both in its formal aspect and in its interior, where the empty space is dominated by high ceilings and natural light shines in creating an austere aura. Additionally, this same building is released from the determination of the program, serving as a venue for events, exhibitions or any other activity - closer to the uncertainty of contemporary life.

On the other hand, the institutions carry the conservatism and usual bureaucracy of public life and, as such, the strategy was for it to be duplicated, not through copying, but by way of a double, formally identical to the previous one, built with efficient,

prefabricated materials and construction systems, within the concepts of constructive and bio-climatic rationality, to serve as venue for these functions. The transparent box, which concentrates in its interior all of the compartmentalized spaces of the cultural center, does not compete with the old warehouse. On the contrary, they maintain a relationship of discretion, with a rarefied atmosphere, due to the translucent enclosure. There is not the same ambiguity here as in the first project - of the uncertainty between the new and the old - on the contrary, there is a clarity as to what the ruins is (as it will continue to be) and what the recent, innovative building is.



Fig. 3: FRAC Dunkerque. Source: Claus Ableiter, 2014. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Ug2E3Z>. [Accessed: 3 November 2022].

These relations between ambiguity and clarity recall another intervention, developed in Brazilian modernity by Lúcio Costa when he was director of SPHAN³: the Museum of the Missions in São Miguel das Missões, Rio Grande do Sul (1940), illustrated in Figure 4. The stateliness of the ruins of the archaeological site, where the church is located, led the architect to design a shelter to exhibit the objects found there, such as sculptures and construction scraps. In a certain cense, the solution of the pavilion treats the ruins as a sacred value, since it constructs a new space inspired by the old indigenous homes in an attempt to establish a narrative between past and present, almost anachronistically, were it not for the enclosure of glass inside the main volume - a transparent element that frames the view of the ruins and establishes a connection between interior and exterior. As such, the action of Lúcio Costa concerns a work of value embedded in history, a classical ruins so

³ National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage.

to speak, whose respect consists in the subtlety of contact with the new, like an artificial overlapping of layers, which we find almost organically in the historical cities.



Fig. 4: Museum of the Missions with the ruins of the church to the background. Source: Carin Kunde, 2011. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3EfulH>. [Accessed: 3 November 2022].

6 Final Considerations

Ruins are the most likely final stage of constructions that resist time. An idea of contravention, as an act of transgressing a natural law, is to resuscitate it through a new use, which all reappropriations of old structures are in one way or another. The contravention knocks us off balance. It surprises and sensitizes us, as much for the incursion in - suspended - time as for the freshness - so dear to the masses, using the concept of value of newness, developed by Riegl (1982). However, we can speak of another contravention, that of attributing value to that which no longer has social esteem, as in the case of a factory structure forgotten by the collective memory. The contravention, in this case, consists in subverting the social conscience, attributing to it another connection, not necessarily linked to function, but to empathy and appreciation.

In his book *Ruin and Redemption in Architecture*, Dan Barasch defines four circumstances for ruins in contemporaneity: the lost (structures that have been demolished, despite their importance, and which remain only in our imagination), the forgotten (really abandoned), the reimagined (proposals not executed) and the transformed (concluded projects). Considering the categories proposed by the author, it strikes us as impossible to imagine a dominant vision of ruins in contemporary society, since their destiny depends on the context in which they are located and the circumstances of their appropriation. Still, another view comes to us from Andreas Huyssen (2006, p. 10), who summarizes them in just two alternatives: they are either demolished or restored, based on the idea that the “chance for things to age and become ruin has diminished in the age of

turbo capitalism.” And perhaps here we can talk about hegemony, which surpasses Barasch's near taxonomy: the possibility of the existence of ruins in our time is only made possible by the support of capital.

Accepting Huyssen's hypothesis, we would thus face a problem which we have not touched on previously: the destructive dimension of this system. The development of science, as allied with economic interests and relations of power, shows its dark side, especially in the destruction of nature, as expressed, for example, by the predatory growth of the mining industry or the technological insistence of oil prospecting, which devastates everything that opposes their own logic. We are speaking, then, of another type of ruins, not of the artifice created by the hands of man and turned to ruins by its own inaction, but of another kind, also provoked by man, but, in this case, which causes nature to succumb. The reconstruction of one or the other-- in other words, of artificial material or natural material-- will always be a contravention: never at any time were any of them able to be reconstituted as they once existed.

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