



Construir discursos Modern Architecture in Mexico

«La arquitectura moderna mexicana alcanzó su madurez durante el siglo xx... [y] prevaleció firmemente a partir de entonces. De hecho, la influencia de la arquitectura moderna... sigue viva y presente hoy en México, y configura la producción de la arquitectura actual, unida a los estilos de vida, valores e ideales del país en el siglo xxi». Desde esta constatación, Celia Esther Arredondo Zambrano construye una investigación reveladora sobre los mecanismos que definieron —y aún definen— el relato de la modernidad arquitectónica en México. Así, *La construcción de la arquitectura moderna en México* constituye una contribución crítica precisa para comprender cómo se ha producido —y reproducido— esa arquitectura en un contexto caracteri-

“MEXICAN MODERNIST architecture came into its own during the twentieth century... [and] effectively prevailed thereafter. Indeed, the influence of Mexican Modernist architecture... is still alive and well today, shaping the production of current architecture and being embedded in the country's twenty-first century lifestyles, values and ideals.” With this statement Celia Esther Arredondo Zambrano embarks on an enlightening study of the mechanisms that defined – and still define – the narrative of architectural modernity in Mexico, and which therefore is instrumental to an understanding of how that architecture has been produced – and reproduced – in a context of profound cultural, social, and political tensions.

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Lejos de presentar una historia cronológica o celebratoria, Arredondo ofrece un análisis que dismantla los discursos dominantes; lo hace a través de cinco ejes que ella misma denomina ‘estructuras de poder’: la disciplina académica, el aparato económico-político, el estatus social, el género y la condición poscolonial. Desde estos vectores, examina cómo se ‘construyó’ —en el sentido más profundo del término— una arquitectura que no puede entenderse solo como forma, sino como producto simbólico, ideológico y cultural, moldeado por un sistema de normas, jerarquías, discursos y exclusiones.

En este marco, la autora insiste en mantener el concepto de construcción no solo en el título, sino como núcleo conceptual del libro. La arquitectura —sostiene— no surge de manera espontánea ni se desarrolla de modo natural: es un constructo deliberado, configurado por discursos, instituciones y políticas históricas. Su propósito es claro: interpelar al lector para que cuestione qué elementos fueron ‘construidos’ y, por tanto, cuáles han limitado la arquitectura moderna mexicana y su identidad proyectada. El objetivo no es solo comprender el pasado desde una perspectiva crítica, sino también provocar una reflexión activa y transformadora del presente.

Uno de los mayores aciertos de la obra es su equilibrio entre la teoría y el testimonio. Arredondo se apoya en

Far from presenting a chronological or celebratory history, Arredondo offers an analysis that dismantles dominant discourses, and does this by means of five axes that she herself calls ‘structures of power’: academic discipline, the economic-political apparatus, social status, gender, and the post-colonial situation. Using these vectors she examines the ‘making’ (in the most profound sense of the term) of an architecture that should not be taken as mere form, but as a symbolic, ideological, and cultural product, molded by a system of rules, hierarchies, discourses, and exclusions.

In this context, the author insists on maintaining the making concept not only in the title, but also as a conceptual core of the book. The architecture, she says, comes about neither sponta-

neously nor naturally. It is a deliberate construct, shaped by discourses, institutions, and historical politics. Its purpose is clear: to help the reader determine what elements were ‘made,’ and then to point out those that have limited modern Mexican architecture and the identity it projects. The objective is not only to understand the past from a critical perspective, but also to trigger a proactive, transformative reflection on the present.

La edición española, publicada por Reverte a partir de la versión original inglesa editada por Routledge en 2023, pone al alcance del lector hispanohablante un texto sustancial. Su



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One major success of the book is its balance between theory and testimony. Arredondo leans on thinkers like Foucault, Barthes, or Baudrillard in giving her views solid ground, but also on the voices of thirteen architects who lived in and gave shape to the Mexican 20th century. The interviews with them do not only enrich the analysis, but also

estructura coherente y su estilo accesible hacen de este libro una herramienta útil tanto para estudiantes como para investigadores y profesionales del ámbito arquitectónico, urbanístico y cultural latinoamericano.

La construcción de la arquitectura moderna en México no es solo un estudio sobre edificios: es una invitación a desmontar relatos heredados, a mirar desde los márgenes y a imaginar otras formas de construir —y habitar— lo común. Ana Esteban Maluenda

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reveal the extent to which they were or were not aware of the structures that conditioned their professional and cultural activities. Architecture, taken here as discourse or as a tool of power, is devoid of neutrality and ingenuity.

Originally published in English by Routledge in 2023, The Making of Mexican Modernist Architecture gives Spanish speakers access to an important text. Its coherent structure and accessible style make it a useful aid for students as well as for researchers and professionals in the Latin American architectural, urbanistic, and cultural sphere.

The book is a study on buildings, but also an invitation to shed inherited narratives, to look in from the edges, imagine other ways of constructing – and inhabiting – the communal realm.