JORGE LOBOS

Interviews



Jorge Lobos licensed from the Universidad de Chile on the year 1984. On 1985 founds the office “Jorge Lobos + Associate Architects” carrying out public and private works in Chiloé and other localities on the south of Chile along with participating on diverse tendering processes and biddings. In 1994 the School of Architects awards him the national price of young architecture, granted to the performance of professionals under the age of 40.

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LOBOS



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PRESENTATION

Dostercios

An extensive room surrounded by models, paintings and books, with a desk in the centre is the study that welcomes Lobos every time he revisits Puerto Montt.

At the back of the room, hanging by the wall, a collage painting is found, an official photography intervention of Michelle Bachelet on her first term, a work and present of the also architect Edward Rojas.

With Rojas he maintains a long lasting friendship , from his very first years as an architect in Chiloé, when they worked together and joined a group of architects that, after studying in Santiago, most of them in the Universidad de Chile, arriving or coming back to the isle giving origin to a new interpretation of the area.

After completing his architecture studies in the aforementioned Universidad de Chile, Jorge Lobos travels to Chiloé to carry out an assignment of months, that would end up becoming years. By then he carried out his architectonic work alongside the group of architects that were already in the area, studying the culture of the territory, linking together the first ideas about what he subsequently will define as "cultural architecture".

The work of Lobos has constantly manifested in a direction towards that or those whom are at the edge of what were, the investigation theories of the academy ,and the task of the architect, both in Chile

and in the world, fields in which still predominates, although in a lesser extent nowadays, the conventional work without further questioning, focused on the artistic and aesthetic. Slowly the problems related to overpopulation, the enormous inequality among the inhabitants of the cities, the lack of housing and the increase in mass migration all over the globe, have lead to questioning inside the focus of the profession, which has put on the frontline a series of issues that fifteen year ago only a small number of professionals were already investigating.

The issues originated by the humanitarian crisis, as well as new necessities originated by the enormous migratory processes in diverse places of the world, constitute the situations on which it has developed the work of Lobos on recent years and the one of the foundation "Arquitectura Emergencia y Derechos Humanos" (Architecture Emergency and Human Rights), which is focused on carrying out solutions that are applicable to different emergency scenarios and in a specific way for each territory and culture; two concepts that are, indeed, fundamental in the work carried out by Lobos since his time in Chiloé. An essential part of his proposal, facing these problems caused by humanitarian crisis, dwells precisely in the understanding of the territory and the culture, specially this last one. As guide of the architectonic design, as far as through these notions, and essential aspect is valued and included. The future inhabitants of the project.

Their work is similar, at distance, with the one carried out by architects like Shingeru Ban in Japan or Santiago Cirueja, in Spain. Very much dissimilar in their geographies, experiences and formal aesthetics but quite similar in their way of devising and labouring, with a strong resemblance in the inclusion of the inhabitants inside the project, also close in the idea that culture is an immovable factor of the human being, and thus not only inherent to him, but it also does travel alongside him, so it becomes quite impossible not working with culture. Likewise this line of thought contemplates that the architect is another cog inside the machinery that the project represents, just another element among many others that shape the project itself.

In the interviews here presented, both carried out between January 2014 and April 2016, does evidence that this way of thinking and questioning the discipline, as well as the labor of the architect inside the project, are constant among the labor and discourse of Lobos, a way of questioning and a line of work that although is not new, right now it has acquired greater value, due that it raises new questions and contribute to a process of change in the focus that the profession alongside the academy have been slowly developing.

THE TALE OF A PROCESS

Edward Rojas[1]

1 Architect licensed on the year 1977, in the School of Architecture and Urbanism from the Universidad de Chile, Valparaiso office. On that same year he abides on Chiloé and founds alongside Renato Vivaldi the Purto Azul Architecture Workshop, starting a fertile architectonic production and theory about the insular culture condition. He has been a permanently invited to exhibit his work and insight in different universities and study centers, as also on architecture biennials, courses, seminars, congresses and cycles of conferences in different countries of Latin America and Europe.He is also responsible together with Eduardo Feuerhake by the foundation of the Museum of Modern Art (Museo de Arte Moderno) MAM of Chiloé. He has been professor in the ARCIS university and in the school of architecture of the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. On 2016 he was one of the professionals awarded with the Ensamble award by the school of architects of Chiloé due to his contribution on architecture and urbanism of the archipelago.

While reading the interview of the architect Jorge Lobos, I remembered the mythical book "Arquitectura sin arquitectos" (Architecture without architects) in 1965 by Bernard Rudofky, that dazzled our generation of students because it showed that another form of production of architecture did exist, that was not dependent on one inspired idea, turned into a project by an erudite architect or an enlightened one, but from the same culture that human beings have already developed in the different territories of the planet. Where the materials, the inertia of the tradition and the vernacular knowledge of a group of craftsmen under the direction of an "adept", were the ones whom gave shape and shelter either on mud, stone, fiber, textile, wood or ice, the human habitat in geographies and climates as diverse as in the Plateau, the Central Valley or the insular Patagonia, in the case of Chile.

Over this context, The Chiloé of the late seventies came to be the paradigm of a place possessor of an architecture with a strong cultural identity, that day by day kept building up, "a senior craftsman" who lead a group of carpenters and with the basis of vernacular typologies, was permanently recreating an architecture that, built with an organic material like wood, had in real and material terms a cycle of life and death.

Chiloé's architecture manifests itself not only on the land but also in the sea and the seashore, through the construction of "palafitos"; greatest expression of an architecture without architects, as a revelation in the area of a living patrimony.

Thereafter, to the contemporary architecture proper to the action of professionals educated in the academy, that we decided to emigrate to Chiloé in the last quarter of the XXth century, it was therefore correspondently necessary to become part of this constructive tradition and vernacular architecture to ensure continuity into the development of insular architecture.

This involved recognizing, during the construction site, the essential importance that the knowledge of the chilote carpenters had over the qualities and characteristics of the different types of wood and their associated technology. They were translating the blueprints of our projects and making important contributions in the field of structural solutions, as well as in the final completions. Facing this reality, it was mandatory to assume the necessity of getting to know and understand the depths of the wood and seashore culture, from which this architecture was its greatest deed. And, in the same way, of understanding how practice generates experiences that lead to insight and thus to the formulation of work hypothesis that allow coming back to work, in a sort of trial and error. Such processes enabled the formulation of a practice theory and of the architectonic

task in Chiloé, that reinforce a different way of working, that shapes and redefines the professional labor.

As a matter of fact, everything indicates us, and so it has been pointed out by many friends, that the experience of working professionally and living in Chiloé for a fixed period, either in the short or long term, undoubtedly modifies the way of seeing things and in one way or another the way of thinking.

For the same reason it seems to me absolutely natural what architect Jorge Lobos states in his interview, whom I did met recently graduated, arriving to the isle and with whom I had the privilege of sharing projects and insights, in a vernacular world in which we did not imagine the great social and cultural transformations, nor the environmental and patrimonial harm that the dictatorship imposed model of free market that we were contemporary of, would eventually bring upon.

It was absolutely natural- I resume-, as the rain or the playing of the tides, that from this pillar, the architect Jorge Lobos would give us in the nineties a combination of works that transcended, from the design, the architectonic continuity of Chiloé's archipelago, as are the Maullín nursing home, La Casa de los Arrayanes in Caulín and, most of all the San Vicente de Paul Church in the city of Ancud. Constructions that crystallize in the area the proper energies of the

place itself and its austral condition, in such a particular moment of history marked by the dictatorship transition towards democracy.

Deed, time and place that originate inside himself reflection and later on the proposal of the theory of cultural Architecture, in his own words "That which consciously values the human processes in the different territories. She emerges in Chiloé with the claim of valuing the difference it has with the rest of the country, reveal his identity and comes to understand the transformation of such identity" [2].

Theory that to my judgment becomes a method to understanding the different realities of the planet, and that allows him to reach the conclusion that.

> *Design and architecture are not going to produce social changes in a planet where two thirds of the population, that is to say 400 million habitants, have no access to a single formal production of architecture, and therefore it is necessary to open the spectrum towards different comprehension dynamics of the architectonic, to other city construction logics, to other ways of teaching and practicing architecture*[3]

2 LOBOS, Jorge. Cultural Architecture, Urbanism Magazine, 2004, n°11, Universidad de Chile, p. 78

3 Ibíem, p. 81

This profound necessity drove him to search for new horizons that will facilitate the transitioning from word to action, in an act of conversion that puts architecture and the architect profession in crisis. One that becomes stronger as far as this necessity takes over in his broadest dimension, the human rights of communities that are faced with natural catastrophes, as well as social and cultural catastrophes, that compel the architect, turned into cultural activist, to put his talents at the service of the neediest.

In such scenario, these architectonic and urban responses that the emergencies, refugee camps, garbage cities or the favelas involve and require does become extremely relevant, which through the Workshops participation, organized by their office with headquarters in Copenhagen and an international network, seeks to provide dignifying solutions towards these different human needs.

Actions, nevertheless, collective that, with some mystic, come about in different continents of the planet, generating new insights and actions to reinforce the new way of working, that puts its stress more on the ethic than on the aesthetic.

Leaving behind the individualism that surrounds us, this approach entrust us the ultimately great lesson, that to change the order of things, each one of us, student or architect, we must look for a certain problem, take care of it and work to solve it.

PUERTO MONTT 2014

Jorge Lobos[1]

1 Licensed from the Universidad de Chile on the year 1984. On 1985 founds the office "Jorge Lobos + Associate Architects" carrying out public and private works in Chiloé and other localities on the south of Chile also participating on diverse tendering processes and biddings. In 1994 the School of Architects award him the national price of young architecture, granted to the performance of professionals under the age of 40.

The year 2007 achieves the Magister in Theory and Practice of the ETSAB-UPC Barcelona.Between the years 2007 and 2012 was an associate professor of the Architecture Department of the Alguero-UNISS in Italy and a Visiting Professor of the Royal Danish Academy of Copenhagen, besides being invited professor on projects in the ETSAM in Spain. Universidad de Porto in Portugal and the Universidad Austral de Chile. From 1997 to 2007 was projects professor in the Universidad de Chile. On the year 2008 founded in Denmark the first office of the foundation "Architecture & Human Rights".

Dostercios: How did you come to Chiloé?

Jorge Lobos: I was born in the south, in Punta Arenas, the southernmost city, and studied in the Ancud secondary school in Chiloé, so for me it was both natural and logical to return there after finishing university in Santiago (at the Universidad de Chile).

It was not a specific decision but rather the logical path to take. I went straight back to Ancud where I had lived and studied, in fact, throughout my time at university I had continued to travel there and work as an assistant in an architecture practice. So, I have always had a connection with Chiloé. There was already a group of architects here and what they had done was very interesting: in a way they had dignified working in the regions and in small communities and this was a great incentive for me to come back and work in Chiloé. Nonetheless, I was faced with the dilemma of whether to stay in Santiago with very limited job opportunities, since we were in the middle of the 80's economic crisis and the country was still under a dictatorship. I decide to leave.

I had won a scholarship to work in Africa. I went back to Chiloé to say goodbye to my family and, as fate would have it, the option arose to stay a few months to work in the practise of a communist architect who was being persecuted by the dictatorship and needed someone to take over his work while he was in hiding.

What started out as a couple of months, stretched to six months and then a year. I lost the chance to go to Africa and stayed 12 years in Chiloé. These were the dilemmas of my youth but I soon discovered that the very same thing I was planning to do in Africa, I could do in Chiloé; it was the same path.

I never considered going to New York, Paris or Barcelona, where Chilean architects generally go to undertake a kind of liturgical procession of knowledge. It is a strange thing Latin American architects do: to go to richer countries then come back to Latin America and repeat the same models they saw there, in those centres of power; an uncritical, simplistic and nostalgic repetition of a world that is not our own.

I chose the exact opposite: to go to what were considered the worst places and stay there to do whatever I could; to do whatever an architect with such limited training as ours could do. These worst places have given me the best.

Dostercios: And, in this act of doing whatever you can, however you can, how does your work arise in these places?

Jorge Lobos: Our work begins in a rather unconscious way, not with totally rational actions but with a mixture of emotions and ideas. This is what Maturana speaks about regarding cultural biology or about how ideas are tinged with emotion. It was interesting to come across his texts since we came to the same conclusion in Chiloé in the 90s without having read them. Such things are coincidences in time, where knowledge is fundamentally generational and flows in the air. And so, out of the creative processes of architecture, we reach this conclusion, where ideas are not totally rational, but rather emotional. Likewise, emotions have a lot to do with ideology. After many years, I read, only a couple of years ago, that Maturana was saying exactly the same, and not just Maturana, but many others. But he had the virtue of being the first; he crystallised a generational idea.

It amazes me how ideas (emotions) are generational, belonging to all humankind and to a determined period of knowledge. Similar ideas flourish in many pars of the world simultaneously and without people necessarily meeting each other. So, we are sure that what we did by going to Chiloé, to little places, to work as architects, that not only we were doing this, but also many other architects in different parts of the world; architects who were travelling to decadent, isolated, poor, marginalised places. The conclusions of these journeys of knowledge

and work are to be seen in today's architecture; in India, in China, in parts of Africa and especially South Africa, very similar processes are arising to those that appeared in Chiloé. It is a humanist reaction to the more traditional stream followed by most South American architects and intellectuals over the last two centuries: to go to the centre of power to learn from the economically more developed countries and then go back to administrate the periphery. This situation has further increased recently in Chile thanks to the private universities; the poor educational quality produced by the Chilean cleptocracy demands that professions seek further training in other countries where the public realm and knowledge and research are valued. This results in a kind of "graduate degree or image laundering": students from a very inferior Chilean university transfer to an international university to compensate for our country's curricular shortfalls. Another aspect of this educational attitude is, without doubt, our desire for social climbing and our classist aspirations, but this is too long and prickly a subject to explain in an interview.

Our position in the 1980s was the exact opposite to the mainstream. We travelled in the opposite direction to the migratory route of our profession; we travelled south, to where there were almost no architects.

Dostercios: Would you say that this reaction was derived from the context of your place of study?

Jorge Lobos: Yes, that is true. I am still convinced that the Universidad de Chile is the only Chilean university that can bring about a real social change in our country; but, as I said before, this reaction is also generational, arising in many other places at the same time, for example, the alter-globalization meetings in Brazil in the 1990s.

Now, I studied in the Universidad de Chile, a public university. I studied free-of-charge and belonged to the last generation to study without charge and under a dictatorship. A curious paradox, because now, in the democracy of 2014, you have to pay to go to university and, even then, the teaching you receive is poor quality. All these phenomena, all these contrasts, these brutal contradictions in our country that were already appearing in the 80s and 90s, produced in me a reaction that was the opposite to the traditional one, a rather youthful attitude perhaps: to go and live in the south of the world, in Chiloé. In a similar way, I took the radical position of not speaking English, a position I maintained for a long while and was part of my reaction to stand up against all that was considered then, and is still considered today, to be the mainstream.

Dostercios: At what point did the idea of "cultural architecture" begin to arise?

Jorge Lobos: It arose through conversations with the people of the island of Chiloé and with other professionals, through the need to work in a multidisciplinary way and through the professional practice itself. Theory and practice have always been together; it is not either one or the other - they are not mutually exclusive. I could not define myself as a theorist or as a practicalist; in fact, my postgraduate studies are in architectural theory and one of my conclusions is, precisely, that there is no such thing as pure theory in architecture. What does exist is a kind of analysis of projects after they have been created, a kind of representation or description of what there is and what has been done, something closer to history than to theory. In Chiloé, professional practice gave us a determined experience that forced us to think and reflect on this practice, since we had not been trained to work in this kind of context in university. Cultural Architecture arose out of this dynamic. But pure, abstract theory does not exist in architecture. It exists in philosophy, history and social science, but not in architecture, or at least, I have not yet seen it.

Dostercios: It does not exist in Chile, or in any country at all?

Jorge Lobos: I would say it does not exist almost anywhere. Rather, an eclecticism of thoughts exists from different perspectives, such as our own, but these only constitute partial and erratic explanations about the world. In terms of theory, architects have not made any great contributions to humanity. On the other hand, although it is possible that we do not really need any such pure theory, nor do we need the uncritical frivolity to which architects have come today, a situation that is both extreme and rarely seen before in human history.

In personal terms, thinking about architecture leads to a kind of ethical reflection upon our profession; but, apart from reinforcing certain ethical values, it does not produce much knowledge or progress for the discipline. Progress is coming from other fields of thought, such as social sciences, art and science, from matters that do not precisely correspond to the essence of our profession. In this sense, the crisis in architecture from the practice-theory dialectic duo is similar to the crisis occurring in philosophy at the moment. Philosophy no longer provides answers to the great human questions; science has taken over this role with its discoveries suddenly narrowing the gap between itself and philosophy. Economists and politicians provide a banal explanation of the world with their defence of the prevailing economic capitalism. Philosophers have come down in the world and

architectural theory has too. I do not wish to stand against theory, indeed, I am very interested in it, but this is the current state of affairs: architectural theory is practically dead. I believe much more in the scientists than the architects who use publicity terms from the economic free market to explain the project of our civilization.

Dostercios: Let's go back to your arrival in Chiloé, which happened at a time when modern architecture was very powerful, especially in the Universidad de Chile. Indeed, it is almost the sole basis of our teaching and the schools we know today. You came from Santiago to the south with this theory as part of your professional training. How does this influence your relationship with the place?

Jorge Lobos: Fortunately, it was not just about modern architecture. I studied at a time when we were taught modernism to postmodernism. This offered us a very particular factor to analyse the profession. We said: if a few years ago only modernism was studied and a few years later postmodernism is being studied, that means we can create our own theory, it means that there is no absolute truth. This simple adolescent reflection called into question all the architecture of the 20th century, which was based on a kind of conceptual totalitarianism. From art nouveau and art deco to modernism and postmodernism, all these were absolute truths that we had to fit into and submissively accept. In any case, it was rather comforting and reassuring that someone else was thinking for you. In the 20th century, the

intellectual and theoretical world was generated as a framework within which you acted. In politics this was vey clear: capitalism or socialism – you decided which you subscribed to, but you could not go outside their frameworks or rules, except to conserve their values. When you go from one architectural period to another, this period of transition is a kind of crisis and luckily I was studying during this moment of crisis. Our reaction in the Universidad de Chile was to create our own option, which we called Neo-Rationalism. Within this framework, we began to act within the university and create neo-rationalist projects. This proved a very useful exercise for our professional training since it allowed us to consider that maybe we could create our own reflection in this sense. This reflection could later be consolidated in Chiloé because we already came with the idea that it was possible to create our own theoretical world.

I must add that in the last ten years I have seen how the most interesting periods of art, in my view, are transition periods, where we see the passage from one thought to another. These periods create tremendously singular, personal, unique works of art, ambiguous pieces that express doubts and yet have enormous creative potential since they are capable of producing the next movement of art.

Dostercios: Regarding the stereotype of Chiloé and its strong territorial relationship, in several articles you refer to the distinction between what is understood as the "physical territory" and the "mental territory". Could you explain this distinction?

Jorge Lobos: I almost always refer more to the mental territory than the physical one. The physical is obviously important because it refers to the geographical conditions, the light, the sun, our profession, but we mainly work on the mental territory, especially in recent years, when we have seen the phenomena of war, refugee camps and migration. This latter example provides one of the main demonstrations of how architecture is a mental territory that becomes physical in the building process. When people move from one place to another, they carry a certain mental territory with them and they build their world from out of this mental territory. This has been happening for a long time: the English colonies in India, where they built houses as if they were still living in the British climate with the same temperatures, fog and cold. Likewise, when Arabs immigrated to France, they began to build their world according to their own codes, adapted to the French styles of that time, but out of their own original mental territory. This affects architecture every bit as much as the physical territory does. I am more and more interested in this mental territory, these emotions fused with ideas, not reason alone, but mainly the relationship between reason and emotion; the word that has not yet been invented to define this indissoluble fusion.

Dostercios: At this moment, a connection starts to be forged with other branches such as sociology and anthropology, which, at one point, were also part of architecture teaching in Chile.

Jorge Lobos: In Chile, in the 60s and 70s, a school of thought was developed that was closely connected with social sciences but that completely disappeared in the subsequent decades. The work we are doing today seeks, precisely, to bring these social elements back into the profession. That is why we have passed from speaking of Cultural Architecture to Architecture and Human Rights, where one field of human rights in architecture involves the cultural processes. Cultural processes are a double-edged sword: they can quickly become nationalism, xenophobia and chauvinism. In this context, architecture is used in some societies to reinforce power in function of cultural aspects. Israel, for example, has used architecture as a weapon of war, to build settlements, to destroy certain cities, to build walls; architecture and urban planning are transformed into a weapon in function of religious and cultural values. So, when we began to see Cultural Architecture in a more critical way, we distanced ourselves from the concept. We first constructed this idea in Chiloé and later questioned it since it is always on the edge of nationalism. That is not the case in Chiloé, because the region has no economic or political power, but if it did, the cultural ideas could perfectly well be used as xenophobic and segregating ideas; it could perfectly well demand independence from Chile and marginalise everyone who did not belong to this world, leave them out, isolate them. Architecture is an

element of this cultural power that can be xenophobic. Faced with this situation, we shifted to a much more universal theme, human rights, which does not accept double standards. We have been working in this for the last ten years.

Within the relationship between Architecture and Human Rights, we are developing nine themes and the ninth corresponds to education. This is explored not only from the architectural viewpoint but covering all its different dimensions, for example, concerning the absence of public education in some countries, such as Chile. I have always been a staunch defender of free state education for all, but in the Universidad de Chile they found it very strange when, in recent years, I told them I no longer believed in free education. Now I think we have to pay students to study.

In some countries, university students receive a salary, because education is understood in a completely different way to how we understand it here, where it is managed by the cleptocracy (a government that favours personal wealth accumulation above the common good). In Chile, the understanding of education is that a university-trained professional will move up the social ladder, so he or she should pay the cleptocracy for this. In other countries, university studies are seen as serving to produce greater intellectual wealth and a better society. In countries with a minimum wage that provides a decent income, if you complete your secondary education at eighteen and you start to work, you can live independently, start a

family of your own, make a life of your own. If you go to university you cannot start a life of your own unless you receive a salary. Conclusion: those governments pay students to build a better society. In Copenhagen, my students earn 1000 euros a month. When I mention this, the response of any Chilean from this cleptocracy will always be that they can do this because they're a rich country. This is an intended falsehood, since these countries started out with these social democratic policies of the welfare state in the 50s, 60s and 70s, when their GDP was considerably lower than Chile's is today. Conclusion: achieving greater inclusion in education in a country is only a question of political decision. In Chile, we have no intention of producing a better country for all because we have no intention of changing the model; we only disguise it a little in order to perpetuate it.

These issues can be discussed with these students from Scandinavia; it is far harder to do so with a kid who is paying a private university, falling into debt with the family and paying a pension and medical insurance. Chileans today are raised with another kind of logic, the logic of individualism. That is one of the reasons why I find it hard to work in my country; it is one of the reasons why I go abroad and also why we work with students from state universities, students who are paid a salary to study and have the time, energy and desire to change the world. They have come from a world that has shown them that democracy and equality are not utopias.

Dostercios: How do you tackle the issue of the humanitarian crisis?

Jorge Lobos: The humanitarian crisis has been one of the main issues we have touched upon within the field of human rights. We have spent a long time working on this: refugee camps; schools as survival platforms; the city of rubbish in Cairo (where Coptic Christians recycle the refuse of 17 million inhabitants); the slums of Bombay that are in permanent crisis; or the traditional emergencies caused by earthquakes, mudflows and floods. We study how architecture reacts to this and, in general, we discover that it does so according to cultural values, this mental territory we all possess. First people do what they know how to do out of their own cultural knowledge. Most of the exogenous elements fail in a humanitarian crisis. So, emergencies in architecture are a kind of civic test of the city and of what happens in society. For example, the English made some very complex bamboo emergency houses, (over)designed specially for Asia. They sent them to a region suffering from flooding in India and found that the houses did not work because no one knew how to connect the aluminium joints and they weighed more than anything they sent out. These joints were so big, so overdesigned that they did not work. In other words, a correct analysis process failed due to cultural impertinence. Another example: after the Indonesian tsunami, Spain provided 80 prefabricated houses, 60 of which were never built and 20 remained only half-completed. Today none are standing. We, as architects, are not prepared for these emergencies and people act according to their

own cultural processes and in a much more logical way than us. We are trying to develop methodologies to deal with these phenomena. One of these is called "1+1 = 11", a traditional Pakistani saying to express that the sum of two individuals is not two but something exponentially greater. This method attempts to bring together different people's energy with that of architects in order to learn together, not to go and teach or help, not to do humanitarian deeds. We learn architecture with this work.

This business of humanitarian work is another absurdity against which we must fight on a daily basis. All architecture is humanitarian: rich architecture, poor architecture, all is for human beings and working in a country that is poor in economic terms does not make us any more or less humanitarian. On the other hand, so far I have never known architecture that is made for any other being than the human being.

The Chilean architect, Fernando Ferreiro, who works in Mozambique, has a phrase that we use in all our public exhibitions: "I am not a humanitarian architect; I am just an architect whose clients have less money". These people are our clients and if you are an architect you must work for them in a professional way, they will receive your experience. But, to what degree do we learn from our clients? That is the point and we don't learn that in the university, but in Chiloé. In Chiloé, if we were not aware of the cultural processes we did not eat. If you failed to understand what people were really asking

of you as an architect, you could not practice as one, or your work was a failure. To give a more local example, what we saw in the 2010 earthquake in Concepción: people robbing supermarkets. It was very strange because they weren't robbing food. They were robbing plasma televisions, microwaves and telephones while outside the shop a 4WD vehicle was waiting for them. They were not people with basic needs or hunger. This is a test for architecture. The city has certain implicit laws, laws given tacitly by its citizens. When the city collapses due to some external factor such as war, social crisis, politics, earthquake or mudflow, these laws are broken and people feel they have the right to do things that they would not normally do. When things calmed down again in Concepción after the earthquake, these amateur thieves began to return what they had stolen, things began to return to normality and the citizen laws, civil and tacit ones, were restored. Social accord began to function once again.

It is very curious how the city creates implicit and tacit laws that are not described, are not wholly explainable, but that can be perceived in such situations or when one is a foreigner who moves to a new city and immediately adjusts to this new role as citizen, even though it is different to one's city of origin. These points are important for me in humanitarian crises: how the emergency places architecture in crisis, places the city in crisis. I have become less and less interested in design, less and less interested in losing time in designing a window, a staircase, even though it does give me pleasure because I am addicted

to architecture. But this is only a personal vice; I don't think that this is the razon d'etre of my profession. For me, the razon d'etre of architecture is much more in the social form than the physical form.

Dostercios: And if this is then brought into the field of architectural practice or teaching, how should this task be done? How would a project be carried out?

Jorge Lobos: We began to do projects we had set ourselves. We started materialising these projects through social networks - not the Internet but networks of people. This has been our way of working in recent years. Each of us looks for a problem we want to resolve, then we see if architecture can give an answer to that problem. There is a study from the Escuela Técnica Superior in Madrid, from the department of human settlements, which states that only 8 to 10% of architects work in design and of this percentage only 10% design projects assigned by a client. That is, only 1% of architects in the world work on assigned projects, where a client commissions you directly to build a hotel, a stadium, a museum. Most architects work in construction companies, universities, public administrations, photography, etc. So, why is there this distortion between architectural practice and the schools of architecture that mostly teach you to design commissioned works? This is something



Picture 1 EAHR Office, Copenhagen, Denmark

we have to resolve, a gap we must fill. One possibility, amongst many, is self-commissioning, where architects are capable of seeing the city, seeing society, determining what is needed and pursuing this project, seeking a way to carry it out.

Each architect must find his or her own way to act, especially now when there is no longer any specific overruling or unique ideological mould as there was in the 20th century. Now each of us can build our own place in society, our own way of working, and it is unlikely to be through commissions from clients. When I see architects' conferences based solely on design where not a single miserable person appears in their photographs I am amazed and angered at how far they are from the social world. I feel ashamed at how we overvalue aesthetic design, as if this had higher properties to solve social problems. On the other hand, I must say that I love designing, but it is a hobby, something that amuses me; besides, it is very easy and cannot be the basis of architecture because it is very easy to design well. It is enough to look around - there are very good examples and designers of offices and other spaces that we can follow, but it is very difficult to find good designers of society.

Dostercios: In this sense, when one begins to make this distinction, one comes up against the current idea of architecture teaching in Chile, because the traditional schools only focus on talking about architecture from the starting point of the design process, without relating it to social processes or the construction of the city.

Jorge Lobos: At one point I was rather sceptical about architecture. In fact, I would state that architecture will never bring about social change. Never. Because it depends on money and money is behind power and power will never want to change since it would have to self-destruct and one intrinsic function of power is to fight to conserve itself.

My crisis at that point was with architecture. I thought that architecture did not work. Then I realised the problem was not architecture but architects. It is the architects who are not working. It is the architects who are absorbed by the existing capitalism and individualism and this way of seeing the world. It is the architects who in Santiago have to pay their pension, medical insurance, have four children in private schools and who have to make a certain amount of money each month in order to survive and who, therefore, have no time, urge or interest to worry about changing the society in which they live. So, the problem is the architects and not architecture. In this sense, some schools of architecture must be re-founded so that we can think of our profession in a way that is

better suited to the new challenges our planet faces. It cannot be that the works of architecture that get published in Chile are houses in the countryside for rich people, private university buildings and corporate office blocks. It cannot be that there are no plazas, no public spaces, that no state schools are shown, no social or collective projects. In Chile, only rich people's houses get published, and they are in the countryside, not even in the city. This reflects Parra's words: "Chile is not a country, it is a landscape." I think architecture in Chile is in a bad situation; it does not help produce a better, fairer and more democratic society. Our social housing is a disaster, the collective relationships it produces are very precarious and they bring about almost no social mobility. For example, Bajos de Mena in Santiago or Alerce in Puerto Montt are neighbourhoods in which the inhabitants have almost no social mobility. But all this is the structure of the country and the architecture is nothing more than a reflection of that country.

For me, one of the most notable examples of a building that expresses and represents the recent history of a country is the UNCTAD III building, today the GAM. This building best reflects what Chile has been over the last 40 years: a brutal example from a historical viewpoint. I don't know many cases in the world where a work of architecture expresses so well a country's violent ideological changes. UNCTAD III was built by the Unidad Popular government to host the great United Nations meeting in 1973 - a source of immense

pride for the country, a remarkable, international piece of architecture for the people, with open dining areas for workers, alongside the best national art and architecture.

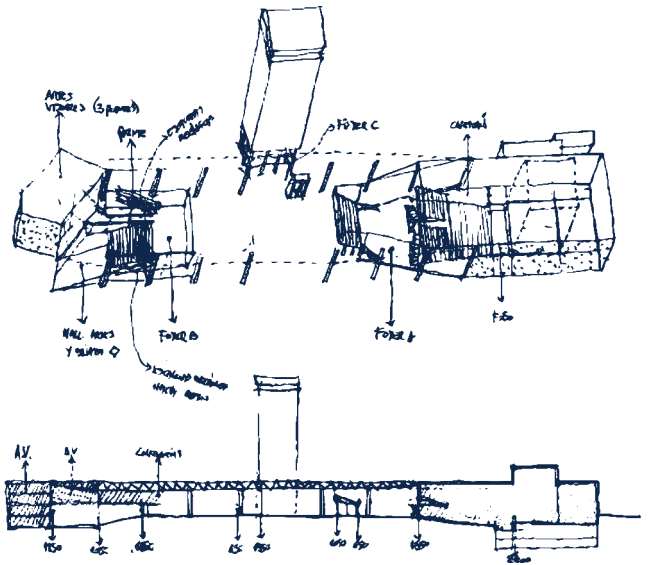
After the La Moneda governmental palace was bombed in 1973, during the dictatorship UNCTAD III was transformed into the Ministry of Defence, became the military headquarters of Pinochet and was re-baptised the Diego Portales building.

With the end of the dictatorship, the building was abandoned and eventually, in a state of disuse, was damaged by fire in the midst of the return to democracy.

Today, in the free market democracy, it has been transformed into a kind of mall or shopping centre of art, with separate shops where one is a theatre, another an art gallery, another a fast food restaurant and another a Nike shoe shop. There is an absence of collective public spaces - only a small entrance plaza for a city of over 6 million inhabitants. Everything, even art, has been subjected to absolute merchandization and total individualism where collective public space is privatised. This is the vision of the government of the Republic of Chile, which really has very little of 'Republic', and is rather the government of the Reprivate of Chile.

Dostercios: Regarding the Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral (GAM), what was the proposal of the team you led for the tender for ideas for this building?

Jorge Lobos: We proposed building an enormous public space, the biggest Santiago could have. To recuperate the beautiful and enormous reinforced concrete pillars and the roof of the building to create a great, roofed, urban, public plaza of 10,000m2 that would have been one of the largest roofed plazas in the world. Santiago has no large-scale space for many people to come together and this could have been such a place for the meeting of people, politics and art. Ten thousand square metres of covered space for gatherings and rallies, protected from the rain in winter and the sun in summer. The students would have been fascinated during the 2011 protests; it would have been their meeting place. But, of course, it was a project for another epoch and we architects do not change society, we only reflect it. That is why we say that architecture will never be an element of social change; it will always depend on the political powers. We end up being something like the jesters of the powers that be.



Picture 2 Drawings GAM project:
Public Plaza for the city and the democracy



Picture 3 GAM Project: Buildings and the cultural program towards the Lastarria districts.

Dostercios: How do you view the current relationship between architecture and art?

Jorge Lobos: Artists, one way or another, can see society beyond the present; they are the machis or sorcerers of the present. They have the ability to encapsulate and reveal our conflicts. The conflict in architecture is that we speak of art from a classical perspective; we only broach the form of art reflected in the object. Therein lies our crisis: we talk of aesthetics and design but not of Duchamp when he placed a urinal in New York in 1917 and said "This is not a toilet". Duchamp brought about a change in art, he made it possible for any object to be art. He modified the networks connecting the commission, the object and the viewer.

In architecture, one hundred years on, we still have not managed to do this, we still practice classical design from the 800s, regardless of whether the forms are modern, with fractal, broken lines and flat roofs. It is the same approach as the neo-gothic or art nouveau architect but with a different form. Our work structure has not changed, it is the same without any major social impact, the same as in the nineteenth century, but with a different form, be it deconstructivist or minimalist, it makes no difference.

This is why today's architecture is not very interesting for me; it does not reach the level of the art of 1917. We architects are a century behind the progress and challenges of humanity.

EXPLORING THE ARCHITECTURE FRONTIERS

Humberto Eliash[1]

1 Licensed architect on the year 1975 in the Universidad de Chile. He has been practicing the profession designing buildings for public use, especially in the institutional and educational scope. He is an associate professor of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Universidad de Chile. Former Vice-dean of this, vice president of the Colegio de Arquitectos de Chile and co founder of the SAL (Latin-American Architecture Seminars). He also is a visiting professor in the School of Architecture of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and in the UBA from Argentina. He has published several books and articles about modern architecture in Chile and Latin America.

"I am not the kind of architect that enjoys working for the privileged people. I like doing it for people in general. That is the main reason why I chose to design structures that were useful for people victims of natural disasters"

Shigeru Ban

I have known Jorge Lobos for a long time, when I started my connection with Edward Rojas and Renato Vivaldi in Chiloé, in 1977. He was the youngest one, and thus he joined us later on as a partner in professional interventions, of academic activities in the Universidad de Chile (where we both studied and still practice as professors) and of labor-union actions inside the "Colegio de Arquitectos de Chile" (Architects Association of Chile).

I was not difficult for me to agree on writing a prologue for this brand new book that includes interviews of Jorge Lobos himself, because it addresses the subject that Jorge has been working on with passion and tenacity for many years in Chile, Europe and other continents. Besides because, personally, I have dealt with this matter in my university work in Chile, following the incentive and the guidelines that he himself was kind enough to share with me.

I agreed on writing it, looking forward on contributing a little to the diffusion in a very unorthodox way inside our means, of conceiving the architectonic practice that do deserve to be well known and encouraged.

Jorge Lobos has devoted 20 years in this predicament, mainly through the work inside the foundation run by himself and the architecture for emergency situations.

Related to this issue, writer Jorge Baradit points out in his book "Historia secreta de Chile":

> *Chile is strange, newly-made country. A recent human settlement, set up between the most active tectonic plaque and the longest chain of volcanoes of all. Where once a year the driest desert in the world floods and one thousand year old trees get burnt. Also had the two most violent earthquakes registered by mankind and a string of geological catastrophes, floods and tsunamis that make you wonder who would have thought of placing a country right here*[2].

In these conditions and despite that today it holds an income per capita of US$23.000(For some, that implies to belong in the group of developed countries), In Chile the way of handling emergency situations and reconstruction facing catastrophes still remains being the one of an underdeveloped country. Actually it can be said that the management overall has worsen with time, instead of improving.

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2 BARADIT, Jorge. *Historia secreta de Chile*, Santiago: Sudamericana, 2015, p. 12

In many aspects the reaction of the country on the year 1939 against the earthquake in Chillán and Concepción, and in 1960 against the Valdivia earthquake, it was better that the one demonstrated during 2010. And by then, the income per capita was lesser than US$2.000 , or rather the income per capita Haití has today.

Every major earthquake in Chile causes humanitarian tragedy but also generates on the other hand: The solidarity, the capacity of forethought and reaction along with improvement of what it is already being done. The creation of the "Servicio de Sismología Nacional"(National Seismology Service) In Chile by the Universidad de Chile (Under the principalship of Valentín Letelier, in 1939), Is consequence to the sudden earthquake and the following fire of Valparaiso in 1906. The earthquake of 1928 resulted in the creation of the Urbanism in Chile and the regulating plans that by the way, already existed in other countries but not in Chile. Likewise the earthquake in 1939 made possible the creation of the CORFO(La Corporación de Fomento de la Producción) and helped as platform for young architects of the early modernity being recently graduated of the same Universidad de Chile, made their very first works on the south: Concepción, Chillán, Cauquenes and Parral. The universities participated very actively on that occasion getting involved directly in the reconstruction duties. The same occurred in the reconstruction of churches that a group of professors and students of the Universidad Católica de Valparaiso carried out after the earthquake in 1960. Recently following the earthquake of 2010, The School of Architecture of the Universidad

Finis Terrae in Santiago built a school in only three weeks using sea containers, in the small cove of Tubul that had been washed away by the tsunami. And the Faculty of Architecture of the Universidad Católica that currently takes part in the reconstruction duties in Chañaral after the flood on march 2015.

Like these ones we could mention several examples of university schools on reconstruction duties after catastrophes. Nevertheless, they are specific actions that detonate when a tragedy occurs. Until now, there is not a stable institutionalism that gives continuity to a way of working and thinking in this matter. As it neither exists an academic area where spreading and teaching along with investigating over this common subject of emergency and reconstruction can be put into practice.

Though every tragedy builds up at the same time an opportunity. This Jorge Lobos and his team know very well, and by discovering those opportunities behind every single humanitarian tragedy. Where others see only problems and desolation, they see an occasion not only to mitigate the disaster but to improve the people quality of life. Where only few authorities create protocols and bureaucracy to engage the issues, they provide ideas and direct actions to mitigate the consequences over the affected ones. Precisely, in his text "Arquitectura y Derechos Humanos"(Architecture and Human Rights), Jorge writes:

> *Humanitarian tragedies cause great suffering to thousands of people. Paradoxically, these disasters constitute a huge opportunity to act and as a consequence, prepare the cities in a better way for new generations and their future*[3].

To what should be added that most of the victims of these tragedies comes from the most vulnerable social classes.

The world moves forward every time to better rates of life quality: Poverty is decreasing, life expectancy at birth increases, etc. The paradox is that the amount of people dead, missing, or damaged by humanitarian emergencies, far from decreasing, is indeed increasing. The UN estimates that each year there are over 30.000 deaths by natural disasters and the number rises by 14% every ten years. Of course if war victims and mass displacements like the ones happening in Europe are added the number is even larger.

The UNHCR(United Nations Human Rights Council) estimates that there are more than 60 million people displaced by war and conflicts. From whom, 14 million were added only in the year 2014.

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3 LOBOS, Jorge. *Arquitectura y Derechos Humanos*, Roma: Aracne, 2013: p.46

The leap from Chilean earthquakes and tsunamis to the floods in Africa, and the refuges of Palestine and Syria, happens at the same time that the international career of Jorge Lobos advances. He settles as an Architect and professor in Copenhagen on the year 2005 and also teaches in Italy, still maintaining his professional office in Puerto Montt. He permanently travels around the world spreading his global action.

Today his professional activity is focused on working for Africa and the Middle East. His vision is far from the paternal approach that characterized many organizations of international cooperation as the ones described by Gustau Nerínen in his book "Blanco rico busca negro pobre"(White rich man looking for poor black man). The interest of Lobos lies on the development of strategies that not only direct international collaboration, but are also capable of strengthen self management and the sustainable development of local communities.

This books can definitely contribute to getting to know better the work that Jorge does outside the borders of our country, but specially to transmit the actual duty beyond the limits of our discipline of architecture, being that effective action over the zones of catastrophes is an interdisciplinary one. In fact, is impossible to act from a sectorial and reductionist point of view. Similarly, this publication aims to show young professionals that the world is full of opportunities for architecture, beyond the conventional work that focus on a very

limited part of the populations and from the agencies that are capable of articulating and actually reach the sectors affected by tragedies lacking effectiveness and good timing. Shigeru Bahn is one of the few architects of the "Star System" that has achieved putting the subject in the middle of professional action and making quality architecture for emergency situations. Most of the architects does not do the same and prefer just to ignore such reality.

While writing this text, I am reading in the newspapers that the very first rain in Santiago has caused the overflow of the Mapocho river, that has muddied the water that 4 million people drink, and has caused lots of destruction in Providencia and other communes: There has been two people deceased, three people missing and hundreds of people damaged. Nonetheless, another piece of news on the newspaper called my attention: a study reveals that all the houses in the commune of La Granja in Santiago de Chile are equal to 3% of the value of the houses in the commune of Las Condes in the very same city. Inequality as severe as that is also a humanitarian tragedy. Maybe there, an explanation can be found towards the reason why these tragedies hit mainly the humbler vulnerable social classes. But this is a matter for another book.

SANTIAGO 2016

Jorge Lobos

Dostercios: Let's talk about the work you're doing in the foundation "Architecture, Emergency and Human Rights – Chile" AEiDH.CL

Jorge Lobos: We began to investigate the legal requirements to set up an architectural practice that could operate according to our objectives. We studied a number of options: traditional practice, cooperative, foundation, corporation, laboratory, etc. The traditional practice structure did not offer the possibility to work on the kind of projects that interested us. A traditional practice works for private clients, or for the government, but the government does not necessarily undertake projects that are important to us, projects that defend one or more of the fundamental human rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Paris, 1948). Consequently, we had to create our own ideas and projects and for this we needed funding and resources that were independent of the projects.

Finally, we decided to set up an architectural practice with the legal denomination of a non-profit foundation. This offered us the options to obtain resources and finance our projects in different ways. It also distanced us from the central objective of most architectural practices: economic profit.

We set up this foundation in Chile and Denmark (Copenhagen) and we've now opened another office in Rome. In Chile, we would like to be based in the Recoleta district, where there is a certain friction

and tension that, if you observe and live with it every day, would keep you alert and sensitive to the architectural project and the country's current situation. It is different being in districts where the people have high income levels, such as Las Condes or Vitacura, and such friction does not exist or is different. In such places it's very easy to becoming rather condescending with power and be lulled to sleep by the material comfort they offer. Therefore, our foundation has to be in a place where we can really see and experience what happens with the people we are building for or want to build for. The same paradox can be found in other fields in Chile. Public health and education will only improve here when parliamentarians send their children to state schools and receive their healthcare in public hospitals.

I think our practice should be in Recoleta for professional, political and emotional reasons. I would love for the practice to be in the same cité I was when I was an architecture student in the Universidad de Chile in the 80s. It would be a way of going back to the origin and not forgetting where we came from and where we belong.

The main objective of the foundation is defined by a word we invented or modified from English: (E)quality "social equality and architectural quality". That is, we achieve social equality alongside architectural quality, a duo not usually brought together conceptually. We see in Chile that, generally, buildings for the more well off sectors of society that do not seek social equality enjoy a certain architectural quality.

In contrast, buildings seeking social equality do not generally achieve architectural quality or often suffer from poor professional standards. We are seeking to reconcile these contradictory parameters: social equality and architectural quality. In Spanish this could be termed "(E)cualidad", a word that doesn't exist in our vocabulary.

Dostercios: Could you tell us about some of your current projects where this quality-equality duality is present?

Jorge Lobos: We have many different projects. We are working: in Nepal (rebuilding with rubble from the earthquake); in Palestine ("Water for Palestine" – 50 wells in 50 settlements); in Zaatari (building small schools in this refugee camp in Jordan); in Denmark and Italy (where we are developing projects for refugees); and in Chile, where we are focusing on a school for the Pehuenche community in Icalma.

Projects on the Middle East clearly reflect the spirit of our foundation: the right to drinking water in Palestine and the right to education in a refugee camp.



Picture 4 School ground in mapudungün
for pehuenche children, Icalma, Chile

Dostercios: According to the experience garnered over the time you have been working in humanitarian crisis situations, how should architecture face these situations and processes the communities pass through, which may occur within a relatively short time-frame as is the case with natural disasters, or over a more prolonged period, such as the example of Gaza in Palestine?

Jorge Lobos: Well, Gaza, in Palestine, is a very unusual situation; it is not really a refugee camp but presents a dramatic reality with 1,700,000 people living on a strip of land measuring forty-by-ten kilometres. This humanitarian crisis is very different from the refugee camps in other parts of the world.

The year 2015 witnessed the highest level of migration worldwide since the Second World War: seventy million people were displaced. Architecture has a great deal to do in this dynamic. The refugee camps are designed by the military, engineers, nurses, doctors, politicians and United Nations personnel, not by architects. I only know of two or three refugee camps in Kosovo that were designed by architects. This is very curious because in physical terms architects should be designing these places. We should change the concept of temporality of the refugee camp to that of a city. A refugee camp is a city and must be understood as such. This is a wholly architectural matter. Moreover, in practice, many camps are transformed into cities. Jarmouk, a Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus,

has been in existence for sixty years. This camp at one point had 160,000 inhabitants and a number of multi-storey buildings. It now has 18,000 inhabitants, i.e. 10% of its maximum. It has been the focus point of the war outside the Syrian capital. These emigrants, who arrived sixty years ago, managed to build more or less normal lives for themselves, achieve economic development and educate themselves, but now they have lost everything and must become refugees again by fleeing from Syria. A refugee camp is a city and this is the basic idea we wish to instil. A refugee camp must be planned out and understood as a city.

Dostercios: Processes of migration have effectively increased lately and are larger-scale and more powerful both in Europe and the rest of the world. In this context, how do architecture schools tackle this issue? Do you think the universities are interested in this matter?

Jorge Lobos: This is not yet an issue in architecture schools but things are starting to change. We began in this field twelve years ago, in 2004, and today it is becoming increasingly common in universities. The problem we have is that, unlike the traditional architecture taught at university, no history of architecture or technical compilation has been written that provides tools and methods for facing this problem. A refugee camp is more a sociological and cultural problem, where the physical aspect is absolutely necessary, but, for now, secondary, because we architects have been unable to demonstrate our usefulness in the field. Perhaps this is why we are not invited to work in such places, because I do not believe our professional formation provides us with the necessary tools. But methods must be constructed, we have to construct them academically, and the universities are more and more interested in this: degree projects on refugee camps or humanitarian problems are beginning to appear. This year we opened a Master's degree in "Emergency" for professionals in the University of Venice.

But, going back to the Middle East, both Palestine and Syria are conflicts that produce migration, mass migration to Europe, even

though most refugees are heading to neighbouring countries. Migration into Europe is minimal and does not affect the European population. Last year, one and a half million immigrants came into the European Union, which has 500 million inhabitants; that is, immigrants represented only 0.3% of the European population. This is not a demographic problem. It is only an artificially created political problem that translates into a social problem. Chile has more immigrants that the average for European Union countries. Syria's neighbours, such as Turkey and Jordan, receive millions of displaced people. The poorest countries show the most solidarity or, at least, put up less barriers; perhaps this is not solidarity but rather that they do not put any impediments to receiving people. In contrast, Europe, a wealthy place, puts up barriers and implements immigration policies that encourage increasing xenophobia and racism. That the home of democracy and human rights should act in this way is paradoxical. These are countries that lived through the Second World War and the holocaust and whose inhabitants migrated all across the world without any continent putting up barriers or impediments. Europeans should supposedly have learnt something and should not react in an egocentric and racist way against immigrants who are going through the same thing they did in the 1940s.



Picture 5 This is not a home. Homeless persons project, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Dostercios: But anyway, hosting areas and sectors are being set up for immigrants and refugees...

Jorge Lobos: Yes, but under a "not-in-my-backyard" policy. Everyone says, to be politically correct, "it's an interesting project", but no one wants the refugees anywhere near them. "Not in my city, not in my neighbourhood, hopefully further away." Copenhagen, for example, has a refugee camp 30 kilometres outside the urban sector, where each refugee receives 300 euros a month from the government. A ticket from the refugee camp into the city costs up to 10 euros. These people may live in the refugee camp a year or two while they wait for residency.

Basically, they are two years in a prison, created like a ghetto outside the city with no integration whatsoever. We propose that these places be located inside the city and that people can begin to work immediately, because for the refugees the problem is not finding a house, it's finding work. Once they have work they can get a house and solve their day-to-day problems. That's why we're concerned about creating jobs with architecture: tailoring workshops, bakeries, professional services and so on. We want to help destroy the myth of the poor, ignorant refugee. This is false; their levels of education are very similar to most Europeans. Syrians, for example, have very high education levels, many are professionals, in fact, we work with a Syrian architect who arrived in Denmark two or three years ago and is an

excellent professional. In other words, our work is not just to make buildings, but to build a better society, tearing down the caricature of the refugee community and basing our projects on this premise. The architectural project is not just an object; it's the social dynamic and debate that must arise around the issue. If we do not discuss the issue of the refugees politically, we can make pretty containers 30 kilometres outside the city, we can make a beautiful prison for refugees, but we're not interested in doing this. We're interested in working inside the city and creating integrated, democratic and multicultural neighbourhoods, mini cities within the metropolis.

Dostercios: How does the concept of "cultural processes" enter in here? Have you studied and described the phenomenon of how a person moves from one territory to another but carries with them a series of cultural characteristics of their own that they do not leave behind in the country of origin?

Jorge Lobos: This is one of the biggest issues of contemporary architecture. The migration produced in recent years questions the very idea of place as the panacea for architecture. The idea that the place is the essence and that we have to respect intrinsically what we find there is destroyed by migration. That is why, rather than the physical place, we talk about the mental place. It is the place that immigrants carry as a conception of their way of life and physical surroundings to the new physical space that is unknown to them. This cultural meeting is the meeting of mental places; it is the essence of multiculturalism. This is where architecture is made.

The Copenhagen project represents the meeting of many mental places: the original Dane from the neighbourhood, the radical xenophobic Dane, the free-thinking, supportive Dane, the politically diverse Syrian and the fundamentalist, the Palestinian second-time refugee or the Chilean or Italian architect who also contributes with another mental place. How do all these mental places meet? This friction is what makes the architectural project.

This is why we believe that these multicultural mini cities, inserted into the larger city, can build the plurality and democracy of the future, where all these mental places meet and where architecture is the stage for building the collective, the co-creation and the indeterminate future. We give an initial push but we never make a final plan because we do not know what the project or collective creative process will become.

Dostercios: That's why the connection with the final inhabitant of the project is so important to the process...

Jorge Lobos: Ideally, in all the projects we do, we would try to create systems of collective creation, but in the immigration projects it's clear, crystal clear, how these mental maps can be found. They are plural identities that discover themselves and that will, in the future, create a new plural identity.

Dostercios: It's an interesting idea to see architecture as a stage for the meeting of these mental places, a neutral thing that at some point contradicts the theoretical postulates that were at one point very strong in academic circles. For example, Fernandez Cox's idea of "appropriate modernity", where the physical place has an enormous bearing on the architecture and is directly related to the concept of acknowledging the identity of a place through determined formal architecture elements.

Jorge Lobos: This happens because, in the 90s, Latin American architecture was based on identity formed by the contrast between tradition and modernity, local and universal, centre and periphery. Tradition was the place (Latin America) and modernity was what came in from outside (from the developed world) and our aspirations to be like them. This is a simplistic view of the architectural process but, clearly, it helped us to think about ourselves.

Today, we see architecture as a heterodoxy of simultaneous life models that are not necessarily desired, because the modernity talked about in the 90s was a modernity of evolution, of moving forwards, of progress, of all the good things we took from elsewhere. We no longer see it this way. The person who arrives might be a fundamentalist or a great scientist, all kinds of people come, the maximum expression of human variety, and each of their mental maps is completely different. We must work in response to this plurality. We have moved into a

new stage of architecture, precisely due to these kinds of phenomena, which were not so radical in previous decades or in the last century. These are, in fact, processes belonging to the twenty-first century. Migration is a phenomenon intrinsic to the human being since our very origins. What is new is that now there are great masses of people involved, millions and millions of human beings moving in search of a better future. This phenomenon, so massive and plural, is very different to that of Latin American architecture in the 1990s.

Dostercios: How do these phenomena come about in Chile and how does your work tackle them here?

Jorge Lobos: Chile has higher immigration levels than Europe and is very centralised and localised. In Europe, immigrants are distributed according to a quota system: one and a half million people arrive and each country receives a determined number; inside each country each province receives a certain quota; within each province each district receives a certain quota. So, unlike in Chile, immigrant dispersion is planned. Here, there is a high concentration of immigrants, especially in Santiago and cities with a lot of work like Puerto Montt. In the case of Santiago, the immigrants do not settle throughout the city; rather they are concentrated in certain districts, such as Recoleta, central Santiago and Independencia. This makes the phenomenon much more intense and perhaps more fruitful than the carefully planned assimilation in Europe. We must recall, in this sense, that the injurious concept of ghetto is not fixed: in some cases, bringing together the people from one culture can constitute an act of resistance and survival; let us remember the piccola italia or Chinatown in New York. It helps both the identity of the immigrant group and the multicultural quality of the city.

The high percentage of immigrants in Recoleta could be a great opportunity for the future. We are beginning to work with the municipality on a comparative study of immigration in Recoleta

and Barrio Sur in Montevideo. Recoleta, according to its mayor, has historically received immigrants: Koreans, Palestinians, rural workers and others who were not allowed to cross the river. In this sense we can draw comparison with Barrio Sur in Montevideo that sheltered the black Africans who were freed or escaped from Brazil and other slavery zones. Uruguay took in many freed slaves. The interesting thing that happens there is that the city begins to be "contaminated" with Afro-Latin cultural values. So, the Uruguayan population adopts cultural values that belong to a black immigrant minority; this is quite remarkable.

In Recoleta, what is normally seen to be an immigration problem could actually be a future virtue. This district could become the most multicultural place in Santiago. There are cases of this, such as the NGO in Sweden that began to reappraise the mainly Middle Eastern immigrant women who did not go out to work but stayed at home. They set up popular restaurants managed by these women, with Lebanese food one day, Syrian the next, Peruvian the next and so on. The area was transformed into a magnificent place and these women's lives, their cultures and the economic life of the city was recognised and valued.

In summary, policies can be adopted that attempt to restrict immigration in response to perceiving it as a problem; or, policies can be created that seek to transform immigration into a virtue, based on the considerable value the city will acquire in the future. Let us not forget that the human being is the greatest wealth of any society.

ATTACHED AEIDH

Siria - Palestina



Picture 6 Syrian Refugees camp

SIRIA

The main problem in the refugee camps is that they cover the basic needs for a supposedly temporary settlement: roof, drinking water, toilets, food, medicine and security. Schools are near the bottom of the list. Such schools are mostly built by UNICEF or the United Nations. Three have been built in the Zaatari refugee camp, which, at its most critical moment housed 200,000 people and now has been 90,000 and100,000 inhabitants. A refugee camp changes from week to week according to the political situation. These three schools are insufficient for the number of children in the camp. Two-thirds or 70% of the children do not go to school and have no possibility of continuing their education while they are in the camp. Zaatari was first settled four years ago and refugee camps have an average life of about seven years. A child who misses out on seven years of schooling loses much of his or her educational process and subsequently has difficulty reinserting in civil society. This is a considerable problem.

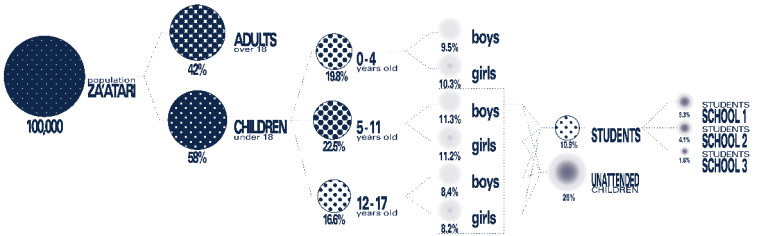
When we carried out a study we saw that there were no investors willing to build schools, especially in a refugee camp created by a war that might end in a couple of years. A school for five thousand students needs thousands of square metres of floor area: what will happen to such a building when the refugee camp is no longer there? And this refugee camp lies in the middle of nowhere, in the desert.

June 2013

470,000 SYRIAN refugees in JORDAN
100,000 population ZA'ATARI
53% CHIDLREN under 18yo
36,000 CHIDLREN of school age (6-17)
10,070 **STUDENTS**
26,000 UNATTENDED CHILDREN

January 2014

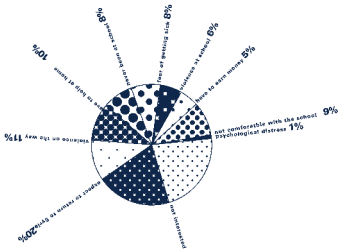
3 SCHOOLS IN ZA'ATARI
5,283 CHILDREN IN SCHOOL **1**
4,147 CHILDREN IN SCHOOL **2**
1,556 CHILDREN IN SCHOOL **3**
10,986 **STUDENTS**



June 2013

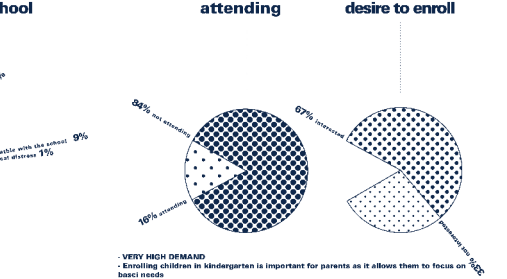
SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN REASONS

for not going in school



June 2013

PRE-SCHOOL - KINDERGARTEN

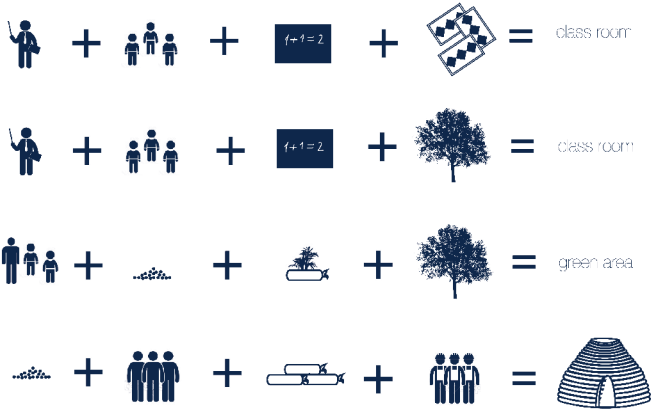


- VERY HIGH DEMAND
- Enrolling children in kindergarten is important for parents as it allows them to focus on basci needs

In the Workshop 5x5[1] in Copenhagen, we decided to build small and very economic schools out of bags filled with sand. These schools would be located near to wells, distributed evenly across the whole refugee camp.

This would make it easier to send their children to school; parents fear letting children travel long distances since the camp is dangerous and has extensive conflict zones. To give us a clearer picture, Zaatari is like Puerto Montt in terms of the number of inhabitants, but similar to Calama in climate. A parent would not send their child to school across the other side of the city because of the risk they might not return. Hence the need to build a small school beside each well (which are always close to the houses), with sandbags sewn by local women to earn a little extra money. The bags are used like bricks to build a kind of dome. This also allows the community, which suffers from high unemployment levels, to begin to work as teachers, seamstresses or builders. A mother, a father, a young person, someone who knows how to read and write can be a teacher for twenty children. These are small sand schools. When the refugee camp closes, the school disintegrates, the sand returns to the soil along with the

1 The system of short workshops, called "Workshop 5x5", was initially implemented by J. Lobos in the Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. It involves simultaneously analysing five humanitarian crisis situations in five different contexts around the world in order to provide students with a global perspective on the conflicts faced by humanity and the relationship between architecture and human rights. To date, versions have also arisen in Mexico, Brazil, Mozambique, Turkey, Italy, Chile, Latvia and Bangladesh. (Interviewer's note).


1+1=2
class room
1+1=2
class room
green area

organic material the bags are made from; everything fuses back into the landscape. This school is extremely low-cost. The money we try to raise is for the materials and to pay the people who are building the school and work there. In this way, we also bring a little economic activity into the refugee camp: we produce employment and money.

PALESTINA

Palestine is a place we have always wanted to work due to its worldwide significance and symbolism. Two of the architects who work with us in Denmark went to Palestine and contacted a Palestinian architectural practice, Riwaq, a part of whose portfolio is restoration projects. They had identified fifty settlements in the West Bank of great heritage value but in the process of being forcibly cleared and their idea was to rebuild at least one house or small building in each of these settlements.

When our colleagues returned to Copenhagen, we saw that this was a very interesting idea because to build in a place that's in a state of war constitutes an act of cultural resistance. War destroys; we build. Architecture is transformed into an act of peace. However, we realised that rebuilding fifty buildings was utopic; it was difficult to get funding for this and would not be possible for us. Moreover, we were not restoration architects and there were many people in this field who could do it better than us. Then, through the photographs, we discovered that there were many abandoned wells and that the settlements were almost empty. We began to investigate why this was so and we found out that water is a big problem in Palestine; it is a country with no right over the subsoil. Indeed, in reality, it is a nation that has been denied the legal right to be a country. It has no right to excavate the subsoil. Moreover, the rivers that



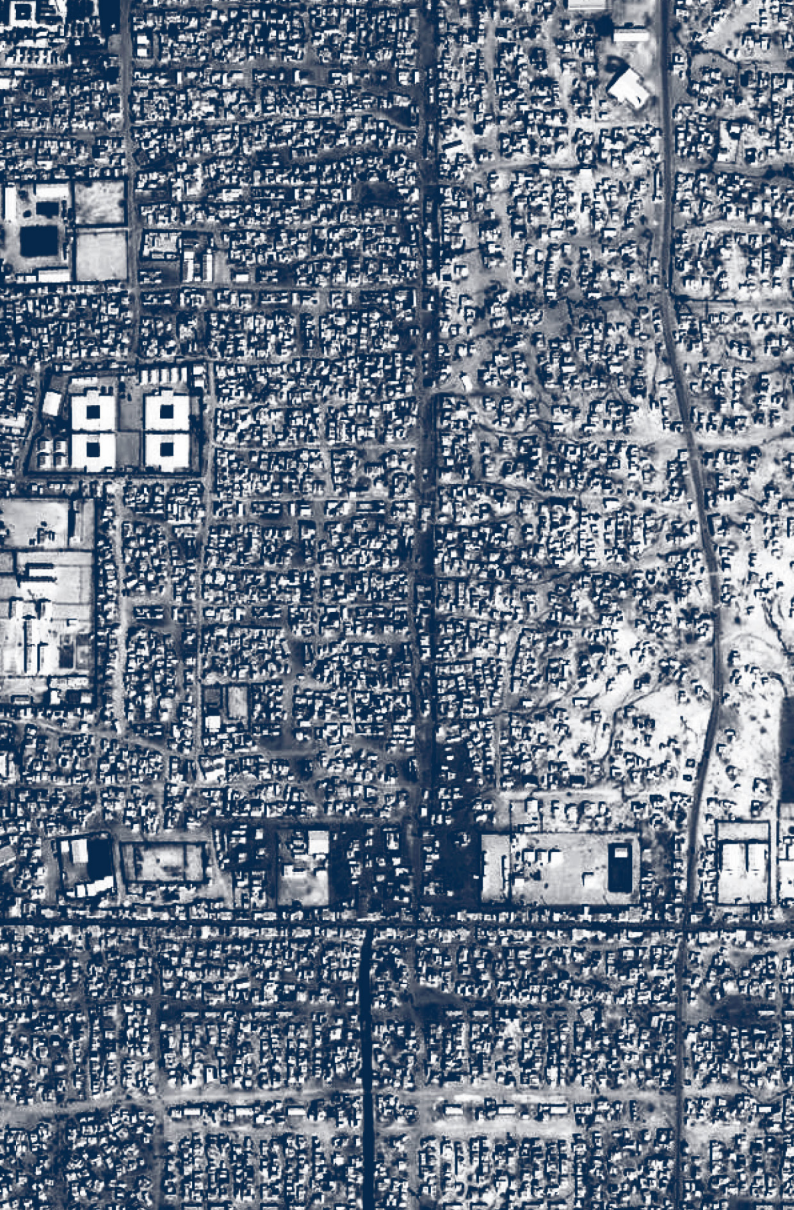
Picture 7 Water Tank, Palestine

cross the West Bank have all been interrupted or diverted before leaving Israel, thus impeding any free flow of water. The architectural project was born of this crisis. We realised we did not have to rebuild fifty buildings; we had to build or rebuild fifty wells, one in each settlement according to the needs of the different communities. Each well or water source had to be a social space: the well and a small plaza, the well and shade, the well and an agricultural area, the well and meeting place, and so on.

Although this project initially arose in Denmark, there is a large and rich Palestinian community in Chile with whom we have started to discuss how to bring forth this project from here. It is a curious paradox that a developing country like Chile can today fund works in another country, a role only traditionally undertaken by the most economically developed countries.









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