



Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016, *After Belonging: A Triennale In Residence, On Residence and the Ways We Stay in Transit*. Curated by Lluís Alexandre Casanovas Blanco, Ignacio González Galán, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Alejandra Navarrete Llopis, Marina Otero Verzier. (Photo Istvan Virag)

Architecture for Museums

Fifty years ago, the Italian architect Aldo Rossi spoke of the need to develop an architecture for museums,¹ thereby giving his own spin to the famous phrase uttered by Paul Cézanne in relation to art: “I paint only for museums”. In Rossi’s opinion, Cézanne was clearly referring to a type of painting that followed a rigorous development and positioned itself within the logical framework of works whose qualities could be only verified within the space of the museum.

Similarly, in the context of the Italian rationalism of the time, according to Rossi, architecture could be found in its most elevated and autonomous form only in museums. According to his definition, architecture creates museum pieces that only later would be taken up by technicians, to be “transformed and adapted to the multiple functions and needs to which they have to be applied”.²

In the contemporary, marked by a redefinition in the museum’s role, and with the emergence of curatorship and the work of architects within countless galleries, biennials and triennials, Rossi’s words (and, by extension, those of Cézanne) seem particularly conspicuous. Museums are no longer called to celebrate and hold works based on artistic achievement. On the contrary, the architect’s role involves developing works “only” for museums, as the central space of disciplinary discourses wanting to be culturally relevant. Later on, and depending on the quality and impact of the show, they may be translated into buildings in hands of technicians.

Of course, as presented here, these ideas may look oversimplifying more complex, entangled processes, but allow us to emphasize the role played by the architecture exhibition as a founding agent and not merely a container of objects coming from an “outside”. This debate effectively corresponds to what we might call an architecture of “paradoxical economies” based on the permanent exchange of ideas through different media (text, exhibition, buildings) where use value and exchange value are in permanent tension, thereby opening up a political dimension.

Whilst it may seem that we have now stylistically gone beyond Rossi’s work, the same cannot be said for his concept of autonomy, which has been expanded to become the autonomy of display. This call will enable us to discuss historical and contemporary subjects and examples contributing to a critical debate on architectural and curatorial practices that have been conceived, to use Cézanne’s term, “only” for museums: a working space for independent exploration and the place where the architect’s work can achieve its highest level of understanding.

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The Guest Editor and the Scientific Committee are calling for contributions (see the editorial guidelines) in English or Spanish from architects and scholars up until 14 February 2019. Proposals will be judged on their diversity and the speculative nature of their approach. Examples of potential subjects are listed below.

The architect as curator; curatorship as an autonomous practice; curatorship as a political practice; the exhibition as a form of research; archives and display; from curatorship to design to construction; exhibiting as teaching strategy; types of exhibitions; the museum as a speculative realm; museum, heterotopia and architecture.

¹ Taken from the Spanish version: Aldo Rossi, *Arquitectura para los museos* (1968), pp. 201-210. In *Para una arquitectura de tendencia: Escritos 1956-1972*. Gili, Barcelona, Santiago de Chile, 1977.

² *Ibid.*, p. 210.