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To cite this article: Francisco González de Canales & Nuria Álvarez Lombardero (2019) Aldo Rossi and the architecture of Spanish democratic transition in Seville, The Journal of Architecture, 24:1, 73-90, DOI: [10.1080/13602365.2018.1527386](https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1527386)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1527386>



Published online: 15 Jan 2019.



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Aldo Rossi and the architecture of Spanish democratic transition in Seville

In the second half of the 1970s, during the Spanish transition to democracy, a new generation of young architects in Seville reassessed the city in relation to Italian debates and their strong political drive. Concerned about the destruction of Seville's historical centre by the Franco regime's urban planning, these architects found in Aldo Rossi not only their main figure of reference, but also a powerful object of fascination. Moreover, Rossi's presence in Seville between 1975 and 1978 had a fundamental influence on the early work of young Sevillian architects and the subsequent planning of the city under the first democratic administrations. However, a particular analysis of Rossi's ideas in comparison to the works of that time in Seville showed how these young local architects did not always fully bring on board Rossi's political position through their architectural projects. Rather, these architects' reading of Rossi favoured figure over structure, visual aspects over relational ones, and ultimately had an important impact in the way the city's historical centre developed in the 1980s and 1990s.

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Introduction

The Milanese architect Aldo Rossi first visited Seville in 1975. Local followers congregated around the architectural guru, whose ideas were meant to confront the consequences of Franco's *desarrollismo* (developmentalism) in Spanish cities.¹ Since the mid-50s, Franco's dictatorial regime had fervently developed ambitious urban renewal projects, the large-scale production of modernist social housing, and the proliferation of new plans for cities in accordance with late-modernist discourses.² These ambitious modernisation plans changed the face of most Spanish urban territories, but also had severe consequences for historical cities and their surrounding environment. By the beginning of the 1970s, when pro-democratic movements against the dictatorship were reaching their peak, a new generation of Spanish architects just starting their careers mobilised against this destruction of the city.

In Seville for example, the implementation of new plans and municipal policies not only catalysed the rapid destruction of the historic city centre, it caused an even deeper erasure of the rich social and cultural fabric that formed it. Two particular initiatives affected this process: the 1962 Plan General de Ordenación Urbanística (PGOU; General Plan for Urban Programming) and, more decisively, the 1968 Plan de Reforma Interior del Casco Antiguo, (PRICA; Interior Reform Plan for the Old Town). For Franco's regime,

these two plans were the main instruments used to help the underdeveloped city of Seville face the challenges of the contemporary age. Typical of the regime's planning of the 1960s, the PGOU was conceived under functionalist and scientific trends³ to accommodate the growth of the city.⁴ Consequently, the main aim of the Seville PGOU was the quantitative growth of the city based predominantly on urban expansion through infrastructural development as well as the densification of the existing city. To trigger this city expansion and densification, the PGOU facilitated real estate developments through a flexible plan encompassing land use classification. Framed within the PGOU, the 1968 PRICA's main objective was to activate the most degraded and economically stagnant area of the city — the historical centre — by favouring real estate development there. To incentivise investors, the plan allowed the construction of one or two more floors on 75% of the streets. In addition, 70% of street layouts were modified totally or partially to maximise the area for construction. The plan also allowed the construction of housing on old military barracks, convents, schools, and gardens.⁵

The radical consequences of this planning shackled the city and agitated young architects from the region, causing them to rebel against it. The Spanish economic crisis of 1974–75 also suggested that cities could not continue their exponential expansion. Following Italian urbanist Giuseppe Campos Venuti's ideas, a reference for those years in Seville, the real challenge for these young architects was to work with the existing urban fabric.⁶ For them, what mattered was not only the obvious process of the destruction of the tangible city, but also the underlying negation of the city as a civic reality at the expense of uneven economic development. In the words of one of the leaders of this group of architects, Víctor Pérez Escolano, a member of the Spanish Communist Party who criticised the PRICA: "cities are the fundamental base for human capital, but the crudest and least imaginative capitalism has operated in Seville, inducing a process of destruction that we so regret".⁷

These words indicate Escolano's strong interest in the Italian debates on the city. Campos Venuti and his Bologna Plan, and the movement of La Tendenza were reference points shared by the young architects of Seville. In this general climate of nonconformity of the 1970s in Seville, these communist models became a very present and strong reference in the ideology of this cohesive group, who moulded them with the ambition to confront the increasing destruction and commodification of the city.⁸ Both the Bologna Plan, as an integral and holistic preservation of the city centre over and above the preservation of specific monuments,⁹ and the typo-morphological analysis of La Tendenza, with remarkable examples such as La Città de Padova,¹⁰ served as reference points for Spanish cities facing similar problems as the Italian ones.¹¹ But if the Bologna Plan or Carlo Aymonino's and Giorgio Grassi's work appeared in this way as the architectural discourse opposing the techno-economic development of the 1960s, it was probably the powerful personality of Aldo Rossi that condensed this approach, with *The Architecture of the City* as a necessary bedside book for all young architects in Seville.¹²

The “School of Seville”

In 1978, these young architects were identified for the first time as a cohesive group by two issues of the influential Madrid magazine *Arquitectura* dedicated to them. They were recognised as the “School of Seville” and started to achieve a certain relevance at the national level.¹³ Although their interests differed in some respects, the core of the group at that time was broadly labelled, with certain nuances, as “Rossian”. This group of architects included Antonio Barrionuevo, Antonio Cruz, Gonzalo Díaz Recassens, Antonio González Córdón, Antonio Ortiz, Víctor Pérez Escolano, Francisco Torres, Juan Luis Trillo, Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, and Fernando Villanueva.¹⁴

Among them, Antonio Barrionuevo and Francisco Torres, who were partners at that time, were the most militant supporters of Rossi in Seville. Barrionuevo encountered Rossi’s ideas in Barcelona through urban planner Salvador Tarragó while finishing his architectural studies after transferring from Seville. He also established contact with other emerging groups of “Rossian” architects across Spain, especially with 2C: *Construcción de la Ciudad* — a belligerent magazine published from Barcelona under the leadership of Tarragó and Carlos Martí. The magazine was considered to be the main propaganda mouthpiece of “Rossianism” in Spain. Meanwhile, Torres learnt of Rossi through architect Rafael Moneo in the 1960s. Torres also transferred from Seville to finish his studies — in this case, to Madrid. There, he studied under Moneo at a crucial moment. During those years, Moneo was developing a voracious interest in Rossi’s theories after his contact with Manuel de Solà-Morales, advancing what would become the influence of Rossi in Spain.¹⁵

Two other Sevillian architects, Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz,¹⁶ studied under Moneo during this crucial time, but their connection with him grew stronger than Torres’. The architectural duo had worked together since the beginning of their careers under Moneo’s strong influence. Their relationship with Rossi was probably as cautious as Moneo’s: admiration while maintaining a critical distance from him. Like Moneo, they were generally interested in the theory, but not in Rossi’s figurative universe.¹⁷ As Moneo mentions in his celebrated essay on Rossi for *Oppositions*, “following Rossi’s enunciated principles in no way compels the formal choices that he made”.¹⁸

Other members of the group, including Fernando Villanueva and Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, maintained a much closer personal relationship with Rossi. Villanueva was Rossi’s best friend in Seville, hosting him at his home when Rossi visited the city, while Consuegra could be considered his main promoter in Seville, accompanying him on the many visits he made in the 1970s.¹⁹

Beyond these more well-known figures, other young architects should also be noted, such as Gonzalo Díaz Recassens, Juan Luis Trillo, and Antonio González Córdón. They were conscious supporters of La Tendenza and introduced its new sensibilities to the School of Architecture in Seville.²⁰ Although most of the School of Seville architects were teaching in the 1970s, only these three and Barrionuevo stayed in academia to gain professorships and continued to introduce this sensibility into local architects’ education in the 1980s. In relation to this

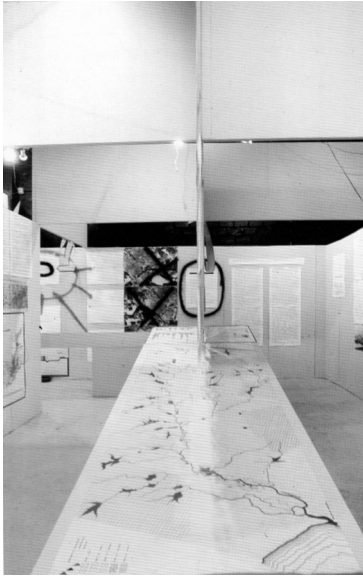


Figure 1.
La Destrucción de la Ciudad (the
destruction of the city), exhibition
organized by the CYES in Seville,
1976. Photograph courtesy of
architect Lino Álvarez.

group of academics, there is an indispensable figure: the previously mentioned architect Víctor Pérez Escolano. In particular, Escolano acted as theoretician of the Sevillian group and published about them in different magazines of the time. It was Escolano who named them the “young architects of rigour” in an article in *Jano* magazine in 1978. This motto, famous at the time, made referred to their preference for Italian rationalist architecture.²¹

For the formation of the School of Seville, it is also important to highlight the role *El Colegio de Arquitectos* (Architects’ Association) had in shaping these different young architects as a group. *El Colegio* was fundamental not only for the promotion of consciousness about the city, but also for raising awareness about the idea that architects were a community, a body of intellectuals with a particular culture, interests, and a unique lexicon in common. The young Sevillian architects wanted to be seen as a cohesive group that met weekly around architectural events to showcase the new spirit of the first generations of architectural graduates from School of Architecture in Seville, which had been founded in 1960.²² As previously mentioned, most of these active young architects taught there in the mid-1970s, but rapid professional success and some political mismatches led some of them to drop out of academia and focus on their own professional practice. They also participated in the Centre for Studies and Services (CEYS), an agency of research and propaganda of *El Colegio*, where they presented rather controversial exhibitions, such as *La Destrucción de la Ciudad* (The Destruction of the City) in 1976 (Fig. 1).²³ In addition, *El Colegio* promoted several competitions with profound implications for the city, including its own headquarters in Plaza San Pedro, and prestigious competitions for the most important public spaces of Seville, such as El Prado de San Sebastián and La Alameda.²⁴

Rossi in Seville

Rossi’s first visit to Seville in 1975 was related to both a conference at the Museum of Contemporary Art and the possibility of his first assignment in Spain. This project consisted of the remodelling of one of Seville’s most popular corrals, El Corral del Conde, which was ruined at the time.²⁵ Under the advice of local architects, Rossi was appointed to develop an exemplary project as part of his initiative to recover the essence of the city. After this visit, Rossi’s presence in Seville became very common. He would return in 1976 to be a member of the jury for the El Colegio headquarters design competition, in 1977 to head the conference “The architecture of the old city of Seville”,²⁶ and in 1978 to preside over the second Architecture and the City Symposium (SIAC).

The affection between Rossi and Sevillian architects seemed reciprocal. His experiences at these different trips to Seville also marked Rossi deeply.²⁷ The celebratory comments Rossi made about Seville’s Feria de Abril and Pasaje Valvanera, published in *Scientific Autobiography* (1981), showcase the impact that Seville had on Rossi those years.²⁸ But in particular, it was the traditional Sevillian house that was of the greatest interest to Rossi, also because of its similarities

with the *casa di ringhiera* in the old city of Milan. In *Scientific Autobiography*, Rossi commented on this:

The analogical links, the associations between things and situations, became multiplied during my stays in Andalusia, so that the images of the structure of the house of Seville began to emerge elsewhere, mixing autobiography and civic history. I have always loved the typology of the corral and often proposed it in my work. The corral was the form of life in the houses of old Milan, it constituted the form of the country dairy farm and dates back to the Imperial agricultural villa which was enclosed like a little city at the end of the Pax Romana.²⁹

One important reference for Rossi when discussing his proposal for El Corral del Conde in Seville (Fig. 2) was one of his most paradigmatic housing projects in Milan, San Rocco in Monza, drawn up together with Giorgio Grassi (Fig. 3). In fact, Rossi would cite this project several times when referring to his reading of the city of Seville, his fascination with its traditional housing, and his proposal for Corral del Conde.³⁰ According to Rossi,

The project for the residential unit of San Rocco addresses the problem of the courtyard: the typical courtyard element of the Milanese urban structure that I have found especially in the neighbours' courtyards of Seville (it would be interesting to do a comparative analysis); it is the typological generator of the project. It closes on itself to build a nucleus of city in the landscape of the industrial Milanese periphery, a zone of much degraded conurbation.³¹

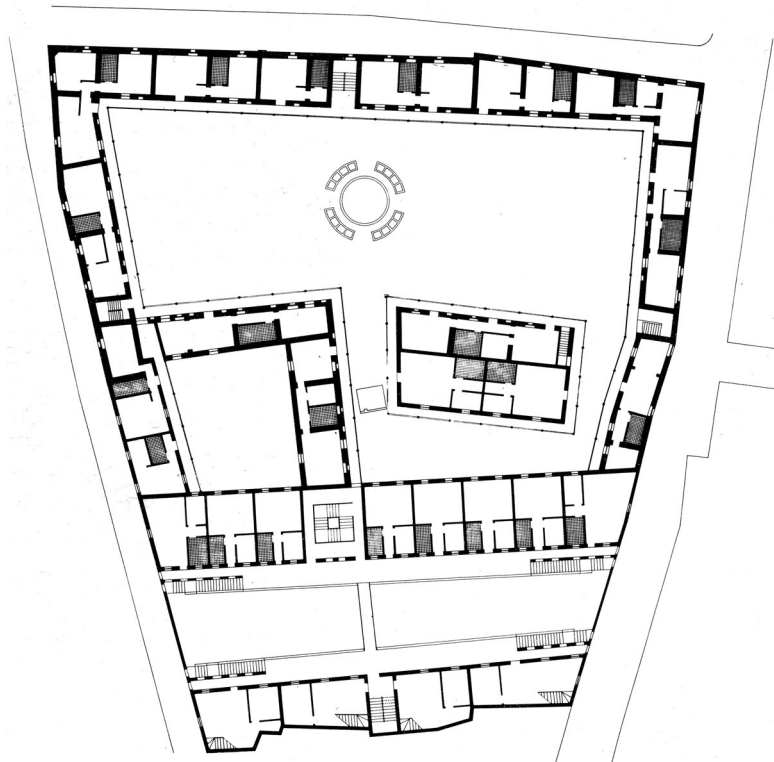
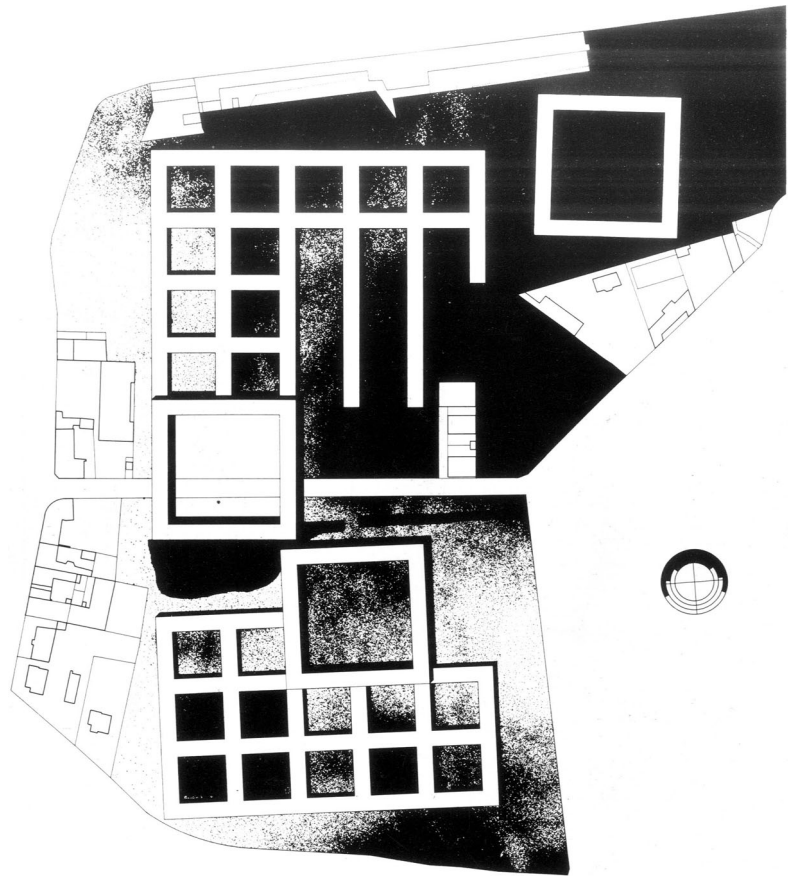


Figure 2.

Aldo Rossi, proposal for El Corral del Conde, Sevilla, 1975.

© Eredi Aldo Rossi courtesy of Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

Figure 3.
Aldo Rossi and Girogio Grassi,
proposal for San Rocco, Monza,
1966. © Eredi Aldo Rossi courtesy
of Fondazione Aldo Rossi.



Rossi's political stand

A deeper reading of San Rocco may help understand the political implications of Rossi's theory. As Rossi pointed out, San Rocco was intended to regenerate a highly degraded industrial area in Monza in the metropolitan area of Milan.³² In that context, the proposal defined his political agenda as a particular way of thinking about the city, in which the role of architecture was to create a rupture within the existing urban continuum. For this purpose, the project proposed the fragmentation of the diffuse metropolitan infrastructure in spaces or courtyards, allowing a certain distance and autonomy with respect to aggressive urban dynamics. Following a Marxist approach, with which Rossi sympathised, these urban dynamics fed vigorously from the capitalist relations of the production and distribution of goods and services that now also involved social relations.³³ Therefore, this separation in spaces was capable of generating a distance from these processes to allow citizens to freely position themselves and re-relate to the city as autonomous

associations of individuals. San Rocco appears as a building complex that fragments spaces in the arid industrial territory, and yet these seemingly abandoned fragments are precisely those that define a new order. In addition, the fragmentation that Rossi proposed was not amorphous and dis-articulated. On the contrary, the new order that he proposed relies on architectural form understood here as a structure — that is, as a cohesive system of relations.

The ideas Rossi developed in San Rocco are supported by his most fundamental political argument in *The Architecture of the City*, his notion of “locus”.³⁴ This notion draws heavily from his readings of French structuralist geographers such as Max Sorre and Marcel Mauss. Structuralism, and in particular, logical-normative structuralism, holds that a particular element of a structural system has no meaning in itself; rather, it is the system that gives meaning to the element. To apply this to the city, Rossi first had to propose a theory of the division of space, a way of dividing the urban into formal fragments (urban artefacts) which became elements of the structure. He explained this in the chapter “The individuality of urban artefacts” in *The Architecture of the City*.³⁵ This division of space seemed to be of great importance to Rossi in contrast to the predominant notions of the city as infrastructure, territory, and network.³⁶ But it is precisely this theory of the division of space that allowed Rossi to apply a structuralist view to the city and understand the city as a group of structurally organised urban artefacts. In *The Architecture of the City*, Rossi used the example of the space of the Catholic Church. According to Rossi,

this space covers the whole earth because the Church is indivisible ... And yet, in this total and undifferentiated picture, where space itself is nullified and sublimated, there are singular points [...] These are the places of pilgrimage, the sanctuaries in which the faithful enters into communication with God.³⁷

These are discriminated places within this continuum, like the church is. According to Rossi, they are “a small part of the universal space that is the place of the communion of saints”.³⁸ The same correlation can be made, according to Rossi, with the city. If the church is to be conceived as the body of all Catholics, the city is the body of all citizens — that is, the polis, as understood in Greek democracy.³⁹ In this way, once Rossi divides the city into urban artefacts or “singular points” that are differentiated from the urbanised continuum, a meaning can be assigned to them. The meaning of these urban artefacts is given by the polis — that is, by the collective of individuals who inhabit the city, this being the most basic political meaning of the city for the Italian architect. Although it is true that Rossi’s theory can be deployed through very diverse architectures, it always implies this particular political dimension of the architecture of the city.

Therefore, the locus, in its deepest political sense, recognises an interminable dialectical relationship between the architectural form as a stable system of relations and the citizen’s political agency as an informal practice. Thus, although form is a structure of relationships prefixed by the city’s architecture, the informal is the political autonomy of individuals manifested in their various

approaches to what the city is for them, and is made explicit through plural and even contradictory modes of expression. For Rossi, being able to project architecture as a form, as a structure of relations segregated from the urban continuum, is what allows citizens' political autonomy in the city. His political position is that understanding form as structure is a fundamental architectural precondition for the unfolding of the political.

The architecture of the School of Seville

Rossi's stress on form, as a structure of relations, was not fully recognised by the School of Seville as the source of a political positioning. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, young Sevillian architects drew and redrew the traditional city — not focusing on it as a structure, but mainly as a visual and linguistic rhetoric. This action separated them with respect to Rossi's initial preoccupations. This is perhaps even more paradoxical when analysing the fascination the School of Seville maintained with American architects, such as Robert Venturi or the "The New York Five".⁴⁰ Despite Sevillian architects often publicly rejecting them, they were references in compositional-rhetorical terms, and emphasised the recycling of languages.⁴¹ An implicit example of this is the exhibition "La Casa Sevillana" (Fig. 4). Curated in 1977 by Antonio Barrionuevo and Francisco Torres, two of Rossi's most militant followers in Seville, the exhibition redrew some patio houses and neighbours' courtyards of the city with a special emphasis on linguistic and figurative aspects through detailed axonometric drawings that might seem closer to the Five Architects' work than to Rossi's. This closer relationship was also stressed by the fact that many of the architects' observations in their explanatory texts related to these linguistic and figurative aspects.⁴²

Although projects of the time used Rossi to demonstrate a strong interest in the architecture of the historical city, its conceptualisation and representation maintained strong links with the new American architecture of the East Coast. For instance, greatly valued projects of the time, such as the houses designed in El Aljarafe, the Martínez Gijón house in Castilleja de la Cuesta (1974) (Fig. 5), and the Elizalde house in Mairena del Aljarafe (1976–77) by the previously mentioned architect Vázquez Consuegra, are closer to the American rationalist rhetorical compositions of Richard Meier or Michael Graves. They also deployed façades of a highly sophisticated compositional language that became common for the School of Seville. In other projects by the same architect in this period, such as the house Rolando in Mairena del Aljarafe (1980–83), there is a rhetorical approach to the project, where architecture becomes a set of well-informed linguistic gestures and circular compositional variations that include the use of a false façade — intentions that would greatly appeal to Robert Venturi (Fig. 6). Indeed, there is even a certain recognition of this type of phenomenon expressed in Víctor Pérez Escolano's description of the architecture of young Sevillian architects, where he defines it not only as an architecture "of rigour", but also as "the school of the *toreo de salón* (ball room bullfighting)" (Figs. 5–8).⁴³

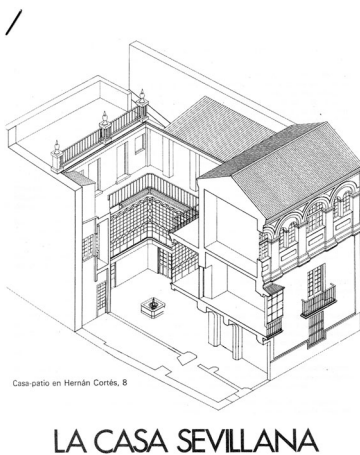


Figure 4.
Cover of the brochure produced for
La Casa Sevillana exhibition (the
Sevillian house). Drawing by
students from the University of
Seville School of Architecture.
Courtesy of Francisco Torres.

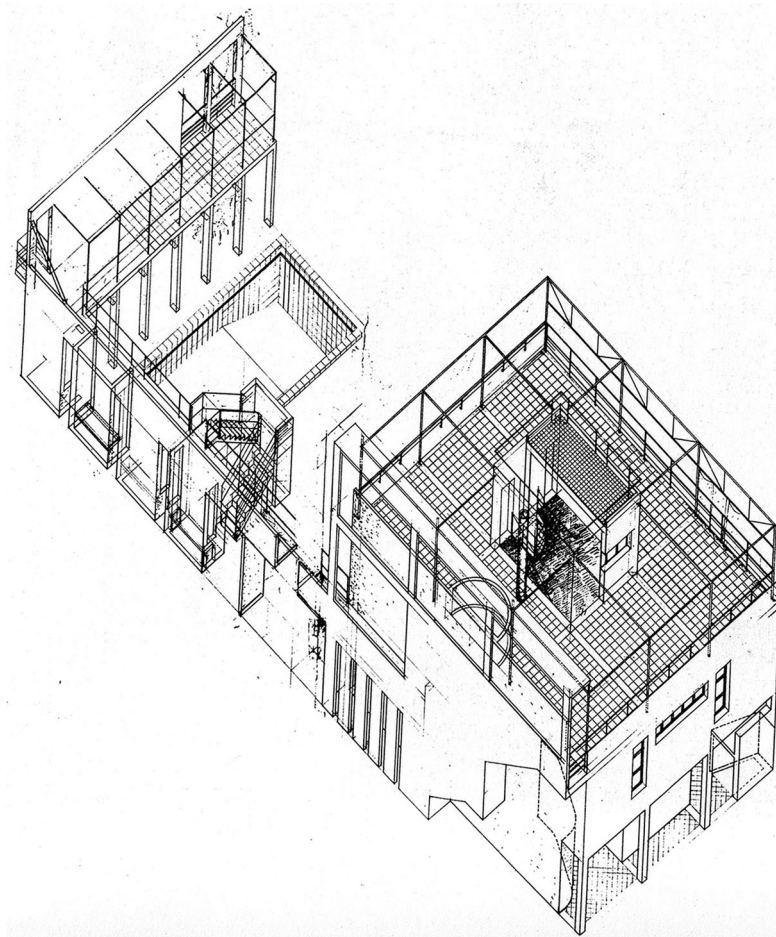


Figure 5.
Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra,
Martínez Gijón house, Castilleja de
la Cuesta (Sevilla), 1974. Guillermo
Vázquez Consuegra Arquitecto.

Hence, what becomes more problematic about the positioning of the School of Seville is how close it stayed to the design methods practiced by Richard Meier or Michael Graves in the 1960s and 1970s. These merged so well with the neoliberal approach favoured by architectural theoretician Colin Rowe, and was at the opposite end of the spectrum to Rossi's political ideas as expressed in projects such as San Rocco. The Five Architects and their compositional rhetoric were, for Rowe, a demonstration of the definitive fall of the revolutionary myth in architecture, an attestation of the end of the dream of social progress that this architecture would bring, and the stripping of architecture of any political function, finally to place it where Rowe always thought it should be, namely, at the service of the free development of private interests.⁴⁴

However, the truth is that by the mid-1970s Rossi had started to distance himself from his earlier more ideological and political positions, finding increas-

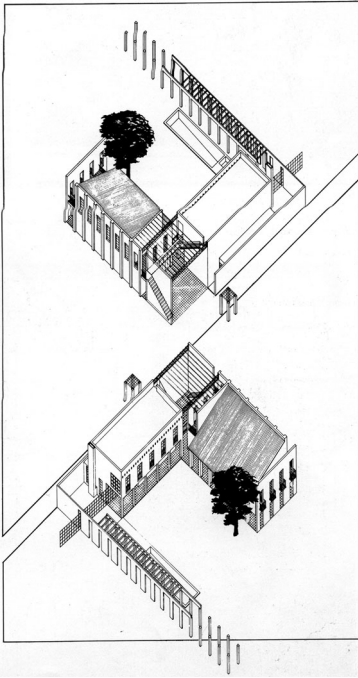


Figure 6.
Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra,
Rolando House, Mairena del
Aljarafe, Sevilla, 1980-3. Guillermo
Vázquez Consuegra, Arquitecto.

ing connections with the interests of the American East Coast. This started to be unveiled by the architect Rafael Moneo in the last section of his well-known essay on Rossi in *Oppositions*, written in 1973 and published in 1976. For Moneo, there is an inevitable mismatch among Rossi's figurative expression, its lyrical dimension, and Rossi's will to establish a rigorous response to the city structure as a collective endeavour.⁴⁵ This suspicion was later confirmed by his choices for the Triennale of September 1973, where Rossi and his followers tried to redefine "rationalist architecture". It is remarkable how Rossi's selection included European architects such as James Strling or Leon Krier, clearly contaminated for instance by the American sensibilities of Venturi and the New York Five. In addition, the special relation that Rossi started with Peter Eisenman, one of the New York Five, cannot be ignored. Eisenman invited Rossi to the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies in New York between 1976 and 1979 and also prepared the first English edition of the *Architecture of the City*, which was fundamental for spreading Rossi's ideas in the US. It is difficult to believe that the growing ambiguity and depolitisation of Rossi's position did not affect his followers' positions as well.

In the School of Seville, there is not only an insistence on highly rhetorical façades, but more importantly on the use of the patio, a particular structure that Rossi recognised as fundamental in the architecture of Seville. However, the courtyard was also often reconceptualised as more of a figurative image than a structure in the School of Seville, substantially mitigating its role as articulator of the interpersonal relationships of a small community that Rossi attributed to it. Most of the housing projects developed by the previously mentioned architects Cruz and Ortiz since the early 1970s, thanks to the possibilities of the PRICA, are deployed around a formally and geometrically complex patio, such as their housing block projects on Medina Street (1972–75), Doña María Coronel (1974–76), or Lumbreras Street (1978–80). In these housing projects the general feeling is that the patio is conceived more as a figure than as a structure. The patio is a gap that lets the light through, a breach to oxygenate the tight urban fabric, but not the vivid space of the traditional neighbourhood block. In cases like the housing block on Lumbreras Street, the house is shown as two blocks joined by a false façade created by the elongation of balconies. The patio becomes the access space to the house that is between these two linear buildings, as if we had to read them as two free standing modernist blocks. Very similar is the layout of the housing on Medina Street, with the same façade of balconies (Fig. 8). The patio of the very well-known housing block on Doña Maria Coronel Street, the so-called kidney patio house (*casa del patio riñón*), is never inhabited by anyone (Fig. 8). This patio acts as a space to pass through, but not to live in. In fact, no life is predicted for it beyond the passage of the car to the parking in the basement. It is not that this housing project has no relevant values in its texture, language, and updating of the work in the historic centre from a contemporary perspective, but it clearly identifies the idea of the patio as a figurative image rather than a lived structure.

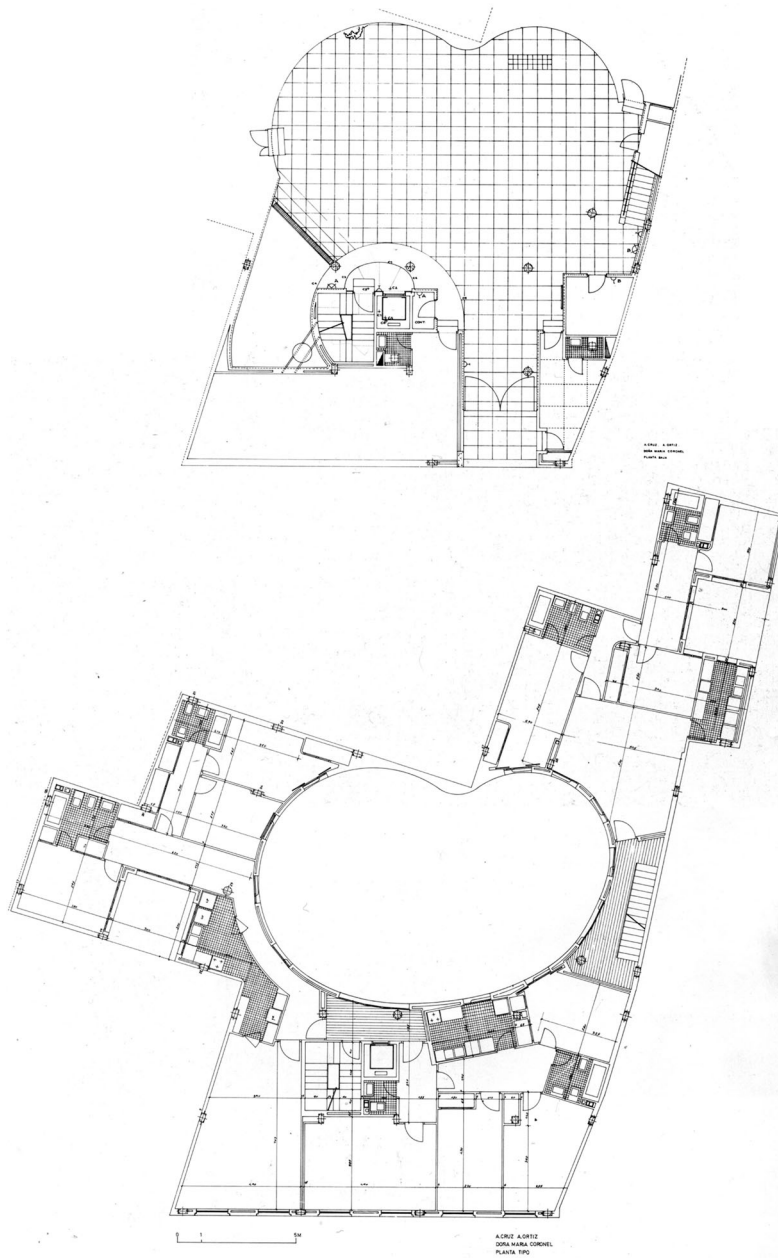


Figure 7.
Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz,
Plans of housing building in Doña
María Coronel (aka house of the
kidney courtyard), 1974-6. Cruz y
Ortiz Arquitectos.

First urban plans for Seville in democratic Spain

The new policy-making of the early 1980s, after the first democratic municipal elections of 1979, also highlights the consequences of this approach. This can be seen in the plan for the Pino Montano neighbourhood in Seville by Cruz



Figure 8.
Antonio Cruz and Antonio Ortiz,
housing in Medina Street, Seville,
1972-75. Photograph by Francisco
González de Canales.

and Ortiz (1981–86), shaped with a structure of blocks around big courtyards that were later developed by the majority of the most preeminent young architects of the School of Seville (Fig. 9). If we have a close look at these housing complexes, we again note how the courtyards are largely residual spaces with no life in them. The patio is not an associative space, it is not programmed, and it ends up having no daily life. In many cases, the blocks tried to mitigate the formal consistency of the patio by reducing them to an assembly of linear blocks. In this way, architects were stating that the inner courtyard was not a space of cohesive association, but the space in between blocks. This approach seems to again contradict Rossi's notion of form as a strongly cohesive system of relations. In addition, despite the strength of Pino Montano's neighbours' associations, no resident was consulted for the development of the plan or any of the blocks. On the contrary, many linguistic references to the city or Rossi's own language were implemented in the projects as a substitute for popular expression precisely in one of the most active neighbourhoods of Seville. Again, this shows how most young Sevillian architects willing to commit to a new democratic architecture in keeping with their time placed much more emphasis on visual and linguistic gestures than on spatial and structural relations for people to express themselves. In this way, the courtyard or patio became, in many cases, an image and, as such, undermined Rossi's fundamental political reflection on the city as a structural relation between the polis, understood as a community of political subjects, and urban artefacts, autonomous spatial organisations.

On the other hand, the 1981 PRICA managed to stop the brutal demolition of the urban centre that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. The new regulations that would later be extended in the PGOU of Seville in 1987 not only included the conservation of individual buildings, but also a sense of the protection of the historical centre which was understood as a whole. However, given the preponderance that language and image were having since the mid-1970s, this protection was translated in many cases into a conservation of façades, if not a reinvention of the same within an agreed "Sevillian style". The more structural questions of spatial organisation were left aside, unless they were particularly obvious. The result, at an extensive level, was the propagation of a concept of preservation and a new municipal legislation mainly concerned with the building façade or with whatever could be seen of the building from the exterior. This generated a pre-set and picturesque image of what the city of Seville was to illustrate, behind which processes of gentrification and urban expulsion did not cease to spread.⁴⁶

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the architectural language of the School of Seville became increasingly mimetic of a certain image of the city and sometimes also of Rossi's own works. Mouldings, horizontal or oblique grilles, vertical windows, or thin concrete cantilevers were repeated as an apparent reinterpreted expression of the city's popular language. These were elements employed by a cultural elite whose derivative taste for the popular was not a way of involving people, but a way to subsume their participation within an architectural representation prefixed as popular. The representations of this



image of Seville soon became much coarser in the hands of less skilled architects. It was precisely by this means that the city, deprived of its meaning as a political structure, was replaced by its self-imposed image. Architecture as such did not become a new vehicle for democratisation, but inversely evolved into an instrument that informed the depolitisation of the city.

Conclusion

The architecture of the city in Seville during the democratic transition could be considered as highly politicised, but perhaps it was hardly political, or at least it did not respond to the political position for an architectural project of the city that Rossi envisaged. For Rossi, architectural form was not a figurative expression, but a cohesive structure able to trace or break relations. As such, form was a fundamental precondition for the political to be unfolded in the city. Contrary to this, for the School of Seville, architectural form as a structure was soon overshadowed by a resilient interest in the figurative aspects of their contemporary architecture (e.g. Rossi, the New York Five, Venturi). For Seville's architects, to develop a strong personal imagery and linguistic rhetoric of their own became the most important driving force of their architecture, as manifested in the two most important projects of the time: Rolando house by Vázquez Consuegra and Patio Riñón housing by Cruz and Ortiz.

Figure 9.
Aerial view of Pino Montano partial plan. Archivo Gráfico y Publicaciones. Fototeca. Gerencia de Urbanismo del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, this successful generation of architects redeveloped the city under mainly figurative premises. Consequently, the political dimension of the architecture of the city was increasingly replaced by a somewhat artistic and self-referential conception of the architect's work. The right to individual political autonomy through the individuation of spaces, as proposed by Rossi, was progressively substituted by the autonomy of interests of the architects themselves, while leaving behind Seville architects' connections with the political phenomena of their time. In addition, economic growth in the 1980s provided an opportunity for architects to insist on the development of their own private languages. Today, this is a tendency that can also be seen to be in line with the general neoliberal trend promoted by the new international status quo: a prevalence of the interest in the individual (and private) over the collective (and common), deeply affecting even the Spanish socialist governments of the 1980s.⁴⁷

In short, despite the political concerns shown by the Seville architects of the moment and their proclaimed closeness to communist ideas and the Italian debates of the 1960s, the phenomena discussed herein meant that, in the long term, a displacement of architecture was understood as a practice intimately linked to a political purpose, thereby creating and increasing the distance between the architectural discipline and the people still seeking to recover it.

Notes and references

1. In the mid-1950s, Franco's regime normalised its relations with the exterior by establishing agreements with the United States of America and having Spain join the United Nations. It started a national plan of modernisation that also involved new architectural preferences. John F. Coverdale, *The Political Transformation of Spain after Franco* (New York, Praeger, 1977), p. 15.
2. Spanish urban planning of the 1960s developed scientific-functionalist approaches, having as a reference the work of Constantinos Doxiadis and Christopher Alexander. In fact, Doxiadis himself received several commissions in Spain during the 1970s in different locations (Malaga, Gipúzcoa, Navarra). C. Doxiadis 'La región Catalana se beneficiara de lo que planifiquemos con las computadoras', *Diario de Barcelona*, May 13, 1972.
3. Fernando de Terán describes the scientific drive of Spanish urban planning during the 1960s as an attempt to legitimise the decisions taken by the regime under the cloak of technical neutrality. Words such as "natural" or "scientific" appear to defend the supposed neutrality of Franco's technocracy. However the scientific approach was confronted by new generations who identified ideological assumptions underlying this planning. F. de Terán, *La Ordenación Territorial. Evolución y Crisis de los fundamentos teóricos* (Madrid, Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1983), pp. 19–20.
4. Urban expansion became the major obsession of the Franco's regime planning. By the beginning of the 1970s, urbanists of repute highly respected in Spain, such as Constantinos Doxiadis, developed regional plans of growth taking over entire regions. This is the case of his plan for Barcelona metropolitan area, which Doxiadis conceived as a Cerdà plan for the entire region of Catalonia. 'Nuevo plan Cerdà a escala regional: Constantinos Doxiadis', *El Correo Catalán*, May 13, 1972, p. 21.

5. *Plan de Reforma Interior del Casco Antiguo* (Sevilla, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, de 25 de abril de 1968). PRICA norms facilitated gentrification in the city centre and a massive destruction of the traditional urban fabric.
6. Campos Venuti was a very important figure in the development of urban planning in Bologna in the 1960s, and was a major reference for this generation of architects. His ideas about an urbanism of contraction, based on the reuse of the existing, were very present across the 1960s and 1970s, being finally published in the book *Urbanistica e austerità*. The book was translated into Spanish in 1981. G. Campos Venuti, *Urbanistica e austerità* (Milan, Feltrinelli, 1978)
7. V. Pérez Escolano, *Informe sobre el avance de adaptación del Plan General a la Ley del Suelo* (Seville, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1979), p. 2. (Translation by the authors. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the authors.) As a representative of the Communist Party, Pérez Escolano also became Town Planning advisor for the first democratic municipal government in Seville starting in 1979. The *Informe sobre el avance de adaptación del Plan General a la Ley del Suelo* is the first relevant urban document that he signed from this position.
8. Moreover, they shared this interest with many other agents very active in the city, such as: emerging neighbourhood associations, illegal trade unions, political parties (Comisiones Obreras and the Spanish Communist Party), cultural promoters (Antonio Bonet Correa and the recently opened Museum of Contemporary Art in Seville), philanthropic aristocrats (the Duke of Segorbe) and professional associations (The Colegio de Arquitectos or Spanish Architects Association); to name just a few of the most relevant.
9. P. L. Cervellati and R. Scannavini, *Bologna: politica e metodologia del restauro nei centri storici* (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1973). Also published in Spanish as: *Bolonia: política y metodología de la restauración de centros históricos* (Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1976)
10. C. Aymonino et al, *La città de Padova: saggio di analisi urbana* (Roma, Officina Edizioni, 1970).
11. Rossi pointed out how overdetermined were Sevillian architects by the morphological-typological analysis during the SIAC symposiums (Seminario Internacional de Arquitectura y Ciudad — International Seminary on Architecture and the City), in Santiago de Compostela 1976 and Seville 1978. S. Tarragó y Justo G. Beramendi, eds. *Proyecto y ciudad histórica* (Santiago de Compostela, Colegio Oficial de Arquitectos de Galicia, 1976), pp. 16–24.
12. An amateur translation into Spanish of the book by Salvador Tarragó circulated among the architects related to Rossi from the late 1960s until in 1971 Gustavo Gili officially published the first Spanish edition. The book had originally been published in Italian in 1966. GG Spanish edition was reprinted three more times throughout the 70s. A. Rossi, *La arquitectura de la Ciudad* (Barcelona, Gustavo Gili, 1971). Translated by Josep Maria Ferrer-Ferrer and Salvador Tarragó Cid. As it is known, the first English edition of 1982 was not printed until 1984: A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1984)
13. United through the Association of Architects (El Colegio de Arquitectos), young architects in Seville kept a strong common position against the current planning of the city. Madrid magazine *Arquitectura* featured in 1978 two special issues on “Seville Architects” including the most promising figures of the new generation, such as Francisco and Antonio Barrio-nuevo, José Antonio Carbajal, Antonio Cruz, Gonzalo Díaz Recassens, Auerelio del Pozo, Antonio González Córdón, Enrique Haro, Luis Martín de Terán, Félix Pozo, Antonio Ortiz, José Ramón Sierra, Francisco Torres, Manuel and Juan Luis Trillo, Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, Fernando Villanueva, among others.
14. There are other very interesting architects in the period who were also published in the *Arquitectura* 1978 issue, and who have not been discussed here. In some ways these other architects were not entirely part of the main group, as their personal interests

- were not so clearly defined by Rossi and La Tendenza. This is the case for Manuel Trillo and Francisco Barrionuevo, elder brothers of Juan Luis Trillo and Antonio Barrionuevo. Both worked for Otaisa with Fernando Villanueva, and even though they were interested in Rossi, they did not advocate a great deal for his architecture. Other intriguing figures were José Ramón Sierra, who never felt sympathetic towards the common trend, and Luis Martín de Terán, who studied in Madrid and was part of a totally different generation.
15. F. González de Canales, *Rafael Moneo: A Theoretical Reflection Through Profesional Practice* (A Coruña and Hong Kong, Fundación Barrié/Hong Kong Design Institute, 2013), pp. 68–69.
 16. Both Cruz and Ortiz made it into the international scene, specially after the Seville 92 exhibition. Both studied under Moneo in the same class as Torres, as the three of them transferred to Madrid after the school in Seville ‘invited’ them to leave because of their activities in the students’ movement against Franco’s dictatorship. Ortiz was also one of the few collaborators Moneo had at that time in the office (1970–71), in a critical period when Moneo himself was absorbing Rossi’s theory and started teaching at the School of Architecture in Barcelona.
 17. Interview with Antonio Cruz, 12th January 1998.
 18. F. González de Canales and N. Ray, *Rafael Moneo: Building, Teaching, Writing* (London and New Haven, Yale University Press, 2015), 2018–2222. This is particularly implied in his famous article on Rossi published in *Opposition* 5, 1976. See Rafael Moneo, ‘Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena. Cemetery’ in *Oppositions* 5, Summer 1976 (reprinted in K. Michael Hays ed.: *Oppositions reader*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) p. 125. The text was originally written in 1973 and published as ‘La Idea de Arquitectura en Rossi y el Cementerio de Módena’, *Monografía 4* (Barcelona, Cátedra de Elementos de Composición, ediciones de la E.T.S.A., 1974).
 19. The early death of Villanueva in 1992 left a promising career truncated. It was different for Consuegra who continued developing a successful career through Seville Expo 92, gaining some international recognition (especially in Italy). By that time, however, Consuegra had already replaced Rossi with Alvaro Siza, who became the main subject of his admiration.
 20. For instance, architect Antonio González Cordon was more identified with Grassi.
 21. Escolano wrote: “The ethics of rigour emerges in each of the decisions, from the distributive, to the formal ones, from the one relative to the systems of representation to that of control in execution”. V. Pérez Escolano, ‘Los jóvenes arquitectos del rigor’, *Jano Arquitectura*, 56 (1978), p. 22. This number of *Jano* was dedicated entirely to the young architects of Seville, as well as two special issues of the magazine *Arquitectura*, 210 and 211, which also appeared in 1978 under the title of ‘Arquitectos Sevillanos’.
 22. V. Pérez Escolano, ‘Nuevas Escuelas: Escuela de Sevilla’. In A. Fernández Alba, ed., *Ideología y Enseñanza de la Arquitectura en la España Contemporánea* (Madrid, Júcar, 1975), pp. 201–233.
 23. The exhibition organised by the CEYS took place at the headquarters of El Colegio from February 25 to March 15, 1976 with samples of the destruction of Seville historical centre.
 24. On the El Prado competition see: G. Vázquez Consuegra y F. Torres. El Prado de San Sebastián (Seville, CEYS: Colegio de Arquitectos de Andalucía Occidental, 1975). On the Alameda competition, it is interesting to watch the film produced for the occasion: J. S. Bollain, *La Alameda* (film) (Seville, Colegio de Arquitectos de Andalucía Occidental, 1978). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNyUh4Y0o5o>.
 25. This project was developed by Pro-Sevilla, a company founded in 1974 by Ignacio Medina, Duke of Segorbe, to promote the preservation of the historical centre of Seville by developing non-profitable lots in the areas of the city he owned. V. Sainz Gutiérrez, ‘Aldo Rossi en Sevilla: los Primeros Viajes (1975–1978)’, *Boletín Académico. Revista de Investigación y*

- Arquitectura Contemporánea*, 3 (2013), p. 3. <http://revistas.udc.es/index.php/BAC/article/view/991>.
26. Sainz Gutiérrez, 'Aldo Rossi en Sevilla: los Primeros Viajes (1975–1978)', p. 13.
 27. V. Sainz Gutiérrez, 'Aldo Rossi y Fernando Villanueva: historia de una amistad', *Archivo Hispalense*, 294–296 (2014), p. 3.
 28. In 1976 he described the Feria de Abril (Seville's annual spring festival) with these words: "The strange historic centre which is renewed and destroyed every year (but) has a character of permanence, inflexibility, of absolute rationality. [...] In it, architecture is like a mechanism that in itself may seem monotonous, but which favours the development of life, the appearance of that convulsive beauty of which André Breton speaks, which is the meaning of the Fair ... Perhaps the architect has no choice but to prepare the terrain, to raise the necessary structures for life to unfold". On the other hand, on the Pasaje Valvarena, a traditional housing block in the historical city revolving around an internal passage, Rossi wrote: "Valvanera ... it is a house and a street, a bridge and a road, the term passage — *passaggio* — exceeds the topographical definition to mean the step towards a new architecture where people can meet and be free, where reality is the basis and the object of the imagination. Valvanera could be a novel or a film. For me, it is one of the monuments of Seville". A. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1981), pp. 24–25 and 30.
 29. A. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, p. 28.
 30. A. Rossi, 'Conferències a l' Escola. Cicle Aldo Rossi. Arquitectura: Profesió i cultura', *Annals d'arquitectura*, 2 (1983), pp. 14–15; and A. Rossi, 'Ciudad y proyecto'. In S. Tarragó y Justo G. Beramendi, *Proyecto y ciudad histórica*, pp. 2–3.
 31. A. Rossi, 'Ciudad y proyecto', p. 3.
 32. A. Rossi, *Projects and Drawings* (London, Academy Editions, 1979), p. 78.
 33. P. V. Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy* (Nueva York, Columbia Architectural Press, 2011) pp. 53–56 and D. Harvey, *The Neoliberal City The Neoliberal City*. Lecture given at the Dickinson College, New York, 1st of February 2007. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfd5kHb-Hc8>.
 34. A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, pp. 185–189.
 35. *Ibid.*, pp. 70–72.
 36. P. V. Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, p. 59.
 37. A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, p. 186.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. In his book *The City and the Laws*, Cornelius Castoriadis, one of the philosophers who made the most effort in understanding the principles of democracy, uses Thucydides' well-known words "ándres gàr polis" to define the *polis* ("men are the city"). As such, according to Castoriadis, the polis is not the physical space, but instead its inhabitants or, more precisely, the body of the inhabitants — according to the particular relationship that Greeks had with their bodies. Therefore, the polis is that of the common body configured by free citizens. C. Castoriadis, *La Ciudad y Las Leyes* (Buenos Aires, Paidós, 2012), pp. 63–64.
 40. "The New York five" is a group of New York architects, Peter Eisenman, Michael Graves, Charles Gwathmey, John Hejduk and Richard Meier, whose photographed work was the subject of a meeting of the Committee of Architects for the Study of the Environment at the Museum of Modern Art, organised by MOMA curator Arthur Drexler and architectural theoretician Colin Rowe in 1969, later compiled in the book: *Five Architects: Eisenman, Graves, Gwathmey, Hejduk, Meier* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1975).
 41. Relations with American architects of the East Coast became much more complex since *Arquitecturas Bis* magazine appeared in 1974. Led by Ignasi Solà-Morales and Rafael Moneo (the latter still considered as a Russian), the magazine became the main promoter

- of neo-avant-gardist architectural ideas in Spain in close relation with American theoretical debates. The good relation between Rafael Moneo and Peter Eisenman, who invited the Spanish architect to his Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies in New York, in 1976–77, fostered this interest. However, the young Spanish group around Rossi still heavily criticised the American neo-avant-gardes, as it was made public at the 1978 SIAC in Santiago de Compostela. The connections with the US were nevertheless latent. C. García Estévez, 'So Close, So Far: Aldo Rossi and the 2C Group. Architecture, Ideology and Dissents in the Barcelona of the 70s', *Proyecto, Progreso, Arquitectura*, 11 (2014), pp. 111–114. <https://ojs.publius.us.es/ojs/index.php/ppa/article/view/37>.
42. A. Barrionuevo and F. Torres, *La casa sevillana* (Seville, Caja San Fernando, 1977), s.n. A. Barrionuevo and F. Torres, 'Algunas consideraciones sobre la ciudad y la casa', *2C: Arquitectura y Ciudad*, 11 (1979), pp. 6–49.
 43. The term "Toreo de Salon" is the Spanish culture is referred to the practicing of bullfighting without bull, with no risk or truth, and as pure rhetorical exercise. V. Pérez Escolano, 'La escuela del toreo de salón. La arquitectura joven sevillana', *Arquitectura*, 210 (1978), pp. 8–12.
 44. C. Rowe. 'Introduction', In *Five Architects*, pp. 3–11. This approach is expanded in the first chapter of *Collage City*. C. Rowe and F. Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1978).
 45. Rafael Moneo, 'Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena. Cemetery', p. 124.
 46. I. Díaz Parra, 'Viaje solo de ida. Gentrificación e intervención urbanística en Sevilla', *EURE: revista latinoamericana de estudios urbano regionales*, 122 (2015), pp. 150–153. <http://www.eure.cl/index.php/eure/article/view/545>.
 47. S. Gálvez Biesca, 'La primera etapa de la política laboral del gobierno socialista (1982–1992)', *Hispania Nova*, 3 (2003), s.n. http://hispanianova.rediris.es/articulos/03_014.htm.