

Learning Architecture
—in 20 jumps



How many years fit in twenty years? The answer to this question would not be the same if answered by a geologist, a musician or a politician. When we pose the question in architectural terms it seems that time has an elongated behaviour, which most of the times stretches when the deadline to deliver projects arrives. The same happens with the kind of memories that build up our experiences, which are somehow invented everytime we recall them.

By questioning scales of human interactions with connections of different nature, we're also questioning "What are we? Where do we live? Who are our neighbors?" not only as architects, but mainly as co-habitants of places in which other human and non-human agents negotiate their agency, and their right to exist.

Now it's your time to ask, it's your turn to jump!

About UIC Barcelona School of Architecture

The UIC Barcelona School of Architecture is committed to the intellectual, professional and personal growth of all those who form part of it. The School of Architecture has strongly invested in a teaching model based on individual attention, practical learning based on bringing in all areas of knowledge, cutting-edge technology and teaching staff with international experience in order to train architects to be able to tackle the challenges posed by society.

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Learning Architecture
—in 20 jumps

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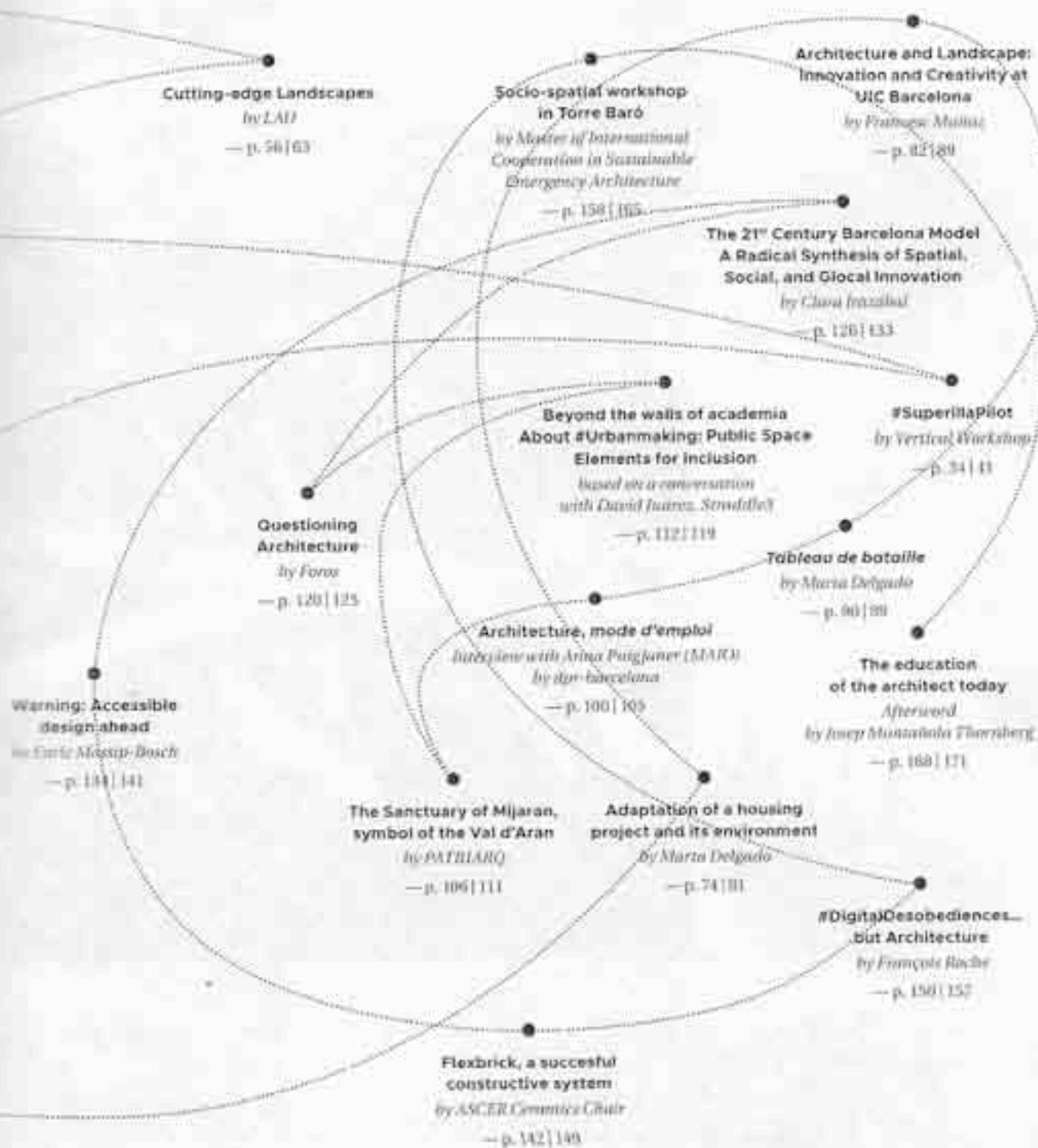
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Intersection of energies

Introduction

by Manuel Gausa

Member of the Board of ESARQ-UIC, 1998-2000

Senior Founder and Dean of IAAC, 2012-2015

Professor of Urbanism and Director/Coordinator of the Doctoral Programme in Architecture and Design, DAD-UNIGE, Genoa

I- Words - Names

Words were always important in the initial impulse of ESARQ (now, UIC Barcelona School of Architecture). Many of the most important initial energies grew out of a desire to communicate, to get involved, to project the initiative *inter pares*, peer to peer, to work through complicity rather than to confront from discordance, to look for common voices rather than celebrity names and to seek flexible vectors rather than high-profile pedagogy. From its inception ESARQ has been an environment that has put its faith in concepts more than in precepts. Many of the main foundational activities were centred around spaces for exchange and debate — meetings, publications, manifestos, dictionaries and other formats of transmission and dissemination— that set out to celebrate ideas instead of formalizing models.

Words are messages that often seem to resemble one another but do not always have the same meanings, and in that subtle difference between the similar and the distinct encompasses a wealth of nuances and some of the principal characteristics of a project — that of ESARQ-UIC— which is particularly important for the educational and cultural reactivation of —and in— this country.

II- Recollection – Memory

I recall with great pride and satisfaction the birth of ESARQ. It was an adventure that had something at-once epic and lyrical, uniting will and capacity, sense and sensibility in a shared project in which ambition was as important as conviction.

Recollection is always a slanted recalling of fragmented situations projected backward from the present into the past in search of elements (spaces, images, instants) to grasp and at the same time to oscillate within. Memory is more systematic: although polycentric it works on the basis of integrated relational sets.

To write the preface of the book commemorating the twenty years of ESARQ's existence is an exercise of memory (data and information, combined and processed) but it is also an appreciable gift with which to conjugate that memory (singular and plural, particular and collective) with recollections of a more individual and personal nature. The rereading of old documents such as the school's first publications (the issues of *DIAL*) or the first-generation brochures, pamphlets and posters makes it possible to extract messages, manifestos, intentions and writings, with which in those days I was particularly involved, together with other colleagues, and to which I will refer from time to time in these lines.

III- Impossible – Improbable

That a group of relatively young architects without eminent backers, many years of professional practice or weighty academic baggage should set out to found a new school of architecture seemed, in 1998, an almost impossible undertaking in a setting like Barcelona, where the prestige of the public architecture school (and of many of the notable figures associated with it) still exercised considerable influence on the city and on the urban development of the time.

It seemed impossible but it was not improbable.

The changes experienced in the nineties with the emergence of a new era of digital information (remember the consolidation of Windows and its almost universal adoption, parallel to that of the first laptops at the beginning of the decade and the implementation of the first software programs: AutoCAD, 1982-1990; GIS, 1990; SCANNER, 1984-90; PHOTOSHOP, 1990; CATIA-3D, 1996; MAYA 3D, 1998, etc) were to give a whole new 'in-between' generation (between times, logics and technologies) an awareness of a new type of paradigm, then barely intuited, in a definitive break not only with the old modern logic of the industrial age but also with the more recent postmodern accommodation of the post-industrial era.

The turn of the century was to bring a spectacular shift in scale in the definition of our spaces of relation and coexistence —our habitats— associated with the increases in mobility and long-distance communication, the delocalisation of exchanges and the capacity for technological and material transformation of our environment.

and, above all, with the digital revolution and the complex processing of information. The combination of INTERACTION + INFORMATION thus manifested itself as the great spatial-cultural revolution of a new time.

IV- Innovation – Renovation

The emergence of this new scenario of technological and social transformations, more intercommunicated, diverse and cosmopolitan, together with the conception of a new idea of progress (not as an imposition of a new universal order but as a *re-activation*—or *re-information*—of reality itself) evidenced the need for a return to experimentation, to research (and to innovation) above and beyond the old yearning for ongoing formal renewal, linguistic, semantic and/or disciplinary.

For many of the new actors, what was taking place at the turn of the century—and has since been validated later, in all its force and forcefulness—was the mould-breaking explosion of a new operational logic, decidedly innovative in its whole conception of order, of form, of geometry and of the materialization and organization of things. This was a logic bound up with the assumption and *parametrization* of complexity and plurality, with the ability to interact between, with the dynamic condition of processes and, ultimately, with a new transversal and relational capacity, called to create intersections, encounters and hybridizations; mixes and exchanges.

V- Theory – Paratheory

The articulating defence not only of an architecture but also of a society, a culture and a city that were more heterogeneous and diversified, more multiple and multifaceted was to give rise in the nineties to countless significant experiences in which a certain readily discernible shared concern engendered complicities on the basis of the *celebration* of complexity rather than its reduction.

Throughout the 1990s some of the most interesting experiences on the European level were to seek to conjugate (in response to the increasing tendency of official criticism to incline towards the description of events—or panoramas—rather than any authentic theoretical endeavour) a dual activity, both disseminating and producing, critical and operational, interpretative and projective, a vocation that was more *paratheoretical* than strictly theoretical and embraced as a decidedly *engaged* action.

That interest in doing and thinking, creating and narrating, producing and writing, projecting and interpreting—that is to say, in manifesting a certain idea of the world, however diffuse—formed the substrate of a certain 'alternative generation' in contrast to that of the more elitist eighties.

These dynamics should be linked to the then-significant impact of various forums for exchange and encounter, such as the first European or ArchiLab get-togethers, the research work of the AA, the activities of the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam, the labs at

Columbia and UCLA and others: stimulating spaces infused with a 'renewing energy' that drew on an evident concern with theory and a search for better solutions, even if these often lacked a properly integral global interpretation.

VI- Encounters – Interchanges

These spaces of encounter were to entail, over the course of decade, the physical concretion of interchanges of a different kind, which were more 'virtual', destined to identify in turn—in possible scenarios of common interests and discussion—some of the most advanced research lines produced on an international scale and registered in diffusion platforms such as *Quaderns*, *Actar*, *Archi+*, *Archis*, *Fisuras*, *Assemblage* and so on: a diffuse network that benefitted, in the early 2000s, from the turn-of-the-century consolidation of the Internet and the globalization of telecommunications networks. In this context, the very considerable strength of a project such as the Metapolis encounters (1998-2003)—so untypical in this country and so unlike the usual academic conferences and politically correct get-togethers—effectively brought to light the unexpected complicity of then-incipient shared experiences which were much closer to genuine scientific exchanges than mere media spotlight-seeking (as well as being 'beyond' the lucubrations of the purely theoretical or academic). In effect, what was being put forward were concrete (operative) readings and proposals for the future of the city, the landscape, the environment—quite simply, the habitat itself—from a more open (and explicitly innovative) conception attuned to the need to combine the production and dissemination of new ideas with the research, exploration and methodological transmission of the processes currently in use.



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It is hardly surprising, then, that these encounters and interchanges (and the groups behind the Metapolis initiative) should have sown the seed for two educational projects of such significance in our cultural context as ESARQ-UIC (founded in 1998) and IAAC (founded in Barcelona in 2001), with their evident crossovers, complicities and shared concerns and experiences, both in their own commitment to experimentation and in the *ad hoc* confluence of some of their prime movers.

VII—Logics – Models

As we have seen, what this *n-urban* or *metapolitan* generation was witnessing was a paradigm shift in architectural, spatial, social and cultural thinking: we were moving from a logic based on a static conception of form to a logic based on a dynamic formulation of processes; a logic that was more impure, more irregular and more definitively interactive in its engagement with a medium, with a context, with a society, and with a creative and scientific culture that were more attentive to the diversity and complexity of a definitively *informational* space-time.

In this context, cities, regions, landscapes, objects and/or spaces for living and relating seemed to call for other approaches very different from those traditionally adopted by the old disciplines of space and the conventional design models (formal composition, volumetric planning, fixed and/or stabilized conception, etc).

The emergence, at the turn of the century, of a new and more advanced operating logic (more complex, transversal, differential or, simply, informational) came as an invitation to explore the new challenges of a reactive and interactive (and thus also environmental) revolution associated with the complex logics of a new *n-reality* interpreted as a new *inter-relational multi-scenario*.

VIII—Complex – Multiple

From the outset the positive (and *positivising*) embrace of the notion of complexity itself was to prevail in the conceptual approach of ESARQ-UIC, and perhaps that was the school's greatest achievement: the combining of complexity and operability, substantive complexity and substantial plurality.

The very notion of complexity is posited on that relational condition: the ability to combine and synchronise —to activate and interactivate— multiple levels of information (data) and variable networks of relationship (connections), while working from strategies of empathy, synergy and interaction, both personal and procedural.

This interest in exploring the horizons and testing the limits of a new operational logic (produced beyond the recreation of form, objectual construction or gestural design) was to prove fundamental to an understanding of, for example, the differences between the nineties generation and its immediate predecessor in the eighties (that generation steeped in the glamour of 'design'), which, although a pioneer in innovative modes and manners, had continued to trust not only in an apparent formality, implicit in concepts and designs, but also and above all in a readiness —professionally more profitable— to see itself and to be seen as more of an intellectual elite, qualitatively and vocationally cultured, rather than as an authentic collective field of research and inquiry.

IX- Choral - Collective

It was this generational need to address and explore another kind of approach to architecture associated with a new era, then barely apparent, which was to be affirmed from practice, from criticism, from dissemination and from action and also from the transmission of ideas and the investigation of the new scenarios that were already beginning to be intuited, at the same time revealing the importance of generating new spaces for shared research and exchange.

This generational complicity (by no means unusual in Barcelona) also explains the collective energy bubbling under the creation of ESARQ-UIC (thanks to the possibilities opened up by the legislation enabling the first private universities in Spain), an energy at once collective and interactive (multiple and multiplying) on which the profile—and the *theoretical* substance—of the new school was to draw.

The group that provided the initial impetus, centred on the dynamic figure of Felipe Pich-Aguilera, threw itself with truly admirable intensity into this dual endeavour, conceptual and legal, conceptive and administrative, of putting together a serious and ambitious project, oriented and codified to meet the requirements of the higher education sector and the public authorities. The new venture brought together a collection of personalities who were going to invest a significant amount of effort and dedication to a goal that, though it never seemed easy, was always possible.

Becoming involved in this initial process was, for me, particularly stimulating and I remember the hours of discussion that went into the drafting of texts, organigrams and profiles, structures and methodologies as having been especially fruitful, rewarding our faith in a collective founding process which managed to conjugate a civil and civilised vision of tolerance and respect with a plural and differential orientation.

The collective (more abstract and generic) was thus combined with the choral (more polyphonic and diverse) to generate differential spaces in global (collective) synergy and with local (individual) intensity.

X- Direction - Codirection

The whole principle of co-direction of the school was conceived as a response to these criteria, which bestowed primacy on plural systems of orientation rather than on univocal leadership figures. Although socio-cultural inertias would tend to favour unidirectional heads (no doubt in order to identify powers and responsibilities more clearly), it was to be the 'consular' systems (within co-responsible teams) that responded best to the more complex new logics of our time.

The testing out of this type of management approach, at once multiple and differential, was not easy, on account of its unusual structure, but it was probably one of the greatest achievements of the initial ESARQ.

I recall the meetings of the various councils in which the school was structured (a transversal matrix that irrigated, in a highly adaptable manner, all of the subjects) as being particularly interesting, and so too was the constructive and proactive climate of a *penta-direction* in which the versatile relational ductility of Felipe Pich was combined with the academic tenacity of Alberto Estevez, the seriousness and economic efficiency of Esteve Cabré, the methodological pedagogical imagination of José Miguel Roldán and, to a greater or lesser extent, my determined cultural and positional vocation.

In effect, then, *Complexity* and *Plurality* had to be the basic factors in the positioning of the school in relation to the other key centres of innovation of those years: the Berlage Institute, the Architectural Association, the Bartlett School, etc.

XI- Transversality – Intersection

Both the peer-to-peer management team and the actual organization of the organization as a whole reinforced that willingness to create intersecting matrices capable of fostering a transversal action among a number of different impulses but also between open fields of knowledge and creation (art, science, literature, communication media, sociology, anthropology, ecology...) in an action necessarily free of formal prejudices or predetermined disciplinary codes.

From the very beginning ESARQ sought to ensure a flexible academic functioning, capable of going beyond rigid and rapidly *indurating* structures.

To this end, the various structures tried out were posited as dynamic multivalent network spaces combining basic frames of reference and other more versatile and variable schemata open to the continuous presence of multiple energies and contributions.

In fact, as indicated above, in a first basic overlay (which, in terms of the actual functioning of ESARQ, evidenced its commitment to *simultaneity*) the whole homologized educational framework of subjects, courses, labs, units and teaching staff intersected with another more open and variable framework engendered by the transversal contribution of the various 'councils', which were to be the site of much of the activity, not only academic but relational and experiential, of the school itself, which thus experimented with a truly innovative model in which different fields, areas, frames and sensibilities could 'intersect'.

XII- Stimuli – Sensibilities

The Academic Council, AC (responsible for ensuring the coherent design of the different study plans in the light of the contributions and proposals coming from the other councils) was duly complemented by the Council for Processes and Technologies, CPT (responsible for engaging with the technological and environmental changes associated with the construction and development of the contemporary space and habitat); the Council for Cooperation, CCO (responsible for promoting awareness of precarious

and vulnerable scenarios of deficit in which the social action of the architect was to be prioritized); the Professional Council, CP (responsible for ensuring a satisfactory relationship between the students' theoretical and academic training and the world of professional practice), and the Cultural Council, CC (responsible for promoting and publicising the cultural activity of ESARQ and its positioning at the national and international level through the organizing and running of various exchange and communication activities (forums, workshops, seminars, debates and meetings).

The Board of Management, CD, with a representative from each of the councils, was thus constituted as the plural synthesis of these stimuli and sensibilities, with a view to defining the fundamental guidelines of the project and the executive actions necessary for its implementation.

In recognition of the commitment and dedication of the many professional colleagues who played a part in this start-up period, mention must be made of Alberto Alegret, Mercè Berenguer, Mònica Farrán and José Miguel Roldán (Academic Council), Maria José Masnou, Willy Müller, Ignasi Pérez, Felipe Pich-Aguilera (Council for Processes and Technologies), Alberto Alegret, Isabel Bachs, Teresa Batlle, Esteve Cabré, José Colomer, Miguel Ruano and Salvador Torrents (Professional Council), José Juan Barba, Miquel Batlle, Guillermo Maluenda, Felipe Pich-Aguilera and Lluís M. Samllehy (Council for Cooperation) and Alberto T. Estévez, Xavier Costa, Vicente Guallart and Octavio Mestre (Cultural Council, of which I was also a member).

The names of these men and women have since come to have considerable significance in various spheres of public life and private activity in this country (Barcelona City Council, the COAC Catalan architects' professional association, the University of Barcelona, etc).

XI-Staff-Mesh

From the very beginning, then, ESARQ-UIC has been committed to grounding the students' training in a highly developed strategy of 'intersecting' spaces of knowledge, spaces of synthesis and spaces of research and development: spaces designed to favour both internal and external experiences.

Above and beyond the conventional structure in terms of teaching staff or subject staff, these studies were to be articulated on the basis of an extended intersecting mesh in which instrumental knowledge areas (core linear contents) were combined with R&D programmes (optional transversal contents and free-choice programmes), spaces of synthesis (studios, labs and multi-scalar project workshops, with a variety of single-semester and whole-year horizontal and vertical formats) and practical placements (specific experiences related to the different sensibilities of the councils that represented). Within this multi-layer structure, several cross-sectional formats were of note for their special intensity: the *Foros* (the ESARQ weekly meeting area, an ambitious space of debate, reflection and knowledge in which guests from every field of knowledge

—literature, philosophy, science, creation, audio-visuals, etc— could intersect concerns and experiences in an open atmosphere of discussion and encounter); the *Vertical Workshop* (a two-week-long intensive final workshop designed to bring together students from all the different years in a vertical manner with a visiting Extraordinary Director and a multidisciplinary research topic that served to integrate—with the participation of various professional and civil associations— subjects, approaches and knowledge in one great joint project); the *Cooperation Practices* (an unusual activity, carried out during the first three years, in the form of experiences in countries in the Global South, designed to facilitate contact with other cultural and social realities and their construction practices and in so doing call into question the *Eurocentric* and *developmentalist* points of view and open them up to more global perspectives); the *International Hall* (a hosting initiative in which students from the most prestigious international architecture schools live and work together in the same space of encounter), and the Workshops and Summer Workshops (intensive international labs and seminars with an emphasis on exploring and debating topical issues), among others.

XIV- Polytony – Poliphony

The ultimate objective was to encourage the generation of polyphonic activity that went beyond localism, based on an extensive network of stimuli in constant interaction, on the basis of internal and external connections, understanding the school as a mesh of exchanges but also as a node (or rather as a multi-node of links between teaching, culture, research and technology, production, creation and market) and



More than left wing
 Second Programme de Post, course 1997-2000
 Criss Crossing, Atlas for a new scenario

Second Programme de Post, course 1998-2000
 Land Links, Images Operatives

Workshop No Homologated, November 2000

Project
 Pierre Teller Pavilion, course 1997-2000
 Costa Idénica, The Facade

Second Year National Course 1998-1999
 Legal, Brother Energy

stimulating a plural and integral approach through which the students would not only learn about disciplinary practice and techniques but also acquire the critical and analytical faculties of management and communication and, above all, of relation and synthesis (at all levels and scales).

All of these frameworks drew on an extensive external network of collaborating professors, mostly affiliated to a generation of ideas, concerned about and engaged with contemporary reality, sensitive to the environment and socially committed, with a real taste for experimentation and innovation, substantial professional experience, a vocation for teaching and considerable theoretical and practical baggage, who had achieved national and international recognition.

Of the various teachers who worked alongside the members of the start-up group at ESARQ in its first three years of existence I would like to mention here Manuel Arenas (Barcelona), Félix Arranz (Barcelona), Manuel Ballo and Rosa Rull (Barcelona), David Baena and Toni Casamor (Barcelona), Bernard Cache (Paris), Pietro Caruso (Wien), Miquel Codorniu (Barcelona), Ricardo Devesa (Barcelona), Dennis Dollens (USA), David García (Barcelona), Efrén García and Cristina Pérez (Madrid), Eleni Gigantes (London), Gustavo Gil (Barcelona), Xaveer de Geyter (Rotterdam), Bea Goller (Barcelona), Nuria Llaverias (Barcelona), Xavi Llobet (Barcelona), Miquel Lacasta (Barcelona), Duncan Lewis (Angers), Greg Lynn (USA), Joan LLort (Tarragona), Winy Maas (Rotterdam), Josep Lluís Mateo (Barcelona), Enric Massip (Barcelona), Josep Miàs (Barcelona), Ellen Monchen (Rotterdam), José Morales (Sevilla), Anna Nufrio (Milán-Barcelona), Josep Olives (Barcelona), Carme Pinós (Barcelona), Maurici Plà (Barcelona), Fernando Porrás (Madrid), Alejandro Rodríguez (Barcelona), Rodrigo Prats (Barcelona), Florence Raveau (Barcelona), François Roche (Paris), Antonio Sanmartín (Barcelona), Amadeu Santacana (Barcelona), Aurell Santos (Barcelona), Vicente Sarablo (Barcelona), Bruno Sauer (Antwerpen), Julia Schultz (Berlin-Barcelona), Francis Soler (Paris), Kelly Shannon (Leuven), Federico Soriano (Madrid), Judith Urbano (Barcelona), Jaume Valor (Barcelona) and Elia Zenghelis (London).

We must also acknowledge here, in token of friendship and in sincere tribute, the generous support of Ignasi de Solà-Morales, who, without being directly or indirectly involved in the project, provided important intellectual and moral support, for taking a stand in our favour (not an easy position to adopt) and for his breadth of vision in those difficult initial times when ESARQ was still regarded as a strange 'intrusion' in the official story of post-Olympic Barcelona.

XV- Profile – Character

Above and beyond the old tropes of essential (and essentialist) 'identity' of a collective and/or cohesive (local) nature, ESARQ demonstrated its international and cosmopolitan vocation through the elaboration of a profile (or character) of its own, at once shared and differentiated (global).

This was clearly stated in the opening text of *DIAL-0* (the in-house publication I had the pleasure of setting up and editing):

The School of Architecture (ESARQ) of the International University of Catalonia (IIC) is proposed as a plural and dynamic centre, aimed at fostering an innovative teaching of architecture in a framework open to the constant crossing of stimuli, cultures, sensibilities and experiences. From the confidence in the combined action of basic knowledge and new, and more complex and diversified keys, it is intended to effectively address the changes produced in society and in the mechanisms that mark the production and construction of the new contemporary scenarios that affect today the future profile of the architect (...)

A formation based, then, on criteria, curiosity, encouragement and exploration; definitively in the capacity of prospection and synthesis.

In this way ESARQ aims to position itself as an imaginative and plural center, recognized for its cultural dynamism and ambition, its research commitment, its affirmation as a laboratory of ideas and proposals (creative and operational), its effective connection with the world of work, business and professional, its social concern and its work in the field of cooperation, as well as its high level of demand in the new technological, environmental and multi-media (digital) fields.

Everything from the contribution —combined— of recognized experiences and emerging energies.

XVI—Holism – Generalism

In this way ESARQ identified itself with a more holistic (integrative) professional practice, more varied, versatile and multi-faceted than that defined by the traditionally generalist (dispersive) conception of design, too firmly anchored in disciplinary taxonomy or in the transmission of the architect's craft but at the same time far removed from an exclusively specialized, unidirectional and conductive training, with low long-term yield. Again, as another of the presentation texts published in *DIAL* publication declared:

The training received in ESARQ aims to favor a diverse —and diversified— integration in the professional world, through the student's own will to research, thus generating —without apriorisms or prejudices— their own elements and areas of interest. Combining a qualitative (holistic) education with a determined attention to the diverse and diversified fields of activity that are opened today in the profession; giving priority to the faculty of adaptation and response, to the critical look and to the investigation, to the continuous recycling; interesting the student in all those multi-disciplinary aspects that would affect the architecture and the society of the time itself, with the aim of favoring a greater capacity for synthesis and for the relationship

produced at all the scarce and at all levels, evolving from a training based on the disciplinary tradition to another more in keeping with the multiplicity of messages, techniques and possibilities that characterize the contemporary world. From this School will come trained technicians in the globality but attentive at the same time to the specificity, with aptitudes to face (individually and as a team) to multiple situations, some still emerging; in short, with the ability to conceive new relational systems in increasingly complex environments.

XVII— Complicity – Collaboration

In an environment such as that of ESARQ it is evident that students could no longer continue to be thought of as the 'disciples' of previous times but were to be engaged as new virtual *partners*, a collaborators in a joint process of research and (co-)production. Traditional craft skills were increasingly making way for research, and this being so, the transmission of 'models' or 'certainties' had to make way for the construction of criteria: criteria of action.

The idea of a school as a referential *Model* (a centralized space of training) was thus being replaced by the idea of the school as a *Laboratory* (a creative and investigative environment in a network).

An environment in which to learn, by experimenting and collaborating.

Without fear of making mistakes but at the same time without fear of responsibility.

Without fear of trying things out or of discussion and exchange on the basis of mutual respect and open curiosity.

Without fear of the new or the *proneistic*, of the restless or the iconoclastic.

Without submissions or collusions.

Working with discipline and indiscipline... between disciplines and beyond the discipline...

Combining rigorous coherence and audacity... analysis and intuition... self-affirmation and shared restlessness... The close at hand and the cosmopolitan.

Intellectual respect and generational complicity.

Intimate conviction and enthusiastic curiosity.

XVIII— Talent – Merit

Having faith in emerging talent and energy —combining reason and ponderation with imagination and enthusiasm— proved crucial to ensuring the positive quality of a young educational environment that carried no heavy baggage.

A young school so conceived —as a (relational) environment rather than as a (referential) model— could not waste talent... on the contrary, it had to integrate talent, its own talent and external talent, but, above all, the talent of 'each' generation. Not from obedient apprenticeship but from the promotion of creativity and generous feedback.



Encouraging the impulse to the renovating initiative and the access of the students (and former students) to areas of project design and responsibility, conceived in terms of flexible mechanisms rather than from fixed positions.

If we remember here the pioneering first generations of alumni whose involvement and enthusiasm were so crucial for the whole educational project — Natxo Alonso, Guillem Augé, Sergio Balaguer, Anna Borrell, Sergi Cera, Josep Colom, Raquel Colacios, Isabel Gabarró, Cristina García, Guillem García, Josep Gascón, Maria Guasch, Ivan Llach, Miquel Moragues, Cristina Profitós, Moon Puig, Manuel Peribañez, Esther Rovira, Jordi Roviras, Eduard Sancho, Natxo Solsona, Ainá Salvà, Anna Vergès, I. Antoni Vidal and others — it is in no sense as a mere conventional gesture but an act of sincere recognition.

XIX- Research – Exploration

In a moment of shared explorations, architecture sought once more to become, in effect, a collective cultural adventure (and not just a mere record of individual brands or personalities). This adventure involved innovative (re)searches, shared horizons, and narratives that were more stimulating and exciting in their own risky decoding.

Going beyond the usual gloss on 'singular trajectories', 'iconic personalities', 'unique experiences' or 'revered pedagogies', the interest now was in an architecture capable of generating shared research processes: trajectories capable of revealing the evolution of a more complex and diversified (new) logic, posited in relation to the conditions of the culture, the society and the technology of its time.

XX- Evolution – Adaptation / Position – Positioning

While ESARQ's own activity and its progressive and progressionist evolution have always responded to these premises, it is true that, from certain critical positions, arguments not devoid of intention have been put forward with a view to 'characterizing' the school's own positionings.

— As against recognized experience, a certain iconoclasm, sometimes forcefully explicit.

— As against academic maturity, a clear predilection for the 'young' and (why not?) the 'novel'.

— As against the strength of the secular — and the public — an unabashedly private and confessional origin.

- As against the Barcelona brand a decided affirmation of the 'international'.
- As against absolute coherence in the lines of action, a certain diversity of approach.
- As against the intensity of the references, the multiplicity of connections.
- As against univocal leaderships, a preference for the diffuse, the choral and the polyphonic.

Nevertheless, during all this time, ESARQ-UIC has succeeded in maintaining its own profiles and innovative formats (*Foros*, Vertical Workshop, Cooperation Practices and so on) and in renewing its various teaching structures with many of its own alumni. It has also been able to position itself in a number of fields of research such as those of digital morphologies, new materials, international cooperation or new representation, among others.

It would seem that the slender means with which the first times were woven have proved us to be sufficiently effective and flexible to favour both permanence and changes, adaptations and (re)adaptations.

And on this we should congratulate ourselves.

XXI- Epilogue – Overview

If I take stock, now, of the four years I spent in ESARQ and the interesting experiences I had the pleasure of sharing in, in the school's beginnings, I find the balance could not be more positive. It seems to me that the Cultural Council (which I had the honour of chairing) launched important projects, such as the first iterations of the *Foros* (*Criss-Crossing, data for a new scenario*, 1998; *Land-Links, operational landscapes*, 1998-99; *Complex Logics*, 1999-2000), the national and international Symposiums *Otra Mirada/ Another Gaze* (1997-98), *Lands-in-Lands* (1998-99), *Virtual-Real-Actual* (1998-99) and *Non-homologated* (1999-2000), as well as the Vertical Workshops *Costa Iberica: the facade* (1998, with Winy Maas as director) and *Litoral: another Energy* (1999, with Duncan Lewis and Greenpeace) or the publication *DIAL*, coordinated by Joan Frances Raluy.

Those pioneering years were followed by other adventures (first the IAAC in Barcelona, then the Master Intelligent Coast and the Projects and Urban Planning Chair at UNIGE in Genoa) which led me to new destinations connected with teaching.

All of them have brought me great satisfaction and prestige.

There have also, of course, been difficult situations, but these have always been more than compensated for by the more rewarding experiences. Out of all of them, the period at ESARQ appears now, twenty years on, wreathed in a great aura of enthusiasm, conviction, civility and positive intensity generated among equals, at once diverse and close.

This, perhaps, is what we call civilization: that rational spirit of tolerance, respect and shared generosity. And, to a great extent, ESARQ continues to represent that.

I hope this prologue may serve not as the paradoxical end of a remembered adventure (now recollected) but as the true beginning of a new shared re-encounter. ■

Studies

Vertical Workshop

— *Directors:*

Felipe Pich-Aguilera, Anna Vinzenza Nufria, Bernard Cache, Andreas Peter Kammermeier, Ignacio Pérez Arnal, Dennis Lindsey Dolens, Karl Shweflin Chu, Alberto T. Estévez, Elena Cánovas Méndez, Jordi Truco Calbet, Jorge García de la Cámara, Borja Ferrater, Vicenç Sarrablo, Alfons Puigarnau, Estel Ortega, Raquel Colacios, Ivan Llach, Itaki Baquero, Manuel Arenas

Foros

— *Directors:*

Alberto T. Estévez, Manuel Guita, Xavier Costa, Vicente Guallart, María Teresa Muñoz, Luis M. Mansilla, Emilio Tuñón, Luis Díaz Mauriño, Anna Pla Català, Dietmar Steiner, Karl Shweflin Chu, Josep Miàs, Jorge García de la Cámara, Borja Ferrater, Ester Rovira, Joan Viñoria, Jorge Vidal, Ethel Baraona, Miquel Lacasta / Archikubik

Master International Cooperation: Sustainable Emergency Architecture (Official)

— *Directors:*

Carmen Mendoza-Arroyo, Sandra Bestraten

— *Coordinator:*

Raquel Colacios

Master's Degree in Biodigital Architecture (Official)

— *Director:*

Alberto T. Estévez

Postgraduate Degree in Accessibility and Design for All

— *Director:*

Enrique Rovira-Beleta