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THE SENSES OF LIVING IN THREE ACTS: REPRESENTATION, COMFORT AND PRIVACY

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ABSTRACT

Considering the single-family residence as a cultural artefact, a product and producer of social relations, this article intends to investigate the notions of representation, comfort and privacy in their practices and materialities, from the moment of their constitution, at the turn of the twentieth century, to their transformations, in the mid-1920s. From this panorama, we intend to problematize the professional and social *habitus* of architects like Lina Bo Bardi, Vilanova Artigas and Paulo Mendes da Rocha, who have questioned the “bourgeois” domesticity in the 1960s, and proposed a new lifestyle. It aims at pointing out the ambiguities of such critique, detailing it historically to present other possibilities for building dialogues between architects and society in contemporaneity.

KEYWORDS

Modern Housing. *Habitus*. Representation. Comfort. Privacy.

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OS SENTIDOS DO MORAR EM TRÊS ATOS: REPRESENTAÇÃO, CONFORTO E PRIVACIDADE

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RESUMO

Tomando a residência unifamiliar como um artefato cultural, produto e produtor de relações sociais, este artigo pretende investigar as noções de representação, conforto e privacidade em suas práticas e materialidades, do momento de sua constituição, na virada do século XX, até suas transformações, em meados dos anos 1920. A partir desse panorama, pretende-se problematizar o *habitus* profissional e social de arquitetos como Lina Bo Bardi, Vilanova Artigas e Paulo Mendes da Rocha, que questionaram na década de 1960 a domesticidade “burguesa”, propondo um novo modo de vida. Trata-se de apontar as ambiguidades dessa crítica, circunstanciando-a historicamente para, então, assinalar outras possibilidades de construção de diálogos entre os arquitetos e a sociedade na contemporaneidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Habitação Moderna. *Habitus*. Representação. Conforto. Privacidade.

THE SENSES OF LIVING IN THREE ACTS: REPRESENTATION, COMFORT AND PRIVACY

Between the end of the nineteenth century and the second half of the twentieth century in Brazil, the single-family residences of the middle and upper classes underwent intense transformations that could be understood from the constitution and clashes of the notions of representation, comfort and privacy. These notions were linked to a diverse set of strategies to conquest and maintain the social, economic and cultural positions in a world increasingly marked by mobility, in which a house had assumed a central role as mediator of symbolic and concrete relations, as well as inculcator of practices and customs (CARVALHO, 2008; MENESES, 2008; COSTA, 1983). Considering a residence as a material, mental and social production, with three intrinsically articulated dimensions – as representation, as artefact and as field of interactions and disputes (MENESES, 1996, p.149), we intend to investigate, in a historically detailed way, from São Paulo, the moment when these notions were constituted at the turn of the twentieth century, their transformations from the mid-1940s, and their questionings in the 1960s.

“TELL ME HOW YOU LIVE, I WILL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE”

The period between the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century concentrated fundamental moments of change in the socio-spatial organization of São Paulo. In these decades, the city has undergone intense demographic, socioeconomic, political and spatial transformations, beginning its modernization and metropolization process (COSTA, 1977; COSTA, 1983). It was in the wake of this process that certain previously unnecessary instruments of power affirmation and social position were stated. One of them, according to Jurandir Freire Costa, was “*the form of sociability that consists of periodically receiving at parties and domestic meetings, leading figures from the economic, social and political world*” (COSTA 1983, p. 104). Hence the creation of a new type of control of day-to-day life, and of various tactics of representation in search of connections and social networks that could be converted into commercial exchanges, contracts and other forms of economic relations that marked the constitution of a new *habitus*¹. It was for this purpose that the middle and upper classes were concerned with elaborating business cards, and all sorts of receptions in domestic spaces specially designed for this purpose of public representation.

Betting on the communicative capacity of architecture and urbanism, the construction of this representation began with the choice of neighborhoods and composition of façades (CAMPOS, 2008, p.50) in the most varied styles, according to symbolic concerns of material, professional and identity issues. A good example is the residence of the Danish Adam Dietrich von Bülow (1895), built on Avenida Paulista in the Germanic or Norman style. The property was a rereading of the European summer cottages, and served to express the fortune of its owner and his success as a foreigner in the face of disputes with the local elites. In the case of foreigners, due to the absence of exclusive elite institutions

¹ The concept of *habitus* in Bourdieu (1983, 1989, 2007) refers to an open system of dispositions, actions and perceptions that individuals acquire in their social experiences, both in the material and corporeal dimension, and in the symbolic and cultural dimension. It is a matrix, determined by the social position of the individual, which allows him to think, see and act in the most varied social, political, moral and aesthetic situations.

in São Paulo, the residence had an even more crucial importance in showing prosperity in their social ascension efforts (MARINS, 2016, p. 59-66).

However, the strategies of representation were not restricted to the urban scope, they passed through the interior of the house and focused on its agency and decoration. Several attributions were mobilized to inform the visitor about the moral and economic qualities of the resident, especially in the reception rooms (CAMPOS, 1997; HOMEM, 2010; CARVALHO, 2008). As Machado de Assis pointed out in "Straight line and curved line" ("Linha reta e linha curva"), during Tito's visit to Emilia, "*the examination of the room and the objects that filled it*" should be considered "*in the study he wanted to do of the girl's spirit. Tell me how you live, I will tell you who you are*" (ASSIS, 1994, p.20).

In a world where "all that is solid melts into air", a good evaluation of the taste and refinement of the owner and his family was fundamental to build, maintain, and expand his network of political, economic, and social insertion. For this reason, decorative choices, spatial agencies, and forms of reception have served the education of future generations, guaranteeing the family's social reproduction and management of its economic and symbolic capitals. Concerned with the future of their heirs, the well-established families configured their homes as a pedagogical device, whose codes involved learning the proper body gestures and recognizing the pertinence of using each ambience, its furniture and objects, as well as the limits of circulation according to their social and family position (MALTA, 2011; CARVALHO, 2008).

Massively published from the nineteenth century, manuals of civility systematized these lessons, just as manuals of domestic life emphasized the influence that the good choice of objects, colors and textures exerted on children, initiating them in the pleasures of high culture and the education of sight, fundamental to acquire the much valued good taste and refinement (BOURDIEU, 1983; CARVALHO, 2008; MALTA, 2011; VALENCIA, 2014). A piano displayed in the living room with a small bust of Chopin, not only communicated its pecuniary value, but also the alleged erudition of the owner. At the same time, the instrument could be played by the daughter, serving the disputes by the most eligible young men, in which the taste, good education, grace and physical appearance of the offspring weighed heavily (COSTA, 1983, p. 107-8).

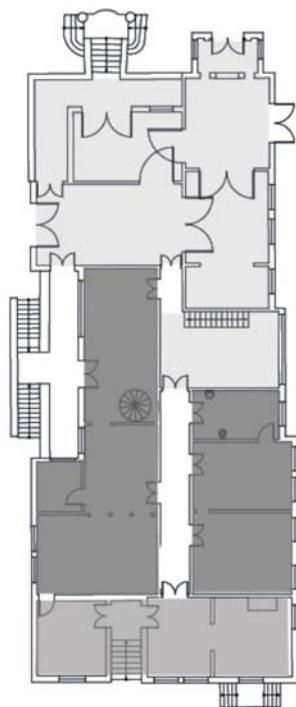
In this arrangement, the marriage involved a clear division of roles. The wife was responsible for the administration of the home, and for the ostentation of her husband's financial prosperity, expressed in clothes, jewellery and free time, emulating a daily life untouched by work (CARVALHO, 2008). Following this effort, the decoration of women's spaces such as the *boudoir* and the living room were guided by the exhibition of wealth, as a result, many of these rooms were called "*golden salons*", like in the Residence Franco de Mello (SILVA, FERREIRA *et al.*, 2015). In these rooms filled with carpets, French-style furnishings, mirrors, "bronzes", crystals and waxed floors, hovered the dome of sumptuousness. Their colors, as well as the choice of furniture and its organization, should encourage the mood and the sensation of reception propitious for social encounter. It was here that the hostess organized events that comprised not only female leisure but also the role of strengthening ties of friendship and cordiality, which cooperated to weave the networks of the

desired relation. Men complied with the ode to work and moral rectitude, based on severe behaviour, formal dress, the use of objects such as suits, watches and glasses, which referred to intellectual work, symbolically distancing them from the typical activities of manual workers. In the same sense, their ambiances were marked by furniture of dark color, with sober and/or rectilinear design (CARVALHO, 2008).

Due to an intensifying routine and growing anxiety fuelled by the confrontation with metropolitan life and an increasingly competitive world, domestic spaces and male artefacts served other purposes as well. In the magazines, there were plenty of indications of therapies and inventions with the purpose of providing *"rest for the body and the spirit"*, forgetfulness of the *"thorny struggles of life"* (DURVAL, 1894, p.2). Opposing the chaos of the modern city and the world of production, a house should also meet the needs of pleasure, rest and evasion. Thus, the residence of these social groups was transformed into a psychic, emotional and corporal shelter, a temple of comfort.

This way of thinking the house led to a search for exclusively residential suburbs, where the property was implemented in the center of the lot, amid wide gardens that provided contact with nature, reinforcing the separation between urban and private life, and emphasizing the desired sense of evasion and protection. For the same purpose, the arrangement of the program, inspired by French models, was divided into three distinct areas – social, service and intimate – whose relations to the exterior and the internal articulations were mediated by setbacks, verandas, vestibules, corridors, stairways, doors and openings that directed the circulation, avoiding interference and unwanted encounters (LEMOS, 1985; HOMEM, 2010).

Figure 1: Plan of Residence Franco de Mello, where the three areas of the house are specified: social (light gray), intimate (dark gray, and in the middle) and service (middle gray, at the back); interconnected by a long corridor (white), divided by three doors that operated as "filters" between the three sectors. On the right, photograph of the corridor, taken from the kitchen door (with serving hatches) towards the doors of the social area. Source: SILVA; FERREIRA *et al.*, 2015.



This sectorization allowed each space to have a specific practical and symbolic function, marking the transitions, establishing well-defined social “filters”, and hiding the labor activities arranged at the back of the lot, away from the eyes of the residents and visitors. Through this organization, the spaces of private comfort were separated from those destined to ceremonial representation, guaranteeing the effectiveness of work evasion, as well as the proper functioning of the representation strategies, which should be kept away from the secrets of the objects and gestures in the intimate spaces, which could denounce ways of life or tastes uncharacteristic of public life.

In this context, the dimensions and formats of the rooms were determined according to the appropriateness to the activity for which they were designated, considering their functionality, comfort and corporal and psychic convenience. Therefore, the house started to be designed from the inside out, with the support of new materials and industrial techniques, generating polygonal compositions and cut volumes, although the appearance was not discarded (RICE, 2007). In fact, the search for the construction of a cosy nest led to the coating and ornamentation of all environments in order to erase the marks of the constructive process and, at the same time, to compose introvert scenarios, favourable to visual delight and to the messages that each ambience should communicate according to its use. The curtains dimmed the entrance of light, creating a pleasant and cosy atmosphere. The coatings, their materials and tonalities contributed to the control of luminosity and usually exhibited picturesque subjects that gave rise to reverie and well-being. The manuals of civility recommended avoiding controversial themes at the table, indicating for the dining room the display of images that could exalt the pleasures of food in order to regulate the moods (MALTA, 2011).

Comfort also served to domesticate the emotions and passions of the middle and upper casts. From the upholstery of the armchairs to the pleasure of the delight obtained through the ordination and decorative composition, all the well-being provided by these devices were gentle agents of the behavioural disciplinarization, with a view to securing the patrimony, family cohesion, offspring education and labor routine (GAY, 2002). In the manuals of domestic life, the relations between comfort and sexual control were explicit, attributing to the woman the task of keeping the house pleasurable, both materially and socially, preventing a mistreated, ugly or boring household from leading the husband elsewhere (MALTA, 2011). Women should also find their pleasure in the house, without which they would hardly agree with their domestic castling. In this sense, doctors, moralists and novelists played a fundamental role in promoting maternal love, linking female satisfaction to family care, placing all members under surveillance (COSTA, 1983; CARVALHO, 2008; SANTOS, 2015). The individual rooms and beds, separating the bodies of brothers and sisters, couples and children, previously gathered in the same bed, was another measure of moralizing comfort that avoided the sexuality of the couple to stimulate the curiosity of the children.

However, this bedroom had a side effect in being one of the main refuges of intimacy, a proper place for secrecy, adventures of the mind and the discovery of the body. The rooms were devices that ensured the individuation process at

home, in an effort to distinguish the identity of parents and children. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this endeavour found obstacles in the social and economic dependence of the parents and within a very hierarchical family logic. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the individual overlapped his family. The consolidation of school and health institutions contributed to this overlapping; as well as the changes in gender relations, and women's entry into the labor market, in a timid but continuous and expansive movement; the transformations in the senses and the forms of marriage, and the increasing choice for love, to the detriment of the social and economic interests; also the growth and stability of the golden years. The bedroom, but also the city and, in a broader sense, modernization, provided the mental, material and cultural support for the conquest of this autonomy and liberation (PROST, 2009), which reverberated in the transformations the domestic space went through from this moment.

“IT IS HORRIFYING TO DESIGN HOUSES FOR MADAMS”

Delineated in the last decades of the nineteenth century and based on the notions of representation, comfort and privacy, the way of living of the middle and upper classes defined the design and organization of their single-family residences until at least the 1920s. From that moment, under the impact of the changes in social and gender relations indicated above, and the gradual influence of the American culture, new housing habits emerged, less prone to the old rituals of formality inspired by the way of life of the nineteenth-century European elites. Such modifications could be observed at various scales.

The elite neighbourhoods, which so far had been designed as urban walkways for exhibition and strolling, were consolidated for the first time, in the form of garden suburbs, as exclusive spaces for the upper classes, distinct and distant from the spaces of leisure, commerce and work (WOLFF, 2000; FELDMAN, 2005; MARINS, 2011; FERREIRA, 2017). In this process, family intimacy prevailed over public representation, also affecting the internal space of the house, especially in the social area. The gradual decrease of the program is noticeable in the variety and specialized magazines, with the disappearance of ambiances such as the smoking room, the boudoir, the study and the pool room, whose activities began to be carried out in specialized buildings in the city (SILVA, 2013, p.150; PAULILO, MARQUES; FERREIRA, 2016). Even when they remained in the domestic interior, some rooms acquired new connotations and constituted other articulations. The cabinet, previously isolated and with exclusive entrance for clients, destined to daily work, became an office integrated to the social area, dedicated to study, leisure and eventual work. Likewise, the dining room had its area reduced and integrated into the drawing room, which ceased to be an exclusive place for social exhibition and began to approach the living room, an intimate and comfortable living space for the family.

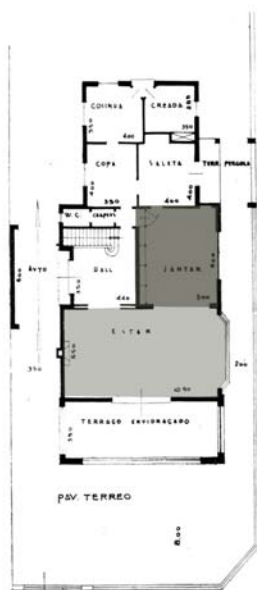


Figure 2: Plan of Residence Ernesto Chamma, built on Rebouças Avenue (1947), in which one can observe the integration of the dining room (dark gray) to the drawing room (light gray), probably intended for family leisure and reception, the largest ambiance in the house, to the detriment of the first, which is diminished. In the picture on the right, taken from the living room, one can observe the simplification of the decoration, resulting from the gradual deritualization of the family coexistence and receptions. Source: Acrópole Digital Magazine, Oct. 1947. Collection / FAUUSP Library / Unidentified authorships.

In the wake of this process that occupied the first half of the twentieth century, a group of architects, critics of the ongoing social structure, some linked to socialist ideology, even if not always directly, sought to build another world. Hence the centrality that the single-family residence – a major symbol of the “bourgeois” way of life against which they stood – assumed in their critique². This change of attitude in relation to the residence configured as the main commissions of architecture offices since the nineteenth century reveals that, in the course of modernization, the professionals of the area were reviewing not only the principles that guided their practice, but also their social function, trying to define the architectural field³ from other political and disciplinary parameters (DURAND, 1989; SILVA, 2012; ROSATTI, 2013).

Thus, if until the 1940s, architects were placed at the service of their clients, trying to understand their needs and their desires; from then on, it was important for this group to propose new forms of spatial and productive organization that would contribute to the construction of another society. In this sense, the professional should not be at the service of the client, but affirm himself as an interpreter of society, a transformative agent, having the city in the horizon, something made explicit by Vilanova Artigas when recalling, during testimony in 1984, his trajectory:

In the 50's, I thought it was necessary to change the house typology in São Paulo. It was about modifying the internal spatial division of the middle class house in São Paulo, which needed to be updated in relation to the social changes taking place in our country. It could no longer continue to imitate the traditional house, influenced by life in the country. At that time, for example, it was common for houses to keep the driveway reminiscent of the old coach house, with the servants' quarters and the laundry tub at the back of the house. For me, they should be thought of as an object with four facades, more or less equal, adjusting to the landscape, as a unity (ARTIGAS, 2003, p. 217).

It was on this horizon that the conflicts between architects and clients became increasingly frequent, the latter were seen as people with whom it was necessary to counteract, which established a series of resistances and prescriptions for the architect's project to be imposed according to the principles governing the discipline and ethics that guided his worldview. Such conflicts were part of the effort to

² Marlene Acayaba, on the occasion of the reedition of the book *Residências em São Paulo: 1947-1975* (2011), recalls that in order to convince Julio Katinsky to advise her in a masters research on “bourgeois residences”, she had to “eliminate the sinister word, or rather the ‘sinister approach’ and simply replace it with ‘vanguard houses’” (p. 30)

³ A field is defined, for Bourdieu (1989, 2007), by the autonomy of a certain space that is social, cultural, economic, educational, scientific, etc. – in which relationships of competition and dispute are established over the domination of the system of relations in the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods.

create other forms of insertion and professional practice, as Lina Bo Bardi's comment on the Valeria P. Cirrel House (1958) makes clear:

I have designed some houses but only for people I know, whom I esteem. It is horrifying to design houses for madams, where that insipid conversation enters the discussion of what the pool will be like, the curtains... I have done more public works, always in collective work. I would love to make popular houses. I have several personal studies in this sense but, for the time being, it seems that there is no possibility (BO BARDI, 1993, p. 117).

Despite being synthetic, the passage is full of senses. From the outset, it shows the conflicting position of the architect with the clientele. A position based on the explicit repudiation of the notions of representation, comfort and privacy that, as we have seen, had guided the symbolic and material production of the "bourgeois" residence. In fact, it was against these values that Lina stood, and the compliment she made to Artigas's houses in the first issue of the *Habitat* magazine, stating that they broke "all the mirrors of the bourgeois hall", could not have been more explicit (BO BARDI, 1950 apud ROSATTI, 2013). At the same time, it indicated the architect's contempt, shared by some of her contemporaries, for this type of commission and client, reaffirming the commitment of the profession with works of public character and collective use, intended for the popular classes, although they were not always at their reach⁴.

Contradictorily, despite not having the constraints imposed by a private client, when designing her famous Glass House (1950-1951), Lina did not adhere completely to the propositions she praised, perpetuating part of the values against which she stood, either for the choice of a neighbourhood inspired by the bucolic values of the Garden City, away from the city center, with large lots destined exclusively for residential use; or for the spatial and visual segregation of the living, intimate and service areas; or even for the stairs, doors and corridors, which filtered the circulation among visitors, owners and servants.⁵ Such a contradiction was noted by Francesco Tertori and Giò Ponti on their visit to the residence, prompting Silvana Rubino to ponder that:

[...] being or not bourgeois in São Paulo in the 1950s-60s, concerning an intellectuality that was a fraction of class in the sense used by Raymond Williams, more than an emptied discourse or a space solution, was an almost insoluble tension (RUBINO, 2017, p. 128-9)⁶.

If, from the point of view of comfort and privacy, the Glass House had accompanied the transformations in progress since the 1920s, without breaking radically with the existing order, the notion of representation, on the other hand, was restored with new meanings. The famous images by the publicity photographer Chico Albuquerque⁷, in which the architect appears standing with her eyes facing the horizon, wearing shirt and trousers, a wristwatch and holding a book – all work indexes hitherto used in the exclusive composition of male profiles (CARVALHO, 2008) –, leave no doubt how much Lina sought with this work, the first one in Brazil, to affirm herself professionally (RUBINO, 2017). In this sense, the house was designed to be exhibited either as a manifesto, through which she affirmed a new way of living and a new architectural language; or as a vehicle for publicizing her activity as an architect and the one developed with her husband, Pietro Maria Bardi, at the head of the São Paulo

⁴ Still recuperating the making process of the research that gave rise to the book *Residências em São Paulo: 1947-1975*, Acayaba states that Vilanova Artigas criticized the pertinence of his object of analysis, reinforcing "the importance of the popular house" and pointing out "how the people would be the ideal client, capable of providing work for all architects, even though they were still far away at that time" (2011, p. 37).

⁵ This attitude changed in the late 1950s, after Lina's passage through Salvador, which explains the difference between her residence and those she designed for private clients later, such as Valéria P. Cirell.

⁶ See Raymond Williams (1999), "The Bloomsbury Fraction", in Portuguese "A fração Bloomsbury", available at: <<http://www.revistas.usp.br/plural/article/viewFile/77127/80996>> last access 10 June 2017.

⁷ These photos make up the Chico Albuquerque collection and can be accessed at the Instituto Moreira Salles website, available at <http://fotografia.ims.com.br/sites/#149979335928_30>, last access 15 June 2017.

Museum of Art. This double function was disclosed in articles in specialized journals and also in the entry “The House”, created by her, published in the *Encyclopedia of Women* (1958), explaining how in this period the women architects “took an active part in the reconfiguration of the traditional feminine knowledge” as a strategy of professional affirmation (RUBINO, 2017, p.56).

The ambiguities found in the Glass House marked other residential projects of the time, indicating that the ongoing proposals for domesticity review were experienced in a conflictive way, even among those who shared the same worldview (ROSATTI, 2013). Sílvia Virgínia Czapski affirms, recollecting the experience in the house that Artigas designed in 1949 for her parents, the photographer Alice Brill and the doctor Julian Czapski:

Its front was made with large transparent glass plates. If transparency took away the privacy of the family, this was a small inconvenience that they would have to get used to. [...] Professional and mother, Alice prepared everything by herself, for by this time the “secretary of the home” had gone. Because he thought it was socially incorrect, the architect did not provide for a housekeeper’s room. [...] As one could only leave the house through the living room, it was necessary to cross it with the trash to take it to the street. One more price of modern architecture, which placed beauty above practicality (CZAPSKI apud ROSATTI, 2016, p.151).

In addition to the criticism of lack of privacy and comfort in the terms established from the twentieth century, the testimony confirms the house experience as a pedagogical device, no longer to boast the economic position of its owner, but to affirm the commitment to certain aesthetic and ethical dispositions (ROSATTI, 2016). The proposal was also in favour of a more relaxed and integrated experience between family members and close friends, questioning old social and gender hierarchies for a new, shared way of life and supposedly without secrets. Hence, a more fluid articulation between the three sectors of the residence, the emphasis on the social area and the sensible decrease of the intimate and service areas (BUZZAR, 2014, MEDRANO; BARROS, 2013, SILVA, 2016), as shown by Deocélia Vianna’s testimony about the house Artigas designed for her family in 1950:

[...] ours had 500m² of built area and only two tiny little bedrooms, which could barely fit us. Mine could only fit the double bed with two bedside tables, and built-in closets, of course, and a complete bathroom, rather small, and Vianinha’s bedroom could fit a bed and a bookcase that could be turned into a study table, and a bathroom with shower. Half of the building was on ramps, a room of 8X6m, another of 5X4m, both tiled areas, the kitchen, tiny as well, was at the front of the house, facing the street. For a housewife, it was horrifying! Artigas ended up fighting with me, I had no right to give opinions, I did not understand about construction, I was stupid. And the money for the contractors was endless. [...] I was already refusing to live in the house, which would take a butler with gloves and everything, something that did not agree with our way of thinking. To shorten the story, there was a glass wall next to the first ramp, three meters high on the lowest part and nine meters on the highest. How could those glasses be washed? We would have to hire a company with suspended scaffold to clean it up (VIANNA, 1984 apud ROSATTI, 2016, p.154).

Conceived as manifesto-houses⁸, a space of experimentation and affirmation for the architects, these residences have synthesized some of the debates happening in the Brazilian architectural field in the middle of the twentieth century. However, besides reverberating the ongoing transformations and the ways in which the architects stood for them, these houses once again occupied, despite the social critique they carried, a central position in the avant-garde architectural production and criticism dedicated to it. This centrality was no longer based on the social prestige of their residents, but on the professional distinction of the architects, presented and then recognized as intellectuals and artists of high political and cultural value for the country's development.

“AN INGENIOUS CONSTRUCTION THAT WAS MADE TO BE OCCUPIED LIKE A HOUSE”

Indebted to the transformations in progress since the 1920s, and to the proposals for revising the forms of housing formulated by architects such as Artigas at the turn of the 1950s, Paulo Mendes da Rocha radicalized the critique of the notions of representation, comfort and privacy in his private residence, but not without contradictions. In spite of affirming in several occasions that the “*planet cannot admit anymore that you sell a piece of it to make a house, and with that, little by little, construct an entire city according to this model*” (MENDES DA ROCHA, 2016, p. 33)⁹, at that time, in another context, as soon as he reached personal and financial conditions, the architect also built his own single-family dwelling in the Butantã neighbourhood.

Implemented on the banks of the Pinheiros River, near the future campus of the University of São Paulo, where Mendes da Rocha taught, the exclusively residential neighbourhood was composed of large lots interspersed with squares and green areas. The bucolic experience, the distance from the agitation and vices of the city was also affirmed there, especially because, as the architect recalls, the highway section Marginal Pinheiros had not been built on that side yet, and even the river had not reached the current degree of pollution, allowing the imagination of leisure and rest activities, such as the use of a rowing boat (MENDES DA ROCHA, 2016, p. 37). In this sense, the proposal did not directly contradict the “bourgeois” urban models, as it is possible to see, not only in the ambience of the neighbourhood, but also in some projective solutions, among them the implementation, the topographic reconfiguration, the landscaping and the elevation on pilotis that emphasized the isolation of the building and protected the domestic interior.

Somehow, the contradiction was commented on by Mendes da Rocha when, instead of marking the alignment of the lot and highlighting the residence in order to confirm the domain of private property, he sought to give continuity to the public sidewalk, and especially when he created a slope to integrate the terrain to the Monteiro Lobato Square, removing the focus off the residence, so that it could concentrate on the landscape. In this way, the solution reached the sense of luxury and ostentation that the facade accomplished in the “bourgeois” residence.

⁸ Based on Beatriz Colomina (2007), Silvana Rubino points out in her full professor thesis how this idea was expensive for the avant-garde production since the first decades of the twentieth century (2017, p.5).

⁹ Such considerations have reflected on the critical analyses of the residential production by Paulo Mendes da Rocha (NOBRE, 2007; WISNIK, 2012; PISANI, 2013; OTONDO, 2013) and explain the almost inexistence of projects of the genre in the two volumes dedicated to his work (ARTIGAS, 2000).



Figure 3: Views of the Butantã Residence from Engineer João de Ulhôa Cintra Street, and from the corner of Monteiro Lobato Square. Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha.

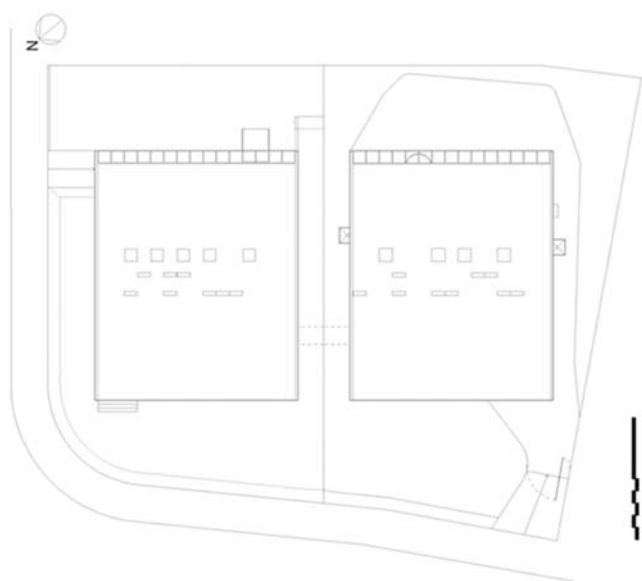


Figure 4: Implementation of the residences of Paulo Mendes da Rocha (left) and Lina Mendes da Rocha Cruz Secco (right). Above, side view of the architect's residence before the development of the vegetation. Source: Acrópole Digital Magazine, Sept. 1967. Collection of the FAUUSP Library/ Unidentified authorships.

It was also against this notion that the architect carried out two other actions. The first was the duplication of his house. In reality, the Butantã Residence are two residences: one for the architect's family and another for his sister's, Lina Mendes da Rocha Cruz Secco, built next door (NOBRE, 2007; BASTOS; ZEIN, 2010; PISANI, 2013). Twin residences, but not identical, whose similarities, emphasized in the implementation, in the general design of the façades and in the structural solution, break with the symbolic association hitherto sought between residence and owner, in order to affirm their economic status and social position.

While denying the emblems of wealth and ostentation, other forms of representation have also been placed here. One was political and moral, and would confirm the leftist commitment and the architect's attachment to values of slackening and austerity, worshiped by a clientele formed by liberal professionals, artists and groups from the productive sectors of high economic and cultural capital, whose *habitus* defined the fruition of an abstract aesthetics, free of adornments, and the establishment of "*a stylized, contemplative and disinterested relation with the world of art and the world of life*" (ROSATTI, 2016, p. 46).

The design of fixed concrete furniture, which did not allow any changes and adaptations, shared these values. Its hard and rough materiality was against the expectations of physical and visual comfort, imposing a distant experience from the sensations of relaxation, delight and pleasure

worshiped in the “bourgeois” residences.¹⁰ The smallness of its dimensions imposed limits on its everyday uses and on keeping objects, directly affecting the consumption, an activity that had assumed centrality in the construction of the “bourgeois” representations (CARVALHO, 2008, p. 22). If the house was not configured as a unit of consumption, it was affirmed as a space of production, notably intellectual, an attitude reinforced by the presence of tables and desks in all the rooms.

Another already mentioned representation was that of a professional character, according to which the house, in its spatial, formal and constructive eccentricity, together with the discursive radicality, was the purest statement of the architect’s aesthetic and ethical ideals. In other words, the house, at this point too, was a markedly authorial, socially engaged work of art, fruit of the critical interpretation of society and the desire to transform it. The latter representation, as the “Architect’s House”, was mobilized by the clientele as a mark of distinction, proof of its artistic refinement and recognition of the architect’s genius.

The second critical action of the “bourgeois” representation was the conception of the residence as a pre-fabrication rehearsal; hence, the identical design of all frames and the adoption of a rigorous modulation, which aimed, in a future horizon, at the serial fabrication of the constructive elements (PIÑON, 2002; BASTOS; ZEIN, 2010, CASA DE ARQUITETO, 2013; MENDES DA ROCHA, 2016, p.82). This way, not only was the individuation effort of the single-family residence hit once again, but also the very image of what a house should be was dismantled. None of the motifs normally associated with the domestic universe was handled by the architect, but rather the chosen materials, forms, and constructive systems referred to public works of collective use or infrastructure that were considered essential for national development – schools, hospitals, administrative headquarters, bus stations, subway lines and stations, hydroelectric plants etc. In light of these investments, the houses served as small rehearsals that should be used in this set of initiatives of a greater size and political significance, with which the professional field should preferably be involved (SILVA, 2012; ROSATTI, 2016). The commitment to prefabrication, however, given the contingencies of the moment, remained restricted to a discourse, serving in the specific case of the Butantã Residence only for the reutilization of the slab forms for the floor and roof (MENDES DA ROCHA, 2016, p. 37)¹¹.

In addition to this technical commitment exalted by the architect and his critics (PIÑON, 2002; NOBRE, 2007; CASA DE ARQUITETO, 2013; BASTOS; ZEIN, 2010; WISNIK, 2012; PISANI, 2013; OTONDO, 2013) the drawing and materiality of these elements informed other intentions, reminiscent of the fascination that many architects had for the mechanization and rationalization of work, credulous of their capacity for redemptive transformation. Thus, it was necessary to keep in sight the ingenious way in which things were accomplished, so that each constructive element could be clearly identified in its individuality, articulation, and functioning. Hence, the option for apparent reinforced concrete; for the total absence of cladding; for the marks of concreting forms; for the separation between each element, to the point that the Venetian doors and the sealing panels did not reach the slab, leaving gaps between the ambiances; and for the visibility of the hydraulic and electrical tubings. The system of

¹⁰This aspect was present in the testimony of one of the architect’s sons, collected by Bárbara Cardoso Garcia (2017) for the development of the communication “Concrete furniture and gender experiences: Paulo Mendes da Rocha’s Butantã house in periodicals”, part of the Master’s dissertation *Inhabiting residences with fixed furniture in São Paulo 1950-1970*, advised by Ruth Verde Zein. The work was presented at the Thematic Symposium *Material Culture and gender relations: design, fashion, architecture and urbanism*, coordinated by Joana Mello de Carvalho e Silva and Marinês Ribeiro dos Santos during the 13th Women’s World Congress (MM) / International Seminar Making Gender 11.

¹¹Frustrated at that moment, the prefabrication initiative was recovered by the architect at the Gerassi Residence (1988-1991), not by chance, the only one that appears in the first volume of his complete works (ARTIGAS, 2000).



Figure 5: View of the frame in details.
Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha

counterweight for the frames that conform the glass panels of the longitudinal facades is the most striking example of this attitude, because when using it, it is possible to understand its mechanism, by seeing each one of its pieces in action.

Nothing could be more averse to the “bourgeois” aesthetics, with its coatings and ornaments designed to completely erase the marks of work, including those used to construct the building. In this inversion, praise for the industrial world not only encompassed the architectural language at all scales, including the domestic one, but also submitted the house’s spatiality and materiality to its productive logic, as Mendes da Rocha’s explanation of his residence’s design makes clear: “*The house can be understood like this: an ingenious construction that was made to be occupied like a house*” (MENDES DA ROCHA, 2016, p. 33).

Work marks are also visible in the organization of the program. Contrary to what happened in the “bourgeois” residences, the servant’s room was not implemented at the back of the lot, out of sight, but on the ground floor, in a visible place, just at the entrance of the residence, despite being separated from the other dwelling areas. A similar solution was

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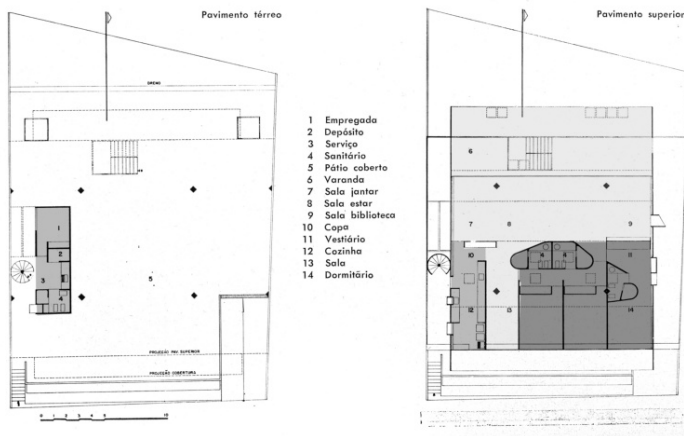


Figure 6: Plans of the Francisco Malta Cardoso residence (1963), in which one can observe the surpassing of the social area (light gray) in relation to the service area (medium gray) and the intimate (dark gray) areas. Subtitles: (1) Maid’s room; (2) Storeroom; (3) Service area; (4) Bathroom; (5) Covered patio; (6) Balcony; (7) Dining room; (8) Living room; (9) Library room; (10) Scullery; (11) Changing room; (12) Kitchen; (13) Lunch room; (14) Dormitory.

Source: Acrópole Digital Magazine, Sept. 1967. Collection of the FAUUSP Library / Unidentified authorship.

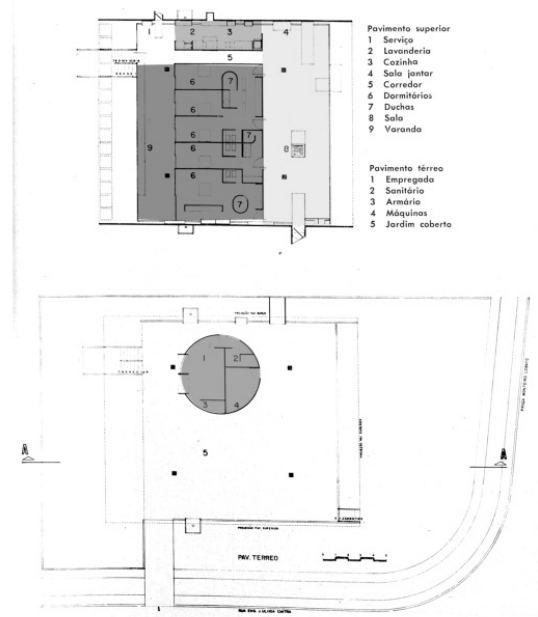


Figure 7: Plans of the Paulo Mendes da Rocha residence (1964), in which one can observe the interweaving of the social area (light gray), the service area (medium gray) and the intimate (dark gray) areas. Subtitles: Upper floor: (1) Service area; (2) Laundry; (3) Kitchen; (4) Dining room; (5) Corridor; (6) Dormitory; (7) Shower room; (8) Living room; (9) Covered balcony. Ground floor: (1) Maid’s room; (2) Maid’s bathroom; (3) Wardrobe; (4) Machine room; (5) Covered garden.

Source: Acrópole Digital Magazine, Sept. 1967. Collection of the FAUUSP Library / Unidentified authorships.



Figure 8: Image of the entrance of the Butantã Residence. On the right, the servant's room, and on the left, the only access staircase.
Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha.



Figure 9: View of the main door and the "veranda" of the bedrooms from the entrance of the residence.
Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha.



Figure 10: View of the living room and bedrooms, in which the distance between the closures and the slab can be observed.
Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha.



Figure 11: View of the bathrooms.
Source: Photo by Lauro Rocha

adopted in the houses of the architect's sister and of Francisco Malta Cardoso (1963); although in these works some distancing filters were constructed, mainly due to the location of the access staircase.

The critique of the "bourgeois" way of living also concerns the agency of the social, intimate and service sectors, whose ties are strained, again more radically in the architect's house than in those commissioned by private clients. Such tensioning is triggered initially by the design of a single access to the residence, through which one enters the service and intimate areas, and not in the social ambience, as in the previous examples. Thus, at first glance, one can see on the left the pantry, laundry, and kitchen, whose rooms were partially opened by the absence of doors and the existence of low partitions, and on the right, the veranda and bedrooms, whose closure was also partial and mobile, accomplished by shutters and panels that did not reach the roof slab.

This deliberate inversion breaks with the filters that organized, from the turn of the twentieth century, the domesticity of the middle and upper class residences from marked separations between employers and employees, owners and visitors who, except when directly belonging to the family, remained restricted to the spaces of public character, destined to meetings and reception activities.

This rupture is undoubtedly related to the new forms of sociability and gender relations, but it assumes a deeper radicality, becoming a manifesto in favour of a less segregated and hierarchical domesticity, in which shared experience completely subverted the notion of privacy, and comfort was defined by other parameters, notably those relating to praise for informality. The absence of a powder room emphasizes this subversion by imposing the circulation of visitors into the bedrooms, whose design motivated Flávio Motta to describe the architect's residence as a "*rationalized favela*" (MOTTA, 1967, p.18). The qualification of the critic was related not only to the aforementioned fact that the visitor was placed in direct contact with the space and the experience of the intimate and service areas, but especially to the fact that the closure of these ambiances was partial. In this house, where everything can be

heard, seen and felt, not even the bathrooms, which at the end of the nineteenth century were one of the most private spaces of domestic life (PAULILLO, 2017), escaped from open coexistence.

The impulse to collective life was also induced by the larger size of the living room and the “veranda”, whose spaces were favoured by the direct illumination and by the view of the external landscape, to the detriment of the bedrooms with minimal dimensions, similar to the cells of a monastery, and with only zenithal lighting. Concerning the three sons, this experience was even more intense than for the two daughters, for they had to share their bedroom space, given the absence of individual doors for each cell. From this point of view, in spite of the deposited hopes, the utopia materialized there could assume an imposing and even controlling character. After all, the bedroom as a space of privacy had played an important role in the liberation of the individual from the vigilant family ties. This institution, in those 1960s, was in the midst of a crisis and led to revisions of this type, but they could only be formulated on the horizon of individual autonomy, to which the division of the “bourgeois” residence had collaborated.

In spite of the similar characteristics, the other residences designed by Mendes da Rocha, in the period, do not completely break with the distinction between the social and service entrances, configuring more defined intimate, social and service areas, and spaces that allowed modifications, being more adaptable to the requirements of privacy and comfort. The differences reveal resistance on the part of the clients, as well as some limits to the transforming role of the architect, who had to absorb, even if negotiating, the demands of the clients.

EPILOGUE

The bet on architecture as a modelling force for new social relations and cultural practices involved a civilizing project that sought to revise family hierarchies and break with the “bourgeois” moral scruples. It was a question of building a new society in a historical context marked externally by the Cold War, and internally by the possibilities of national development on its own and independent bases, but they were abruptly restrained by the Civil-Military Coup of 1964. It was on this horizon that, agreeing with the analyses by Flávio Motta, Mendes da Rocha emphasized that individualism and attachment to material things were harmful to society, because they objectified man and isolated him in an endless selfishness (MOTTA, 1967, p.18). Therefore, in designing his home, he emphasized the spaces of coexistence, encounter and exchange not only between family members, but also among friends, impelling a shared experience that should be superimposed upon individual experience. At the same time, he sought to create a domesticity that praised production and rationality to the detriment of consumption and daydreaming.

Despite the placed hopes, the playful aspects of the proposal, and an experience that presented other living possibilities, the course of history has gone through other ways and, by relying on the complete denial of the ongoing social organization, this project did not meet the desired repercussion. In the utopian quest for an *ex-novo* creation, these proposals somehow contributed to

the architect's professional isolation, either because of his intransigence towards the clientele, as made clear by their testimonies, or because of his sacralisation in the field. After all, the virtuous and ideal social model, mark of utopia, can only function if isolated from the contradictions and complexities of the present world (WISNIK, 2016).

This isolation was reinforced by the critique when it privileged an internalist analysis, committed to a specific definition of the architectural field guided by the ideal of creative genius and good form¹². Furthermore, without historicizing the debate about the place of the house in practice and in professional discourse, such interpretations gave these proposals a universal and timeless validity, as if they could be suspended in time and in social space. Without losing sight of the interest of what these architects proposed, it must be recognized that even the most radical proposals were permeated by the typical ambivalences of modernity (BERMAN, 1982). For this reason, only by considering the single-family residence as a social and cultural construct, is it possible to detail historically, and without longing, the elaboration of these proposals, to learn with them, but, again, acknowledging their limits.

In this sense, the current challenge, internal and externally to the professional field, seems to be to construct *heterotopias*, in other words, ties with the present world, without conformism, and therefore, without losing sight of the possibility of transformation and the necessary recognition of conflicts and social contradictions (FOUCAULT, 2013). This bet, articulated with a conception of architecture as cultural manifestation that involves other agents beyond the professionals of the area, seems to weaken the opposition between clients and architects, and to impel dialogue. In this effort, understanding the specificities, permanences and transformations of the social and professional *habitus* from the single-family residence in its various commissioned scales and types, not only constructs more complex and detailed historical interpretations, but also contributes to building new bridges between architect and society in contemporaneity.

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¹² A similar analysis regarding the design was made by Adrián Forty in the book *Objects of Desire* (2007).

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