The Third Generation: Distinctively Mexican in the 21st Century?

by

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Abstract

What role does cultural identity play in architecture? Does contemporary architecture allow for expression of culture? Can the architecture of today reflect the history of a place and simultaneously situate itself in the 21st century? This thesis opens up a positive relationship between culture and architecture and deems it necessary for a design to successfully root itself in the context of a place.

In Mexico, culture is present in everyday life but Mexicans have long debated how to define their identity as a nation and have consistently used architecture as a medium of exploration.

This thesis looks retrospectively at culture and identity throughout Mexican architectural history of the past century and critiques recent projects commissioned by Mexico's National Council for Culture and the Arts.

The findings of this research are applied to a proposed redesign of a traditional crafts market in Mexico City. Can the character of the Mexican culture inform this contemporary project?

Author's Note:

The Mexican culture has always been a source of inspiration for me, especially through its colourful, folkloric *artesanías* and its monumental pre-Hispanic architecture. Visiting my mother's side of the family in Mexico City is always something I look forward to and each visit always brings new museums, monuments, and buildings to explore. One place I never miss paying a visit to, however, is the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market – a truly unique shopping destination in Mexico City full of charm and creativity. It is easy to lose yourself in everything the market has to offer, which fortunately distracts many visitors from its unsightly architecture.

When I decided to tackle this issue as my thesis topic, it soon became apparent that a lot of groundwork would be involved to prepare for any architectural intervention I would propose. Information about the land ownership debate that the Artesanías Market is involved in was only accessible online in the form of newspaper articles, which very often contained few facts and much speculation. Most resources, including the newspaper articles required translation on my part from Spanish to English and are denoted as such in the bibliography.

It also proved to be difficult to obtain any architectural drawings from the *delegacion* Cuauhtemoc, the borough's city hall equivalent, let alone a comprehensive site plan of the area.

Getting information from CONACULTA was also a challenge because my emails and calls were mostly ignored, leaving me to base most of my information from their website and from media coverage.

The two site visits that I made in October 2011 and February 2012 were key in the development of this thesis and allowed me to conduct one-on-one informal interviews with the vendors of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market to get a real sense of their wishes for the market's future and their opinions on what could be improved in the market.

It was also important to me to visit as many of the buildings that are mentioned throughout the thesis as possible. Experiencing the spaces allowed me to better understand the qualities of the architecture and its inspirations.

I am grateful to the people who took the time to answer my questions, recount their personal accounts and experiences, and share some of their own documentation with me.

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I would like to thank my advisor Roger Connah, as well as the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs for partly funding my research trip to Mexico City in October 2011.

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Prologue

"To be truly modern we must come to terms with our tradition"

- Octavio Paz¹

Figure 1: View of Mexico City from Torre Latinoamericana

The 21st century phenomenon of globalization draws two opposing opinions regarding its effect on local traditions and on displays of culture through media such as architecture. One opinion views globalization as a positive and inevitable occurrence, which, if met with resistance, implies that a country is stuck in its traditional past. The other is more critical of globalization and, while recognizing its inevitability, is concerned with the possibility of a global homogenization of culture and tradition, resulting in a loss of identity of a country or region. The effect of globalization is reflected in the contemporary architecture of a country such as Mexico, an emerging nation with a rich history. In order to analyze this situation it is essential to investigate the events that have built up to this 21st century crisis before passing judgment on the reflection of culture (or lack thereof) in Mexican contemporary architecture.

For the purpose of analysis in this thesis, the Mexican architects that will be discussed have been classified into three generations. This loose classification permits the discussions in this thesis to generally refer to a group of architects that share similar ideals, goals, and aesthetic – and changes in aesthetic – within the same time period. It is necessary to view the last century retrospectively to

¹ Herbert J. M. Ypma, Mexican Contemporary (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2010) 1.

Figure 2: Architecture at CU

Figure 3: National Auditorium

properly analyze the contemporary scene in Mexican architecture because it was the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) that sparked a quest for national identity in Mexican architecture. This search continued throughout the 20th century, with architects continuously oscillating between believing in tradition and in modernity, and remains a topic of discussion today. The use of the word 'generation' is also fitting because in Mexico, *generación* can also refer to a graduating academic class and in this thesis each generation is classified based on school of thought.

The First Generation of architects are those who turned to the Functionalist movement that was popular in early 20th century in Europe as a solution to post-Revolutionary Mexican architecture. They sought to express Mexican unity by disassociating their architecture from the traditional architecture of Mexico and to portray Mexico's position as a distinct nation through Modernism. First Generation Mexican architects include Juan O'Gorman, Mario Pani, José Villagrán García, Enrique del Moral, and Luis Barragán, and cover an approximate era from 1920 to the 1960s.

The architects that can be classified as Second Generation are those who were taught by, and began their careers working for, First Generation architects. They were taught to think rationally but would learn to find inspiration from Mexico's pre-Hispanic cultures and would create architecture centered around monumentality. These architects include Ricardo Legorreta, Teodoro González de León, Abraham Zabludovsky, and Agustín Hernández. Second Generation architects emerged onto the scene in their own right at the end of the 1960s and some are still practicing today.

Figure 4: Soumaya Museum

The Third Generation, beginning in the late 1980s, describes the architects who are making their mark on the architectural scene in Mexico today, and will be referred to as 'contemporary'. It is this generation that is of particular interest in this thesis. What have they learned from the first two generations regarding culture and tradition in architecture? How are they dealing with the subject in face of the globalized world we live in? The Third Generation was pioneered by architects Enrique Norten and Bernardo Gómez Pimienta (founders of TEN Arquitectos), Isaac Broid, and Alberto Kalach, but also includes Michel Rojkind and Fernando Romero, young vanguard Mexican architects of today.

For the purpose of this thesis, Enrique Norten has been classified as a Third Generation architect despite bordering between the Second and Third Generations. Norten, along with Gómez Pimienta, Broid and Kalach have been referred to as the "young cosmopolitan avant-garde"², and are being considered as part of the Third Generation because of their style of architecture which embraces and maximizes the use of technology. On a timeline in late 20th century Mexican architecture, these architects overlap with those of the Second Generation and in some cases worked in collaboration with them, yet their inspirations draw from different sources and their approaches to design are more 'foreign' than that of their predecessors. These architects would fit into the label of the "crack" generation of the 1980s and 1990s, defined by Susanne Dussel and José Morales-Saravia, as Mexicans who are breaking away from the accepted

² Peter Herle and Stephanus Schmitz, *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Architecture: Case Studies from the South* (Berlin: Lit, 2009) 139.

canon of monumentality and “describes their will to begin a different trajectory...away from a commercial regionalism and the architecture of official rhetoric.”³

The inclusion of these architects into the Third Generation, however, creates a spectrum between their work and the architects who have recently begun to make waves in Mexico. Norten, Gómez Pimienta, Kalach, and Broid distanced themselves aesthetically from pre-Hispanic tradition and the pyramid but kept some ancient Mexican inspiration as an undercurrent of their work. The architects that follow make a more deliberate separation, almost a rejection, of the traditional, the local, and any pre-Hispanic influence. The unifying factor of the Third Generation is materiality; this group has abolished the heavy concrete and coloured stucco of the Second Generation, replacing these more traditional materials with steel, glass, and prefabricated panels. This shift is similar to that of the First Generation upon adopting Functionalism, yet the Third Generation's change is done as a progressive transition from the aesthetic of the Second Generation, as a reaction to globalization, and in response to architectural design made possible through the use of Computer-Aided Design (CAD). Rojkind and Romero have been classified as late Third Generation because of their similarities and overlap with the architects mentioned above, and also because, with only a handful of projects to their name, it is difficult to tell at this point in time if they will truly distinguish themselves from the early Third Generation architects or if these two groups will remain analogous.

³ Herrie and Schmitz, 137.

Figure 5: Timeline of the Three Generations of Mexican architects

Around the world, Mexican architecture is synonymous with imposing pre-Hispanic ruins or with brightly coloured walls and open spaces made popular by Luis Barragán and Ricardo Legorreta. These typologies have direct correlations with Mexican culture and history, but the presence of culture in Mexican architecture need not be as obvious and can be hinted at through composition, materiality, and distribution of space.

For example, Ricardo Legorreta believed that it is more fruitful to develop a modern style built upon traditional Latin American architecture than to begin from a clean slate, and that distinctly Mexican architecture can be constructed from non-traditional materials.⁴ He was known to dissect historical Mexican architectural forms, such as the pyramid, and to critically analyze its defining features (in this case, its monumentality and inclined planes) to incorporate them into his buildings in a reinterpreted method. This example demonstrates that it is also the attitude and the approach Legorreta employs towards design that identifies his architecture with the Mexican culture.

Figure 6: Legorreta incorporating pyramidal shapes into the Monterrey Library

This thesis will investigate this attitude towards design and will seek to understand how contemporary Mexican architecture can acknowledge its place in Mexican culture while contributing to the globalized world we live in.

⁴ Ricardo Legorreta and Victor Legorreta. "Entrevista a Arq. Ricardo Legorreta Y Arq. Victor Legorreta Por Warren Orbaugh." Interview by Warren Orbaugh. Universidad Francisco Marroquín, 25 Sept. 2007 Universidad Francisco Marroquín 14 Apr. 2011.
<http://newmedia.ufm.edu/gsm/index.php/Entrevista_a_Arq._Ricardo_Legorreta_y_Arq._V%C3%ADctor_Legorreta_por_Warren_Orbaugh>.

Figure 7: An inside view of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanias Market

A challenging site to apply the findings of this exploration between culture and history, and technology and innovation is a traditional handicrafts market in Mexico City. The *Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela* ('La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market) spans almost an entire city block and consists of an agglomeration of market stalls in a range of constructions that are shielded from the street by a bright yellow wall. Some of the stalls are grouped under a single roof, are enclosed by brick walls, and are arranged in the most practical of ways; others are located under tarps or other improvised roofing solutions and consists solely of a table or two of merchandise. Narrow passageways lead visitors through the market to find a wide variety of *artesanías*, or traditional handicrafts, handmade by artisans from all over Mexico and representative of many of Mexico's indigenous tribes. The 'La Ciudadela' market is mostly popular with souvenir-shopping tourists but is also frequented by locals for artesanías such as fine jewelry, household items and decorative pieces. Although the ad-hoc architecture adequately serves the market's purpose of selling Mexican crafts, the market deserves to be a place that celebrates the importance of these items and showcases them beautifully to potential buyers, whether locals or foreigners. The market has seen a decline in customers in recent years, partly due to the downturn in the global economy. Additionally, the 'La Ciudadela' market faces a land ownership debate dating back to its origin and is potentially facing being closed as a result of this ongoing struggle. How can this market be revitalized to celebrate the Mexican culture and the crafts that it sells, contribute to contemporary architecture in Mexico, and be safeguarded as an important cultural site in Mexico City?

Chapter 1 – Culture and Identity

Immaterial Heritage

It is difficult to truly qualify 'culture' because the word encompasses a myriad of elements, from traditions to clothing to a common mindset of the inhabitants of a defined region. Culture, however, can loosely be defined as intangible or "immaterial heritage", which goes beyond what is normally referred to as folklore.⁵ Immaterial heritage is qualified by the people who measure and appreciate it and, through their particular manner of doing so, add to the worth and meaning of the immaterial heritage in question. Each person who celebrates a tradition that has been passed down to them by their ancestors, for instance, carries out that tradition in the way in which they were taught. That is their personal interpretation of a tradition that differs from that of their friend, relative or neighbour. We often take immaterial heritage for granted because the customs we practice are ingrained in our subconscious because they were formed absorbed through our surroundings and learned through practice. Immaterial heritage has perhaps carried a higher profile in recent years because, true to its nature of adoption and adaptation, many traditions have experienced a modernization at the hands of younger generations.⁶ In 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) created the category "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity"⁷, which addresses this elusive

⁵ Lourdes Arizpe, El Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial De Mexico: Ritos Y Festividades (Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrua, 2009) 7.

⁶ Arizpe, 7-9.

⁷ "What is Intangible Heritage?," UNESCO Culture Sector, 20 June 2007, UNESCO, 03 Aug 2012, <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00002> >.

form of heritage in an attempt to safeguard these “living expressions and traditions.”⁸

The following are the seven elements from Mexico that have been added by UNESCO to their list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:⁹

2008	- Indigenous Festivity dedicated to the Dead
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Traditional Mexican cuisine – ancestral, ongoing community culture, the Michoacán paradigm- Places of memory and living traditions of the Otomí-Chichimecas people of Tolinán: the Peña de Bernal, guardian of a sacred territory- Ritual ceremony of the Voladores
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Parachicos in the traditional January feast of Chiapa de Corzo- Pirekua, traditional song of the P'urhépecha
2011	- Mariachi, string music, song and trumpet

Figure 8: Aspects of the Mexican culture that are on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage

⁸ "What is Intangible Heritage?," UNESCO Culture Sector

⁹ "Intangible Heritage Lists," UNESCO Culture Sector, UNESCO, 03 Aug. 2012,

<<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&multinational=3&display1=inscriptionID#tabs>>.

Figure 9: *Trajineras* at Xochimilco

Figure 10: Flyers of Papantla

Figure 12: A Mariachi troupe

Figure 11: Day of the Dead sugar skulls

Culture in Mexico

Mexico's history has created a *mestizo* culture resulting from the blending of the Aztecs and other indigenous groups with the European Spaniards, which is deeply religious and steadfast in its traditions. The Mexican culture encompasses a mixture of the Roman Catholic religion, its Aztec and Mayan heritage, and the many customs and traditions have been passed down through Mexico's numerous indigenous tribes. In short, the Mexican culture of today can be described as an eclectic mix of the different heritages that each played a role in the creation of present-day Mexico. Mexicans are united in taking deep pride in their country. There are countless songs from the national anthem to popular mariachi and *ranchera* tunes, such as *México, Lindo y Querido* (Beautiful and Beloved Mexico) through which Mexicans express their pride and patriotism. The most visually striking feature of the culture is its abundant display of colour, which is present in everything from traditional garments (such as *rebozos*) to its *artesanías*, to the façades of *pueblo* houses.

Recently, in a National Values Survey, realized by Banamex, one of Mexico's national banks, Mexicans were asked the question, "What do you think has been Mexico's greatest achievement in its 200 years as an independent nation?" The most popular category, chosen by 17% of the surveyed Mexicans, was 'Arts and Cultures', receiving more votes even than the answer 'Democracy'.¹⁰ This statistic supports the affirmation that Mexicans have a wholehearted respect of their culture and an appreciation of Mexican art forms.

¹⁰ Consuelo Saizar, "Ponentes - Lic. Consuelo Saizar," La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference, 28 Sept 2011, Hotel Camino Real Polanco, Mexico City, 29 Mar. 2012, <<http://lacumbredelacomunicacion.com/anterior/index.php?v=13&ponen=4>>.

Culture throughout Mexican architectural history

Mexico has seen three distinct architectural periods throughout its history: pre-Hispanic architecture, colonial architecture, and modern architecture.

Figure 13: Chichen Itza

Mexico's pre-Hispanic era placed a greater importance on metaphysical architecture of worship and ritual than on everyday architecture. Mayan cities like Chichén Itzá and Palenque were "meant to awe and intimidate, and to overshadow [their] citizens. They represented the symbolic universe of gods and higher spiritual forces."¹¹ Their ceremonial buildings were resplendently colourful and intricately decorated, as were those of the Aztec, the Toltecs and the Zapotecs.¹² Colour and monumentality are the two major characteristics of Mesoamerican architecture that would resurface later in Mexican architecture.

Figure 14: Colonial architecture

The period of colonialism began upon the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century and marked a change in culture with the assimilation of the indigenous natives as well as a change in the region's architectural style and typologies. This period, like pre-Hispanic Mexico, was also defined by its spiritual architecture. One method used by the Spanish to convert the natives to the Catholic religion and to a more European lifestyle was the adaptation of spaces that were familiar and common in pre-Conquest Mexico. Pre-Hispanic places of worship, for example, were open-air ceremonial plazas or atop monumental structures. Rather than forcing the indigenous people to worship in a European church, the Spanish friars built outdoor enclosed "churches", using to their favour

¹¹ Lawrence Herzog, Return to the Center: Culture, Public Space, and City Building in a Global Era. (Austin: University of Texas, 2006) 118.

¹² Ypma, 115.

a type of space in which the natives were comfortable, to aid in the transition. The new spaces that emerged were the direct result of the blending of both cultures, making them unique to the Spanish colonies.¹³

Figure 15: Landscapes of Mexico through its different architectural periods

This blending of cultures is intrinsic to the types of spaces and buildings constructed in Mexico throughout the years as well as to the attitudes and views of Mexicans today. These first two periods utilized architecture to stress the importance of tradition and religion in Mexico. Mexican authors Fernando Nuñez, Carlos Arvizu and Ramón Aboncé have classified the types of landscapes that Mexico has seen in its three distinct eras: the pre-Hispanic period, was dominated by monumental pyramids which stepped up to the sky whereas the colonial period, introduced the church as a new vertical element which became the focal point of colonial towns. The landscape of the modern city is defined by skyscrapers.¹⁴ Beginning in the 20th century, Mexican cities was no longer thought of as a whole and Mexico City, especially, was growing at an alarming rate, forcing the city's urban planners to implement infrastructure without visualizing a cohesive city.¹⁵ This shift coincided with the rise of rationalist architecture which added to the discontinuity of the urban fabric and would pave the way for the skyscrapers that would soon define the urban landscape.

¹³ Fernando Nuñez, Carlos Arvizu, Ramón Aboncé, Space and Place in the Mexican Landscape: The Evolution of a Colonial City, (Texas, Ed. Malcolm Quantrill., 2007), 3-6.

¹⁴ Nuñez, Arvizu, and Aboncé, 6.

¹⁵ Herrie and Schmitz, 142.

Criticizing Critical Regionalism

In recent years, globalization has become more apparent especially with the immediacy at which information can be shared across the globe. While Mexicans have embraced being technologically connected with the rest of the world, this blurring of boundaries has also caused many to cling more strongly to their traditions and local culture in fear of losing their identity. This phenomenon of blending, exchanging, and transmitting ideas is also occurring in the world of architecture and acts as cause for this thesis to examine recent architecture in Mexico to determine to what degree culture is present in contemporary Mexican architecture.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the 1980s when Kenneth Frampton, along with Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, used the term 'critical regionalism' to describe "an architecture that can neither be branded as internationalism nor as a folkloric of historical concept of region and architecture"¹⁶ thereby giving a modern twist to traditional regional or vernacular architecture. In their book *Constructing Identity in Contemporary Architecture: Case Studies from the South*, Peter Herrle and Stephanus Schmitz point out flaws in using 'critical regionalism' to define the identity search in contemporary architecture of developing countries:

¹⁶ Herrle and Schmitz, 8-9.

- a) "The concept of 'critical regionalism' tends to overlook the historic (often colonial) backgrounds of countries of the South and the emergence of 'independent' modern architectures in countries as a result of an increasing interaction between modernism and tradition, between global forces and local dependencies.
- b) The concept tends to be based on a static notion of culture and identity, of modernity and tradition, whereas in modern urban societies identity seems to be in a permanent process of being re-invented and re-defined and thereby merging various internal and external influences.
- c) The concept of 'critical regionalism' as it is frequently used tends to define the term identity on the basis of territory, denoting the 'own' as an asset accumulated within the locality, and 'foreign' as something coming from outside. However, in modern urban landscapes localities are rarely congruent with cultural domains, and cultural patterns (including those that can be traced in architecture) can hardly be identified with localities and delineated by physical boundaries."¹⁷

¹⁷ Herrie and Schmitz, 9.

The 'Own' and the 'Foreign'

In their essay "The 'Own' and the 'Foreign': Architecture and the Discourses on Identity in 20th Century Mexico", authors Susanne Dussel and José Morales critically reflect on the topic of the Mexican identity crisis. The 'own' and the 'foreign,'"18 are terms they derive from Mexican architect Enrique del Moral's 1953 essay "Tradition versus Modernity". For del Moral, 'tradition' meant local and 'foreign' meant modern¹⁹; two polar opposites that during the same year Mexican architects (including del Moral) were attempting to marry at the University City campus by incorporating murals, mosaics, and sculpture into rationalist architecture. The paradoxical relationship between these two ideas has occurred in Mexico since the turn of the 20th century, with the definitions of 'own' and 'foreign' changing and evolving over time. These interpretations have been influenced by architectural developments in foreign countries as well as domestic events and politics.

Today, vastly different definitions can be attributed to 'own' and 'foreign'. Lines have been blurred and the two words, though possessing distinct meanings, appear to no longer be as polemic and certainly modern is no longer the definition of 'foreign'. Mexico is a 21st century country: a member of the G20, proving itself to be more than a developing country, and of NAFTA, having close economic and political ties with Canada and the United States. Mexicans have succeeded in conserving their traditions and customs in their everyday lives, but what about in

¹⁸ Herrie and Schmitz, 88.

¹⁹ Herrie and Schmitz, 88.

Mexican architecture? Does contemporary Mexican architecture still acknowledge the Mexican culture?

Figure 16: Library at University City

Juan O'Gorman and *Ciudad Universitaria*

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) sparked a desire for Mexicans to create a new identity for themselves in all aspects of their lives. Before the uprising, architecture in Mexico was largely in the colonial style and was especially influenced by French architecture.²⁰ In the decades following the Revolution, First Generation Mexican architects strove to be equal to their European counterparts who were at the time invested in Rationalism. When literature, such as Le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture*, became available in North America, Mexican architects jumped at the chance to embrace the new architectural ideas that were making waves in Europe.

Despite the early enthusiasm of the First Generation, mid-twentieth century Mexicans struggled to cope with this minimalist style, a failure which caused First Generation architects to tailor their Modern architecture to be better situated within their country. They each began to design their own version of Modern architecture – one that was *Mexicanized* through *integración plástica*, “an architectural position...[that] demanded that architecture should be conceived as a complete work of art, together with painting and sculpture – as in pre-Hispanic Mexico.”²¹ This modification shows the first re-evaluation of the ‘own’ and the ‘foreign’ by Mexican architects.

Juan O'Gorman is the best example of the changes to the Mexican architectural aesthetic in the early to mid-20th century. At the beginning of the century,

²⁰ Ypma, 27.

²¹ Herrle and Schmitz, 117.

Figure 17: Rivera and Kahlo's Studio House

O'Gorman elected to adhere to the strict regulations of functionalism and "negated every aesthetic architectural component as well as every relation to culture, history, tradition or topography."²²

He was then one of the first of the First Generation architects to adopt the *integración plástica* approach in his functionalist architecture, as seen in the Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo's Studio-House (1929-1931). The project consists of two adjacent artist studios connected by a bridge and each characterized by their brightly-coloured façades: his a rich terracotta red and hers a dark cobalt blue. Although the bones of the buildings are undoubtedly functionalist – they comply with all five of Le Corbusier's postulates of modern architecture – the ornamentation and treatment of such *Mexicanize* the architecture and soften the contrast between the Modern and traditional Mexican architecture.

Figure 18: Example of Integracion Plastica

The culmination of *integración plástica* occurred at the University City (*Ciudad Universitaria*, often shortened to CU) campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (*Universidad Autonoma de Mexico*, or UNAM) in Mexico City. CU, considered to be the "most significant project of modern architecture in Mexico"²³ was executed between 1948 and 1954 and was an extensive collaborative effort between Mexican architects, engineers, landscape architects, fine artists, and urban planners. Many of the buildings on the campus, which were designed separately by notable First Generation architects such as José Villagrán García and Felix Candela, showcased murals on their exterior – either wall paintings or mosaic compositions – whose subject matter spoke of the political situation in

²² Herrie and Schmitz, 104.

²³ Herrie and Schmitz, 117.

Figure 19: Urban plan of University City

Figure 20: Urban plan of Monte Alban

Figure 21: O'Gorman's Library at CU

Mexico at the time. Led by First Generation architects Mario Pani and Enrique del Moral, the CU campus' urban plan also invoked a sense of tradition through its spatial composition and volumetric configuration, as it is very reminiscent of the pre-Hispanic Zapotec ceremonial plazas of Monte Albán (c.500BC - 800AD) near present-day Oaxaca, which is known for its "monumental axiality"²⁴. It is unknown whether this similarity was intentional, but even as a subconscious decision, this occurrence emphasizes that Mexicans have an innate sense of familiarity with elements of its architectural past.

The project at CU received international attention, which was a rare circumstance for Mexican architecture at the time, and included a great deal of negative critique, for example, for its low success in truly fusing art and architecture. Despite some failures, University City remains the best early example of collaboration in Mexican architecture: between peer architects, between architects and artists, and between design disciplines (urban, landscape, architecture).

The campus houses O'Gorman's famous mosaic-clad library, done in collaboration with Gustavo Saavedra and Juan Martinez de Velasco, whose design illustrates the transition of O'Gorman from being a disciple of Le Corbusier to a follower of Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architecture. In fact, O'Gorman had initially proposed a pyramidal library as a direct link to Mesoamerican architecture but was forced to change his design as it clashed with the campus' Functionalist vision.²⁵

²⁴ Herzog, 118.

²⁵ Edward R. Burian, *Modernity and the Architecture of Mexico*. (Austin: University of Texas, 1997) 140-141.

"Later, I revised the functional premises and confirmed that the artistic aspect in architectural creation cannot be denied. [...] Such, that functional architecture degenerated at the beginning because some contractors confused maximum efficiency with minimum effort, maximum yield with minimum investment [...]"²⁶

- Juan O'Gorman

"Like all academia, this new academia that eliminates original, imaginative creation and restricts itself just to the more or less elegant, finicky arrangements of the elements born in the heat of functionalism, has produced a sterile architecture that is already starting to be boring, even for some of its followers and defenders, who are already beginning to realize its unimportance, its barrenness, and above all, its inadaptability to the environment."²⁷

- Juan O'Gorman

In a "pendular movement"²⁸ away from functionalism in the most extreme case of First Generation architects, O'Gorman changed his aesthetic entirely to an organic Mesoamerican style and designed himself a cave-like home (1953-1956) "decorated with mosaic symbols and images from Aztec mythology."²⁹ O'Gorman's interpretations of 'own' and 'foreign' dramatically changed from shunning the 'own' and endorsing functionalism, to deeply criticizing and rejecting functionalism, the 'foreign', in favour of emphatically traditional 'Mexican' architecture.

While the drastic case of O'Gorman is unique, it highlights the indecisiveness of First Generation, and even a few Second Generation architects who wanted to find a distinctively Mexican architecture but were unsure of the correct mixture of 'own' and 'foreign'.

²⁶ Herrie and Schmitz, 109.

²⁷ Herrie and Schmitz, 109.

²⁸ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 - Arquitectura," 16 Sept 2010, Gobierno Federal, 14 Nov 2011, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J6W2Gzk-aA>>.

²⁹ "Juan O'Gorman (Mexican Architect and Muralist)." Encyclopedia Britannica, 30 July 2012. <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/425883/Juan-O-Gorman>>.

Figure 22: Barragan's San Cristobal Ranch

Luis Barragán: From Functionalism to Minimalism

Perhaps the most successful architect, and certainly the most influential architect, of the First Generation was Luis Barragán. Contrary to the other architects of his era, "his work was driven not by nationalism but by an unceasing quest to achieve 'an architecture of the senses and emotions.'"³⁰ Despite how distinct his architecture was from that of his contemporaries, he is included in the category of First Generation Mexican architects because Barragán followed the same initial career trajectory into functionalist architecture as his peers before he discovered immense inspiration in the folk culture of his home state of Jalisco as well as the "inner courtyards, the walls, water canals and basins of the old *haciendas*."³¹ Luis Barragán opted to keep a Modern aesthetic in his architecture but softened the starkness and unfriendliness of functionalism through explorations in volume and light, and injections of colour. For Barragán, colour was "a complement to architecture. It can be used to widen or enclose a space. It is also imperative for adding that touch of magic to an area..."³² Barragán's emotive architecture holds an air of suspense, choreographed through the use of screens, half walls and several doorways, especially evident at his own house in Tacubaya, Mexico City (1947-1948). The transition from one space to another is carefully planned as is the feeling associated with each space.

Barragán's work possesses a timeless elegance and holds international appeal in its colourfulness and simplicity, confirmed by the Pritzker Prize he received in 1980. As he mainly designed houses and private country clubs, Barragán's

³⁰ Ypma, 133.

³¹ Herrle and Schmitz, 112.

³² Ypma, 113.

Figure 23: Casa Gilardi by Barragán

architecture was slow to be recognized internationally, and to some degree nationally, until years after its completion, yet he has inspired countless Mexican architects to emulate his emotive minimalist architecture and, today, is one of the most recognized Mexican architects internationally. Barragán remains a key figure in Mexican architecture for establishing a viable regional yet modern architecture with deep ties to local Mexican culture. Along with Barragán's architecture, the art of Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Rufino Tamayo, and Jesús "Chucho" Reyes "changed the cultural profile of modern Mexico from a nation that copied and imitated to one that proudly celebrated its own folk crafts and traditions and the magnificent legacy of its pre-Hispanic civilizations."³³

Barragán captured regional Mexican folklore through colour, texture, and the essence of his spaces, but also employed traditional building materials of wood, stucco, clay, and, alluding to pre-Hispanic architecture, volcanic rock. The success of this infusion was that the aforementioned elements "were not integrated as ornaments or as an emulation of historical stylistic elements but as a component of the building structure: the principles of functionalism were not abandoned; they were being watered down and made more homely and inviting."³⁴ Barragán's 'own' and 'foreign' were as balanced as would occur in 20th century Mexican architecture because he was conscious of the spirituality of spaces and generated a renewed interest in current – at the time – Mexican folk culture through architecture, compared to his fellow First Generation architects who drew mostly from pre-Hispanic architecture when attempting to *Mexicanize* their work through *integración plástica*.

³³ Ypma, 27.

³⁴ Herrie and Schmitz, 111.

*"Art in general, and naturally architecture as well, is a reflection of the spiritual state of man in his time. But there is an impression that modern man, individualized and intellectual, exaggerates sometimes – perhaps because he has lost contact with the community – by wanting to emphasize the rational part of architecture. The result is that 20th century man feels squashed by so much 'functionalism', by so much logic and utility in modern architecture. He is looking for a way out, but neither exterior aestheticism understood as 'formalism', nor organic regionalism, nor even dogmatic Confucianism has fully addressed the problem that the man – creator or receiver – of our time aspires to something more than a nice, pleasant, adequate house. He asks – or will have to ask one day – of architecture and of its modern materials and media, a spiritual uplifting: simply said: an emotion like the one he was given at the time by the architecture of the pyramid, of the Greek temple, of the Roman or gothic cathedral or – even – of the baroque palace. Only by receiving real emotions from architecture can man consider it again to be an art."*³⁵

- Mathias Goeritz, *The Emotional Architecture Manifesto*, 1954

³⁵ Herrle and Schmitz, 111-112.

The successes and failures of First Generation architects laid the groundwork for the Second Generation. Having observed the difficulties of introducing a completely foreign modern architectural style to 20th century Mexico, the Second Generation were more interested in converting pre-Hispanic archetypes into modern architecture, contrary to their predecessors (with the exception of Barragán) who forced a union between the two extremes of the 'own' and the 'foreign'. The architecture of the Second Generation was informed by ancient Mexican cultures and not by the surviving folk culture that inspired Barragán.

Herrle and Schmitz state that in the case of contemporary Mexico, identity in architecture has become "superfluous" and that "Mexico has arrived in the present."³⁶ While not as blatantly regional as in Luis Barragán or Ricardo Legorreta's architecture, in general, contemporary architecture in Mexico does indeed draw from earlier Mexican architecture and tradition, often through its massing, and treatment or distribution of space.

³⁶ Herrle and Schmitz, 11.

Characteristics of Mexican Contemporary Architecture

Figure 24: View of the National Palace and the Zocalo

In 2011 Arquine, a Mexican architectural magazine, and CONACULTA co-produced a TV series entitled “Mexican architecture of the 21st Century” which identified three main characteristics of contemporary Mexican architecture: monumentality, the presence of a void, and its treatment of natural lighting.

Mexican architecture has consistently had an imposing presence and has been referred to as monumental throughout its three architectural periods for works such as the pyramids at Teotihuacán (c.200BC-100AD), the National Palace (16th century), and even the University City campus (completed 1954). For 21st century buildings, monumentality conveys power, signifies a focus on aesthetics, and, sometimes, the possibility of a creation of an iconic building. Miquel Adrià, editor of Arquine, explains that “architecture plays a role similar to a lighthouse; [it is] a reference point within a sprawling city”, which is indeed the case of the metropolis of Mexico City. Barragán’s treatment of dimension and magnitude foreshadow their uses in 21st century architecture. He played with proportion and the illusion of magnitude: “Magnitude was an impression rather than a quantifiable fact.”³⁷

Monumentality as iconography is debated by architects including Ricardo Legorreta and fellow Second Generation architect Carlos Mijares. Mijares believes architects require a modest attitude wanting to be protagonists on a city’s stage. This modesty is needed for a project to be successful in an urban context. The

³⁷ Ypma, 57.

architect must embrace their status as team member within a group of engineers and designers for a “project to be assembled or framed in a way that benefits the public as a whole”³⁸ and for it to establish a relationship with the surrounding community. He believes that, in general, architecture schools in Mexico (the most numerous per country in the world) are not successfully preparing students to be architects with decency and dignity and to recognize that “architecture is the basic element of the city.”³⁹ Legorreta also believed architects need to be humble and team players, saying that a city can’t be composed of monuments and that most buildings need to be apparently anonymous to let others shine otherwise the city would look too chaotic.⁴⁰ He attributes many architects’ goal to stand out to “commercialism that has invaded architecture and architectural magazine [and that we as architects] have arrived at the conclusion that each building we design needs to be a masterpiece and should greatly distinguish itself from others. What we are achieving with this is the destruction of cities.”⁴¹

Voids are also popular throughout Mexican architectural history and in many cases the void is presented as a *patio*, or open-air courtyard, which are popular focal points in colonial architecture and serve as a mise-en-scene. Voids are remained common in 20th century architecture, such as at the Museum of Anthropology,

³⁸ “Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura”.

³⁹ “Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura”.

⁴⁰ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en Mexico,” 2 June 1995, Canal 22, Legorreta & Legorreta, 09 Aug. 2012. <<http://legorretalegorreta.com/canal-22-presencia-de-la-arquitectura-en-mexico/>>.

⁴¹ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en Mexico”.

Figure 25: Naturally-lit space at the MUAC

Figure 26: Naturally-lit space at the Museum of Memory and Tolerance

and remain a fixture in 21st century architecture including in a redefined role as an enclosed void.⁴²

The third key characteristic of Mexican architecture is its manipulation of natural light. “Mesoamerican cultures worshipped the sun and that concept survived in the Baroque architecture, as well as in the architecture of Luis Barragán.”⁴³ Mexican architecture celebrates natural light through the usage of light wells and large skylights which are often placed over entryways in public buildings. These create “ambivalent exterior/interior spaces where natural light is always present,”⁴⁴ such as in the case of González de León’s University Museum of Contemporary Art or Arditti + RDT’s Memory and Tolerance Museum, which speak of the importance of these sunlit spaces.

The central lobby of the Museum of Memory and Tolerance (2011) demonstrates both the concept of the void and that of the aforementioned solar condition. Several stories high, the enclosed space takes on the role of a colonial *patio* as the museum’s main gathering space for the public. A large skylight overhead and an entirely glazed wall, which overlooks an exterior courtyard, invite sunlight to enter the lobby space, deeply contrasting the somber subject matter found in the museum.⁴⁵

⁴² “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*. Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22, originally aired 2 Aug 2011, DVD, 20 July 2012.

⁴³ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*. Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁴⁴ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*. Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁴⁵ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*. Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

These three characteristics, along with many other re-interpreted archetypes of pre-Hispanic and colonial architecture, have shaped contemporary Mexican architecture. There exists a layering process that occurred over the 20th century in which Mexican architects have enriched the existing repertoire of Mexican design through their individual contributions.⁴⁶ The next two chapters will investigate the 'layers' 21st century architecture in Mexico has contributed to this palimpsest.

Figure 27: Characteristic of Mexican architecture throughout its history

⁴⁶ Ypma, 13

Chapter 2 – CONACULTA & Mexican architecture

CONACULTA

Figure 28: CONACULTA logo

As previously stated, culture is an intangible object but has a great presence both in everyday life and in giving a defining identity to a country. In recognition of the importance of this presence, in 1988 the Mexican government founded the National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA) with the goal to “foster the artistic expression of social groups from different regions across the country in order to promote, preserve, and enrich the historic, artistic, and cultural elements that form part of Mexico’s heritage.”⁴⁷

Mission:

- CONACULTA is the institution in charge of wholly preserving Mexico’s cultural heritage in all its artistic and cultural manifestations, while at the same time stimulating programs oriented toward the creation, development, and enjoyment of the same.
- CONACULTA’s actions are geared toward sustaining a professional commitment, benefiting all of Mexican society through the promotion and dissemination of the artistic and cultural sector.

Vision:

- To become the most relevant national institution in the cultural and artistic sector.
- To stimulate artistic and cultural creation while guaranteeing full creative freedom. This, in acknowledgement of the fact that it is the duty of the State to promote and disseminate national identity and heritage.
- To elevate the presence of Mexican art and culture through projects, exhibitions, cultural events, and cinematography.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ “About Conaculta.” Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura Y Las Artes. 10 Nov 2011, CONACULTA, 09 Aug 2012.
<http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/acerca_de_en.php>.

⁴⁸ “About Conaculta.” Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura Y Las Artes

Figure 29: "Nuestros Silencios" Exhibit

CONACULTA is very prominent in Mexico through various art shows, theatre and dance performances, and cultural fairs that they organize and promote to enrich the lives of Mexicans. True to their mission statement, these events range from traditional, such as artesanías exhibitions and folkloric ballet performances, to avant-garde, such as a recent sculpture show "Nuestros Silencios", exhibited in the *Zócalo*, or main plaza, in Mexico City. CONACULTA is responsible for running many of Mexico's museums that are dedicated to the Mexican culture, history, or heritage and does an admirable job in promoting their events, such as through advertisements in subway stations and inside the subway cars, where they are targeting the everyday citizen of and the poorer demographic to attend cultural events and embrace their celebrate their culture.

Consuelo Saízar, President of CONACULTA, had high praises for Mexico's numerous cultural attractions in speech at the 2011 "La Cumbre de la Comunicación" Conference in Mexico City. She highlighted that Mexico has many cultural establishments that are ranked highly in the world, such as the National Auditorium, which is used for concerts and shows, and the National Anthropology Museum, which has one of the best collections of its kind. Mexico has the most UNESCO world heritage sites in the Americas and the Film Festivals held in Guadalajara and Morelia are ranked within the top ten film festivals in the world.⁴⁹

Saízar also sang praises of Mexico's President, Felipe Calderon, whose six-year term comes to an end soon in December 2012. According to Saízar,

⁴⁹ Consuelo Saízar, "Ponentes - Lic. Consuelo Saízar," La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference.

CONACULTA's budget, assigned by the Federal Government, has practically doubled since the beginning of Calderon's term – the highest it has ever been. This generous increase in budget enabled CONACULTA to produce close to seventy films in 2011, compared to the twelve that were produced in 2006.⁵⁰

As the government organization responsible for promoting and conserving Mexican culture, it is worthwhile to use CONACULTA's current architectural projects as case studies in this thesis. They will be used as a framework for evaluating and comparing other contemporary Mexican architecture and as a means of determining the degree to which the Mexican culture is represented through architecture. Some of Mexico's prominent museums that are overseen by CONACULTA are the Rufino Tamayo Museum, the National Museum of Anthropology, and the Fine Arts Palace, which are all noteworthy in the Mexican architectural history, but the projects that are of particular interest in this case study approach are those that have been commissioned to be built specifically by CONACULTA, not simply the buildings that fell under its jurisdiction upon the institution's creation in 1988.

CONACULTA has worked with several of the big names in contemporary Mexican architecture including Second Generation architects Bernardo Gómez Pimienta, and Isaac Broid, and Third Generation architects Fernanda Canales, Mauricio Rocha, and Michel Rojkind. Many of these architects are accustomed to working in collaboration with other architects, a practice that CONACULTA is also

⁵⁰ Consuelo Saizar, "Ponentes – Lic. Consuelo Saizar," La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference.

enthusiastically promotes. Despite investigations with CONACULTA, the selection process of these architects was not disclosed. It is evident, however, that the architects that have recently worked in conjunction with CONACULTA represent different architectural interests and aesthetics, and they are all established and recognized Mexican architects.

The main interest in analyzing CONACULTA's undergoing projects is to determine what style of architecture the organization has determined is best suited in representing Mexican cultural establishments. CONACULTA is dedicated to preserving heritage but also to supporting new artistic endeavours.

In 2011, CONACULTA announced an initiative entitled "The Cultural Project of the 21st Century". This project has a wide scope of which one of the main objectives is to digitize all of the archives and print documentation that its many cultural establishments, including museums and libraries, hold in their possession. The initiative also extends to architecture as there is a need to create new spaces to house these new areas and vaults.⁵¹ As digitization is an inherently 21st century action, does new architecture commissioned by CONACULTA tend to reflect this age of information? Or, is this architecture more connected to the historic cultural material that is being digitized, and does it draw from regional or pre-Hispanic architecture? Is the architectural vision of CONACULTA consistent or based depending on the project?

⁵¹ Consuelo Saizar, "Ponentes - Lic. Consuelo Saizar," La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference.

CONACULTA currently has at least major architectural projects underway in Mexico City, which include new constructions, renovations, and additions to existing buildings, and of which three will be discussed in this thesis.

The first project consists of completing extensive repairs and renovations to the National Centre for the Arts campus (*Centro Nacional de las Artes / CENART*). This project will be studied in depth and used as a point of departure in the debate of the presence of culture in recent Mexican architecture. The largest project is the renovation, expansion and amalgamation of two smaller CONACULTA ventures, which are the José Vasconcelos Library of Mexico and the Centre for the Image (*Centro de la Imagen*), that are located in the same historic building and are being united to create a unique cultural attraction: the City of Books and Images (*La Ciudad de los Libros y la Imagen*). The final project represents an avant-garde and globalized approach to architecture and consists of the expansion of the National Film Library, now being referred to as the National Film Library of the 21st Century (*Cineteca Nacional del Siglo XXI*).

These three projects raise different issues in contemporary Mexican architecture and, whether through similar design or program to other recent projects in Mexico, they open up a discussion to which architectural style is best suited for and is most successful in representing culture in 21st century architecture in Mexico or if a direct link to the Mexican culture is relevant.

Chapter 2.1 – 'National Centre for the Arts'

'CENART' versus 'CU'

Figure 30: Aerial view of the CENART campus

The National Centre for the Arts (CENART) is an agglomeration of distinguished Mexican fine arts schools including dance, music, and theatre schools. The project was promoted by Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the president who, in the same period in office, signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).⁵² Although the current CONACULTA project at CENART, which opened in 1994, consists mostly of renovations, it is worth mentioning this project as a point of departure due to its similarities to the University City campus. The sole new project is the addition of an installation of forty purple columns in one of the plazas on the campus that has been renamed Plaza Ricardo Legorreta.⁵³

The CENART campus is reminiscent of CU and was realized in a similar manner under the master planning of Ricardo Legorreta and individual schools being designed by distinct architects. At CENART, however, there exists a range of architectural styles in contrast with CU's unified aesthetic architectural approach. This range of styles provides another valid reason to start the discussion of the display of culture through architecture with the CENART project, and in what

⁵² Herrie and Schmitz, 138.

⁵³ "Conaculta Presenta Los Sitios Informativos De Sus Proyectos Arquitectónicos" Sala de Prensa. CONACULTA, 9 Aug 2012. <http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/sala_prensa_detalle.php?id=19010>.

better place than in a campus of buildings designed to house some of the best artistic schools in Mexico. The CENART campus allows for a good comparison between a top collaborative effort between First Generation and Second Generation Mexican architects because both projects were executed at the height of the success of their respectful generations.

Due to his involvement in the original project, the current CONACULTA renovation project at CENART was being led by Ricardo Legorreta until his death in December 2011. The work is being continued by his firm Legorreta + Legorreta in which his son, Victor, became a partner in 1991.

While the architects of CU attempted to create a campus that was uniform in a modern design aesthetic specific to Mexico by way of showcasing art, specifically murals, in tandem with their architecture, the architects of CENART did not share the same desire and proceeded to create a campus comprised of diverse approaches to architecture. The unity of the campus buildings comes from the Second Generation's shared vision of creating a new architectural identity for Mexico despite searching for this identity using contrasting and varying approaches.

CONACULTA's interest in restoring and maintaining the National Centre for the Arts campus is likely because the architecture at CENART is an accurate reflection of the post-Modern architectural scene at the end of the 20th century in Mexico.

Figure 31: Architecture by Legorreta

Figure 32: School of Music

Figure 33: National Theatre School

There were three “clearly identifiable styles of architecture”⁵⁴ each with its followers, giving no clear vision to what Mexican architecture should convey.

The first of the three streams was led by Ricardo Legorreta and “reinterpreted elements from Barragán’s language with the use of colour and the incorporation of colonial typologies, such as the patio and the arch.”⁵⁵

The second was led by Teodoro González de León and, in the eyes of Miquel Adrià, was the frontrunner at the turn of the century and remains so today. This style “manifested the monumentality of brutalism derived from the architecture of Le Corbusier”⁵⁶ and included architects Abraham Zabludovsky and Francisco Serrano.

The final style that was present at the turn of the millenium had emerged in the 1980s with a generation that, once again, incorporated an international language, namely high-tech, and “involved architects that avoid the use of colour and chiseled concrete to look for other modes of expression”⁵⁷ that stray from exaggerated volumes. TEN Arquitectos is closely associated with this more globalized style.

The following sections explore the traits and formal qualities of these three streams through a concentration on their respective leaders.

⁵⁴ “Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura”.

⁵⁵ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁵⁶ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁵⁷ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Figure 34: Faculty of Economics at UNAM by Legorreta

Ricardo Legorreta

Ricardo Legorreta's architecture is often described as a continuation of Barragán's explorations in colour, light, and geometric massing. From Barragán, Legorreta learned that "a space is different in the morning than it is in the afternoon and that spaces need to be used and related to our lifestyle."⁵⁸ Legorreta took up Barragán's quest to create architecture that evoked the colourful and simple architecture of rural Mexico, one that is visually and fundamentally representative of the Mexican people and one that they feel an inherent connection with, which he achieved largely through an emphasis on the wall plane. In addition to colour, Legorreta's architectural vocabulary included *patios*, angled walls, cylindrical pillars, and the use of grids, whether ornamentally or in plan.⁵⁹ He learned from Barragán's manipulation of space and colour but applied them in his own architecture under a different objective.

Legorreta began his career working in José Villagrán García's office, the man who is considered the father of Mexican Modern architecture, executing architecture in the International style before shifting his attention to a more expressive architecture reminiscent of Barragán, much as Barragán himself shifted from true modernism to a variation thereof. Regardless of Legorreta's undisputed success in Mexico and internationally, his architecture is often considered emotionally shallow when drawing comparisons to his forerunner Barragán. "Many poetic moments of the rather homely, intimate architecture of Barragán disappeared with Legorreta,

⁵⁸ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, "Presencia de la Arquitectura en México".

⁵⁹ Herrle and Schmitz, 129-130.

Figure 36: Conjunto Juarez by Legorreta

Figure 35: Interior of Camino Real Mexico City

who opted for an exorbitantly exaggerated monumentality and colourfulness.”⁶⁰ This comparison, however, can be partially justified in the jump in scale from Barragán's single-family homes and intimate country clubs to Legorreta's high-rise office towers, museums and hotels. The larger scale at which most of Legorreta's architecture was designed did not allow Legorreta to plan each space with the care and precision Barragán achieved by only ever working on one project at a time. While Barragán created spaces charged with spirituality, suspense, serenity, or other emotional states, Legorreta's architecture is more lighthearted, celebrates life, and provokes joy and other emotions in the user. Ricardo Legorreta himself best addressed the comparison between his work and that of Barragán: “The main difference between us was that I decided I was going to design for people, and Luis did not believe in that. Luis believed that if you design a beautiful space, people will understand that space.”⁶¹

Perhaps Legorreta's greater flaw was that he kept fairly consistent design aesthetic throughout his career. After his success with the Camino Real Hotel (1968) in Mexico City (considered one of the best modern works of Mexican architecture), Legorreta stuck to his formula of channeling the monumentality of the ancient Mexican architecture in combination with the colours of vernacular architecture.⁶² In part, this helped to give him exposure as his buildings are immediately recognizable to the public, but his lack of real experimentation

⁶⁰ Herrie and Schmitz, 129-130.

⁶¹ John V. Mutlow, *Ricardo Legorreta Architects*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1997), 23.

⁶² Herrie and Schmitz, 129.

prevented him from being identified as “Legorreta; himself and not as an exceptional follower of Luis Barragán.”⁶³

It is hard to deny the attraction of Legorreta's architecture to Mexicans, which reminds them that they are a colourful and joyful people, but its presence is a constant on the scene of Mexican contemporary architecture, one that is consistently successful without taking enough risks.

Ricardo Legorreta is not the only Second Generation Mexican architect to have found their primary inspiration in pre-Hispanic Mexico and in Barragán's architecture, but his bold, attention-grabbing architecture and desire to put Mexico on the world map in contemporary design – a mission he undertook upon realizing that foreigners knew little about it⁶⁴ – has caused Legorreta's name to be one of the most recognized in recent Mexican architecture.

Upon explaining his usage of colour in his architecture Legorreta admitted that his main motive is to provoke emotion. He has explained that he will add colour to different project at different stages – “it can start as an initial concept, sometimes it happens to me when I see a model, sometimes it happens to me when I see the plan, and sometimes at the construction site: there is no rule.”⁶⁵ The choice of colour was often made when Legorreta felt as though something

⁶³ Gustavo López Padilla, *Nueva Arquitectura Mexicana: Tendencias Entre Siglos*, (Mexico City: D.R. Editorial Designio, 2011), 120.

⁶⁴ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en Mexico”.

⁶⁵ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en Mexico”.

Figure 37: Rosa Mexicano screen

Figure 38: Administrative towers at CENART

was missing from the space, for example, he would add the colour yellow when he felt a space needed a splash of sunlight.

A colour that had already been chosen could also be changed at any point in the project. In the case of the Camino Real Hotel (1961) in Mexico City, Legorreta initially painted the perforated screen that shields the hotel entrance from the street in a harsh grey-black colour. Upon seeing the effect on the completion of the construction of the hotel, Legorreta immediately gave the order for it to be re-painted *rosa mexicano*, a bright magenta pink to create a more joyous space.⁶⁶

“Not only do I use colour, but I can’t design without it...I have almost never regretted using colour and several times I have regretted not using it.”⁶⁷

- Ricardo Legorreta

At the National Centre for Arts, Legorreta’s administrative building towers are brightly-coloured “totem-like buildings with monumentality, [almost like] objects.”⁶⁸ Legorreta often emphasized the vertical in his architecture through towers, and even designed the Monterrey Camino Real Hotel (2007) as the

⁶⁶ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en México”.

⁶⁷ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, “Presencia de la Arquitectura en México”.

⁶⁸ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

vertical interpretation of his previous success, of Camino Real in Mexico City, which is very horizontal and grounded.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ "Camino Real Hotel Monterrey" Legorreta + Legorreta, 09 Aug 2012, <<http://legorretalegorreta.com/en/proyectos/hotel-camino-real-monterrey/>>.

"[Legorreta is] one of the few architects I know who has combined a real understanding of history and tradition with modernity, the influence of Mayan architecture, of the colours, of the forms, the landscape. His buildings are about place, they're not about abstraction, they're about people. He's a true humanist."⁷⁰

– Richard Rogers,
on Ricardo Legorreta after Legorreta's death

⁷⁰ "Richard Rogers Subtitulado Final Sub En Fondo Negro," 20 Jan 2012, Richard Rogers. 9 Aug. 2012.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWRlqFLlV8>>.

Teodoro González de León & Abraham Zabludovsky

Teodoro González de León, architect of the Superior School of Music at CENART, is another successful Second Generation Mexican architect who has enjoyed a long career and continues to practice today. Contrary to his contemporary Ricardo Legorreta, González de León has evolved greatly as an architect over the years and has experimented with varying styles of architecture, all while ultimately seeking to consistently create the same core types of spaces in his architecture.

González de León worked under Le Corbusier on his *Unite d'Habitation* in Marseilles in the late 1940s when the latter was struggling to "reconcile industrialism and nature, modernity and the sub-structures of the past,"⁷¹ an experience from which he took away an interest in brutalism.

Teodoro González de León worked in partnership with Abraham Zabludovsky, another Second Generation architect, from 1969 to the 1990s. Together they sought to transform Modern architecture into architecture that is considerate of its place and history. Their link to Mexican culture was through their re-interpretations of monumental pre-Hispanic architecture, similar to Legorreta's approach, yet the results were vastly different. González de León and Zabludovsky were uninterested in the Mexican vernacular and avoided the use of colour, preferring to take advantage of the qualities of the material palette they employed. Their favourite material was a marble aggregate concrete as it is comparable to the stonework of which the ancient architecture they strove to

⁷¹ Curtis, 6.

Figure 39: National Auditorium

evoke was constructed and “suggests the porosity of the surface of the Mexican pyramid.”⁷² This type of concrete also proved to successfully withstand the smog-filled air of Mexico City with little maintenance solidifying its place in González de León and Zabudovsky’s architectural vocabulary despite its fairly somber, monochromatic appearance. According to González de León, brut concrete was the first of two constants in the pair’s collaborative architecture that is characterized by volumetric massing, imposing geometries, and inclined planes, which all echo qualities of the ancient Mexican pyramids. These elements can be found in their designs for the Rufino Tamayo Museum (1981) and the renovation to the National Auditorium (1990), two of their most notable projects.

The second constant in their collaborative architecture is the use of the *patio*, or courtyard. The *patio*, a fixture in Mexican colonial architecture and also present in Mesoamerican architecture, can often be found as a centerpiece in the pair’s architecture as a means of allowing light to infiltrate spaces inside of their buildings and of creating a meeting place for the coexistence of the users.⁷³

The role of politics in Mexico’s search for an architectural identity will be covered in Chapter 3, however it is worth mentioning that Teodoro González de León and Abraham Zabudovsky, in addition to designing several buildings for the municipal government of Mexico City, epitomized the ‘pyramid’ architecture that the Mexican Federal Government supported beginning in the 1970s.⁷⁴ González de León and Zabudovsky are designed several Mexican embassies around the world,

⁷² Herrie and Schmitz, 127-128.

⁷³ Herrie and Schmitz, 127-128.

⁷⁴ Herrie and Schmitz, 128-129.

which asserts that their architecture is successful in channeling the spirit of past Mexican architecture in a modern way. The partnership between González de León and Zabudovsky dissolved into in the 1990s and each continued to practice individually with similar ideals and aesthetic. González de León has also designed Mexican embassies on his own, such as the Mexican Embassy in Berlin.

Figure 40: Arcos Bosques Complex

The focus of González de León's architecture throughout his career has always been on quality of space and use of materiality. Teodoro González de León is one of the few Mexican architects to design successfully throughout the changing face of architecture in Mexico throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. He planted the seed for the University City project⁷⁵ when he was still a student – a project that is undoubtedly First Generation – and continues to practice today, receiving acclaim for his work in the era of the Third Generation. González de León has proven to be an excellent architect through solo and collaborative design, within Mexico and representing Mexico abroad. He "returns time and time again to primary typological themes from the history of architecture such as the gate, the patio, the parasol or the hypostyle hall"⁷⁶ as ways of bridging the history and the present. At the National Centre for the Arts, González de León's Superior School of Music picks up on the "classic relationships between architecture and music" such as rhythm and proportion.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Burian, 108.

⁷⁶ Curtis, 7.

⁷⁷ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Figure 41: MUAC

In recent years, González de León has begun to leave behind his characteristic concrete Postmodern vocabulary in favor of more lightweight looking structures that continue to explore volume and materiality in a more contemporary manner.⁷⁸ Some of his recently completed works include the Arcos Bosques Towers, a collaborative effort with fellow Mexican architects J. Francisco Serrano and Carlos Tejada that is colloquially referred to as *El Pantalón* (the pants) due to its shape, and the University Museum of Contemporary Art (*Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporánea*, or MUAC), the latter located in the CU campus he conceived decades ago. He is lauded by critics and other contemporary Mexican architects for his evolving as an architect and changing with the times. His architecture remains a source of inspiration for Third Generation architects, especially in the quality of space he is able to achieve without relying on colour or different materiality, but based on proportion, scale, and dimension. González de León's architecture provided the following generation with modern archetypes derived from ancient Mexican architecture, ready for the architects of the Third Generation to further distill the ideas and utilize them in a more 'foreign' manner in the globalized world of today.

⁷⁸ Herrie and Schmitz, 141.

Enrique Norten

Other buildings at CENART are more radical in their attempt to convey culture and do so through other, less evident, forms of representation.

Figure 42: National Theatre School

The National Theatre School, designed by Enrique Norten and his firm TEN Arquitectos (with former partner Bernardo Gómez-Pimienta), is the most futuristic building on the CENART campus. Norten is perhaps the Third Generation Mexican architect whose aesthetic is truest to the modernist manifesto. Often using steel and metal as the main building material, Norten's high-tech architectural designs come off as colder and less inviting than Legorreta's colourful architecture and even González de León's and Zabludovsky's volumetric architecture despite its rough concrete finish. At a glance, the National Theatre School disregards classic Mexican architecture in favour of a "new internationalism"⁷⁹ architectural style driven by materiality, but does in fact address key criteria that characterize contemporary Mexican architecture.⁸⁰ TEN Arquitectos created a highly-glazed building and opted to envelop it with a large curved metal roof that acts like a shell to protect the building. This architectural feature generates the same conditions of the void, monumentality, and welcomes the entrance of natural light.⁸¹

⁷⁹ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁸⁰ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁸¹ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Figure 43: MUSEVI in Villahermosa

Norten claims to find inspiration and power in the Modern Mexican architecture of the First Generation despite the style's dubious success.⁸² Norten's high-tech architecture finds a way of being monumental without the volumetric qualities of González de León and Zabudovsky or the vast rectangular wall planes of Legorreta. His work can more easily be transplanted to other countries in the world as its Mexican influences are subtle and Norten has established TEN Arquitectos offices in both New York City and Mexico City. Norten's work applies Arquitecto's three characteristics of 21st century Mexican architecture many of his works but upon first glance seems to overlook any attempt of displaying the 'own' – the traditional or local – in favour of a rationalist 'foreign' approach.

⁸² "Enrique Norten Habla Sobre Arquitectura Mexicana Contemporánea," 12 Apr 2008, Aura Branding, 09 Aug 2012.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYksIOJcZsl>>.

Summarizing the Importance of CENART

The National Centre for the Arts proved to be as indicative of its time as University City. Three distinct architectural styles are present on the campus – two familiar styles by Second Generation architects Legorreta and González de León, focused on monumentality, and one new one, led by Norten, concerned with industrial materiality. The new style featured a shift in preferred materiality (from concrete and stucco to steel and glass) and a change of desired spatial qualities. The Third Generation leaders Norten and Gómez Pimenta break from the typical colonial archetype of the central *patio* and the wall enclosure to create an semi-enclosed yet inviting outdoor space that is located adjacent to their National Theatre School. Their building, despite its monumental height, is much more lightweight – a literal shell of Second Generation architecture. Technical precision of prefabricated pieces has replaced the craftsmanship associated with González de León's poured concrete or Legorreta's stucco-finished walls.⁹³ CENART is truly a bridging project between the Second and Third Generations in which the resulting discordance is celebrated because of the campus' artistic program. CONACULTA's comprehensive restoration and maintenance of the campus will preserve it for generations to come.

Analyzing the architecture from the National Centre for the Arts provides an excellent understanding of the Mexican architecture scene at the end of the 20th century and "it is from these three streams that Mexican architecture of the 21st

⁹³ Herrle and Schmitz, 138-139.

century is derived, in which we can find a wide variety of languages and typologies which form a mosaic where public vocation dominates.”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ “Episodio Apertura.” *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Chapter 2.2 – 'The City of Books and Images'

La Ciudadela

The marriage of two preexisting CONACULTA projects located in the same historic building in the historic centre of Mexico City is the last of the current CONACULTA project to be studied and is perhaps the most relevant case study for this thesis. It also balances two distinct architectural style; this case sees a balance between 18th century colonial and contemporary architecture. The aforementioned historic building is the *La Ciudadela* building, literally 'The Citadel', that is located in the adjacent block to the chosen project site for this thesis.

Figure 44: Interior view of La Ciudadela

The large stone building of *La Ciudadela* was designed and built by Spanish architect Antonio González Velázquez between 1773 and 1797. It was constructed to house a tobacco factory New Spain⁸⁵, and is now officially known as 'La Ciudadela'. This nickname was coined by the citizens of Mexico City due to the building's 'austere, almost military character'⁸⁶ both in terms of ornamentation and layout in addition to serving citadel-like purposes in important moments in Mexican history.

During the War of Independence (1810-1821), due to its strategic location near main access roads, La Ciudadela was converted into a military headquarters and barracks, and also served as a jail. A century later during the Mexican Revolution

⁸⁵ Ernesto Martínez Alva, *Ciudad De México. Guía De Arquitectura* (Mexico City: Gobierno De La Ciudad De México, 1999) 142.

⁸⁶ "La Ciudadela," Gobierno De Mexico, 06 June 2012, <<http://ciudadmexico.com.mx/attractivos/ciudadela.htm>>.

Figure 45: Fighting during the 'Ten Tragic Days'

Figure 46: Artillery on the rooftop of 'La Ciudadela'

(1911-1920), La Ciudadela and the adjacent Balderas Street were key sites in the bloody 'Ten Tragic Days' in February of 1913 which ended the rule of President Francisco I. Madero's democratic government and resulted in his assassination and that of his vice-president, José Maria Pino Suarez."⁸⁷

La Ciudadela was designated a national monument in 1931 and sat empty until 1942 when it became the home of its current resident, the 'José Vasconcelos' Library of Mexico, which is the most visited public library in Mexico City.⁸⁸

Previous renovations & 'The Centre of Images'

Since La Ciudadela was designed to house a factory, it is overall a square single-level building with high ceilings and large interior spaces. Its original design involved a large interior courtyard which was later divided into four separate covered exterior courtyards under Abraham Zabludovsky's renovation project in 1988⁸⁹. The courtyard roofs are umbrella-like trusses supported by a central column in a "contemporary architectural style"⁹⁰ of the end of the 20th century to contrast with the original building's neoclassical style. Other areas of La Ciudadela, named "one of the most endearing and beloved buildings in the country"⁹¹ by CONACULTA's president Consuelo Saizar, were also converted into

⁸⁷ "La Ciudadela," Gobierno De Mexico.

⁸⁸ "La Ciudadela," Gobierno De Mexico.

⁸⁹ Martínez Alva, 142.

⁹⁰ Martínez Alva, 142.

⁹¹ Consuelo Saizar, "Ponentes - Lic. Consuelo Saizar," La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference.

Figure 47: Plan of the Centre of Images

cultural spaces in following renovations – mainly a photographic image gallery named the *Centro de la Imagen*, or The Centre of Images, designed by early Third Generation architect Isaac Broid in 1994.

When designing the Centre of Images, Broid had to decide which parts and areas of the existing building to keep and repurpose, and how much contemporary architecture to introduce. In this case, and in similar projects in heritage buildings, the 'own' refers strictly to the existing building whereas anything that is being introduced is 'foreign'. It is a simpler definition of the terms but is a more restrictive process within a set of parameters of dimension, height, and volume that must be adhered to. In La Ciudadela, Isaac Broid proposed minimal alterations to the interior of the historical building opting to conserve and restore much of the areas of the original 18th century building designated for the Centre of Images. The contemporary aspect was introduced in the form of a diagonal circulation path through the exhibition halls, within the historic walls, in a manner that brings a modern twist to the space and introduces a new axis as a way of interrupting the existing grid. The high ceilings allowed Broid to install steel mezzanines in the exhibition halls connecting to the new diagonal axis. A juxtaposition of materials – prefabricated metal, glass, and concrete against white stucco and wood – create a soft but noticeable contrast of the two styles without requiring major modifications to the historic building.⁹²

⁹² López Padilla, 146.

Figure 48: Plan of the 'City of Books and Images'

'The City of Books and Images'

The Centre of Images and the Library of Mexico, today both overseen by CONACULTA, provide a cultural hub within the historic building of La Ciudadela and form part of CONACULTA's most ambitious architectural project and the 'Cultural Project for the 21st Century'. These two cultural spaces are to be united under the title 'The City of Books and Images', which includes renovations to both of the mentioned spaces as well as an overall restoration of the Ciudadela building. The bulk of the work, however, is to be done to the existing 'José Vasconcelos' Library of Mexico and includes the creation of new library archive rooms, the addition of personal library collections of notable Mexicans intellectuals and a new library for the visually impaired. The transformation of one of the courtyard spaces will create the 'Sky Patio', an open-air courtyard to be used as a reading area and exhibition space and complete with a new café.

It is a substantial project to balance the restoration of an 18th century historical building with the addition of 21st century spaces and the extensive scope of the 'City of Books and Images' project requires the involvement of many notable Third Generation Mexican architects. These architects include Bernardo Gómez-Pimienta and Alejandro Sánchez leading the new 'modernized' masterplan of La Ciudadela, Isaac Broid who is once again in charge the design of the 'Centre of Images', Mauricio Rocha who is responsible for the library hall dedicated to the visually

impaired, and other architects for the many different archive vaults and individual library collections rooms.⁹³

The work that is scheduled at the Centre for Images is small considering the overall scope and will add more exhibition space along with areas for students. Isaac Broid has mentioned that his team is also contemplating adding a retractable rooftop to one of the patios with a café and could convert another of the open-air patios into an exterior exhibition area.⁹⁴

The City of Books and Images is driven by CONACULTA's desire to bring together once-private library collections of notable Mexicans, such as José Luis Martínez, making them accessible to the public, and to celebrate each of these contributing individuals. Once again, the main goal of the 'Cultural Project for the 21st Century' is to digitize the collections and archives in the library's collection, a venture they are committed to doing after the unfortunate loss of several prized collections.⁹⁵

The digitization of a library consists of three steps: the first is digitize the contents and make them available online, rights permitting, to be easily accessed by the Mexican public; the second is to scan any notes or entries on a book's pages; and the third step is to link all of this digital information to a central library 'brain' system, connecting all libraries in municipalities and States that are

⁹³ "La Ciudadela Sera La Ciudad De Los Libros Y La Imagen," 20 Mar 2012, CONACULTA, 09 Aug 2012, <http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/sala_prensa_detalle.php?id=19689>.

⁹⁴ "La Ciudadela Sera La Ciudad De Los Libros Y La Imagen," CONACULTA.

⁹⁵ "La Ciudadela Sera La Ciudad De Los Libros Y La Imagen," CONACULTA.

connected to the internet, to facilitate the sharing of information from library-to-library. There exist certain limitations, such as a limited lending period of electronic source material, but the effort, feels Saizar, is well worth it and will allow Mexico to “remain the great cultural power that it currently is.”⁹⁶

This digitization is reflected the new contemporary architecture within La Ciudadela’s 19th century building. Like Broid’s original plans for the Centre of Images, the new archives, reading rooms, and library rooms mostly consist of exposed metal constructions that contrast the original building but do not overshadow its setting. Some rooms will be finished in wood to create more intimate reading environments.

The major renovation and restoration of this historically important 19th century building hopes to attract and educate its users through the new spaces that will be offered by CONACULTA. And, true to their mission statement, CONACULTA seeks to preserve Mexican history while exploring and promoting a 21st century Mexico by means of its architecture.

By creating more spaces for the enjoyment of the public like the Sky Patio within a cultural establishment and enabling the public to access a wider range of books and archived documents, CONACULTA hopes to stimulate interest in the Mexican culture, in this case contemporary Mexican photography and historical Mexican literature, and colonial and contemporary Mexican architecture.

⁹⁶ Consuelo Saizar, “Ponentes – Lic. Consuelo Saizar,” La Cumbre De La Comunicacion 2011 Conference.

Figure 49: San Pablo Oztotepec Market interior view

Figure 50: San Pablo Oztotepec market exterior

Figure 51: School for the Plastic Arts

Mauricio Rocha

Mauricio Rocha is a contemporary Third Generation Mexican architect in a league of his own, much as Barragán was during Mexican Modernism. Rocha creates contemporary clean lines in his architecture but uses materiality as the root or basis of his designs. In his design for the San Pablo Oztotepec Market, located in a poor suburb of Mexico City, Rocha employs prefabricated corrugated steel panels to construct an indoor food market. His pragmatic use of materiality allows the market to be understated and sensitive to its surroundings both in appearance and cost.⁹⁷ He creates a light, airy feel inside due to the varying heights of the cubic roof panels, creating various clerestory windows throughout. The materiality is simple and unsophisticated – the type that is often found in rudimentary rural house constructions in Mexico as makeshift walls and roofs.

Mauricio Rocha has also explored rammed earth and concrete. His School of Plastic Arts in Oaxaca is another example of Rocha understanding the fundamental purpose of the building's program and its relationship to the site through materiality. Rocha "isolates [the school] from its context to create its own context inspired by traditional Oaxacan painting and the pre-Hispanic abstraction. Buildings and *patios* create a puzzle of solids and voids which showcase light and materials."⁹⁸ Rocha had identified the "tectonic, material-based" ⁹⁹ architecture as being inspired by Oaxaca's strong reputation in the plastic arts.

⁹⁷ Herrie and Schmitz, 142.

⁹⁸ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

⁹⁹ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Figure 53: School for the Blind and the Visually Impaired

Figure 52: Library hall for the Blind at La Ciudadela

Rocha's experience in designing the School for the Blind and the Visually Impaired in Mexico City made him an obvious choice for the architect of the rooms dedicated to the visually impaired in the 'City of Books and Images' project at La Ciudadela. His sensitivity of materials and use of change in tactility within a space shift the focus of the visual to the importance of tactility. The Hall for the Visually Impaired at La Ciudadela will consist of an open, flexible area which will allow the user to circulate with absolute freedom, and also a space that enables the necessary privacy needed for acoustic isolation. The specialized rooms will utilize various tactile finishes and signs in Braille to help orient the users through the space by touch. Recording cubicles, isolated work cabins and cabins designated for reading and writing with the assistance of a librarian, are some of the supporting services that will be offered. The Hall for the Visually Impaired is part of the 'Cultural Project of the 21st Century' and its architecture, orientation, acoustic equipment, and other range of facilities make it unique in Mexico.¹⁰⁰

At first glance, Rocha's architecture is understated and simple, but each design decision has been made after careful consideration and Rocha takes great measure to achieve the right kind of space and feeling within a space, which may go unnoticed by the casual observer. Rocha's architecture is probably the first since Barragán to be so meticulous and focused on using the correct material or texture as a means of provoking thought or emotion. Rocha's cultural connection

¹⁰⁰ "Conaculta Presenta La Sala Para Personas Con Discapacidad Visual En La Ciudad De Los Libros Y La Imagen." 22 Mar 2012, CONACULTA, 09 Aug. 2012. <http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/sala_prensa_detalle.php?id=19732>.

is spiritual and material-based and offers a contemporary alternative to the architecture resulting from globalization.

Figure 54: Vasconcelos Library

Alberto Kalach

Alberto Kalach's Vasconcelos Library, also named after Mexican politician, writer, philosopher and revolutionary José Vasconcelos as the library at La Ciudadela, provides an excellent comparison to the 'City of Books and Images' project. Kalach's library, a new construction built in 2006, is a futuristic stage with steel bookshelves suspended from the building's ceiling and with floating catwalks running between the bookshelves providing access to their content. The library's building form is derived from a train car as an homage to the site's previous use as the Buenavista industrial train station.

The library's architecture meets the criteria of Mexican contemporary architecture outlined by Miquel Adrià in Arquine's "Mexican Architecture of the 20th Century": it is a monumental building that contains a naturally-illuminated interior void.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Kalach, categorized in this thesis as an early Third Generation architect, explains that an early concept of accommodating the required number of books inside the container was to create a stepped mayan-like pyramid before opting to hang the shelves from the building's roof structure. The design of the hanging shelves also means the building's louvred façades are largely uninterrupted and allow sunlight to enter the library during much of the daytime.¹⁰² Through the building shell's inclined planes, Kalach has unintentionally adhered to O'Gorman's criteria of successful Mexican architecture and mimics the shape of Mario Pani's Banobras Tower (1962) in the background.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

¹⁰² "Episodio Apertura." *Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI*, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

¹⁰³ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 - Arquitectura".

Figure 55: Vasconcelos Library

This project proves to almost be a contradiction in itself, as its interior is obviously high-tech with a high attention level to detail, especially in the connections of the suspended bookcases which are the main feature of the library,¹⁰⁴ yet its exterior is also reminiscent of pre-Hispanic architecture. The Vasconcelos Library is an example of the sub-categories within the classification of Third Generation architecture: the exterior is consistent with Second Generation criteria, but the interior represents the 'crack' from pre-Hispanic influence. Kalach, along with Norton, Gómez Pimenta, and Broid, can all be said to have faced similar dilemma, but their overall aesthetic places them squarely into the Third Generation.

¹⁰⁴ López Padilla, 113.

Figure 56: National Film Library

Figure 57: National Film Library

Chapter 2.3 – ‘National Film Library of the 21st Century’

Michel Rojkind

The last of CONACULTA’s current projects to be discussed was designed by Rojkind Arquitectos and includes a renovation and an addition to Mexico City’s National Film Library. The project, which is currently under construction, will renovate the existing four cinemas and add another four smaller cinemas. It will also expand the capacity of the complex’s preservation vaults, will modernize the existing complex, and create more public spaces onsite. This project forms part of CONACULTA’s “Cultural Project of the XX1st Century”.

The main architectural feature of the project is a screen-like envelope that serves as a wall enclosure to one of the buildings in the complex. Through a sweeping gesture, this element transforms into a perforated roof to semi-enclose the project’s central courtyard, whose perimeter is defined by the cinemas. Here, Michel Rojkind creates an intriguing, habitable, covered exterior space whose qualities are reminiscent of González de León’s exterior *patios*, (which are, in themselves, a liberal adaptation of traditional colonial *patios*.) Like TEN Arquitectos’ National Theatre School at CENART, this addition to the National Film Library by Rojkind Arquitectos can be considered monumental when viewed from the exterior, but classified as a void in the interior courtyard space.

The ‘National Film Library of the 21st Century’ project demonstrates CONACULTA’s avant-garde outlook, which, according to their mission statement,

they promote simultaneously alongside their agenda of preserving tradition. This project displays a contemporary approach to a traditionally colonial courtyard space. It also addresses the goal of augmenting the available green space in the building complex and of creating public outdoor forums to attract the public to participate in cinematic cultural events. Late Third Generation architect Michel Rojkind is an appropriate choice as the architect for a project that is being marketed for the "21st century". Rojkind is one of Mexico's most vanguard architects of today and his work garners much attention.

Mexico's emerging generation of architects is once again tending to dismiss the history of their country. In today's globalized world, the ability to seamlessly share ideas across the globe through the internet and to tune into and be inspired by what others are building has changed the design process and provided an endless range of opportunities for collaboration and technological advances. Such progress makes it easy to revert to an architecture that distances itself from culture, history and place in favour of a style that is universally appealing which once again, makes some Mexican architects hesitant to create distinctively "Mexican" architecture. The potential that computer modeling programs offer today's architects, however, gives them a tabula rasa to try drastically different designs. Time will tell if Mexico will embrace this new style of architecture, like the design of Mexico City's Museo Soumaya, and keep allowing the development of a myriad of contemporary styles or if these styles will begin to converge.

Michel Rojkind can be considered the contemporary "starchitect" in Mexican architecture as his image is marketed along with his architecture. He is

recognized in Mexico as the former drummer for a popular Mexican band which has led him to become a spokesperson for Hewlett-Packard design products including TV spots.¹⁰⁵ He is perhaps working in a more "globalized" style because he believes his work has been better received internationally than in Mexico.¹⁰⁶ He attributes this lack of acknowledgement to his former success in the music business and considers he is not taken seriously in Mexico, however, he is likely not immediately well received by the Mexican public because his designs are quite a departure from what Mexicans are accustomed to seeing and living in.¹⁰⁷

Rojkind is opposed to the concept of critical regionalism but is invested in designing for the city and its context. For example he embraces and plays off of the chaos of Mexico City¹⁰⁸ whereas Mexican architecture traditionally relies on walls and enclosures for privacy. Rojkind aims to break Mexican architectural stereotypes, but does not like to compare vernacular Mexican architecture to his own. "I was trained to be an architect, not a Mexican architect," he said when asked about contemporary attempts at critical regionalism in Mexico.¹⁰⁹ Rojkind's firm, Rojkind Arquitectos was named one of the ten 'best design vanguard' architectural firms in 2005 by Architectural Record. Early in his architectural career, Rojkind became partners with Spanish architect and architectural critic Miquel Adrià, architect and editor of *Arquine Magazine*, and early Third Generation Mexican architect Isaac Broid, under the name Adrià + Broid + Rojkind. Curiously

¹⁰⁵ "Michel Rojkind - on Architecture and Travel," 20 Jan 2012, ArchiTeamTV, 09 Aug 2012, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGwu4Pyjdpc>>.

¹⁰⁶ "Michel Rojkind - on Architecture and Travel"

¹⁰⁷ "Michel Rojkind - on Architecture and Travel".

¹⁰⁸ "Michel Rojkind - on Architecture and Travel".

¹⁰⁹ "Michel Rojkind - on Architecture and Travel".

Figure 58: Atizapan Tamayo Museum

Figure 59: Reforma 432

Rojkind's entire architectural education was obtained in Mexico, he has only practiced in Mexico and all of his built works are located in Mexico. Though exposed to architecture of other parts of the world during his days on tour as a musician, it is interesting to recognize that wanting to avoid the label of being a 'Mexican' architect, he has focused a lot of his energy into the architectural scene in Mexico and in addressing urban and architectural issues plaguing Mexico City.

While some of Rojkind's projects are too out-of-context for the general Mexican public, he has other designs that are perhaps just what Mexico needs. Rojkind seeks collaborators for many of his projects, as he did in 2009 for his winning competition entry for the new Rufino Tamayo Museum in Atizapán in the State of Mexico, just outside of the Federal District. Rojkind teamed up with Blarke Ingels of Danish firm BIG to come up with a simple yet effective design for the hilltop site. In plan, the form of the museum is of a cross, or of an unfolded cube, which projects out from the hill and has a viewing platform on the rooftop. Unfortunately, the Atizapán Tamayo Museum project has been shelved due to lack a dispute over the land rights. The museum, though simple in design, shows there is deep thought process behind Rojkind's work which is not discernable in some of his other designs that appear to be a result of three-dimensional model explorations through computer software programs, such as the condominium skyscraper Reforma 432 that is soon to break ground.

Despite resisting employing traditionally Mexican architectural features, Rojkind does attempt to create a dialogue or continuity to an existing fabric in his designs. For example, at the Nestle Corporate Offices in Queretaro, Rojkind

Figure 60: Nestle Queretaro

attempted to keep the idea of the portico that is so present in the city of Queretaro and reimagined them into yellow, curvilinear voids cut into the cuboid masses that house the offices. Rojkind also embraces local labour and uses to his advantage the knowledge of local trades and the availability of local materials. Although not a traditional definition of regionalism or critical regionalism, Rojkind's architecture is Mexican in its own way when possible depending on the client, situation and building program.

Figure 61: Soumaya Museum

Figure 62: Plaza Mariana

Fernando Romero

Fernando Romero is the contemporary architect that is most easily comparable to Rojkind. Also of the Third Generation, Romero is another young Mexican leading an avant-garde firm in the design of several high-profile projects. Both Romero and Rojkind have created fantastical, eye-catching buildings that appeal to the desire of the Mexican people to bring Mexico into the 21st century. Prior to establishing his architectural office in Mexico, Romero worked with Rem Koolhaas for several years and was the project leader of OMA's Casa di Musica in Porto, Portugal. Romero applies what he had learned with Koolhaas in his own office which is very research and experiment-based. Still early in his career as an architect, Romero has already published a handful of books (*Simplicity*, *Translation*, *If - Then: Architectural Speculations*, to name a few) conveying the types of explorations and experimentations that are so important in his style of architecture and that demonstrate the evolution of many of his built projects both formally and programmatically. This self-awareness of his evolution as an architect and in design approaches has allowed Romero to be constantly reflect on the progress of his office, Fernando Romero Enterprise (FREE), and the direction it is taking.

Another factor that has immensely helped Romero's career is his well-placed family connection – his billionaire father-in-law, Carlos Slim, is the richest man in the world, and the owner of several Mexican businesses and land in Mexico. Fernando Romero is responsible for Mexico City's latest architectural attraction – the Soumaya Museum. Located in the trendy neighbourhood of Polanco, the Soumaya was commissioned by Carlos Slim to display and house his extensive

private art collection, including the world's largest private collection of works by Auguste Rodin.

Romero and Slim also recently teamed up to create a new religious centre, Plaza Mariana, adjacent to the world renowned Our Lady our Guadalupe Basilica in Mexico City , the world's second most visited pilgrimage site. This is a more grounded example of Slim using his wealth to enrich the lives of Mexicans and being an advocate for new, exciting architecture. The program in the new Plaza Mariana is mostly linked to the Basilica and provides support spaces, a religious museum, and a new interior market. These are spaces that serve more to the everyday lives of Mexicans and this project is an example of creating new architecture to safeguard the immaterial heritage of Mexico.

Reaction to the Third Generation

The late Third Generation made a strong impression when they debuted and, through controversy, have indeed proven that their architecture is respectful of Mexican architectural history while successfully appealing to foreigners as well. Some late Third Generation projects do tend to focus more on the technicality of the building construction than on the user who will inhabit the space but the beauty of the Third Generation is their eagerness to experiment formally and with materiality. This current generation can also be applauded for using architecture as a means of helping communities and contributing to society whereas much of the architecture of 20th century Mexico was designed in response to a political event or mandate. If the Third Generation employs 'globalized' or CAD-developed architecture to attract the attention of the general public, enticing them to enter cultural establishments and learn about safeguarding Mexican immaterial heritage then, at least for now, they should be considered true Mexican architects.

Chapter 3 – Reflecting on What has Shaped Contemporary Mexican Architecture

Looking back on the 20th century in Mexican Architecture

In 2010, the Federal Government of Mexico organized a television and radio series entitled 'Discutamos Mexico 2010', or 'Let's Discuss Mexico' in honour of the 200th anniversary of the Mexican War of Independence and the 100th anniversary of Mexican Revolution and covering a range of topics. The episode concerning architecture was formatted as a round-table discussion conducted by Miquel Adrià alongside a group of architects, all currently practicing in Mexico and representative of different architectural styles and generations, who expressed their opinions and concerns of major themes in Mexican architecture today and over the past few decades. Accompanying Adrià were Second Generation architects Teodoro González de León and Carlos Mijares, early Third Generation architect Isaac Broid, and late Third Generation architect Fernanda Canales. Canales and Broid have recently worked with CONACULTA on projects in Mexico City.

The panel's conversation began with a quote by famed early twentieth-century Mexican architect Juan O'Gorman addressing the question of architecture and culture in Mexico during his era (that of the First Generation):

"In Mexico, modern architecture is the negation of Mexican-ness; modern Mexican architecture can only be achieved through updating Mexico's one and only tradition: the pre-Hispanic tradition. And these qualities of authentic art would need to be: the pyramidal shape, the dynamic relationship between axes and shapes, profuse and interdisciplinary decoration, the three-dimensional exaggeration of volume and space, harmony of shape, color and material with the surroundings and the landscape."¹¹⁰

-Juan O'Gorman

The panel agreed that O'Gorman's vision of a 'true' Mexican architecture was idealistic and unrealistic, although González de León took a moment to visualize what modern-day Mexico City would look like if O'Gorman's architectural guidelines had been followed. González de León pictured a "marvelous phantasmagoric scene"¹¹¹ to which Isaac Broid responded that it would also have been "terribly doctrinary and unitary" citing open design interpretations and variety as contemporary architecture's best quality and leading to the creation of dynamic, although perhaps less unified, cities. Broid added that reinterpretations of past ideologies has enriched architecture in Mexico.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Curtis, 20.

¹¹¹ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 - Arquitectura".

¹¹² "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 - Arquitectura".

Fernanda Canales asked Miquel Adrià his opinion on contemporary architecture of today versus the opinion he held in 1994 when he authored an article entitled "Latin American Architectures". In this article Adrià stated that "there would be a period of greater reflection in architecture, where Mexican architects will look to within the country for inspiration and not look to copy the imported high-tech movement."¹¹³ Sixteen years later, Adrià says that one of the traits of contemporary Mexican architecture is its great diversity while maintaining threads of influence which tie them to earlier generations. "In the same time and place, we can find different architectures from different generations and with different contextual and formal tendencies."¹¹⁴ Mexican architecture of today is full of life and engage the public by creating moments of encounter, in that manner channeling Legorreta's architecture of humanity.

¹¹³ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura".

¹¹⁴ "Episodio Apertura." Arquitecturas Mexicanas Del Siglo XXI, Arquine, CONACULTA and Canal 22.

Interpreting 'Contemporary'

"Of whom and of what are we contemporaries?" and "What does it mean to be contemporary?" are two questions posed by Italian writer Giorgio Agamben. Agamben writes that to be contemporary is to comply with one's own time and to simultaneously keep it at an arm's length to maintain a clear perspective about the realities of the present.¹¹⁵ Comporariness of architecture can be likened, to a lesser degree, to that of fashion, due to trends in architectural styles. Agamben describes fashion as being a curious time, caught between the "not yet" and the "no more" because based on what is not, fashion predicts what will be trendy before it happens but quickly becomes passé.¹¹⁶ Architectural trends also appear and fall out of favour, in the case of Mexico, depending on the political situation of a country and the intention of its ruling government.

The role of politics in Mexico's search for the 'own' and the 'foreign'

One of the limitations of architecture in Mexico is that it is very affected by political change. Presidential terms are six-year periods and presidents are limited to a single term in office. When a new president begins their term there is a loss in continuity in government-commissioned projects, as it occurs in any other country, which either leaves architectural projects unresolved and unbuilt, or, more commonly, puts a rush on them to be completed within the current president's term. The latter is a "political mindset that has been present since the

¹¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, "What is the Contemporary?," What is an apparatus? And Other Essays, Trans. David Kishik and Stephan Pedatolla, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 48.

¹¹⁶ Agamben, 48.

Figure 63: Mexico City's Zocalo

1960s"¹¹⁷, says Teodoro González de León, to not think enough about the future when coming up with design solutions and that it is sad that politics and design are so intertwined. He says that political times are different from architectural times and when they are forced to align, creativity, aptitude and preparation time are restricted.¹¹⁸ Alberto Kalach agrees about the inconvenience of the six-year term: "We have to finish our buildings with extremely little funding and within the shortest timescale. We have to assume this when drawing up our designs."¹¹⁹

It is noteworthy to look at Mexican politics since the Revolution in 1910 in relation to the evolution of architecture in Mexico during the same period. As previously mentioned, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that formed and took power after the Revolution embraced Functionalism as the official style of any new buildings that they commissioned. They also appropriated existing infrastructure to their benefit by using public plazas in Mexico City to promote their nationalist agenda.¹²⁰ In the 1930s and 1940s, the PRI "sought to create a myth of collective memory into a sacred space and symbol of national identity" in plazas such as the main Zócalo.¹²¹

Beginning in the 1960s, the Mexican government "showcased itself through large public works across all areas of public life" as a means of validating its blatant corrupted and almost dictatorial rule.¹²² This time, the Mexican government was

¹¹⁷ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura".

¹¹⁸ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 – Arquitectura".

¹¹⁹ Herrie and Schmitz, 143.

¹²⁰ Herzog, 138.

¹²¹ Herzog, 138.

¹²² Herrie and Schmitz, 123.

attempting to use tradition and a connection to pre-Hispanic Mexico as a form of uniting the nation. This is likely also a reaction to Mexican architects finding a place for rationalist architecture in new skyscraper commercial buildings and high-rise apartment buildings that gave a boost to Mexico's steel and iron industry and "signalize[d] Mexico's economic step into the modern."¹²³

Figure 64: Patio at the Museum of Anthropology

The most notable building constructed under this government agenda is the Museum of Anthropology (1962-1964) by Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. Regardless of the motive behind the construction of the museum, it is fitting the Ramírez Vázquez looked to the ancient cultures of Mexico for inspiration of a museum dedicated to the country's past societies. The central courtyard of the museum is one of the most recognized features of 20th century Mexican architecture and features a parasol-like roof supported by a single large, ornamented column which is veiled by a waterfall curtain.

The 1960s also saw one of the most tragic events in Mexico's recent history: the 1968 massacre at Tlatelolco. In 1968, a peaceful student protest in Mexico City turned bloody when the Mexican military and special ops division opened fire killing and injuring hundreds of protesters and arresting the rest. "[It] can be generally claimed that culture in Mexico fell into a crisis after 1968 and trust in the modern disappeared. The government deliberately introduced the aesthetic of the pyramid into the buildings of all government institutions up until the nineties. The search for 'the own' was thus used as legitimization of state power."¹²⁴ Tlatelolco also appears to be a tipping point for architects such as Legorreta and the

¹²³ Herrie and Schmitz, 123.

¹²⁴ Herrie and Schmitz, 127.

partnership of González de León and Zabludovsky to decide to commit to a more monumental-based Postmodern architecture instead of the more rationalist architecture they had been working in – a phenomenon dubbed the ‘pyramid principle’ by Dussel and Morales-Saravia – which would be Mexico’s most popular architectural style until the end of the 1980s.¹²⁵ The architects themselves, González de León and Zabludovsky, for example, came to their own conclusions regarding the ‘own’ and the ‘foreign’ which dictated their architectural decisions. Amidst a governmental reign that appropriated the pyramidal shape, however, the “‘own’ and the tradition lost all legitimate worth”¹²⁶ in the eyes of Mexican intellectual Octavio Paz and other critics. Despite the negative associations to the pyramid by some, González de León and Zabludovsky created an architecture that was well received by both the public and the government.

The PRI famously remained in power until the new millennium despite the party’s corruptive and election-fixing ways being public knowledge. The election of Vicente Fox, leader of the National Action Party (PAN), in July 2000 brought about many changes to how the Mexican government operated and also brought small changes to Mexican architecture, especially in Mexico City. Under the PAN, architectural projects such as the Vasoncelos Library by Kalach, the new Senate building by Muñoz Arquitectos, and the new Terminal 2 at Mexico City’s Benito Juárez International Airport by Serrano Arquitectos y Asociados, were realized through open architectural competitions which gave contemporary Mexican firms a chance to contribute to the urban fabric of Mexico City. Twelve years later,

¹²⁵ Herrie and Schmitz, 127.

¹²⁶ Herrie and Schmitz, 131-132.

Mexico has voted the PRI back into power after two six-year terms with the PAN. How will this affect the positive direction in which contemporary Mexican architecture has been evolving?

Figure 65: BBVA Bancomer

Collaborative efforts in contemporary Mexican architecture

Collaboration between architects, both within Mexico and internationally, has become popular in Mexico in the last decade. Perhaps the rise of international competitions with the requirement of foreign firms having to partner with Mexican ones has been partly responsible but many of the recent collaborations of that nature appear to have been driven from a genuine interest in partnership. Such partnerships include Rojkind Arquitectos and BIG (Denmark) for the cancelled Atizapán Tamayo Museum and Legorreta + Legorreta and Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (England) for the BBVA Bancomer Building. Legorreta was a strong believer that teamwork is the future of architecture in this ever-globalized world.¹²⁷

Many CONACULTA projects feature teams of Mexican architects and designers, especially in the 'City of Books and Images' project.

¹²⁷ Ma. Lourdes Marínez Cantu, "Presencia de la Arquitectura en México".

Figure 66: Pilgrim Route

'The Pilgrim Route' is a recent large-scale collaborative project involving international artists and architects and curated by Third Generation Mexican architects Tatiana Bilbao and Derek Dellekamp. This project involves the creation of several installations along a 100-kilometre pilgrimage route to Talpa de Allende, a small town near the city of Guadalajara, which is used by thousands of pilgrims per year during Holy Week to visit the church of Our Lady of the Rosary of Talpa. Infrastructure was needed along the route and the Secretary of Tourism of the state of Jalisco enlisted Bilbao and Dellekamp to provide shelter, lookout points, and moments of reflection for these pilgrims. Along with Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei (FAKE Design), Swiss architects Christ & Gantenbein and HHF, Chilean architects Elemental, and Mexican firms Periférica, Luis Aldrete, and designers Godoylab, Bilbao and Dellekamp created a trail of monuments and inhabitable spaces along the entire pilgrimage route. The spaces were designed keeping in mind that they will only be used once, perhaps a few times, a year, prompting many of the collaborators to design with low maintenance materials of concrete or brick.¹²⁸ A joint venture of this scale between artists and architects has not been seen in Mexico likely since the CU campus of the 1950s. This project is an ideal example of using architecture to conserve cultural heritage. Without the proper infrastructure to house and shelter these pilgrims on their journey, they would experience greater suffering in addition to their lengthy voyage. This project enables a specific pilgrimage route to be more accessible and realistic to accomplish, encouraging Mexicans to celebrate in this ancient ritual and keeping the tradition alive.

¹²⁸ "The Pilgrim Route," 17 Dec 2008, ArchDaily, 09 Aug 2012, <<http://www.archdaily.com/10258/the-pilgrim-route-ruta-del-peregrino-mexico/>>.

Pilgrimages are common in Mexico, especially approaching December 12, the day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico. Millions of pilgrims from all over the country journey by foot – some even crawling on their knees in honour of their devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe – to the Basilica in Mexico City of the same name on an annual basis. The 'Pilgrim Route' project, similar to Fernando Romero's Plaza Mariana, acknowledges this type of religious journey that is so common in the Mexican culture and gives it a 21st century context. This internationally-recognized project has renewed an aspect of the immaterial cultural heritage of Mexico.

Community Projects and Public Agenda

The Third Generation is connecting to the general public, often in many of Mexico City's low-income areas, in unprecedented ways by using architecture to unite communities and encourage greater interaction amongst Mexicans. This social agenda is a relatively new concept in Mexico where politics and politicians often dictated the type of public projects that were realized. It is an attempt, for architects as professionals who have skills to offer to society to enrich and "infect" (to borrow a phrase from Michel Rojkind's TEDx talk 'The Risk of Contagion') these Mexican communities in a positive manner. In these cases, the 'own' can be interpreted as the architects' interest in cultivating Mexican culture through communities.

There several recent projects in Mexico, as Third Generation architect Fernanda Canales, during the '*Distucamos Mexico 2010*' discussion, brought to panel's

Figure 67: Nestle Chocolate Museum

attention, that have enlisted the help of high-prolife contemporary architects where in previous situations they would not have been consulted. Some of these projects are the School for the Blind (2000) and the San Pablo Oztotepec Market (2001) by Mauricio Rocha, the FARO de Oriente (a cultural centre of the Secretary of Culture of the Government of Mexico City in Iztapalapa; 2000) by Alberto Kalach, and even the Nestlé Chocolate Museum in Toluca (2007) by Michel Rojkind.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ "Discutamos Mexico, XV Quienes somos los Mexicanos 108 - Arquitectura".

Shortcomings in recent Mexican architecture

Not all has been positive in Mexican contemporary architecture. Many recent projects have been plagued with setbacks and obstacles, from cancellations of promising projects that would bring international attention and recognition to Mexico, to faulty building constructions that paralyze operations within the buildings.

Two prominent projects that were already making international headlines before their cancellations were the Guggenheim museum in Guadalajara by TEN Arquitectos and the previously mentioned new Tamayo museum in Atizapán by Rojkind Arquitectos and Danish firm BIG. Both of these projects were to bring new cultural establishments to Mexico and would have stimulated international interest, thereby generating tourism, much like the interest that has been prompted by Romeo's Soumaya Museum.

The quality of Mexican workmanship in construction is also deterring the success of many contemporary buildings. Labour in Mexico is cheap and, although it was once highly regarded for its quality, major construction flaws have plagued several recent projects causing severe leaks and flooding, for instance. This is a result of poor workmanship, cheap labour, and even on occasion, the incompetence of the builders in Mexico, looking to cut corners during construction, perhaps remnant attitudes from the PRI's corruptive rule. Affected projects include the Vasconcelos Library by Alberto Kalach, which had to be closed when its greywater

Figure 68: New Seat of the Senate

filtering system flooded the main floor of the library¹³⁰, and the new seat of the Senate on Paseo de la Reforma by Javier Muñoz Menéndez of Muñoz Arquitectos (2011). The latter was also victim of leaks from a rainwater collection system that was installed to irrigate the building's green areas and for upkeep of the patios, and affected the senate's ability to occupy the building.¹³¹

The new seat of the Senate is also an example of under-budgeting and overspending the original budget of millions of pesos. The debt the Senate has accrued with the construction of their new building will play a factor in the project section of this thesis in Chapter 4. Not only did the building come in drastically over-budget, but there were several delays in construction, forcing the Senators to postpone their occupation of the building more than once. Some delays, like the outbreak of the H1N1 virus in 2009, were evidently unexpected and out of the hands of the builder, however the manner in which the new Senate building was executed, factoring in excess spending, several defects and poor craftsmanship, mar the public opinion of the new building. Instead of contemplating the architectural design of the building, many will associate the new seat of the Senate with failure and corruption.

¹³⁰ Tour guide at Vasconcelos Library.

¹³¹ "Se Inunda Nueva Sede Del Senado De La Republica," 19 Apr 2011, Terra, 09 Aug 2012, <http://www.terra.com.mx/noticias/articulo/1092857/Se_inunda_nueva_sede_del_Senado_de_la_Republica.htm>.

Arquine as a Voice of Mexican Contemporary Architecture

Miquel Adrià, a Spanish architect, emigrated to Mexico in the 1990s and has since been instrumental in the development of contemporary Mexican architecture. He began as a contributor to *Arquitectura* Magazine then created *Arquine* in 1997. As the editor of *Arquine*, Adrià has brought much attention and recognition to current Mexican architects within Mexico and internationally. Without such a platform, the Third Generation would not be experiencing the success it has found because in addition to editing *Arquine*, Adrià also edits books on architecture, most of which have contemporary architecture as their subject.¹³²

Figure 69: Arquine, edition 60

In their Summer 2012 publication, edition 60, *Arquine* recognized that, as a magazine, it “must be a sign of its time and a platform for discussing how architecture is developing, while distilling the construction of contemporary history as it is built.”¹³³ Therefore, they published a survey in which they asked three simple questions to eighty-two Mexican architects, designers, or both.

The first question asked the designers to select, in their opinion, the “most outstanding Mexican project between 1997-2012.”¹³⁴ Kalach’s Vasconcelos Library led the poll with a large majority of the votes, and the other top answers, in descending order, were the School of Arts in Oaxaca by Mauricio Rocha, the University Museum of Contemporary Art by Teodoro González de León, and The Arcos Bosques Complex also by González de León. The top two projects, however,

¹³² Herrle and Schmitz, 139.

¹³³ “Overview and prospective,” *Arquine* 60, 28-29.

¹³⁴ “Overview and prospective,” 28-29.

1

¿Qué obra mexicana destacas de este periodo 1997-2012?

Which was the most outstanding Mexican project between 1997-2012?

2

¿Qué trayectoria profesional consideras más relevante en este periodo de quince años?

Whose career has been most noteworthy over this period?

3

¿Qué proyección a futuro vislumbres más destacable?

Who has the strongest potential?

Figure 70: Results of the Arquino survey

Número de respuestas
Number of answers

received a high majority of the votes and several of the other projects received one vote each.

The second question asked, “Whose career has been most noteworthy” over the same time period. Mauricio Rocha received the most votes followed by, in descending order, Kalach, González de León, and Legorreta, with the publication Arquine rounding out the top five responses.¹³⁵ The nomination of Arquine in this category shows the appreciation that the surveyed designers hold for the publication, both as a platform to publish their work, but also to be well informed of designs by their peers.

The last question, “Who has the strongest potential?”, saw the Mexican firm PRODUCTORA garner the most votes. This question was generally left unanswered by the surveyed designers and architects implying that they are not familiar enough with the up-and-coming architects who have yet to make their mark on the architecture in Mexico, perhaps a result of insufficient exposure, ironically one of the reasons of the poll itself. Alongside the graphs depicting the results of the survey questions, Arquine included a graph of the number of architectural projects designed by surveyed architects to give an indication of the exposure they have given to each of those who were in turn surveyed.¹³⁶

This move by Arquine, which turns the tables by asking the architects themselves to choose projects that they believe have recently impacted the architectural

¹³⁵ “Overview and prospective,” 28-29.

¹³⁶ “Overview and prospective,” 28-29.

scene in Mexico, shows an insight into what opinion these professionals have of their peers' work. There are many interesting observations that can be drawn from this survey. For instance, Fernando Romero was not nominated in response to any of the questions, nor was his Soumaya Museum, which is perhaps the most internationally publicized building of contemporary Mexican architecture in recent years. The chart indicating the exposure given by Arquine to each of the surveyed architects, however, places Romero in third with ten publications. On the contrary, PRODUCTORA, a young firm with only two published projects in Arquine, was chosen as having the most potential. Miquel Adrià comments that the nature of this survey will "help us measure [Arquine's] empathy and influence over fifteen years in regard to the interests and focal points that define the direction of contemporary Mexican architecture."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ "Fifteen Years," Arquine 60, 21.

PART TWO

Chapter 4 – 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market

Site Introduction

Figure 71: Exterior view of the artesanias market

The 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market is a popular tourist attraction in Mexico City who seek authentic Mexican handicrafts. It is located block away from the historical 'La Ciudadela' building which houses the undergoing project, 'The City of Books and Images', that was introduced and detailed in Chapter 2.

North of the Library, and dividing the Ciudadela building from the Market, is the Plaza de la Ciudadela, a largely unkept public square that desperately needs to be taken care of by the government, but surprisingly popular despite its often littered condition. The square hosts free *danzón* (a type of ballroom dance) classes on weekends that are especially popular with seniors. An initiative to clean up the park and its surrounding area would make the site more inviting to the public would be sure to increase the number of regular visitors that it already receives.

Figure 72: Aerial view of market and its surroundings

Figure 73: Historic Centre of Mexico [Perimeter A in yellow, Perimeter B in blue, Site in pink]

Figure 74: View of National Arms Factory

Figure 75: Architectural drawings from the borough of Cuauhtémoc

The site of the present-day market also has a long history. At the time of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) it was home to the National Arms Factory of Mexico City. The factory building was demolished in the mid-20th century and in 1965, the site, then bare, was given by presidential decree to the Chamber of Deputies and was designated to be the site of their new legislative building. The building was never constructed and within the same year the site was loaned to artisans representing indigenous groups from across Mexico for use as an exhibition ground. With the 1968 Summer Olympics and the 1970 World Cup held in Mexico City, the artisans were permitted to remain on-site to showcase the type of traditional crafts made in Mexico when the city was filled with foreigners. As of 1973, the artisans began to settle permanently on the land and built fixed market stalls with no protest from the Chamber of Deputies. The *delegación* Cuauhtémoc, the borough of Mexico City in which the market is located, even commissioned an architect to draw up plans of new market shops to be constructed on the site in 1980, which were never built. The artisans have never owned the rights to the land nor paid rent but were accepted by the rightful owners and were left undisturbed for more than forty years.

This changed in April of 2007 when, after suffering a large budget cut, the Mexican Senate requested an exchange of properties to offset the reduction in the budget. They owned of the rights to a property located within the building complex where the Chamber of Deputies is headquartered and asked them for an exchange in which the Senate would become owners of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market site. (In Mexico, the Congress of the Union, is the legislative body of the Federal Government, is composed of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.) The artisans immediately became concerned that they

Figure 76: Turibus routes

would be evicted by the new landowners, a move which would affect the more than 20 000 people whom depend economically on the sales of artesanías at the market. A petition to let the artisans keep their market was initiated and signed by people from all over the world who have visited the market. In 2008, the motion was passed and the property switched hands but no legal action was taken against the market's artisans.

Despite verbal support from a representative of the Senators that the market will not be displaced and its artisans would not be evicted, there have constantly been rumors since 2007 about the sale of the land, particularly when the Senate was looking for funds to pay for their new Senate building on the city's main avenue *Paseo de la Reforma*, which was at one point rumored to be constructed on the site of the market.

In May 2012, the Mexican media reported that the Government of Mexico City had arrived at a decision to modernize the site of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market and to search for a solution that would allow the market to stay open. Although many media outlets have reported the story, there has yet to be a formal announcement from the government, which will likely not happen until they have approved a new modernization plan or urban plan which meets their criteria and that of the private investors rumored to have expressed interest in investing in the property. Once again, the artisans and merchants are left in total uncertainty and are being ignored by the members of the Senate and the Government of Mexico City. CONACULTA is said to be a part of this future project at the site of the Artesanías Market which makes the observations from earlier discussions of

the CONACULTA architectural case studies making very relevant in the event of a redesign of the market. The artisans have been attempting for a UNESCO designation in Intangible Heritage for their artesanías market which would be a major victory in their favour because if granted, the market would likely remain untouched by the parties interested in redeveloping its land.

Timeline of 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market based on published newspaper articles

- 1965- A decree by President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz gives the Chamber of Deputies, part of the Congress of the Union, the plot of land across from the famous 18th-century Ciudadela building, to construct a new Legislative building. This is the former site of the National Arms Factory.
- 1965.12 - Plans for the new Legislative building fall through.
Artisans hailing from all over Mexico are given permission to install a temporary handicrafts exhibition on the site.
- 1967 - The National Association of Artisans submits an application to the Judicial Federal Government requesting a loan for the land to install a temporary fair on-site.
- 1968 - Summer Olympic Games are held in Mexico City.
- Government officials decide to leave the merchants on the Ciudadela site for the enjoyment of national and foreign visitors, without charging the merchants rent or having them sign any official agreement.
- An association is formed between the artisans set up on the land.
- 1970 - FIFA World Cup is held in Mexico City.
- Government officials again decide to leave the artisans on the site - without formalizing the agreement - to promote Mexican *artesanías* to visitors to the city.
- 1973 - 2007 The artisans settled permanently on the land and built permanent installations, shops, housing, and workshops.

- 2007.03. - Due to budget cuts and a desire to expand their offices, the Senate proposes a deal to the Congress of the Union involving a swap of one of Senate's buildings in exchange for the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market site.
- 2007.04. - The Union of Artisans of 'La Ciudadela' invite the head of the Government of Mexico City to visit the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market to demonstrate to him the cultural and economic importance of the market and to make him aware of the situation.
- The Senators' proposal to exchange the properties is approved according to Roberto Sánchez Sánchez, interim director of Legal Matters of the Chamber of Deputies.
- 2007.05. - The artisans of 'La Ciudadela' ask the President and the Government of Mexico City to intervene and to veto the enactment of the decree to amend the General Law of Domestic Goods, which will allow the Senate to evict them once they take control of the land. They are worried that the Senators will sell the land to obtain funds to build their new Senate building.
- The artisans learn about the situation through the media. They do not receive any official information about the matter. The artisans wait for a response to their invitation to the head of the Government and live in uncertainty.
- Foreigners and Mexicans begin a petition to prevent the *Congreso de la Unión* from evicting the artisans of La Ciudadela. They also send the merchants letters of support in this matter.
- 2007.07 - Members of the board of the Union of Artisans of 'La Ciudadela' meet with the Senate's legal consultant.
- 2007.08. - Despite the continued uncertainty about the future of 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market, the artisans plan a

rejuvenation of the market in order to improve its image and be able to offer better service to its national and international clientele.

The project includes the construction of an auditorium where every month folkloric dances and concerts showcasing music from diverse regions of the country could be presented, an area designated for exhibitions and artesanías auctions, as well as a larger parking lot and improving the washrooms.

The preparation of the proposal is headed by Agustín Girón Méndez, architect for the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in conjunction with the secretary of the Union of Congress.

The artisans are still worried about being displaced from the property, especially after some Federal Deputies (from the Chamber of Deputies) expressed an intention of building a shopping centre on the site.

Representatives of the Union of Artisans of 'La Ciudadela' meet with local and federal Deputies 'to remind them and make them aware that artisans, not only those at 'La Ciudadela', but from the whole country, are sources of employment and strength of the economy and foreign exchange."

2007.10. – In protest of the Senate's continued interest in selling the property, merchants from the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market marched down Paseo de la Reforma, Mexico City's main boulevard, in a organized demonstration en route to the official Presidential residence of Los Pinos.

2008.03. – The Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (ALDF) urges the Secretary of Tourism to take the necessary steps to establish a stop for the the Turibús, the popular tourist tour bus, at the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market.

The president of the Tourism Commission at the ALDF states that diverse cultural, historic, architectural, artisanal and artistic points of interest converge near the Plaza de la Ciudadela. These include the Artesanías Market, the José Vasconcelos Library of Mexico (located in the historic La Ciudadela building), the Theatre of La Ciudadela, book-selling street vendors, as well as outdoor dance classes in the Plaza de la Ciudadela.

2008.06. - The Deputies agree to cede to the Senators, without cost, the property and domain rights that correspond to the land where the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market is located as part of the proposed property exchange.

2008.07. - The President of the Mexico City's Senate Commission confirms that the Senate will not displace the artisans and the market from its current location.

The President adds that a study performed in association with other legislators and institutions will be initiated to analyze the necessary market improvements that are needed to benefit the artisans and the thousands of national and international tourists that visit the market. The President also mentions the need to settle the legal status of the land and that "although it is not in writing, the market already belongs to the artisans because they have spent a lifetime working here."

2011.02. - The Senate begins talks with the Ministry of the Interior and the 355 artisan vendors at 'La Ciudadela', informing them that the property must be vacated as it will be sold along with 13 other buildings & properties owned by the Senate. This act seeks to combine all of the Senate's properties and offices in their new headquarters building, soon to open on Paseo de la Reforma, and to help pay for its construction which has already surpassed its budget.

The Senate informs the Federal Superior Auditory (ASF) that it is aware of the possible economic problems that may result from notifying the artisans of their impending eviction and in the inevitable conflicts in the process of dislodging them from the market, however it stands by the decision to empty the lot despite the complication of

it being occupied by artisans.

2011.03. - The Senate asks the mayor of Mexico City for help in evicting the artisans from the market at the Ciudadela.

The coordinator of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) states that the Government of Mexico City had originally planned to buy the land but because of their financial state it is no longer possible and the sale must be made to private investors.

2011.06. - A group of investors approach the legislators with a proposal to buy the property where the La Ciudadela artesanias market is located, according to an act by the Political Coordination Board of the Senate (JUCOPO).

The document does not reveal the names or any information about the investors who are interested in purchasing the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market property, which has been valued between 110 and 120 million pesos [approximately 9 million Canadian dollars] with a total area of 1.6 hectares, or 16 000m².

2011.08. - The Senators put up the market for sale and gauge interest from developers.

"The report by the Public Account in 2009, prepared by the Superior Audit of the Federation (ASF) accounts for the ownership by the Senate of the land at La Ciudadela."

The PRD coordinator reveals that the Senate is in desperate need of funds to finish paying for the construction of the new Seat of the Senate.

The President of the Senate states that the Senate is in talks with different institutions who are interested in an integral project, one that respects the artisans that currently occupy the land and that work legally to provide for

their families, but one that also gives a rejuvenation to the area.

This news immediately put the merchants in a state of alert and made them start negotiations with the legislators. The president of the Union of Artisans of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market confirms they will try to reach an agreement with the government officials.

The Legislative Assembly of the Federal District asks the Senate to reconsider the selling the land where the Ciudadela market is located. This request is submitted on behalf of the artisans and indigenous families who depend on the sales of their artesanías to provide for their families. The ADLF reminds the Senate that the land was originally a public resource and claims, therefore, it should belong to the citizens of Mexico City.

The ALDF also requests to start the process to declare the site as a National Heritage site. The Foundation of Authentic Artisans for the Fostering of Artesanías and the Protection, Defense, and Conservation of the Ciudadela Artesanías Market petitions the Senate to donate the land to the artisans.

The artisans request an audience to talk to the Senators. " We want to reach an agreement and find a way to legalize the land in our favour. We have asked the Senators to listen to us and see what we do. We care about artesanías and the dissemination of our country's culture. Our business is not like anything else. If we are removed from here, this will affect us and our children. We hope that we are allowed to continue working in the name of our country's culture. We are confident that we will be heard and be given the possibility of ownership."

Assembly members from the political party of the Labour Party ask the Senate to sell the Ciudadela Market to the artisans with the intent to respect the history and roots the place has on the site.

Some of the parties interested in buying this land are the Government of Mexico City, The Alameda Trust and the

Trust of the Historic Centre.

The Senate of the Republic rejects to hand over the rights to land free of charge to the artisans. They do, however, agree to give priority to public institutions such as the Government of Mexico City in the sale of the land with the condition that these institutions offer a place to the artisans of the market and not to private organizations.

2011.09 – The Senate requests more funds to pay for its new Senate building. Instead of selling the real state it owns, such as the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market, the Senate passed the motion to obtain the necessary resources from its 2012 budget to pay for its new building, of which the budget been exceeded by millions of pesos.

The coordinator for the PRI states that it is time to make decisions in regard to these buildings and that the opinion of several senators is not resort to public bidding auctions but to turn to other institutions such as the National Institute of Fine Arts or the Legislative Assembly of Mexico City as potential buyers.

2011.10 – The Senate negotiates the sale of its real estate and negotiates a budget with the Chamber of Deputies that will public institutions interested in buying the land at the 'La Ciudadela 'Market land, and the rest of the Senate's properties, to do so.

2011.11. – The President of the National Condeferation of Tourism asks the Senate to sell the land to the artisans. He says that displacing the artisans from this place would be an irresponsible and insensitive act, and asks the Government of Mexico City to finance the sale.

Figure 77: A corridor of the artesanias market

The Artesanías Market is very popular, especially with tourists, and is a wonderful showcase of Mexican artesanías from 20 of the 31 Mexican States. The market's architecture, however, is underwhelming and detracts from the beauty of the hand-crafted merchandise it proudly sells. Factors such as the market's uneven and unplanned growth since its permanent establishment, and the dependence upon each artisan to construct their own stand or shop has resulted in a mish-mash of building materials and mostly makeshift-turned-permanent constructions. The market deserves to be housed in a building that proudly displays the typical crafts of Mexico and underlines their cultural importance.

There are new shopping malls being constructed in practically every borough of Mexico City – massive complexes to which are usually seen filled with shoppers, meanderers, and diners. The 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market, however, has seen a decline in its number of visitors, particularly the local residents. If the Artesanías market were redeveloped and included more diverse programs and public dining, cultural, and entertainment spaces, the market at La Ciudadela could surely successfully become a new cultural hub of Mexico City.

An insider look at the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market

Markets are fixtures in the Mexican culture and architecturally, can be comprised of temporary installations or occupy permanent spaces in buildings. Markets are part of the everyday lives of Mexicans and there is no end to the variety of products sold in Mexican market.

Figure 78: Alebrijes on display

There markets specifically for food, flowers, clothing, shoes, and even a market dedicated to witchcraft in Mexico City. There are also markets that sell a combination of the aforementioned items. Unfortunately, there are also many markets in Mexico that sell pirated and even contraband goods, the most popular being pirated CDs and DVDs. Many of these markets travel throughout the city and can be found, for example, every Wednesday in the same location. This gives the vendors a wider buying audience but signifies that their stalls must be portable and allow for easy assembly and disassembly.

While there are several markets that sell artesanías in Mexico City, 'La Ciudadela' is the largest and is unique. At 'La Ciudadela', there are artisans representing many of Mexico's indigenous tribes who make and sell on-site crafts that are traditional in their cultures. Among these indigenous artesanías, there are also several typically Mexican products, such as *molcajetes*, traditional stone mortar and pestles used in Mexican cooking, and *alebrijes*, fantastical brightly-painted wooden creatures.

Once the artisans set down roots on the market's current site, each one of them

was individually responsible for constructing and financing their own shop. Evidently there was an order to the construction and the distribution of space, as the market is laid out in a grid pattern. It includes a courtyard space within the area of the shops, and the market originally only occupied the easternmost area of the present-day site. There was room for the market to expand when more artisans joined. Several of the shops have an upper level which serves as either a small residence for the artisan and their family, a storage space for their artesanías, or a workshop where the artesanías are handmade. From talking with some vendors at La Ciudadela, it can be understood that most of the workshop spaces were once located at the ground level as part of the shops, which allowed the public to watch the artisans as they handcrafted their artesanías – from guitars, to traditional garments, to silverwork and metalwork. Today, much of the work is done behind closed doors, likely to maximize floor space in the shops, but there still remain the occasional artisan who works while supervising his or her shop.

Because the ownership of the land was never officially passed on from the Chamber of Deputies to the artisans at 'La Ciudadela', the system of renting and owning a stall in the market is still very off-the-books. Many of the artisans in the market have been present since the beginning and have passed the shop down through the generations. The market's organic growth has resulted in shops of unequal size and visibility as there are only three pedestrian entrances from Balderas Street and one from Emilio Donde Street as well as the entrance to the above-ground parking lot. Each vendor "owns" the shop or stall they sell at, having paid for it under the table to the Union of the Artisans of the 'La Ciudadela'

Figure 79: Artesanias in the market

Figure 80: Shoppers at the market

Artesanías Market. When an artisan decides to leave the market, they sell their space directly to an interested party and simply notify the Union of the change – there is no paperwork involved and no formal procedure to follow.

The Union of the Artisans of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market, on which there is not much information available, seems to be an organization comprised of all of the artisans in the market and deals with market-wide issues such as general maintenance and security (for which the artisans pay a monthly fee). Due to the number of ownership issues that have arisen throughout the years in relation to the land, this union has representatives who speak with the Senate and the Government of Mexico City on behalf of all the artisans. There seems to be, however, a hierarchy in the union and a division between those serving as representatives and are in charge of decision-making, and the remaining majority of the merchants. Artisans say that they are not kept informed of the talks between their representatives and the government and that whatever news they hear on the subject is generally from the media. It is unclear whether these representatives and the leaders of this union are abusing their power or how they were elected to these posts. The vendors and artisans are willing to chat about the market ownership situations with shoppers, but are cautious when talking about what is being done on their behalf to save their market. Many simply want to see the situation resolved in a way that will allow them to keep the market the way it has been operating since it was opened.

Despite this communication gap between some of the artisans, there is a distinct feel of community and camaraderie in the marketplace. Neighbouring vendors

Figure 81: Inside a shop. Note the stairs leading to the upper level

Figure 82: Shoppers in the market

chat with each other constantly and watch the other's shop whenever one steps out on a break. Artisans will gladly guide visitors to other shops in the market when they are looking for a specific item that they do not sell, or if they seek a wider selection than what they are offering. The artisans eagerly explain their crafts when they notice shoppers taking an interest in them and are happy to ask questions about the origins of the artesanías, including describing traditional uses and crafting techniques and processes. They are noticeably proud of the work they create with their own hands and are proud to be continuing traditions, whether national traditions or those of their particular indigenous tribe.

Many artisans create modern pieces using traditional materials or techniques. For instance, popular items in the market are *talavera* pottery pieces usually hailing from Puebla or Guanajuato – though each region's *talavera* is distinct from one another – which range from typical planters, vases, decorative plates, cups, bowls, and serving dishes to other kitchenware and even numbered tiles for your street address to hang outside your front door. Artisans making jewelry with *chaquira*, small beads, are always creating new designs for earrings, necklaces, bracelets and rings. The artisans are very clever and innovative in designing pieces as a way of attracting local customers to keep visiting the market.

Figure 83: Collage of photos taken in the market in the 1970s

Photos from the 1970s, acquired from Sra. Yolanda Estrada Hernández, an artisan selling fine silver artesanías whose business was established by her father-in-law at 'La Ciudadela' in 1965, depict a bustling marketplace with artisans working in their shops within view of the shoppers, and community events, such as traditional dances, taking place in the courtyard of the market. Today, despite the reputation of the market, vendors have seen less sales which some attribute to the recent recession and others to the lack of advertisements and lack of coordination with tour groups. Dealing with large groups of foreigners has caused the artisans to become guarded, especially, they say, of asian tourists. First, as is typical in artesanías markets, there are no fixed prices on the merchandise, which allows the seller to set the price according to the buyer – usually depending on whether they are a foreigner or Mexican – but also allows room for bargaining, which is expected of the buyer. Asian tourists, say the vendors, typically start bargaining with ridiculously low prices (as low as a few pesos, or around a Canadian dollar) for meticulously handcrafted items and refuse to pay in the range of what could be considered a reasonable price. This leads the vendors to feel that their work is undervalued and underappreciated. But what angers the artisans, and has caused many to post 'NO PHOTOS' signs at their stalls or in their shops, is that they have discovered that Chinese tourists who take photos of their artesanías do so with a purpose other than documenting their visit to the market. They return to China with these photos and use them to create knock-off Mexican artesanías that are cheap imitations of the intricate and handmade crafts that Mexicans put their time, effort and passion into. These knock-offs are then shipped to Mexico and sold as competition to the very artesanías that inspired them by street vendors around the city. This act has upset the artisans who

already feel threatened by their possible displacement and now have to face competing with much cheaper versions of their own artesanías.

For this very reason it was difficult to properly document the interior of the marketplace, the connecting corridors, and the shops themselves. In shops where conversations were had with the owner, they often granted permission to take a few photos of their artesanías once they understood the reason behind them: this thesis. Most photos, however, were taken discreetly and many show empty shops and corridors as a result since many of the artisans have become wary of anyone who could be attempting to copy their artesanías.

The success and longevity of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market can partially be attributed to the former leader of the artisan's union, Ruben Mercado, who held the position for thirty years, since the union's formation. He is described as a good leader to the market's artisans as he organized many artisanal fairs for the market's artisans to participate in, and also gave them the opportunity to showcase their workshops to the public. He was removed from the post through what sounds like a power play, but his sons continue to handcraft guitars in a shop at the market.

According to artisans in the market, Carmen Romano, the wife of then-President Jose Lopez Portillo, helped revitalize the market a decade or so after the artisans settled on the land. She fully funded the renovation of the courtyard inside the market, which involved unifying the look of the shops adjacent to the courtyard through the creation of stucco and brick archways. It is important to note that

the battle between the artisans and the Senate for the rights to the land is not just being fought by the artisans, their families, and those who would be directly affected if a sale went through, but by many people who believe in and support the market, like Carmen Romano did in the 1970s.

'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market is also difficult to document architecturally. Its street façade is mostly covered by a bright yellow wall that encloses the market from the street. This wall creates a typical situation in Mexican architecture where the street façade is severe and undecorated and in complete opposition to a colourful and interesting interior. Luis Barragán's own house, today a UNESCO Heritage Site, is a masterpiece composed of carefully planned sequences of spaces, and bold walls of colour. The subtle intricacy of the design contrasts greatly with the house's grey, uninspiring façade which gives no hint to the architectural masterpiece it houses. Similarly, at the house-turned-museum of Dolores Olmedo, its tranquil gardens and majestic spaces are hidden from the street. Today, the location of the museum, obviously once located in an undeveloped suburb of Mexico City, is situated on a busy street in a unkept area of Xochimilco, south of Mexico City. Olmedo was a close friend of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and even appeared as the subject in several of Rivera's paintings. She was an art collector whose large collection ranges from pre-Hispanic to contemporary pieces. Visitors to the museum are transported into another world upon crossing the wall threshold and entering the large gardens in which peacocks, ducks, geese and other animals wander freely around the property.

Walls and underrated street façades in Mexico are common as the focus of buildings is on the interior spaces. Although the effect is not as dramatic as in the two given examples, 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market presents a similar situation. The colour and vibrancy of the artesanías are hidden behind the yellow wall that encloses the market and upon crossing one of the thresholds, the visitor feels as though they are stepping into another world.

Figure 84: North elevation - Ayuntamiento Street

Figure 86: West elevation - Enrico Martinez Street

Figure 85: South elevation - Emilio Donde Street

Figure 87: East elevation - Balderas Avenue

Once inside the market, seemingly every available surface is covered in artesanías on display. The vendors creatively use every inch to present their artesanías by hanging them from various places including the walls, the ceilings, and off of tables displaying even more artesanías. The type of selling space differs; the most basic consists of a table, followed by a sort of booth or stall, and finally the most common are the small shops. It is evident that the shops, which are unequal in area, were part of the original organized layout of the market while the other types of vending locales have infilled the leftover space within the site.

Also evident in the original plan of the market is the lack of a canopy design to shelter the circulation spaces between shops. The artisans have therefore installed improvised solutions to keep their merchandise and their shoppers dry, however these solutions are the biggest eyesore of the market. The majority of these improvised canopies are made of corrugated plastic that has yellowed with age and looks outdated. They also provides a stark contrast to the meticulously hand-crafted artesanías which make the plastic canopies look cheap and out of place. It is the aspect of the market which is in most noticeable need of replacement and updating as these improvised roofs are present throughout the market.

Despite the grid organization of the layout of the shops and circulation to each of them, the market gives off no feeling of modularity, perhaps because the eye is drawn to the merchandise in the shop and not to the shop itself, and because each shop sells different merchandise that is presented in different ways. The artisans are not grouped based on the type of artesanía they sell, which encourages shoppers to walk down every passageway in the market as they never

know what they might find. Contributing to the irregularities of the market is the addition of a second level by many of the merchants to their shops. These second levels are accessed through the shop itself and are either used as storage space for artesanías, as a workshop space for artisans, or even as a small living space for the vendors or artisans. While many shops have a second floor, they are constructed in a variety of styles, materials, and dimensions, which reinforces the ad hoc quality of the market and highlights that the owner of each shop considers it their property.

There are few shops to the west of the parking lot which appear to be constructed after the market became established and popular with shoppers. These shops don't receive as many shoppers as the rest of the market. The area to the west of the parking lot is mostly occupied by workshops and storage areas. Perhaps these constructions were built once the market became popular and the vendors wanted to maximize their retail space. The photos from the 1970s indicate that having workshops in close proximity to the shops or within the shops themselves was common but today there are few artisans who tend shop and craft artesanías in the same space, mostly only those who make and sell jewelry.

This area of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market is also home to a small population of the Triquis indigenous tribe, originally from Oaxaca, who were displaced from their homes, along with many citizens of Mexico City, in the 1985 earthquake that caused immense damage to the city and claimed many lives. The Triquis were permitted to take up residence on the land and continue living there to this day. Having a tribe permanently residing within the market site

strengthens the sense of community that can be found among those living and working in the market and strengthens the market's production of artesanías that are representative of Mexico's indigenous populations and of Mexican culture. Apart from the Triquis, many of Mexico's other indigenous populations are represented in the market making it a hub of indigenous artesanías.

Similar markets in Mexico City include the Coyoacan market, the San Juan market, and the Bazar Sabado in San Angel. Until its recent closure, the artesanías market at Buenavista was the most comparable to the one at La Ciudadela. Whereas at La Ciudadela, each artisan pays rent to the artisan's union for the space they are using within the market, the former market at Buenavista was owned by a single man and the artisans selling their work within the market were paid based on commission. This is perhaps why merchandise at the market at Buenavista was typically more expensive and with less selection than at La Ciudadela. The market at Buenavista was located in a single, large building with each artisan selling their crafts in their own section of the indoor building. The atmosphere at La Ciudadela is much more that of a community as each artisan is in charge of their own little shop or stall and are working entirely for themselves.

The *Bazár Sabado*, or Saturday Bazaar, is both an outdoor market that sets up on Saturdays in San Angel in a few outdoor parks and also consists of a permanent market that is housed in a colonial building, complete with a restaurant in the interior courtyard. The setting for *Bazár Sabado* is a quaint part of Mexico City, with narrow cobblestone streets, green parks, and restored colonial architecture. The ambience of the permanent market at the *Bazár Sabado* is more refined and

the artesanías are displayed better than at 'La Ciudadela', however the clientele is generally of higher income which is reflected in the higher priced artesanías, especially noticeable with the fine jewelry and pottery. The market of the *Bazár Sabado* has more architectural character, as it is housed in a bright orange colonial building, of which both the main and upper levels are used as market vending space. Adapting a historic building into a market space, however, has its disadvantages as the shops on the upper levels do not have the same visibility as those on the lower level, and are less visited due to the narrow stairs leading to the upper level and the poor distribution of space upstairs which is at times difficult to navigate.

The market at La Ciudadela, therefore, has its merits as well as its faults, but it is positioned to become a major hub for artesanías with the help of an advertising campaign to attract locals, a better method to attract tourists, and the redevelopment of some areas of the site to maximize the space and to present a new, updated image for the market.

Figure 88: Model of existing marketplace

Intervention proposals

In 2008, the artisans decided that if they were to propose a re-design of the site, the Senators would appreciate the cultural significance of the market and allow the market to remain on the Senate's land. The union of artisans hired an architect from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Agustín Girón Méndez, to come up with a proposal that would re-invigorate the site and better serve the market's national and international visitors. The union of artisans was very clear in the types of programs it felt were missing from the site:

"The project...includes the construction of an auditorium where every month folkloric dances and concerts showcasing music from diverse regions of the country will be presented, including [traditional dances] *La Guelaguetza de Oaxaca* and the *Danza de los Viejitos de Michoacán*. We are also planning to build an area designated for exhibitions and artesanías auctions, as well as a larger parking lot and improved washrooms. 'We want the *Mercado de Artesanos de La Ciudadela* to offer a better service to our national and international clients.'

- José Ángel Zamora, president of the *Unión de Artesanos de La Ciudadela*

Although the 2008 proposal was, evidently, never executed (and there is no trace of any architectural drawings or plans), the suggestions made by the artisans are

an excellent starting point for the proposed re-invigoration of the Artesanías Market in this thesis. The difficult aspect of a redesign of the market is completing the work in such a way that none of the merchants would lose a day of sales. The redesign must be done in phases so that each artisan and merchant, some of whom also live on-site, has a piece of land and a shelter on the site throughout the whole process. A row of abandoned and unused buildings located to the north of the site on the same city block may serve as a temporary location for the market while one part of the current market site is being re-adapted, should the site be approached as a *tabula rasa* as the Senate seems to be advocating. Permanent housing for the artisans should also be included in the redesign of the market and site.

There are several other steps that could be taken to begin to improve the architectural aesthetic of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market and to re-invigorate the site from small to large scope.

The first step would be to properly advertise the market throughout the city and continue to petition for to be included on the *turibus* route which passes nearby. The Mexican government seems to spend more money on attractions that are also geared at tourists. The imminent addition of the new Metrobus Line 4, of which the bus station has already been constructed on the same block as the market, will facilitate a connection an east-west connection between the market, the historic centre, and even the airport. Currently Line 2 of the Metrobus links the market to the south of the city and along one of Mexico City's busiest streets.

Figure 89: Transportation serving the site [MB stands for Metrobus, M stands for Metro]

These connections, plus the existing nearby subway stations, facilitate access to the market from several points in the city and help attract new customers.

The simplest architectural intervention which could be done immediately is to remove the rudimentary corrugated plastic overhead canopies that shelter shoppers (and artesanías) from the sun and the rain. A high-tech rain collection system could be the technical and aesthetic solution that is needed. Much like in the 'Centre of the Images' where Isaac Broid's quiet interventions introduced metal and glass into a historic setting, a sleek fix to the existing eyesores would immediately boost the vibe of the market.

Larger interventions, such as the inclusion of the program spaces requested by the vendors, would likely be situated in the existing parking lot, which in turn could be converted into an underground parking lot. Freeing up the existing parking lot would also open the centre of the market block to the adjacent park and could be the main entryway into the complex in a way reminiscent of the Third Generation architects who broke from earlier Generations' fondness of enclosure and security for exposure to and dialogue with the bustling city.

Such architectural interventions would catch the eye of the general public, creating a larger influx of shoppers, while also safeguarding a part of Mexico's intangible heritage, in which artesanías are most definitely included, as well as benefiting a community in need, similar to other contemporary community projects embraced by the Third Generation.

The uncertainty of the future of the market, which could at any moment in time be closed by the Senate, suggests two separate project proposals should be made. The first would address a larger scope of work of a complete redesign of the site should the Senate and interested private investigators reach a deal and want to add other urban developments on-site with spaces such as residential and office space. A more sensitive approach to revitalizing the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market will also be proposed to safeguard the existing marketplace and accommodate new spaces, both for the artisan community, and the general public.

Figure 90: Example of a woven bordado

Project Investigation #1

The first project investigation considers the site as a tabula rasa – the reason being that if the Senate does indeed sell the land or develop it in conjunction with private investigators, the site would likely be razed to allow for a brand new development and distribution of spaces. This project investigation accepts this possibility and proposes a design approach that would ensure the market would remain as the site's pièce de resistance.

The market's new layout is inspired by *bordados*, or traditional tapestry designs, which often feature repeating geometrical patterns.

Because the market is being completely redesigned, this allows the new program spaces requested by the artisans (an auditorium, exhibition hall, and auction space) to be fully integrated into the shopping atmosphere of the market, and not segregated into shopping and exhibition areas.

Additional programs to be added to the site in this investigation include mid-rise condos and office buildings. This mixture of work, live, and play/shopping is popular in Mexico City with many new complexes of this nature such as Reforma222 (Teodoro González de León), Plaza Carso (Fernando Romero), and Antara Polanco (Juan Sordo Madaleno).

The appropriation and razing of the plots of land to the north of the site, buildings that are mostly vacated, underused, or currently serve as parking lots allows this project investigation to occupy most of the city block, save for the Hotel Panuco

Figure 91: Site plan of first project investigation

and the Editorial Noriega anchoring the corners of Ayunamiento Street. Capitalizing on the new metrobus line that stops along Ayuntamiento, direct access from this street into the new market gives the artisans more exposure and the *bordado*-inspired shop layouts and distribution on-site create more dynamic axes through the site. Pedestrian traffic from the Metrobus to the new City of Books and Images to the south of the site crosses through the market and has some of the new courtyard spaces interspersed throughout the market which offer the public areas of enjoyment, meeting, and gathering.

The shops themselves vary in size though they are all scaled versions of the same shape. The 1980 drawings obtained from the borough of Cuauhtemoc's planning department serve as a guideline for project investigation #1 as three sizes of shops are shown. Shops, or stalls, in the existing market range quite a bit in size and this proposal would standardize the shops in terms of area to more equally distribute space according to the volume of merchandise being sold by each artisan.

This project investigation is proposed not as the ideal solution to adding new program to the market, but provides an alternative example of a contemporary tabula rasa approach to the redesign of the site in the event of the land's redevelopment by the Senate or private investors in which surely the market, if it stays on-site, will no longer be the focal point.

Figure 93: View of model for first investigation

Figure 92: View of model for first investigation

Figure 94: Site model showcasing project proposal (investigation #2)

Project Investigation #2

The second project investigation is more sensitive to the existing artesanías market and looks to add the program spaces requested by the artisans, among others, in a manner that complements its surrounding context.

The better part of the shops in the market, as previously mentioned, are concentrated to the eastern side of the site. These structures will remain in this investigation and the new addition will be proposed on the leftover area of the site where the existing parking lot is and the area that houses storage and workshops.

This proposal is based on appropriation, redistribution and creation of spaces. All of the program that is being removed from the site to make room for a new addition will be redistributed to other areas of the site. The few market shops that will be displaced will be accommodated in a manner that follows the existing grid layout of the marketplace and the existing workshops will be incorporated into the new building proposal. The Triquis indigenous group who reside on-site will be relocated to the mid-rise building located adjacent to the site. This six-storey building, likely built as office space but currently vacant, will be reappropriated into an apartment complex complete with a new entrance access connecting the inside of the market directly to the apartments, which will also have room for some of the artisans living in the main market area.

The first construction change to be made to the site is to excavate under the western portion of the site to build an underground parking lot. This lot, which

Figure 96: Mirrored courtyards

Figure 95: Access points to the market

will increase the number of available parking spaces from roughly 70 to 110, will serve the market and its new addition.

With a third of the site now a blank canvas, design decisions are carefully made to suit the context and the site. A new large courtyard, for example, will be incorporated. Picking up on the symmetry of the 'La Ciudadela' historical building to the south, the new courtyard will be of the same size and shape of the existing one that has proven to be the liveliest space in the existing market. This creates a balance of unbuilt, or negative, space. Pedestrians can approach the new courtyard from two separate entrances, both in roughly the same places as the previous access points onsite. The main entrance to this courtyard replaces the previous entrance to the parking lot, which all becomes a pedestrian walkway that divides the new programs from the market, including the relocated market shops. This walkway draws visitors in from the street, the Plaza de la Ciudadela park, or from the 'La Ciudadela' building itself, as it offers a glimpse of the new program nestled off of the new courtyard space.

This proposal continues the idea of architecture facing the street with a mostly solid, banal façade that shelters the life of the project within. The other entrance and access point to the new program is from Enrico Martinez St. and this entryway passes underneath a bridge element which provides the only real ornamentation to the façade of the new building and connects the two main volumes of the proposal. These two volumes each house a mixture of the types and programs of spaces being added.

Figure 97: Detailed floorplans of the project proposal in the existing setting

Figure 98: Plans colour coded by program:

Pink=market shops

Green=restaurant/café

Orange=workshop spaces

Blue=public areas (exhibition areas and auditorium)

Yellow=community spaces

Purple=circulation

Recalling the Union of the Artisans' of the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market's suggested program injection to the site, all of these spaces have been addressed in this proposal. They include an auditorium, an exhibition space for artesanías, and an auction hall. Other programs that have been included are a café, a new office space for the artisans' union, multi-purpose areas designated for the use of the artisan community, new artesanías workshops, a lounge area, and a restaurant. Most of the new program spaces are meant to be used by both the community at 'La Ciudadela' and the general public. For example, the auditorium serves as a stage for folkloric dance performances and other shows for the visiting public, and as a meeting hall for all of the artisans or the whole community to enable information to be shared more easily within the community.

Figure 100: Deriving the grid & proportions of the new proposal

Other factors that were considered in the design of this second architectural proposal were the proportion and scale of the existing market. In plan, the width of two back-to-back shops is approximately 10m, a dimension which informs the spacing of the structural columns of the proposal and creates a familiar module to work with.

Figure 99: Courtyards as social meeting places

Apart from the new central courtyard, which is overlooked by the double-height exhibition space and the café, a second more intimately scaled courtyard is also introduced which serves more as a retreat for both the public and the community.

Elements that are distinctively Mexican are incorporated into the design. In addition to the courtyards which act like gathering and celebration spaces, and the shielding of the core of the building from the street, decorative motifs factor into the building on the elevations. Once again, an *bordado*-inspired motif has

Figure 101: Design of the bridge screen and pattern inspiration for the window shapes

been used, in this case in the form of glazing. Playful geometric accented-glazing, best viewed from Enrico Martinez Street, that is used in all of the stairwells allow generous amounts of light to illuminate these often-dark spaces. The pattern of the glazing is derived from the elevation's focal point – the aforementioned bridge – and possible variations of the motif are shown in the elevation from Emilio Donde Street.

The bridge, which connects the two main volumes of the proposal at the second-storey level serves as a node between both horizontal and vertical axes. Because pedestrians enter the interior courtyard space by passing underneath the bridge, the bridge is entirely glazed to add a sense of lightness to a solid mass. As a way of ornamenting these glazed façades, the same traditional-inspired geometric motif is applied repeatedly over the entire glazed bridge surfaces which gives the effect of a screen – allowing people on the bridge to look out over the market and the courtyards while adding a eye-catching cultural detail.

This proposal also includes spaces in the design that adhere to Arquine's three characteristics of contemporary Mexican architecture. The new addition to the 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market respects the existing character of the market, introduces the requested program to the site, incorporate subtleties of the Mexican culture, but in a contemporary 21st century manner.

Figure 102: Enrico Martinez elevation with detail of bridge

Figure 103: Emilio Donde elevation and other variations of the window accent

Figure 104: Sections through the project proposal

Figure 105: Section through project proposal

Figure 106: Model of project

Figure 107: Model of Project

Figure 108: Collage of model views

Figure 109: Sketch of 'monumentality' in project

Figure 110: Sketch of 'the void' in project

Figure 111: Sketch showing 'naturally-lit spaces in the project

Postscript

Emerging from the century-long debate of 'own' vs 'foreign', contemporary Mexican architects are no longer choosing one aesthetic over another, but are reconciling the two in innovative ways. Although one stance is often more discernably communicated at first glance, projects such as CONACULTA's National Film Library of the 21st Century and The City of Books and Images at *La Ciudadela*, demonstrate that Mexican architects are no longer attempting to classify themselves in a specific architectural aesthetic but approach each project individually based on the project's program and site, armed with architectural characteristics and nuances which add a sense of tradition and history to contemporary forms, massing, and materials.

Contemporary Mexican architecture encompasses the work of the remaining practicing Second Generation architects and of both early and late Third Generation architects. This range of players has woven an urban fabric of different interpretations and explorations of ways of integrating, merging, and combining the Mexican culture with 21st century technology and expectations. There is no formula for an acceptable balance of the two but the characteristics of monumentality, the void, and a celebration of naturally-lit spaces provide a good foundation and allow for endless possibilities of customization and interpretation.

The Mexican Pavilion at the 2012 Venice Biennale for Architecture, entitled "Culture Under Construction | The Collectivity of Cultural Space", examines the importance of architecture in cultural establishments. It showcases some

CONACULTA projects, including the National Film Library of the 21st Century (Rojkind Arquitectos) and the collaborative City of Books and Images project, along with other projects by Legorreta + Legorreta, Fernanda Canales, Alberto Kalach, Mauricio Rocha, TEN Arquitectos, Tatiana Bilbao, and Teodoro González de León, to name a few. Many of these projects have been discussed in this thesis and their inclusion in the pavilion, curated by Miquel Adrià, validates their selection in this comparative study regarding the expression of culture in contemporary Mexican architecture.¹³⁸

The project investigations at 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market demonstrate the continually evolving nature of Mexican architecture. The Artesanías Market exhibits an architecture that has transformed, shaped itself, and been updated over time to suit the market's growth and its users needs. The project proposal is the latest layer or addition, which, through the introduction of much-needed support spaces for the community and gathering points for the general public, injects new life into the site and enhances the existing market. The site at 'La Ciudadela' Artesanías Market exemplifies the continual adaptation, reconfiguration, and redesign of Mexico City's urban fabric and proves that contemporary architecture does in fact have its place in the architectural palimpsest of Mexico, which began in the Pre-Hispanic era, was altered in the Colonial era, and was transformed during Modernism.

¹³⁸ "Cultura en construcción," 03 Aug 2012, Arquine, 03 Aug 2012, <<http://www.arquine.com/blog/cultura-en-construccion/>>.

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From p97, *The President also mentions the need to settle the legal status of the land and that "although it is not in writing, the market already belongs to the artisans because they have spent a lifetime working here."*, refers to the President of the Union of Artisans of the Mexican Republic, Marino Perez Aviles from the following source:

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From p99, the quotation is by Marino Perez Aviles and was taken from the following source:

Gonzalez, Hector. "La Ciudadela, En El Aire." *Vertigo Politico*. N.p., 21 Aug. 2011. Web. 9 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.vertigopolitico.com/es/vertigo/noticia?id=n349282>>.

From p116, the quotation by José Ángel Zamora, president of the Unión de Artesanos de La Ciudadela is from the following source:

Pantoja, Sara. "Artesanos De La Ciudadela Reciben Apoyo Internacional." *El Universal*. N.p., 23 May 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2011. <<http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/ciudad/84413.html>>.

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