

Architecture Magazines in Spain from 1939 through the End of Francoism: A Historiographic Overview

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of modernity, and through to today, architecture magazines have been the primary medium for reflection, production and dissemination regarding contemporary architectural culture. As such, studying the periodicals associated with a given historical cycle is essential to understand the scope of the debates taking place in architecture and urban planning during that time.

This overview aims to “map” the Spanish architectural and urban planning culture from the postwar years and the period of desarrollismo to the early 1970s, drawing on a selection of some of the main historiographic studies centered on the most relevant architecture periodicals of the period.

Because their contents offer an “archive” of modern architecture, architecture magazines have long been genuine platforms for the exhibition and defense of new ideas. And that is not only the case for the ones that have legitimized avant-garde postures; it also includes the ones that opted to defend conservative approaches, and whose pages were home to the formulations of the architectural and/or urban planning proposals required by society at a particular point in time, or the ones that offered dreams of a new utopia.

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Recently, the interest in studying architecture and urban planning periodicals has been growing, both in academic and professional spheres. Research projects, conferences, exhibitions and publications have been dedicated to the subject, where the norm has been monographic studies of specific journals or time periods. Reference should be made to the landmark work by Beatriz Colomina, carried out at Princeton University, presented for the first time at New York's Storefront for Art and Architecture and published under the title *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X-197X*¹, along with, in the case of Spain, the exhibitions centered on the early days of the magazine *Arquitectura* (1918-1936) –curated by Carlos de San Antonio and organized in 2001 by the Directorate-General for Housing, Architecture and Urban Planning, under the Ministry of Public Works, and the Architects' Association of Madrid– and the magazine *AC. Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*, the publishing arm of the GATEPAC, on which the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía held a monographic exhibition in 2008, curated by Enrique Granell, Josep Maria Rovira, José Ángel Sanz Esquide and Antonio Pizza. A further reference is the international conference, *Las revistas de arquitectura (1900-1975): crónicas, manifiestos, propaganda*, organized by the University of Navarra School of Architecture in 2012.

As for the panorama that interests us here, the one that emerged after the Civil War, when the guidelines that had been outlined by Central European architects during the interwar period were abandoned (a thorough account of which is provided by the two main Spanish journals, *Arquitectura* and *AC. Documentos de Actividad Contemporánea*), another set of magazines played a fundamental role, although in a different way, including *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura*, *Reconstrucción*, and the *Boletín de la Dirección General de Arquitectura*, all three published in Madrid, as well as the early years of *Cuadernos de Arquitectura*, founded in 1944, in this case in Barcelona. These publications give us an idea of the political-architectural transformations of early Francoism.

Of special relevance in this account are the contributions made by Professor Víctor Pérez Escolano regarding the *Boletín de la Dirección General de Arquitectura*, a periodical publication that compellingly compiles the unique moment of transition “from the advances of ‘architectural falangism’ to the freedomless capitalism” experienced by Spanish architecture during those years, as the period has been aptly qualified in the two monographic studies that Pérez Escolano dedicated to the magazine².

Regarding *Reconstrucción*, the magazine edited by the Directorate-General for Devastated Regions between 1940 and 1953, there is an initial study by the art historian Silvia García Alcázar, entitled “La revista *Reconstrucción*: un instrumento de propaganda al servicio del régimen”, which was compiled in the collective volume *Restaurando la*

1. Beatriz Colomina, Craig Buckley and Urtzi Grau, *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X-197X* (Barcelona: Actar, 2010).

2. See: “Arquitectura y política en España a través del *Boletín de la Dirección General de Arquitectura (1946-1957)*”, *RA. Revista de Arquitectura*, no. 15 (2013): 35-46, and “La arquitectura española del segundo franquismo y el *Boletín de la Dirección General de Arquitectura, 1946-1957*”, *RA. Revista de Arquitectura*, no. 16 (2014): 25-40.

memoria: España e Italia ante la recuperación monumental de posguerra, a project coordinated³. In the case of other journals from the period, with a lesser presence yet essential to forming a more plural perspective, such as *Arte y Hogar* (published beginning in December 1943) or *Forma y Fondo* (beginning in February 1944), there are still no monographic studies.

Whereas at the beginning of Francoism, Pedro Muguruza, Luis Gutiérrez Soto, Luis Moya and Pedro Bidagor had laid out the framework for defining, from different standpoints, the architecture and the city of the “New State”, starting in 1949 other figures, including Miguel Fisac, Alejandro de la Sota, Francisco Cabrero, Rafael Aburto, José Antonio Coderch, Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oíza, Luis Laorga, José Luis Romany or Josep Maria Sostres, among others, ushered in a significant change in the panorama of the time.

The influence of contact with the international architecture scene was decisive in this epistemological break. Professor Ana Esteban Maluenda dedicated her doctoral dissertation to the study of the different channels for acquiring knowledge of foreign architecture: *La modernidad importada: Madrid 1949-1968: cauces de difusión de la arquitectura extranjera*⁴. Directed by María Teresa Valcarce and Roberto Osuna and defended by the author at the Technical University of Madrid in 2008, the dissertation centered on the study of a very specific moment in the history of 20th-century Spanish architecture: the reencounter, after the parenthesis of the Civil War, with the architectural ideas of the Modern Movement and the international scene. In that sense, at the beginning of the 1950s there was an increasing interest in foreign architecture, which grew exponentially until, at the end of the following decade, the local culture finally reached realignment with international architectural currents. To help understand the transformation that took place, the dissertation offers an overview of the different paths Spanish architects took toward achieving that modernity, although the scope of the study is limited to the city of Madrid.

Through a review of the work carried out by institutions such as the Madrid School of Architecture (ETSAM) and the Architects’ Association of Madrid (COAM), with special attention paid to the promotion of architecture as a cultural activity, and by investigating the contents of the periodicals most accessible to architects in Madrid, the dissertation presents the means at their disposal for following the evolution of international architecture. Likewise, it reveals that much of the road was paved thanks to the efforts of a small group of architects who took the lead in the recovery of modernity, which had been sidelined during the difficult years of the autarkic regime. One outstanding figure of the period was the architect, critic and engineer Carlos de Miguel, a true factotum of the Madrid architectural culture of the time through his role at several magazines, including *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* (from 1948 to 1959, when it changed its name to *Arquitectura*, which it maintained until 1973), and in the

3. María Pilar García Cuetos, María Esther Almarcha Núñez-Herrador and Ascensión Hernández Martínez, *Restaurando la memoria: España e Italia ante la recuperación monumental de posguerra, a project coordinated* (Gijón: Trea, 2010).

4. Ana Esteban Maluenda, “La modernidad importada: Madrid 1949-1968: cauces de difusión de la arquitectura extranjera” (PhD diss., E.T.S. Arquitectura (UPM), 2007).

Sesiones Críticas de Arquitectura and the Pequeños Congresos. In addition, the dissertation includes an exhaustive bibliography and an appendix that compiles a series of documents, many previously unpublished, to support the text's claims.

Along with a large number of articles, one publication that derived from that dissertation was the book *España importa: la difusión de la arquitectura moderna extranjera (1949-1968) en siete entrevistas*⁵, which includes interviews with some of the central figures from the period, such as Mariano Bayón, José Antonio Corrales, Antonio Fernández Alba, Carlos Flores, Rafael Moneo, Joaquín Vaquero Turcios and Bernardo Ynzenga, in addition to a prologue by Luis Fernández-Galiano.

Before Professor Esteban Maluenda's dissertation there was another academic work titled *La arquitectura en España a través de las revistas especializadas (1950-1970): El caso de Hogar y Arquitectura*, a doctoral dissertation by Candelaria Alarcón Reyero, defended at ETSAM-UPM in 2000⁶. As the author points out, the research attempts to address the knowledge of the architectural landscape in Spain during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as its international impact. More explicitly, it focuses on the Madrid-based magazine *Hogar y Arquitectura*, edited by the Obra Sindical del Hogar under the direction of the architect Carlos Flores from 1955 to 1978, selected for its editorial characteristics, its trajectory and its historical ties to a new political situation that emerged after the end of the Civil War, as well as for its contribution to the diffusion of Spanish architecture abroad.

Between 1949 and 1966, when gestures of contact and connection with the social realities of the country began, there was a move away from the idea of an "organic city" and the proposal of an "imperial architecture" was abandoned. At the same time, new avenues were being investigated, like the ones that were upheld, for example, by the Alhambra Manifesto. And when, beginning in the 1960s, new approaches began to emerge typical of the period of *desarrollismo*, Spanish architecture launched into a new line of reflection that would continue interrupted until the 1973 oil crisis. The three main Madrid magazines from this period were *Arquitectura*, *Hogar y Arquitectura* and *Nueva Forma*, but it was the latter, as Rafael Moneo pointed out in his text *Arquitectura y revistas de arquitectura en el Madrid de los años sesenta* (published in September 2019 by the Association of architecture and urban planning historians (AhAU) with an introduction by Julio Garnica), which had the greatest impact, because of its proselytizing character, on the education of architects in Madrid during those decades.

Regarding *Nueva Forma*, there is a significant study carried out by Lucía C. Pérez Moreno, titled *Fullaondo y la revista Nueva Forma*.⁷, which compiles the research carried out by its author for her doctoral dissertation under the direction of Professor María Teresa Muñoz.

5. Ana Esteban Maluenda, Mariano Bayón, et al, *España importa: la difusión de la arquitectura moderna extranjera (1949-1968) en siete entrevistas* (Madrid: Marea/Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2011).

6. Candelaria Alarcón Reyero, "La arquitectura en España a través de las revistas especializadas (1950-1970) : El caso de hogar y arquitectura" (PhD diss., E.T.S. Arquitectura (UPM), 2000).

7. Lucía C Pérez Moreno, *Fullaondo y la revista Nueva Forma. Aportaciones a la construcción de una cultura arquitectónica en España (1966-1975)* (Alzuza, Navarra: Jorge Oteiza Museum Foundation, 2015).

Equally focused on the aforementioned magazine is the double volume entitled *Nueva Forma: arquitectura, arte y cultura, 1966-1975*⁸, the result of the exhibition held at the Centro Cultural de la Villa, in Madrid, from October to December 1996. Nonetheless, Pérez Moreno's contribution was decisive in evaluating the magazine and its editor-in-chief, Juan Daniel Fullaondo, in all its complexity and with an eye to the magazine's critical approach.

While Madrid's magazines have captured the attention of scholars, the Barcelona magazine *Cuadernos de Arquitectura, or Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo* from 1971 onwards, still demands qualified studies to assess its projection in the architectural culture of its time.

Regarding the unique role of the magazine *Informes de la Construcción*, founded in 1948 at the Instituto Técnico de la Construcción y del Cemento, currently the Instituto de Ciencias de la Construcción Eduardo Torroja, in late 20th-century Spanish architecture, two reference works should be consulted. The first, entitled *Construir el siglo XX con Informes de la Construcción. Índice de índices*⁹, constitutes a valuable instrument for researchers, elaborated by Mercedes Ponce Ortiz de Insagurbe and José Sánchez Sánchez. The second, entitled *El espíritu impreso de una idea: exposición conmemorativa 60 años de la revista "Informes de la Construcción"*¹⁰, provides a succinct synthesis of the magazine, still going strong, and which is so much more than a technical magazine. Good proof of this is the role that the magazine played in the dissemination in Spain, following the signing of the Pact of Madrid with the United States in 1953, of the work of the California-based Viennese architect Richard Neutra, which fueled the modernization of Spanish architecture beyond the Italian references promoted by Josep Antoni Coderch from Barcelona.

This overview would not be complete without mentioning the role of a number of foreign journals –for example, the legendary monographs of the Swiss magazine *Werk* (no. 2) and the Italian magazine *Zodiaco* (no. 15) dedicated to Spanish architecture in 1962 and 1965, respectively– in the dissemination and international projection of Spanish architecture through foreign media.

Studies are still waiting to be done on some magazines, now relegated to obscurity, like the ones promoted by the architect, urban planner, designer and potter Miguel Durán-Loriga Rodríguez. Indeed, a very important aspect of his multifaceted career was related to architectural periodicals, as director of the magazine *TA. Temas de Arquitectura y Urbanismo*, from its foundation in 1957 until 1980, and as director of the magazine *TD. Temas de Diseño*, from 1973 to 1974. Also, the magazines *CAU. Construcción, Arquitectura, Urbanismo*, published between 1970 and 1982 by the Association of Quantity Surveyors and Technical Architects of Catalonia

8. Gonzalo Armero, *Nueva Forma: arquitectura, arte y cultura, 1966-1975* (Madrid: Madrid City Council / Fundación Cultural COAM, 1996).

9. Mercedes Ponce Ortiz de Insagurbe and José Sánchez, *Construir el siglo XX con Informes de la Construcción. Índice de índices* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006).

10. Pepa Cassinello, *El espíritu impreso de una idea: exposición conmemorativa 60 años de la revista "Informes de la Construcción"* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008).

and the Balearic Islands; *Boden*, which was published between 1971 and 1981 by Ceoplástica and later the Plastics Division of the Unión Explosivos Riotinto; or *Jano*, published by Ediciones Doyma between 1972 and 1978, among others.

To complete the historical cycle outlined at the beginning of the text, the Barcelona magazine *Arquitecturas Bis* exemplifies the paradigm shift that took place in the world of architecture with the publication in 1966 of the Spanish translations of the books by Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and *Architecture and the City*, respectively. With 52 issues published, spanning the period from 1974 to 1985, *Arquitecturas Bis* was directed by Rosa Regàs and published by La Gaya Ciencia. The magazine was one of the most important periodical publications in the field of architecture. It is no surprise that its editorial board included names such as Oriol Bohigas, Rafael Moneo, Federico Correa, Lluís Domènech, Helio Piñón, Tomàs Llorens or Manuel de Solà-Morales, and Enric Satué oversaw graphic design.

The doctoral dissertation by the Portuguese architect Joaquim Moreno, entitled *Arquitecturas Bis (1974-1985): From Publication to Public Action* and defended in 2011 at the Program in Media and Modernity directed by Beatriz Colomina at Princeton University¹¹, and the dissertation, currently in its final stages, being written by the Madrid-based architect and professor Alejandro Valdivieso Royo at ETSAM will be complementary instruments for examining the architectural culture of late Francoism and, above all, of the Transition toward democracy. During that period, two other magazines also stand out for their characteristic and distinguished voices: *2C. Construcción de la Ciudad*, which brought together the Spanish followers of Rossi, led by Salvador Tarragó and Carlos Martí between 1972 and 1985, and the Barcelona magazine *Carrer de la Ciutat*, directed by Beatriz Colomina, although led by Josep Quetglas, between 1977 and 1980.

The ongoing indexing and digitization of the complete collections of the main journals of the period, undertaken by the Architects' Association of Catalonia, the Architects' Association of Madrid, and the National Library of Spain, among other institutions, will support new studies and valuable reflections about a time that is enormously important in contemporary Spanish architecture. Although the historiographic account of the period is advanced, it is still fragmentary and unfinished, and needs to be completed. In that respect, this overview is provisional and not definitive.

11. Joaquim Moreno, "Arquitecturas Bis (1974-1985) : from publication to public action" (PhD diss, Princeton University, 2010).