From "form" to "memory." From houses with no site to the city as a determinant in the projects of Peter Eisenman

Da "forma" à "memória". Das casas sem sítio para a cidade como determinante nos projetos de Peter Eisenman

De la "forma" a la "memoria". De las casas sin sitio a la ciudad como determinante en los proyectos de Peter Eisenman

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Resumo

Ao longo dos anos, a abordagem de Peter Eisenman frente a suas críticas à arquitetura vigente foi se modificando. No recorte englobado por este artigo, no entanto, sua busca nunca deixou de ser a autonomia da arquitetura, partindo, inicialmente, do suporte na arte conceitual e na linguística, e, posteriormente, migrando para as interpretações pós-estruturalistas. A crítica que antes se configurava em uma arquitetura desprovida de referenciais externos depois passa a ter no contexto urbano o grande agente da concepção de seus projetos. Assim, o presente artigo visa apresentar a arquitetura crítica de Eisenman e discutir como esta deixa de ser tão excludente de seus elementos contextuais para passar a se relacionar à memória dos locais em que está inserida. Para tanto, buscou-se a leitura de autores que influenciaram o trabalho de Eisenman, bem como de textos do próprio arquiteto e de seus críticos, na intenção de melhor compreender o ambiente e as reflexões que propiciaram tais produções arquitetônicas, além da transição de uma para a outra. Neste estudo, foram identificadas as principais diferenças entre ambas atuações, mas também concluiu-se a existência de uma conversão no que se refere ao afastamento do observador/usuário das duas diferentes séries de projeto abordadas.

Palavras-Chave: Arquitetura pós-moderna, arquitetura conceitual, Peter Eisenman, cidades de escavação artificial, forma, memória.

Abstract

Throughout the years, Peter Eisenman's approach to his critique of current architecture has changed. Within the scope of this article, however, his constant search has always been for the autonomy of architecture, starting, initially, with support from conceptual art and linguistics, and, then later, migrating to post-structuralist interpretations. The critique, which had previously been configured within an architecture devoid of external references, then, within an urban context, went on to present the great agent of the conception of his projects. Thus, this article aims to present Eisenman's critical architecture and discuss how it ceased to exclude its contextual elements and began to relate to the memory of the places into which it was inserted. Thus, we have sought to read authors who have influenced Eisenman's work, as well as texts by the architect himself and his critics, with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the environment and the reflections that have brought about such architectural productions, in addition to the transition that took place from one to the other. In this study, the main differences between both actions have been identified, but it was also concluded that there exists a conversion with regard to distancing the observer/user from the two different series of projects.

Keywords: *Post-modern architecture, conceptual architecture, Peter Eisenman, cities of artificial excavation, form, memory.*

Resumen

A lo largo de los años, el enfoque de Peter Eisenman a sus críticas a la arquitectura actual ha cambiado. En el ámbito de este artículo, sin embargo, su búsqueda nunca ha dejado de ser la autonomía de la arquitectura, partiendo, inicialmente, del soporte en el arte conceptual y lingüístico, y, posteriormente, migrando hacia interpretaciones posestructuralistas. La crítica que solía configurarse en una arquitectura desprovista de referenciales externos, pasa entonces a tener en el contexto urbano al gran agente de la concepción de sus proyectos. Así, este artículo pretende presentar la arquitectura crítica de Eisenman y discutir cómo deja de ser tan excluyente de sus elementos contextuales y pasa a relacionarse con la memoria de los lugares en los que se inserta. Para ello, se buscó la lectura de autores que influyeron en la obra de Eisenman, así como textos del propio arquitecto y de sus críticos, con la intención de comprender mejor el entorno y las reflexiones que brindaban tales producciones arquitectónicas, además de la transición de un al otro. En este estudio, fueran identificadas las principales diferencias entre ambas acciones, pero también se concluyó la existencia de una conversión referente al distanciamiento del observador/usuario de las dos series de proyectos diferentes abordados.

Palabras clave: *Arquitectura pos-moderna, arquitectura conceptual, Peter Eisenman, ciudades de escavación ficticia, forma, memoria.*

1. Introduction

The work of the architect Peter Eisenman has commonly been associated with the phase in which his investigations involved attaining a conceptual architecture, i.e., one that presents itself as being detached and independent of site, history, or even client. In terms of design, this is configured in the famous white houses generated through simple geometric shapes – largely justified by the influences of the European avant-garde of the early twentieth century – and their representations in isometric projections.

However, while his work has not only been limited to this approach, some of his criticism remained until the end of the century. The present study aims to present two of them: one more focused on the interiority of the architectural object, and the other, contrary to this, which takes on elements from history and the city as determinants of its design decisions. Both, however, are focused on the issue of disciplinary autonomy.

Such ways of conceiving architecture start from a context that extended from the mid-1960s through to the end of the 1980s, and which involved a review and critique of the modern movement, especially with regard to the exaltation of functionalist and positivist thoughts, also allied with the conception of historical determinism. The absorption of modern architecture by the real estate market is yet another major source of questioning, as the architect, historian and architecture critic Alan Colquhoun (1983) states with regard to the distortion of the utopian values of the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century, which provided a boost to other modern manifestations, although disconnected from the movement throughout its process of capitalization.

Jonas Delecave (2015), in his dissertation, emphasizes that this moment is characteristic of the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society, whereby the mentality of the time was no longer focused on production and technological enthusiasm but rather towards consumption and exploration of the image. Consequently, architecture also went on to be treated as what K. Michael Hays (2010, p. 68) called a "unit of visual exchange". In other words, a commercialization of architecture through its figurative characteristic, of imagery.

Hays (2010) therefore suggested that frustration with the course that the discipline had taken led some architects to theorize and conceive their projects bereft of function or even of sensuality – whereby being visually pleasant, and pleasing to the eye of the viewer may then be regarded as being a property of architecture –, as opposed to the imagistic appeal, responsible for the reification of architectural forms. The two practices presented in this article are some of the ways used by architects of the time in their struggle to transform architecture into an object of consumption, and Peter Eisenman was at the forefront of both, proving to be an active, controversial figure within this debate.

2. Form

Discussion on the autonomy of architecture in the post-modern period was somewhat motivated by the fervor of conceptual art on the North American scene of the 1960s. At the same time, a powerful wave of linguistic theories also emerged - among them structuralism, stronger in Europe, and the formulation of generative grammar in the United States –, which were then applied to the explanation and analysis of various fields of knowledge. According to Andrés Passaro (2009), conceptual architecture first emerged influenced by the mechanisms of conceptual art and, later, through structuralist discourse and its linguistic tools.

The most outstanding moment for this architectural conception was at a CASE meeting (Conference of Architects for the Study of the Environment) together with the IAUS (Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies) – both based in New York –, held at MoMA and entitled *Five Architects*, with the subsequent homonymous publication in catalog format in 1972. The exhibition presented the work of the New York Five, a group composed of Peter Eisenman, John Hejduk, Richard Meier, Michael Graves and Charles Gwathmey, all North American architects who shared an interest in the formal discussion of the European avant-garde (DELECAVE, 2015).

They were also known as "The Whites", precisely because of their preference for exposing their projects in white surfaces. The main characteristics may be summarized by the representation of residential projects with orthogonal perspectives – capable of averting the character of subjectivity from the images as much as possible, contrary to what transpired with conical perspectives, which approach the human vision. This effect proposes a type of "denial of the subject" (PASSARO, 2009, p.144) through the use of simple, often purist, geometric shapes, a consequence of the aforementioned appreciation for the innovative *plastic*[1] characteristics of the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century.

These, however, are the only points that bring the investigations of the five architects closer (DELECAVE, 2015), since the experiments of each one had different objectives and used different tools. The use of semiology is one of them. While some architects explored the semantic resources of linguistic science, such as Michael Graves, others were much more concerned with its syntactic mechanisms and the way in which they could be explored in architecture, of which Peter Eisenman was an example (LUCENA, 2010).

In any case, these projects were the result of dense formal analyses, increasingly seeking the interiority of architecture, its tautology. Its orthogonal representations aimed to maximize the level of abstraction of the projects, reaching a point where they were detached from the physical world. According to Hays (2010, p. 55), in Eisenman's case, the complexity of the forms and the way in which the architect used the overlapping of structures deprived of their structural role - due to an excess of beams and pillars that present only as intervention elements, stripped of their role as support – are strategies to cause the observer to defamiliarize himself with the architecture; a kind of estrangement, in order to highlight the role of the form-generating process, in addition to annihilating its sensual attributes. The estrangement effect generates a kind of repulsion rather than attraction of the user for the architectural form in order to shift their attention from the final product (usually endowed with a harmonic, compositional beauty) to the development that, when interrupted, generates the form presented there.

Eisenman's houses, even when actually built, were not tied down to a plot of land, i.e., they did not respond to climatic, topographical or even programmatic issues. They did not even have a name, and were always titled by their serial number (House I, House II, etc.). They were disconnected from any external reference or individual observation – which included their owners. The only concerns of the architect in the creation of these houses came from formal investigations, and were framed in the term that Eisenman coined of "cardboard architecture" (LUCENA, 2010, p. 57) This name is due to the fact that the projects become "concrete", mostly, only as models, maquettes.

Cardboard architecture raises the question not only for the design process – highlighting its development to the detriment of the final result, thereby defending that the construction of a building is only a consequence of the architectural project –, but also for the discourse that the maquette or the drawing are indeed already architecture itself, and not graphic pieces of representation. They configure a way of claiming the autonomy of the discipline. Francisco Lucena summarized the concept of cardboard architecture as follows:

> Cardboard changes our understanding of the existing form, from an aesthetic and functional context to a conception of form as a brand or a notational system, of form as language; […] The idea is not the literal perception of the real surface like cardboard, but the virtual layering produced by the particular configuration of the process.

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[1] The term "plastic" has been highlighted because the New York Five were not interested in the ideological content of the avant-garde, and it was considered a reason for the group of architects to criticize the modern movement, since architecture had pushed formal investigations into the background in favor of the desire for social transformation (DELECAVE, 2015).

> Cardboard is, in short, the transposition of a set of interior rules of architecture to syntactic structures, in the sense of generating another formal structure. (LUCENA, 2010, p. 59)[2].

In other words, in terms of Noam Chomsky's generative grammar, Eisenman would be looking for the *deep structures* that govern the independent elements of architectural form (such as pillars, beams, the transparent and opaque planes, etc.). These components of the "architectural" system would be the structures that may be infinitely combined and manipulated through pre-established rules.

In the case of language, from which Eisenman imported the concept of deep structure, these rules consist of categorical components, responsible for attributing certain functions (in the sense of the syntactic function of an element in a sentence) to the structures of an utterance. Jean Dubois and others (2006, p. 488) exemplified the structuring of a sentence as follows:

Neg (negation) + D (determinant) + N (noun) + Aux (auxiliary) + V (verb) + D + N

This categorization constitutes the deep structure of the sentence, which may be manipulated in an infinite number of ways, the combination of which generates its surface structure as a result. Example:

Neg + D + N + Aux + V + D + N = No way, + the + father + was going + to read + the + newspaper

D + N + Neg + Aux + V + D + N = The + father + wasn't + going + to read + the + newspaper

D + N + D + N + Neg + Aux + V = The + newspaper + by the father + was not + going to be + read

And so on.

As the sentence structures are shifted, its meaning may or may not be modified, but its final form never remains the same. This final form, visible in words and not schemas, is what is called the *superficial structure* (DUBOIS et al, 2006). Eisenman was not interested in the final, visual appearance that his homes took on. His concern was to manipulate the elements that form the architecture. Thus, just as what dictates the formulation of statements obeys the basic rules of language, Eisenman's operations also start from pre-established principles, such as addition, subtraction, repetition, rotation, etc.

For this process, the diagram is of paramount importance, since it enables the study of deep structures by operating as an analytical tool that allows architectural elements to be manipulated only as a form, devoid of meanings - as seen in the example of the different clauses, changing the arrangement of structures may generate a different meaning for the utterance, but Eisenman was not concerned with "the final form to be achieved". Another significant property of the diagram is the act of freeing the form from the idea of the presence of an object (LUCENA, 2010, p. 63). This signifies that it brings architecture closer to art in terms of the inexistence of an external demand, thereby enabling the discipline to manifest itself through the graphic proposal of the diagram, since it presents itself as the object itself.

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[2] This and all non-English citations hereafter, have been translated by the author.

Figure 1: Manipulation diagram of the "deep structures" of House III, Lakeville, 1969-1971.

Source: https://eisenmanarchitects.com/House-III-1971
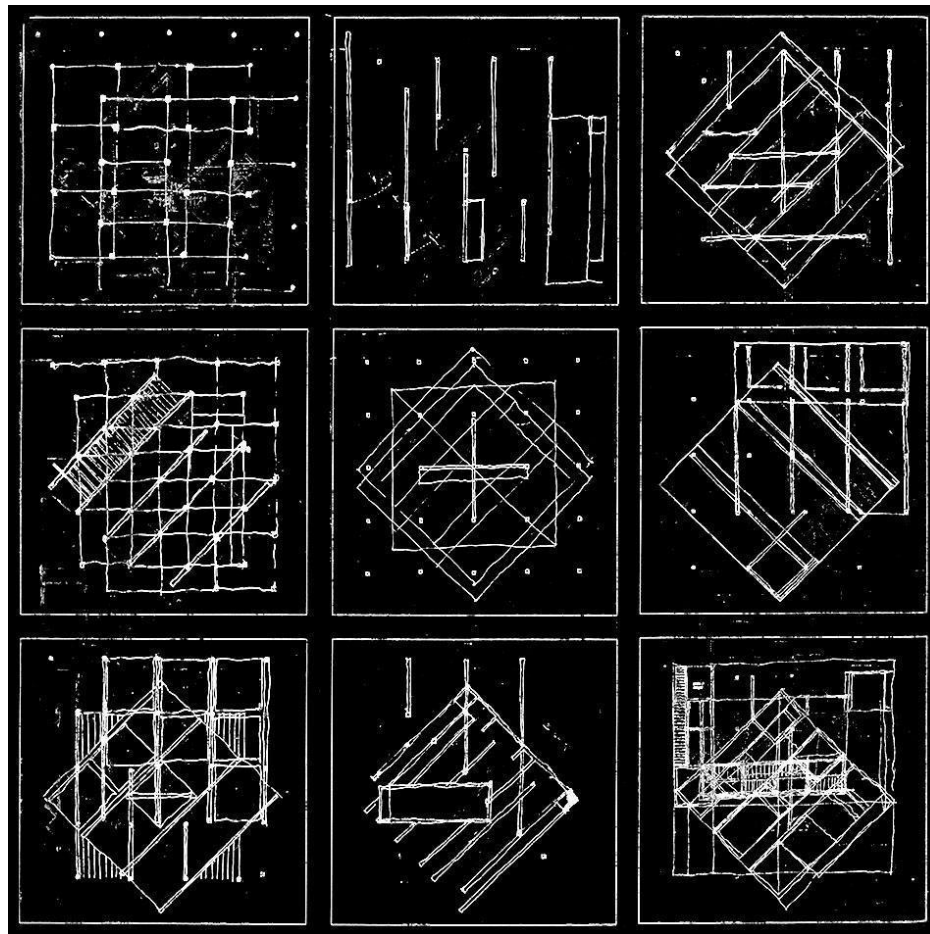
Figure 2: Exterior, or "superficial structure", of House III, Lakeville, 1969-1971.

Source: https://eisenmanarchitects.com/House-III-1971

Thus, it may be stated that the diagrams of Eisenman's houses promote autonomy, or even a tautology, of architecture, by denoting its "artistic condition" (KOSUTH, 1969, p. 220) through a language of codes that Joseph Kosuth (1969, p. 220) called "private". Moreover, this would just be a consequence of the artist's morphological freedom with his work. In this case, the architect with his project.

This therefore demonstrates the clear approximation with conceptual art. Passaro (2009) presented the clear influence of artists from the 1960s on the reflections and writings of Eisenman (which would only bear fruit in future projects). This reversal was present in the formulation of the 15 points put forward by architect in *Notes on conceptual architecture*, in 1970, exposed in footnote format – redirecting the reader to texts and works already canonized as components of conceptual art –, clearly inspired by – or "ideologically plagiarized", as Passaro (2009, p. 140) states – Sol LeWitt's 1969 publication *Sentences on conceptual art*.

Just as LeWitt's sentences operate along the lines of instructions for the proposer and the participant of conceptual art, highlighting the mental mechanisms involved in its production, Eisenman's notes also have an equivalent intention. The architect's main motivation lay in the contestation of current architecture, which was becoming increasingly commercialized due to the imagistic appeal, as was conceptual art in its attempt to break the traditional paradigms of the visuality of the artistic object (BUCHLOH, 1990, p. 107).

Through the production of a more complex architecture, which focuses on its processes and not on its result, its characteristic of being merchandise is removed (or, at least, diminished), leading also towards discomfort. Even though Eisenman's projects were always accompanied by texts and vice versa, the public had great difficulty in understanding them, a situation explicit in the speech by architect Robert Stern, in which he declared "To be candid, much that Eisenman writes gives me a headache; like his isometric drawings, […]" (STERN apud PASSARO, 2009, p. 149). [3] In Eisenman's work, the value that used to be given to the final product has now been transferred to its development, its conception.

Hays (2010, p. 56) believed that, through these complex operations of conceptual and linguistic input, the architect was looking for an etiology of the discipline, which, in other words, would be aimed at understanding its formative processes. This moment, which stretches from the 1960s through to the mid-1970s in Eisenman's chronology, was a purely formal investigation - which is not to say that they were of a compositional character, on the contrary, since the focus is aimed at the independent formal development of its result –, starting from fundamentally structural and internal relationships of architecture. The interest has always been the quest to free architecture from external demands, be they function, client, or even execution.

3. Transition

Peter Eisenman's search for absolute architectural interiority would find other directions after his contact with poststructuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard, through which he came to view his search for the formal origins of architecture as irreducible and aporetic (HAYS, 2010, p. 52), encountered in Houses I to X (1967 – 1975). This disbelief was motivated, above all, by the writings of Derrida and Baudrillard, which helped Eisenman's argument regarding the view of history as fiction, a reflection that was present in his famous (and controversial) 1984 essay, "The end of the classic: the end of the beginning, the end of the end", in which he claimed that architecture had never abandoned the values of classical antiquity. For Eisenman, the architecture that had been produced since the Renaissance was nothing more than a "simulation" (EISENMAN, 1984, p.234), which made it a representation of classical values.

Setting off from this skeptical thought, Peter Eisenman's interest shifted towards the search for what architecture cannot be, what he characterized as "structures of absence" (EISENMAN, 1984, p. 242). Therefore, instead of searching for an origin within the architecture itself (its deep structures), excluding

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[3] STERN, Robert. Five on Five, Stopin' at the Savoye. **Architectural Forum**, Boston, v. 138, n. 4, p. 46-57, May 1973.

external interference, Eisenman began to recognize the importance of contextual elements, mostly absent as physical objects, but which are determinants of form, and which would be the history, memory and pre-existence of the places where he envisaged his projects.

However, he used external elements to draw attention to the arbitrariness of this generating process. In other words, the architect incorporated the history of the cities where he planned his projects, but took it as something fictitious, mainly through parts that were absent from the urban contexts. The absence is of paramount importance, since it is from the missing components of the cities, such as unbuilt interventions, fragments of already destroyed structures, or even characters from that place, that he traced his narratives, formally configuring them into the projects of the series entitled *Cities of Artificial Excavation*.

Considering history as fiction may be interpreted as a derivation, primarily from the new readings around the archives; from the realization that all accumulated knowledge is molded, since it starts with the choice between what will be presented and what will be omitted (SCHWARTZ and COOK, 2009). If what is known about the past is based on a certain viewpoint, leaving aside various other information and reports, could humanity believe these narratives? So why not make them, or rather, assume them, as something imagined and fanciful?

Therefore, Peter Eisenman's artificial excavations were playing with the question of what Michel Foucault (1969, p. 144) called the "historical a priori". In other words, they questioned the condition of reality of the statements. Thus, for the same reason, Eisenman named this project process *excavation*, based on the term *archeology*, also from Foucault; not in the sense of geological exploration, but rather to designate "the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence" (FOUCAULT, 1969, p. 149). It is on top of "questioning the already-said" that the *Cities of Artificial Excavation* (1978 – 1988) operates.

4. Memory

From the moment Peter Eisenman turned to the urban context and its history, he was inevitably working with the mnemonic charge of the place. This new approach adopted by Eisenman was applied for the first time in 1978, when the project for the Cannaregio neighborhood in Venice was taking place, on the occasion of the international seminar to discuss a popular housing plan for the region. However, the term "memory" had not yet been so intensively explored in his texts referring to this project. It was only between 1981 and 1983, when creating the second project of the *Cities of Artificial Excavation*, during the reconstruction of the areas destroyed by the Second World War in Berlin, that the word effectively became the basis of his textual productions, and the consequent repercussions in the project.

The urban regeneration of the West German capital (at that time the country was still bipartite) was organized by the 1984 edition of the International Construction Exhibition in Berlin (the IBA, from its German name, Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin). The event had the participation of several leading architects from the critical architectural scene of the time, which Laís Bronstein (2004) indicated as a great opportunity to put into practice the dense theoretical elaboration of the postmodern period.

According to Josef Kleihues (1991), director of the *Neubau* sector at the IBA, the event intended to give the city of Berlin individuality, through "the necessity for critical reconstruction of the city […] on the basis of rational confrontation with the constituent elements of the city" (KLEIHUES, 1991, p. 6). In other words, the incentive to reconstruct and create new buildings in order to have a unique character, the "plurality in totality" (BRONSTEIN, 2004, p. 6), although without neglecting the implications of the existing city. It was a way, therefore, to oppose the precept of a blank slate applied by modern urbanism, which, moreover, implied cities inhabited by "machines", and not by living beings.

Among the other participants in the exhibition, the Eisenman/Robertson Architects office was invited to participate in the competition for the design of Block 5 in the specific areas of Kochstraße and Friedrichstraße, and consequently supplied the winning proposal. The region selected for the housing

project was located in the district of Friedrichstadt, close to the intersection with the Berlin Wall, which provided a fertile ground for Eisenman's "archaeological sites".

The level of degradation in this area, originating chiefly from Berlin's traumatic past, was appropriated by Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson through the absences, the voids left by the two World Wars. They understood "emptiness" as not only the physical destruction caused by war in the city, but also the hole caused by wars in its history (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983).

According to Eisenman and Robertson, in the case of Berlin, the city itself was the very vacuum, as the Second World War had determined the end of its history and of the values of enlightenment (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983), so striking in its urban layout. Thus, the German capital was placed in the position of a museum city, surrounded by the Wall, thereby evidencing its interrupted history (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983).

Here, together with the concept of memory, the concept of "anti-memory" was also used. With this new term, their intention was to distance the mnemonic character of the city from any form of sentimental or nostalgic charge. Such a position constituted a strong critique of postmodern architecture, as Eisenman and Robertson believed that it appropriated the historic centers of cities as fetish objects, thereby reducing history to a condition of nostalgia (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983).

Both argued, in the presentation of the project, that memory was related to obscuring the reality of the present, becoming melancholic and longing for the past, through an attempt "to deny the evidence of the Berlin Wall, in order to restore the some place of the past" (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). Anti-memory, on the other hand, would do the same with the reality of the past, "which is in fact what renders the reality of the present no place – to create an other place, to create *some place*" (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92). Anti-memory recognizes the emptying of the values and functions of past forms, while still acknowledging their existence and importance. It may be said that it is a way of counteracting the modernist blank slate, while not falling into vain postmodernist nostalgia.

In terms of design, the use of anti-memory took place through appropriating the striking elements of West Berlin to then transform them into grids that structured the organization of the project. These were: the founding walls of the capital, still belonging to the Kingdom of Prussia, dating from the eighteenth century; the city walls of the nineteenth century, as a unified German Empire; the very Berlin Wall itself; and the grid of the terrestrial globe, known as the Mercator projection, created by the geographer Gerardus Mercator in the sixteenth century, when the city was still part of the Holy German-Roman Empire.

The Mercator projection is the pinnacle of the demonstration of arbitrariness applied to the project, since it inserted an external element into the fabric of the city. It is not particular to the city, but links it to the world, exposing a critique of the city's loss of singularity and identity by capitalist processes. The Mercator grid is nothing more than a "universal geometric pattern without history, place or specificity" (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92), which demonstrates the loss of "specificity and identity [that] have been sacrificed on the altar of modern history." (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983, p. 92).

Eisenman and Robertson thus created a "three-dimensional" version of the Mercator projection until it reached the height of the Wall – subverting the logic of the grid, since the grid is commonly associated with the road network, not buildings (EISENMAN and ROBERTSON, 1983) – and superimposing it onto the other three grids, coming from the continuation of both the old and current walls. This is how the shape of the building, their pathways, their facades were extracted, exposing the historical and mnemonic layers of the city right next to a great symbol of war, destruction and division suffered by it: the Berlin Wall. According to Hays (2010), Eisenman and Robertson's intention was to lead the grid through to the exhaustion of its overlaps, an explicit attitude of making it difficult to read and breaking with the visual "commodification" (HAYS, 2010, p. 68) that made architecture a commodity.

**Figure 3:** Drawing with overlapping grids used to design the project for Block 5, Berlin, 1981-1985.

Source: https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985
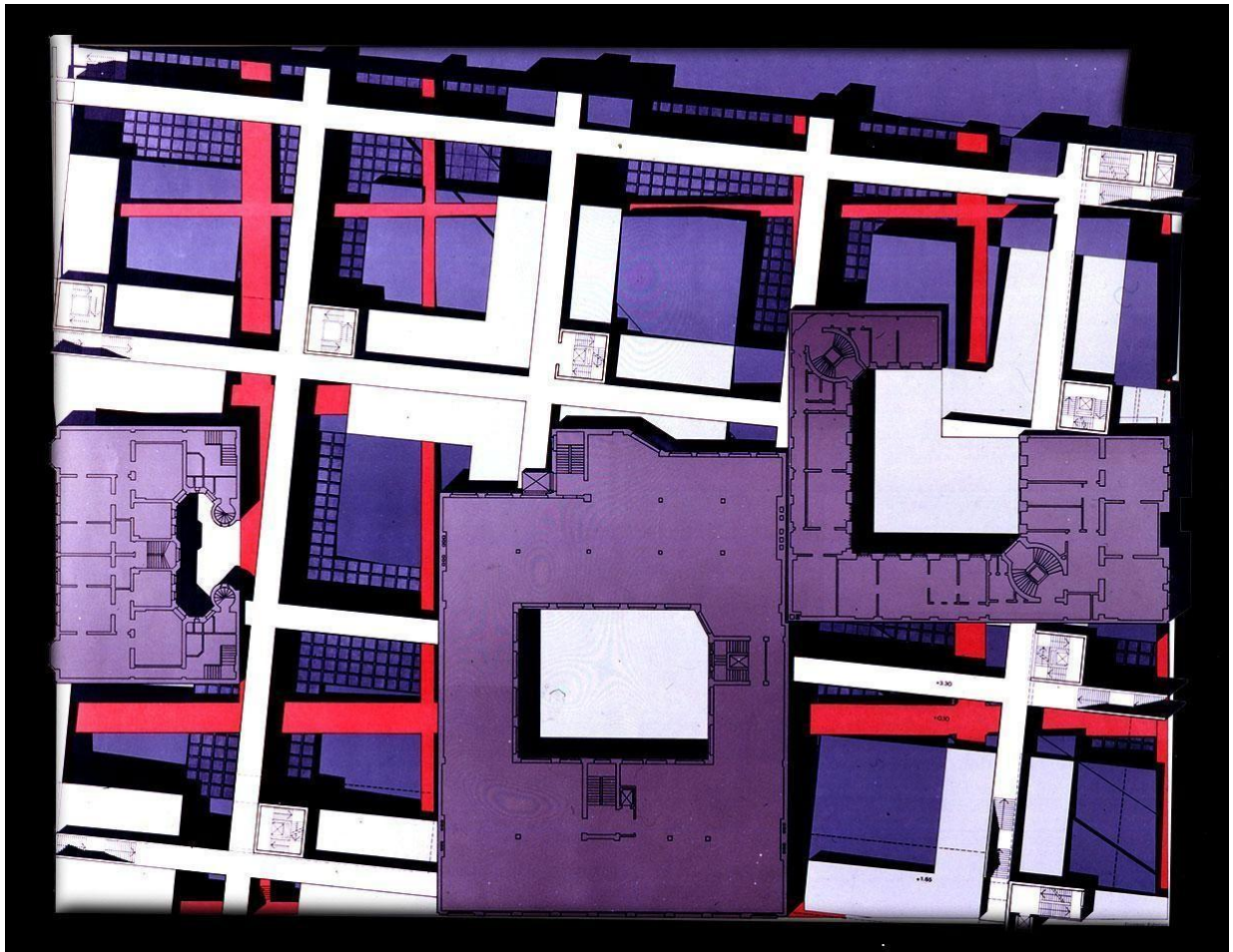
Figure 4: Detail of the facade of the building for Block 5, Berlin, 1981-1985.

Source: https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985

Figure 5: Perspective of the balconies and pathways suggested by the project, with a three-dimensional version of the overlapping grids of the mnemonic layers of Berlin, Berlin, 1981-1985.

Source: https://eisenmanarchitects.com/IBA-Social-Housing-1985
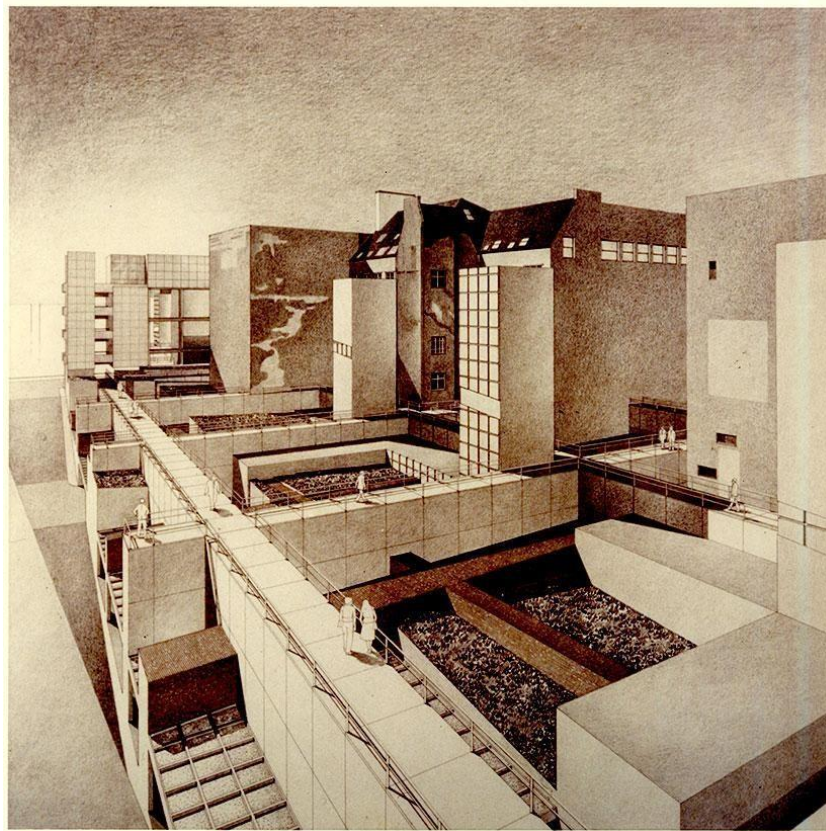
This project, in particular, was effectively built – although not in its entirety – to stand in opposition to a strong characteristic of the others that make up the rest of the *Cities of Artificial Excavation*: the logic of virtuality, of its existence only on the narrative and design plane. Therefore, the fictional and artificial charge of this series is so strong, since, in addition to playing with the past of cities, Eisenman is also affirming drawing as "the necessary vehicle of imagination, symbolization and self-reflection in architecture, analogous to writing in language; drawing is perhaps the necessary medium of *critical* architecture" (HAYS, 2010, p. 63), assuming fiction as a tool to achieve autonomy.

Returning to the overlapping of grids, a situation in which the upper layer makes it difficult to read the lower layer, and so on, the question arises that in a way, they have been engraved onto the urban fabric, like types of scars that show the fragments of a previous city, similar to the *Mystic Pad* – a device composed of three layers and that Sigmund Freud (1925) associated with the psychic apparatus of human perception, in which the lowest layer is composed of a wax tablet, superimposed by a film of waxed paper, which by in turn lies beneath a celluloid film. With this apparatus, it is possible to write and erase easily on its surface, but the record is not completely erased, since it leaves its trace on the wax tablet. According to Freud (1925), the "wax tablet" of our psychic apparatus is responsible for storing our lasting memories, while the "waxed paper" is the one that welcomes the stimuli we receive daily; and the "cellulose" would only be a protector of this whole psychic device.

In other words, Eisenman and Robertson were operating with the traces left in the city, the equivalent of the record that is marked on the wax tablet, in the deepest layer of the Freudian apparatus even when the inscription on the most superficial layer has been erased, it is no longer visible on the outside of the city.

This signifies that Eisenman and Robertson, through these operations of artificial excavation, recovered the records that are superficially imperceptible in Berlin, but that are found as marks left in the past and are brought to the surface by the project. However, its action of superimposing the existing "files", with regard to the fragments of the city, produced a new archive, since it abstracts the meaning of the elements used to apply them only as (linguistically speaking) emptied signifiers (HAYS, 2010), generating a new meaning for the final form. Ultimately the city becomes archived, by recovering its old "archives", but which, ultimately, generates another archive – independent, but nevertheless related to the history of Berlin.

5. Final considerations

The critical and practical trajectory of Peter Eisenman demonstrates a shift from a completely self-centered stance on the architectural object, bringing it closer to an art object, to one more attentive to external conditions, inaugurated by the projects from the *Cities of Artificial Excavation*. This deviation later led to the tremendous sensitivity applied to the work on the *Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, of 2005, which also has the grid as the main formal link, but whose rationality is subverted by the arrangement of the concrete blocks and the ambiences generated within their midst.

The recognition of an embryonic phase of projects based on urban mnemonic content – the case of the artificial excavations – led the Catalan architect, historian and philosopher Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1995), in an essay in which he classifies the work of Peter Eisenman in three different moments up to the 1990s, to call this phase of the architect of "memory" (SOLÀ-MORALES, 1995, p. 22). With this nomenclature, Solà-Morales contrasted Eisenman's artificial excavations with his initial discussions, between 1967 and 1975, which were of a morphological essence, as previously mentioned, a period that the historian named "form" (SOLÀ-MORALES , 1995, p.22).

The title of this article comes from the aforementioned essay, with the intention of exposing the formal and memorial approaches of these moments in Peter Eisenman's career, which spanned from the 1960s through to the 1980s, a period during which the intense, purely theoretical discussion, even if with repercussions in projects, although still of a strongly speculative nature, began to incorporate issues regarding the city. However, the architect's performance escapes any possible conformism with the reality of these cities. In the case of Berlin, Eisenman brings to light the scars of a city that suffered greatly from the Great Wars that followed. Such an attitude does not have the character of nostalgia because it reveals the pain covered by new constructions in an attempt to fill the void produced in the German capital.

Compared to the coldness of his cardboard architecture, the designs for the *Cities of Artificial Excavation*, especially those in Berlin, truly guarantee a greater sensitivity to Eisenman's architecture. However, this gesture is not comforting to those who observe it. Block 5 is the eternal reminder of all the destruction that took place there. The discomfort is also repeated less than ten blocks away, at the Memorial.

Hence, despite the incorporation of external elements into the architectural object, its insertion into the context and memory of the city, Peter Eisenman, instead of bringing the observer/user closer to his architecture, is still pushing them away, insofar as he concretizes the pain and, this is brought to approximate the present. This is an approximation with an opposite intention to that of coziness, as it seeks the discomfort of eternal memory. This forced approximation produces a reflection of distance, similar to the effect of estrangement generated by applying deep structures to the design of his houses.

What is perhaps the main difference between the effect generated by the houses produced through linguistic resources and the artificial excavations is that the excavation project (in the case of this article, the one in Berlin) draws attention to the procedural act of the *city*, the *place* where it is established, which by the way, is part of its conception as architecture, exposing the scars and traumas of that place and its population within the building; and not the self-reflection of an isolated, floating object. This distinction only exists due to the connection of architecture with the city. In other words,

Eisenman continued to emphasize the intellectual effort behind architecture rather than exposing it as an image, but this time in conjunction with form, with urban history and memory.

Thus, even its interiority – sought through the virtuality and fictitious character of architecture, the negation of the discipline as a condition for representing what is real by creating its own cosmos based on the virtual to achieve the autonomy of architecture – is related to its exterior, the city.

6. Post scriptum

This article has addressed the concept of "anti-memory", developed by Peter Eisenman and Jaquelin Robertson, in order to emphasize its non-nostalgic and, therefore, uncomfortable memory condition. However, his role in the project has psychoanalytic dimensions much more intense than what was dealt with in this study. His links with Freud's theories, which were briefly discussed herein through the comparison with the mystic pad, and also with Derrida from the implications of the virtual on the psychic apparatus, has greatly impacted the analysis undertaken by the architects on the urban fabric. As the intention of this work was to mark the differences between two of the phases of Eisenman's work, to present the transition between them and, finally, to bring them closer together, no greater depth was given to the issues arising from the area of psychoanalysis present in the project for Block 5. de Koch-/Friedrichstraße for the IBA Berlin.

7. Acknowledgements

8. References

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