

A6813: Ephemeral Architectures and Falsified Cities

Utopian Visions for Latin America

Fall 2019 | M 11a-1p | Avery 409

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Mosè Bertoni, "Piano della futura colonia"
Project for an Anarchist Colony in Paraguay

From the very beginning, Latin America appeared to be a great unknown to the Europeans that encountered it: a land of opportunity full of possibilities and of extraordinary things. Their earliest accounts speak of a mysterious place of unbelievable cities, peoples, and landscapes. These also tell the tales of ideal lost cities of gold buried deep within the continent. These stories continued well into the 19th century with descriptions of lost civilizations and paintings depicting unbelievable sublime landscapes. Wars of independence and revolutions, in turn, began to redefine for Latin America the possibilities to establish for itself new cultural, social, and political directions.

Latin American artists, architects, and writers began to see that the territory could be the site of new societies whose innovative forms and ideals could improve the lives of its people and influence those outside. Many of these proposals resulted from and reverberated out of social upheavals (local or international), of reactions for and against modernity and its material and socio-political effects, and of searches for new organizational structures that could modify the environment through idealized orders, behaviors, and/or radical, architectural and urban forms. All in all, throughout this time, we witness the production of many proposals for natural, urban, literary, artistic, and architectural utopias intended to challenge and reconstitute society.

This research seminar will set out to study utopias/utopian communities conceived and planned throughout Latin America in the 19th and 20th centuries. We will look in depth at the different forms proposed, the manifestos of their designers, and the context that engendered them and to which they responded.

* Most class readings can be accessed at

September 9

Introduction

"Introduction" and "The Utopian Imaginary" in Richard Noble, ed., *Utopias* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009), 12-37.

Miguel Angel Fernández Delgado, "Saudade for Space, Utopia, and the Machine in Latin American Art" in Sarah J. Montross, ed., *Past Futures. Science Fiction, Space Travel, and Postwar Art in the Americas* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015), 48-60.

September 16

Defining Utopia(n)

Lyman Tower Sargent, "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," *Utopian Studies* Vol. 5, No. 1 (1994), 1-37.

Ernst Bloch, "Introduction," *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986), 3-20.

Fredric Jameson, "Utopia as Method, or the Uses of the Future" in Michael D. Gordin, et. al, eds., *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 20-37.

Recommended:

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism" in *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 77-81.

September 23

Presentations: Principles and Taxonomies of Utopia

Thomas More, *Utopia*

William Morris, *News from Nowhere*

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backwards*

Samuel Butler, *Erewhon: or, Over the Range*

Charlotte Perkins Gillman, *Herland*

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*

Aldus Huxley, *Brave New World*

B.F. Skinner, *Walden II*

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Always Coming Home*

Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

September 30

Architecture and Utopia

Antoine Picon, "Notes on Utopia, the City, and Architecture," *Grey Room* 68 (Summer 2017), 94-105.

Lewis Mumford, "Utopia, the City and the Machine," *Daedalus* 9412 (Spring 1965), 271-292.

Colin Rowe, "The Architecture of Utopia," *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), 205-217.

Recommended:

Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982), 23-88.

October 7

Dystopia and Heterotopia

Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976), 41-49 and 125-149.

Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* (October 1984).

Krishan Kumar, "The Ends of Utopia," *New Literary History* Vol. 41, No. 3 (Summer 2010), 549-569.

Recommended:

Georges Teyssot, "Heterotopias and the History of Spaces," in K. Michael Hays, ed., *Architectural Theory Since 1968* (Cambridge: The MIT Press: 2000), 296-305.

Louis Marin, "Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present," *Critical Inquiry* 19/3 (Spring 1993), 397-420.

October 14

Presentations: Taxonomies of the Unbuilt and Utopian

Brian R. Goodey, "Mapping 'Utopia': A Comment on the Geography of Sir Thomas More," *Geographical Review* 60/11 (Jan. 1970): 15-30.

Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1976).

"How to Build a City: Roman Operating System," in *Mutations: Rem Koolhaas* (Barcelona: Actar, 2000).

Work Architecture Company, *49 Cities* (New York: Storefront for Art and Architecture, 2009).

Helen Rosenau, *The Ideal City, its Architectural Evolution* (London: Studio Vista, 1974).

Nathaniel Robert Walker, ed., *Building Expectation: Past and Present Visions of the Architectural Future* (Providence: Brown University, 2011).

Rodrigo Alonso, *El Futuro ya no es lo que Era: Imaginarios de Futuro en Argentina, 1910-2010* (Buenos Aires: Fundación OSDE, 2009).

October 21

Case Studies: The Problem of Utopia in Latin America

Bartolomé de las Casas + Estridentismo

Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, "Memorial de Remedios para las Indias (1516)" in *Obras Completas 13: Cartas y Memoriales* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1995), 23-48.

Lynda Klich, "Estridentópolis: Achieving a Post-Revolutionary Utopia in Jalapa," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 26 (Mexico Theme Issue (2010)), 102-127.

October 28

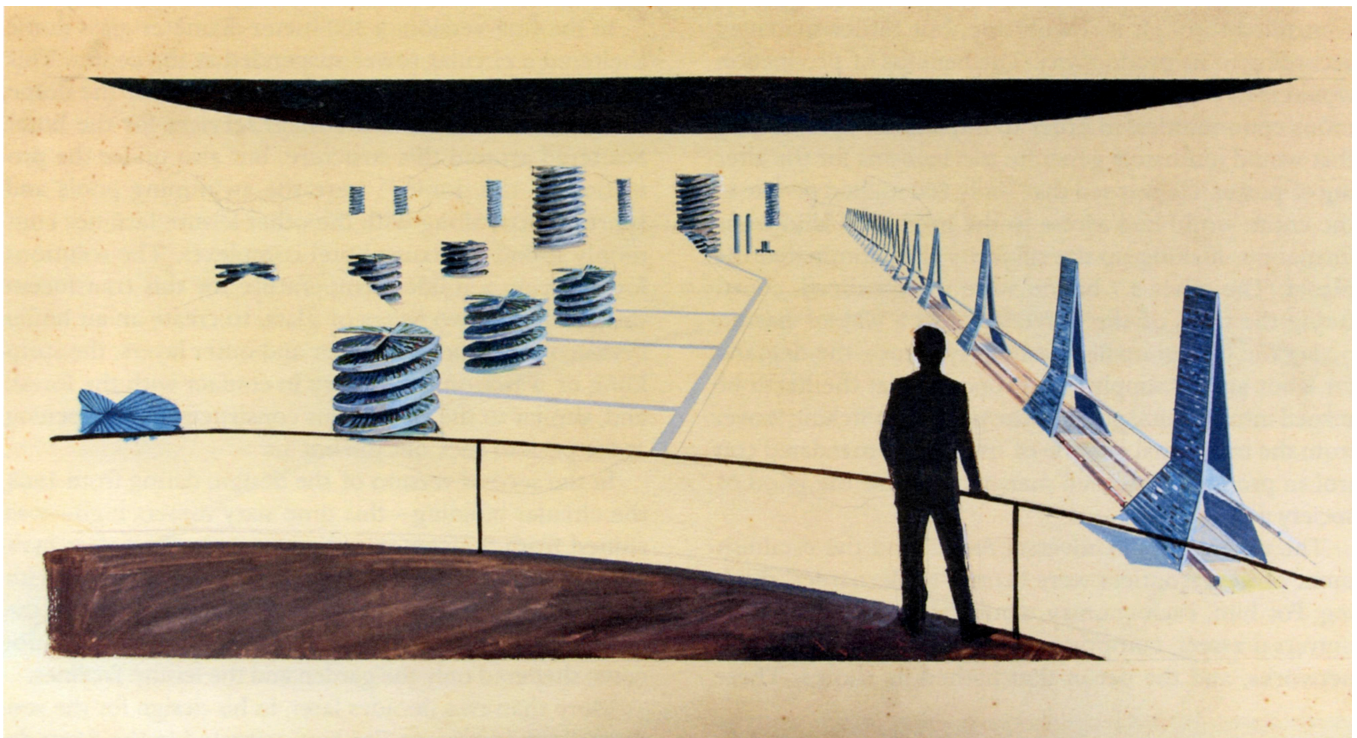
Case Studies: The Problem of Utopia in Latin America 2
Ciudad Obrera de México + Olinka

Unión de Arquitectos Socialistas, "Proyecto de la Ciudad Obrera en México: Doctrina Socialista de la Arquitectura," *XVI Congreso Internacional de Planificación y de la Habitación* (Mexico, August 1938).

Cuahtemoc Medina, "Del anarquismo al Deicidio: Dr. Atl y la Aristocracia" in *Olinka Donde se Crea el Movimiento* (Mexico: Museo Tamayo, 2013), 208-246.

November 4

No Class



Sergio Bernardes, "Rio de Janeiro of the Future"

Objectives and Requirements:

This seminar will consist of an in-depth understanding and analysis of utopias in/for Latin America, their theoretization, and their polemics with the double goal of writing historical accounts and critical essays about them and of collecting and gathering information –from many available but scattered resources at Avery Library, the NYPL, and the MoMA, to name a few– in an effort to develop an accessible "archive." Given that there are no publications or other reference works that extensively address the design(s) of utopias in Latin America, the intention is to develop the foundations for a publication that will disseminate the material researched, the hypothesis studied, the knowledge produced, and the historical and/or archival information gathered. The aim of the seminar's publication proposal –not unlike a previous seminar production, *Latin America: Experiments in (Radical) Functionalism* (GSAPP Books, 2019), and Koolhaas' *Project on the City*– will be to present, polemicize, and disseminate the information produced and material gathered. As such, there

will be discussions and proposals for its graphic design and organization, the visual/graphic display of information, the graphic conventions to (re)present architectural/urban information, and the selection and organization of historical, theoretical, and critical information that will be produced for the seminar. The publication prototype will be created collectively by all of the members of the seminar.

Besides active participation in the seminar, discussion of the readings, and the presentation of examples to elucidate historical and theoretical terms and conditions, student teams will be asked to present their case studies and investigations, propose class readings, and organize a discussion format. It is expected that students will develop representational systems and organized graphic devices to present these case studies.

The order of the presentations will be established in relationship to students' deadlines, material gathered and processed, and/or other circumstances; or, if all else fails, randomly.

General information on the topic can be found in:

Luis E. Carranza and Fernando Lara, *Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art Technology and Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

Barry Bergdoll, et al., *Latin America in Construction: Architecture, 1955-1980* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2015).

Presentations/Production:

November 11 Presentations + Proposals 1

November 18 Presentations + Proposals 2

November 25 Organization

December 18 Final Project Due

Preliminary List of Utopias to Investigate:

Literary Utopias

Argirópolis, D.F. Sarmiento
Universópolis, José Vasconcelos
Estridentópolis, Estridentistas
Ciudad Letrada, Angel Rama
"La Isla" from *La Ciudad Ausente*, Ricardo Piglia

Water Utopias

Brazil Project, Sergio Bernardes (1960-70)
Rio del Futuro, Sergio Bernardes (1965)
Ciudad Hidroespacial, Gyula Kosice
Ciudad Lacuste, Alberto Kalach/Teodoro Gonzalez de León

Concrete Utopias

League of Religions, Roberto Matta
Ciudad Lineal, Wladimiro Acosta
City Block, Wladimiro Acosta
Ciudad Neo-Americana, Francisco Mujica
Ciudad Socialista, Union de Arquitectos Socialistas
Ciudad Azucarera, Alberto Prebisch and Ernesto Vautier
Vivienda en el Espacio, Amancio Williams (1942)
La Ciudad que Necesita la Humanidad, Amancio Williams (1974-89)
Urban redesign for Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, São Paulo, Le Corbusier

Jungle / Nature Utopias

Olinka, Dr. Atl
Ciudad en la Antartida, Amancio Williams
Fordlandia, Brazil
Jonestown, Guyana

Artist(ic) Utopias

Xul Solar
Gonzalo Fonseca
City of the Naked Man, Flavio de Carvalho
Route of Friendship across Mexico, Mathias Goertiz
Filmic utopias (ie. lost cities - Indiana Jones)
Callipolis, Francis Ford Coppola

Established Utopias

Brasilia/Planaltina [different proposals]
Previ, Peru
Ciudad Abierta, Chile
Futura Colonia in Paraguay, Moises Bertoni
Nueva Germania, Paraguay
Religious Utopias