



120

DÍAS DE FUTURO PASADO: EL SUEÑO ARQUITECTÓNICO DE LOS CIBERNÉTICOS

DAYS OF FUTURE PAST: THE ARCHITECTURAL DREAM OF CYBERNITICIANS

Fernando Jerez, Belen Pérez de Juan

doi: 10.4995/ega.2015.4046

La tecnología ha transformado la percepción del espacio en que vivimos. Somos parte de una infinita red con acceso a territorios de inimaginables niveles de conectividad. Aunque Rem Koolhaas continue reivindicando una arquitectura de paredes, puertas y cerraduras en la última Bienal de Venecia, quizás los nuevos Elementos de Arquitectura sean en realidad, passwords, firewalls, key encryptions and security certificates. Nadie escapa a una tecnología invisible que define nuevos espacios virtuales, amplificando los límites de los edificios.

Los expertos dicen que esto es sólo el comienzo. Pero, ¿y si en realidad estuviéramos al final de un largo proceso? ¿Y si la disolución de la arquitectura en la tecnología hubiera empezado hace mucho tiempo?

Para desarrollar esta investigación, revisaremos ciertos planteamientos científicos donde la coincidencia de los protocolos ciberneticos de Norbert Wiener, las secuencias randomizadas de William Ross Ashby o el Systems Research Group de Gordon Pask con el arquitecto Cedric Price y el MIT Architecture Machine Group, generarán, una nueva metodología que derivará en un nuevo lenguaje gráfico, redefiniendo el proyecto de arquitectura.

PALABRAS CLAVE: TECNOLOGÍA. ARQUITECTURA. PROTOCOLO. CIBERNÉTICA

Technology has transformed the space we inhabit. We are attached to an infinite thread with access to an endlessly dense weave, a new territory with unimaginable levels of connectivity. Even if Rem Koolhaas is still claiming an Architecture of walls, doors and locks in the last Venice Biennale, perhaps the new Elements of Architecture are those of passwords, firewalls, key encryptions and security certificates. The message is clear, nobody escapes technology. An invisible technology defines the new space, dissolving the walls of buildings.

Experts say that this is only the beginning. But what if we are actually at the end point of this invisible, technological logic? What if the much advertised dissolving of architecture into technology occurred long ago? To undertake the research, we will review new arising theories in the 60s, where the encounter of Norbert Wiener's protocols, Ashby's randomized sequences, Pask's Systems Research's Group with Cedric Price and MIT Negroponte's Architecture Machine Group will generate a language to redefine the familiar in a new way, opening other windows for future research.

KEYWORDS: TECHNOLOGY.
ARCHITECTURE. PROTOCOL. CYBERNETICS



1. Elements of Architecture. Walls. Instalación de Rem Koolhaas para la Bienal de Venecia 2014
2. Desarrollo de ARPANET de Diciembre de 1969 a Julio de 1977

1. Elements of Architecture. Walls. Rem Koolhaas stand for the Venice Biennale 2014
 2. ARPANET development from December 1969 to July 1977



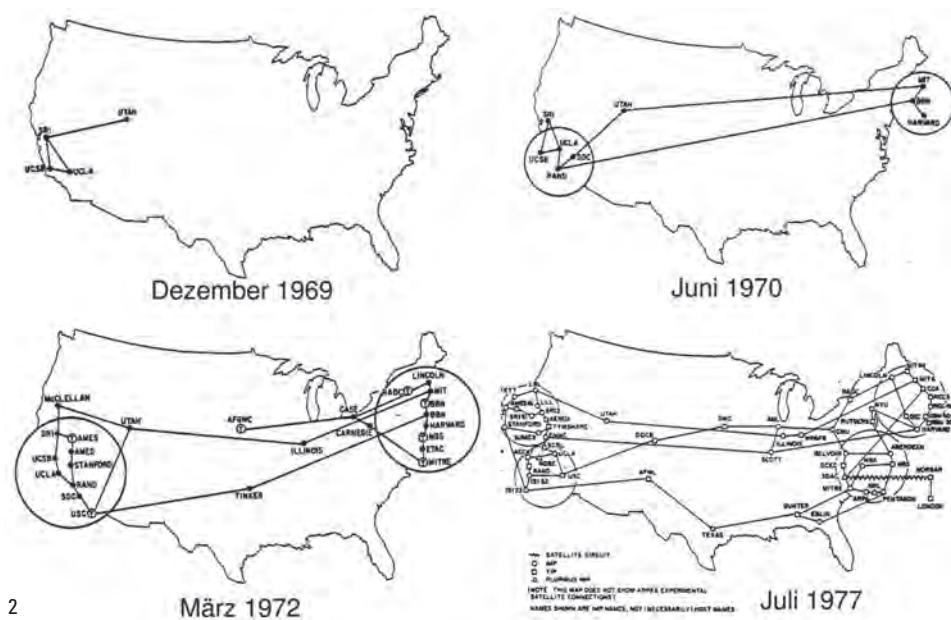
1

Introducción

Estamos continuamente rodeados de tecnología 1. ¿De cuantas maneras podríamos expresar nuestro asombro ante este espacio infinito en el que todo esta a solo un *click* de todo lo demás? Las nuevas tecnologías han transformado la percepción del espacio en que vivimos. Aunque Rem Koolhaas continue reivindicando una arquitectura de paredes, puertas y cerraduras en la última Bienal de Venecia (Fig. 1), quizá los nuevos Elementos de Arquitectura sean passwords, firewalls, key encryptions y security certificates.

Esta nueva tecnología invisible es relativamente nueva. Uno de sus puntos de partida fue ARPANET 2, un proyecto del Departamento de Defensa de Estados Unidos que, en 1969, conectaba los ordenadores de cuatro Universidades norteamericanas de la Costa Oeste. A partir de ARPANET (Fig. 2), Internet, como todos sabemos, ha crecido exponencialmente, y ahora conecta absolutamente todo, desde la esfera individual a la colectiva.

¿Cómo será la Arquitectura dentro de 25 años? ¿Con qué elementos, materiales o inmateriales será construída? Paradójicamente, al mismo tiempo que arquitecturas virtuales crecen exponencialmente en la nube, las gigantescas arquitecturas construi-



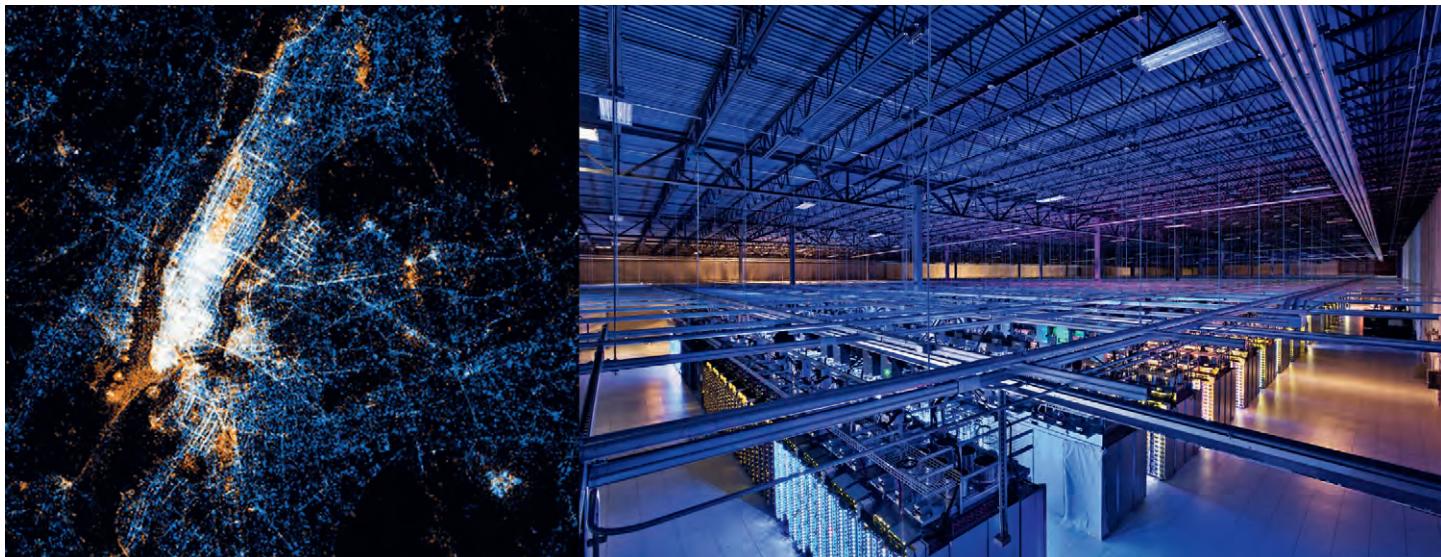
das de los servidores se materializan en lugares remotos (Fig. 3)

Parece que es sólo el comienzo. Pero, ¿y si en realidad fuera el final de un largo proceso? ¿Y si la fusión de la arquitectura y las nuevas tecnologías hubiera empezado hace mucho tiempo?

El primer intento de fusión de Arquitectura y tecnologías de la información puede establecerse en una fecha; exactamente el 23 de Junio de 1963 (Fig. 4). En el encuentro entre un hombre grueso, de pelo oscuro y lacio, con

Introduction

We are surrounded by technology 1. In how many ways are we to express our astonishment when exposed to an infinite space where all is just a click away? New technologies have transformed the perception of inhabitable space. Even if Rem Koolhaas is still claiming an Architecture of walls, doors and locks in the last Venice Biennale (Fig. 1), perhaps the new Elements of Architecture are those of passwords, firewalls, key encryptions and security certificates. This novel invisible technology is relatively new. The 1969 US Department of Defence's ARPANET 2 project represents one of the



3

departing points of this technology. Computers from four American west coast universities were connected. The Internet has grown exponentially ever since ARPANET (Fig. 2), took off and it currently connects absolutely everything we can imagine in both the individual and collective domains.

What architecture will we have in 25 years? What natural components, material or immaterial will be generated? Paradoxically, as virtual architecture experiments exponential growth in the cloud, the colossal structural architecture of servers materializes in remote locations. (Fig. 3). It would seem it is only a start. But, could it just be the end of a long process? What if the fusion of architecture and technology took off long ago? The first attempt to combine architecture and communications technology can actually be identified with a very specific date in the calendar, unequivocally, the 23rd of June 1963 (Fig. 4). The encounter between a plump man with dark, straight hair wearing a white coat and a rather slim man dressed in a dark coloured jacket and a bow tie.

The slim gentleman had been born in 1928 and had been using computers to build models to enable research on super interaction and feedback in language theory from 1952. The plump gentleman, born in 1934, had absolutely no knowledge of computing, was incapable of handling a fax machine and would engage in serious problems if at all attempting to function a photocopier 3. Needless to say, the plump gentleman was an architect.

Photographed together at the Architectural Association in London, the architect was clearly familiar with the setting, having been both pupil



4

chaqueta blanca y un hombre delgado, con chaqueta oscura y pajarita.

El hombre delgado había nacido en 1928 y había estado usando ordenadores para construir modelos que le permitieran investigar sobre interacción y feedback en el lenguaje desde 1952. El hombre grueso, nacido en 1934, no sabía nada de ordenadores, era incapaz de manejar la máquina de fax y tenía serios problemas con una simple fotocopiadora 3. Por supuesto, el hombre grueso era arquitecto.

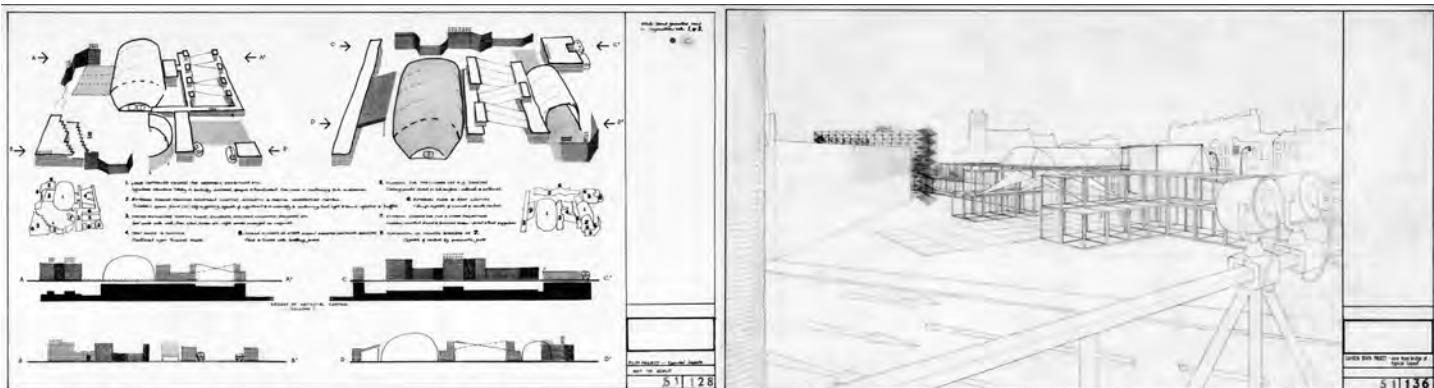
Fotografiados juntos en la Architectural Association de Londres, el arquitecto, que está claramente familiarizado con un lugar en el que había sido alumno primero y profesor des-

pués, escucha atentamente antes de emitir un juicio categórico. El experto cibernético, por el contrario, mueve la cabeza hacia un lado intentando entender la correcta orientación de los dibujos que tiene delante.

Cedric Price y Gordon Pask se conocieron en 1963 (Littlewood, 1994 p.702), gracias a Joan Littlewood, con motivo de la creación del Subcomité Cibernético del que sería el proyecto más influyente de la década en Inglaterra, el Fun Palace.

El *input social*

Antes de conocer a Pask, Cedric Price ya estaba trabajando en un proyecto



5

—conocido provisionalmente como People's Theatre— con Joan Littlewood. Littlewood, una de las directoras y productoras teatrales más influyentes y radicales de la escena británica, reinterpretando a Brecht o Laban, desde los años 40, ya había sacado el teatro a la calle mediante su compañía Theatre of Action. Joan Littlewood quería un Teatro Social, más allá de lo que el propio Bertold Brecht hubiera imaginado —no un teatro de escenarios, backstage o plateas, sino un Teatro performativo, un espacio de bricolaje cultural donde la sociedad pudiera experimentar la trascendencia y transformación del teatro, no como espectadores sino como actores.

Para el proyecto piloto del Fun Palace, Cedric Price comenzó a hacer una serie de dibujos de pequeña escala que ensayan estructuras inflables, elementos modulares, pantallas o cubiertas de lona para áreas de juegos y clases al aire libre (Fig. 5).

Un tiempo después, Price le enseñó a Littlewood los primeros dibujos del proyecto, que Price denominaba entonces The Dream o The Mobile Palace, pero Joan no mostró mucho entusiasmo (Littlewood, 1994 p.675). Price estaba desesperado.

El input cibernetico

En la primavera de 1963, llegaron a conocimiento de Price, los proyectos que un joven científico, conocido en aquel momento, como el Dandy de la Ciber-



6

3. A la izquierda Visualization showing the location of Twitter messages and Flickr photos en Nueva York. Eric Fischer. A la derecha Servidores de Google en Carolina del Norte.

4. Cedric Price y Gordon Pask en la Architectural Association de Londres

5. De izquierda a derecha: Primeros dibujos de Cedric Price para el piloto del *Fun Palace*, 1963

6. Gordon Pask. El dandy de la Cibernetica. Pask Archives

3. Left: Visualization showing the location of Twitter messages and Flickr photos in New York. Eric Fischer.

Right: Google Servers in North Carolina

4. Cedric Price and Gordon Pask at the Architectural Association in London

5. Left to right: First drawings for the *Fun Palace* pilot, Cedric Price 1963

6. Gordon Pask. The Cybernetic Dandy. Pask Archives

and professor at the AA. He attentively listens prior to a categorically exposed judgment. On the other hand, our cybernetics expert waves his head from side to side in attempt to determine the appropriate way of interpreting the orientation of the drawings before him. Cedric Price and Gordon Park first met in 1963 (Littlewood, 1994 p.702), introduced to each other by Joan Littlewood, then concerned with the establishment of the Cybernetic Subcommittee for what would become the most influential project of the decade in the UK, the Fun Palace.

Social Input

Prior to their encounter, Cedric Price had already been working on a project with Joan Littlewood — provisionally conceived as the People's Theatre. Littlewood was by then a renowned British theatrical director and producer and notorious for her influential and radical proposals, such as her reinterpretation of Brecht and Laban since the 1940s and she had indeed already taken her Theatre of Action company to the streets. She was pursuing the idea of a Social Theatre, beyond even Bertold Brecht's imagination, hence, not solely a theatre of stages, backstage or pits, but more likely a performance theatre, a space of cultural DIY, where society becomes present and is allowed to experiment the significance and transformation of theatre, taking part, not as an audience but as interpreters.

Cedric Price initially developed a series of small scale drawings to define the Fun Palace pilot project in which he depicted inflatable structures, modular structures, screens and canvases to house outdoor playgrounds and classrooms (Fig. 5). Eventually, Price forwarded the first project design sketches to Littlewood; what he would call The Dream or The Mobile Palace. Joan, however, was not particularly impressed (Littlewood, 1994 p.675), hence bringing Price to exasperation.

The cybernetic input

In the spring of 1963, Price learned that a young scientist, or The Cybernetic Dandy as he was known then, was based in London and carrying out his research development as Director of the British Cybernetics Foundation (Fig. 6). With an engineering degree and a PhD in psychology for the University of Cambridge, also home to Cedric Price, Gordon Pask was focusing his post PhD research on a new field, cybernetics. Gordon Pask would eventually chair the Cybernetics Committee for the Fun Palace. Most related texts refer to him as an advisor to the project, a few others consider Pask to be the third most important player after Joan Littlewood and Price himself (Matthews, 2007, p.75), although in reality this essay will determine that his emergence would mark a before and after in the work of Price and the diagramming graphics of the architectural project ever since.

Cybernetics was born as a science in 1942 and was originally developed by american mathematician and harvard and mit professor, norbert wiener, who had in fact worked for the us armed forces within a project to guide anti-aircraft missiles automatically, a forerunner of the smart missiles that we know today. As a result of his conclusions inherently developed from this project, wiener introduces the scientific concepts of feedback or retro alimentation that led him to publish in 1948 his book *cybernetics: or control and communication in the animal and the machine*. Wiener considered cybernetics to be the study of feedback, communications and control of living organisms, machines and systems and how to process this information to arrive to different conclusions (Wiener, 1948, p.70).

Katherine Hayles distinguishes a first generation of cybernetics (1945-1960) primarily focused on response to a given environment and a second generation 4 (1960-80) driven by an adaptive, evolutionary model that changes with the environment (Hayles, 1999).

The second generation of cybernetic foremen initiates the change of paradigm in which the technological process switches from material to informational (Johnston, 2008).

It could be said that cybernetics determines the evolution from the machine that originated in the industrial revolution to the age of information. A step towards an Heraclitan vision in which everything flows versus the Parmenidean



nética, estaba desarrollando su actividad en Londres como Director del British Cybernetics Foundation (Fig. 6)

Licenciado como ingeniero y doctorado en psicología por Cambridge, como Cedric Price, Gordon Pask desarrolló sus investigaciones postdoctorales en torno a un nuevo campo, la Cibernética. Gordon Pask, llegaría a dirigir el Comité Cibernético del Fun Palace. La mayoría de los textos consultados, lo sitúan como un asesor, algunos como el tercer personaje más importante del proyecto, después del propio Price y Joan Littlewood (Matthews, 2007, p.75), pero en esta investigación constataremos que su aparición supondrá un antes y un después en la obra de Price y en la diagramación gráfica del proyecto de arquitectura a partir de ese momento.

La Cibernética, que es una ciencia nacida en 1942, es impulsada inicialmente por Norbert Wiener –un matemático norteamericano, profesor en Harvard y el MIT– que curiosamente trabajó para las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos en un proyecto para guiar los sistemas de misiles antiaéreos de forma automática, modelo de los misiles inteligentes que conoce-

mos en la actualidad. Como resultado de los descubrimientos realizados en este proyecto, Wiener, introduce en la ciencia los conceptos de feedback o retroalimentación que le sirvieron para publicar en 1948, el libro *Cibernética o el Control y Comunicación de los animales y máquinas* (Fig. 7)

Para Wiener, la cibernética se define como el estudio del feedback, la comunicación y el control de organismos vivos, máquinas y sistemas y como se procesa esa información para dar respuestas diferentes (Wiener, 1948, p.70)

Katherine Hayles distingue entre una primera generación de cibernéticos (1945-60) focalizados en la respuesta a un entorno establecido y una segunda generación 4 (1960-80) dirigida a un modelo adaptativo y evolutivo que cambia con el entorno (Hayles, 1999).

La segunda generación de cibernéticos inicia el cambio de paradigma en el que el progreso tecnológico pasa de ser material a ser informational (Johnston, 2008).

Podríamos decir que la cibernética supone el paso de la era de la máquina –que venía de la revolución industrial– a la era de la información. Un paso hacia una visión Heraclitiana, en que todo está en flujo frente a la visión de Parmenidiana de que sólo lo estático o lo fijo es lo real.

Pero la figura que establecerá un vínculo operativo entre la cibernética y la arquitectura será Gordon Pask.

El trabajo de Pask, a través de su oficina System Research incluirá, máquinas cibernéticas, instalaciones, colaboraciones arquitectónicas como el Fun Palace e incluso trabajos para Pink Floyd o los Rolling Stones.

Pask veía la arquitectura, como un sistema bidireccional, como una conversación entre entidades. Para Pask, la Cibernética tenía un enorme poten-



ACROSS ARCHITECTURE



THE ARCHITECTURAL RELEVANCE OF CYBERNETICS

Gordon Pask

It is easy to argue that cybernetics is relevant to architects in the same way that it is relevant to a host of other professions; medicine, engineering or law. PL/RT programming, for example, is unequivocally a "cybernetic" technique and it is commonly employed in construction scheduling. Computer assisted design is a "cybernetic" method and there are several instances of its application to architecture, for example, the WSCC's planning scheme in which the designer uses a graphic display to represent the disposition of structural modules

them, criticizing them and evaluating them (as in statements of stability or style). Indeed, when interpreted, the body of metalinguistic statements formed the theory of pure architecture. Consequently, architects did not need to see themselves as systems designers, even though they designed systems, and the evidence suggests that they did not do so.⁸ Instead the professional image was that of a sophisticated house, college or theatre builder.

In the course of the Victorian era new techniques were developed too rapidly to be

7. Wiener, Ashby, Walter y McCulloch. Los cuatro pioneros de la Cibernetica en Paris. 1951. Wiener Archives
8. The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics. Architectural Design N. 39. Septiembre 1969

7. Wiener, Ashby, Walter and McCulloch. The four pioneers of cybernetics in Paris. 1951. Wiener Archives
8. The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics. Architectural Design N.39. September 1969

8

cial para la Arquitectura, ya que según Pask, la Arquitectura era esencialmente un sistema interactivo –o conversacional– para la interacción humana.

En su artículo para *Architectural Design*, *The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics* (Fig. 8) Pask expone lo siguiente:

Si las funciones están al servicio de la sociedad, un edificio no puede verse de forma aislada, interactúa permanentemente con sus habitantes. (Pask, 1969).

Dicho de otro modo, las estructuras cobran sentido como partes de sistemas mayores que incluyen componentes humanos. El arquitecto se ocupa de estos sistemas mayores y no sólo la parte de ladrillo y mortero. Para Pask, El Arquitecto no diseña edificios, diseña sistemas (Pask, 1969). El proyectista de sistemas se interesaría por la organización por encima de la forma.

Podríamos decir que esto producía un traspase de la concepción de la casa como máquina metafórica en movimiento moderno a la concepción de la arquitectura como máquina real, como sistema, al servicio del habitante en su relación con el entorno.

Pask, a través de su compañía *Systems Research*, desarrolla una serie

proyectos que abarcan instalaciones artísticas, computadoras sofisticadas, y proyectos teóricos. Algunos de sus primeros artefactos ciberneticos incluían, una máquina de escribir musical o un metrónomo humano, pero uno de los más espectaculares fue el Musicolor (Fig. 9) que desarrollaría después para conciertos de Pink Floyd. El Musicolor era un sistema de iluminación que interactuaba con actuaciones musicales para controlar espectáculos de luz y crear combinaciones sinestésicas de imagen y sonido. La música se convierte a través del micrófono en señales eléctricas, que controlaban las luces (Pask, 1971).

Pask entendía que a través de la actuación, la máquina y el hombre aprendían uno del otro, performativamente más que conscientemente.

Como objeto, la primera versión del Musicolor fue un fracaso estético y comercial pero supuso un importante avance técnico.

Además de Musicolor, su proyecto más influyente fue *The Colloquy of Mobiles* (Fig.10) producido para la Exposición Cybernetic Serendipity en el Institute for Contemporary Arts de Londres. La instalación *The Colloquy*

some as parts of larger systems that include human components and the architect is primarily concerned with these larger systems; they (not just the bricks and mortar part) are what architects design. I shall dub this notion architectural 'metabolism' meaning metabolism between structures and men or societies.

One consequence of functionalism and metabolism is a shift of emphasis towards the *form* (rather than the material constitution) of structures; materials and methods come into prominence quite late in the design process. Another consequence is that architects are required to design *dynamis* rather than *statis* entities. Clearly, the human part of the system is dynamic. But it is equally true (though less obvious) that the structural part must be imagined as continually regulating its human inhabitants.

Architectural holism

Once a rudimentary version of the functional/metabolic hypothesis has been accepted, the integrity of any single system is questionable. Most human/structural systems rely upon other systems to which they are coupled via the

approach that asserts that only that which is static or still is real.

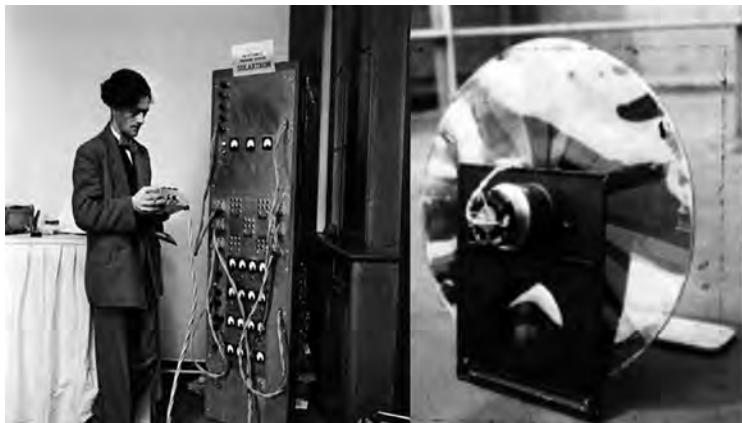
Nevertheless, it is Gordon Pask who establishes an operative link between cybernetics and architecture.

Pask and his System Research Group will develop projects that comprise machines, cybernetics, installations, architectural collaborations such as the Fun Palace or even projects for Pink Floyd or the Rolling Stones.

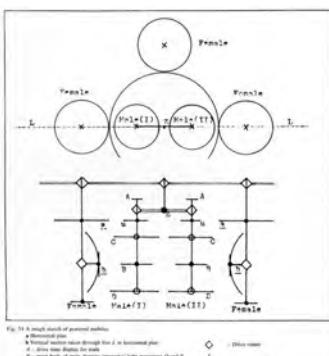
Pask saw architecture as a dual system, a conversation between entities. He thought that cybernetics had an enormous potential within the world of architecture, for as he himself said, Architecture is essentially an interactive or conversational system for human interaction. In his article *Architectural Design*, *The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics* (Fig. 8), Pask suggests:

If functions are at the service of society, a building can no longer be experienced as an isolated structure; it is in fact constantly interacting with its inhabitants. (Pask, 1969).

To put it another way, structures acquire meaning as constituents of larger systems that already include human components. The architect must not only engage in these larger structures but must do so beyond bricks and mortar. Park believes that the architect does not design buildings, he designs systems (Pask, 1969). The designer of systems will develop more interest for the organization than for the form. We could say that this shifts the concept of the home as a metaphorical machine in the modern



9



10

movement towards the idea of architecture as a real machine, or as a system at the service of the inhabitant in his relationship with the environment.

Pask and his Systems Research Group developed a series of projects that embrace artistic installations, sophisticated computers and theoretical projects. A few of his cybernetics artefacts include a musical typewriter or a human metronome, although possibly the most outstanding was his Musicolor (Fig. 9) subsequently developed for Pink Floyd concerts. The Musicolor was a lighting system designed to interact with the musical performances where light is controlled and kinaesthetic combinations of images and sound are created. Music is transformed into electrical signals that control the lighting via microphones (Pask, 1971). Pask understood that through action, man and machine learnt from each other, although more in the context of a performance than through consciousness.

As an object, the first Musicolor version was an aesthetic and commercial failure although it was no doubt a significant technological success. Musicolor aside, his most influential project was The Colloquy of Mobiles (Fig.10) designed for the Cybernetic Serendipity exhibition at the London

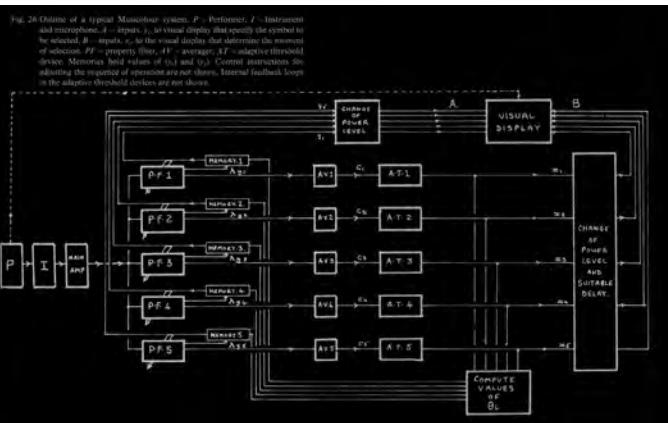


Fig. 26 Outline of a typical Muscicolour system. P = Performer, I = Instruments and microphone, A = inputs, y_i = visual display that specify the symbol to be selected, B = inputs, x_i = to the visual displays that determine the moment of selection, PT = property filter, \bar{AT}^P = average, \bar{AT} = adaptive threshold device. Memories hold values of y_i and x_i . Control instructions for adjusting the sequence of operations are not shown. Internal feedback loops in the adaptive threshold devices are not shown.



of Mobiles era interactiva como las tortugas de Walter Grey.

El *input* tecnológico

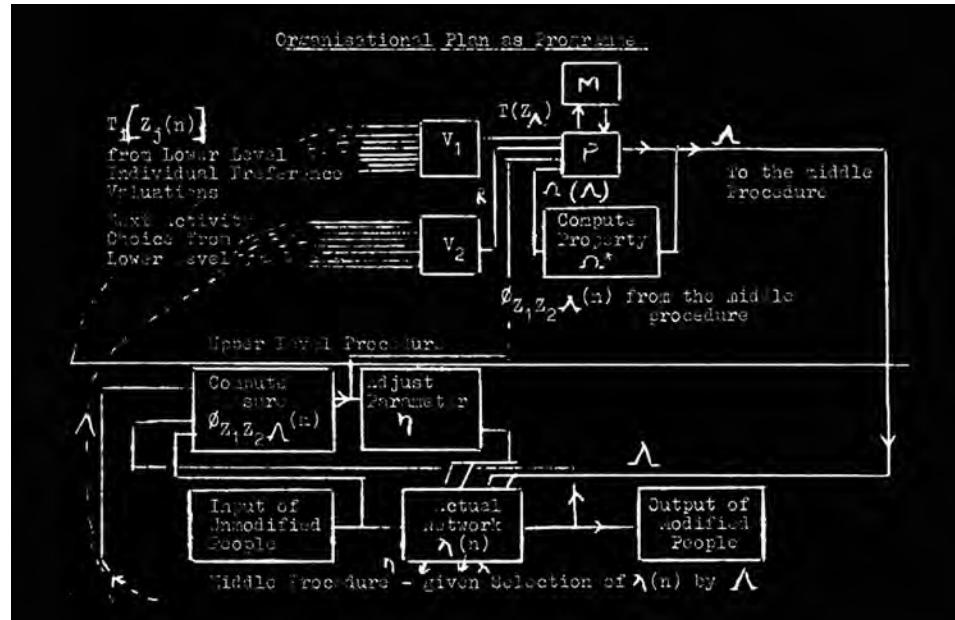
En 1963 Cedric Price invita formalmente a Gordon Pask a colaborar como experto en el Fun Palace. La llegada de Gordon Pask supone la creación del Cybernetics Subcommittee del Fun Palace dirigido por él. Pask utilizó un ordenador primitivo –the Random Machine– para producir diferentes combinaciones de datos que generaban unos diagramas para el funcionamiento del Fun Palace. El análisis logístico llevado a cabo por el Cybernetics Subcommittee asumía que al menos 5 actividades principales se iban a llevar a cabo a la vez para un público objetivo de entre 3.000 y 5.000 personas al día. Estas actividades se solaparían en períodos de horas o días dependiendo de la naturaleza de la actividad. El Subcomité Cibernetico desarrolló modelos matemáticos sobre los aspectos estadísticos, psicológicos y sociales del proyecto. Estos



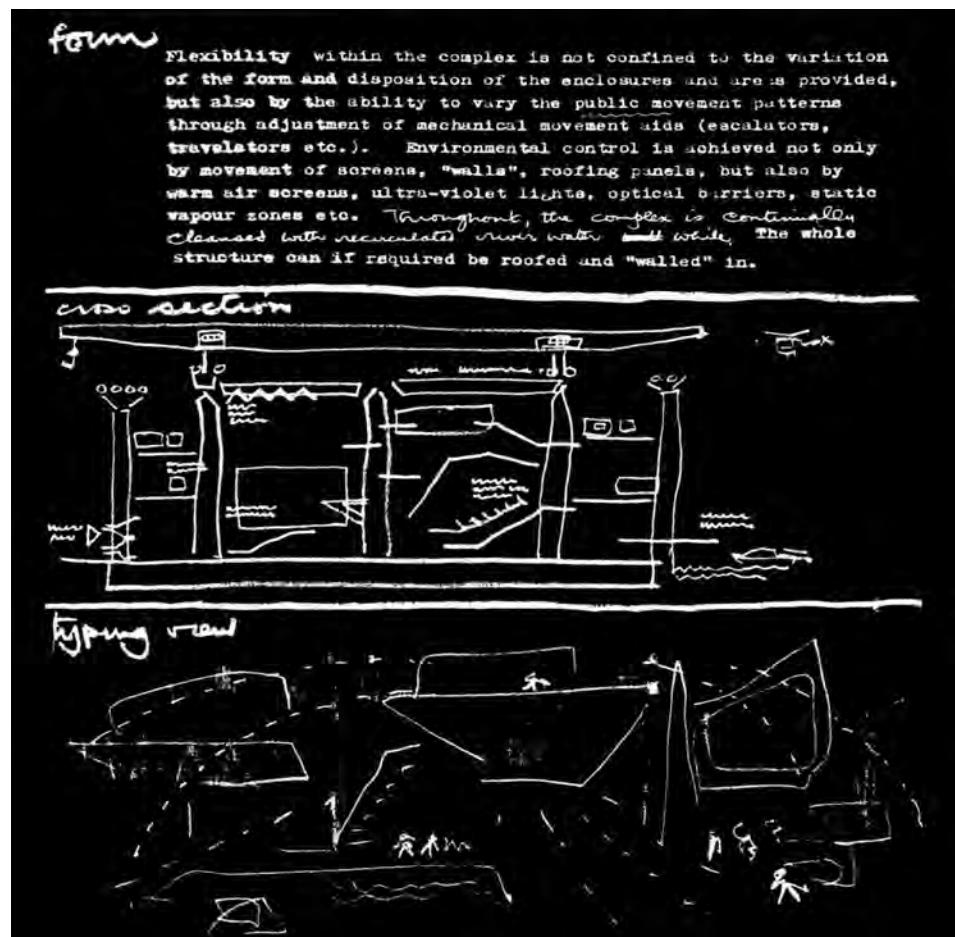
9. Gordon Pask y el Musicolor. 1953
 10. De izquierda a derecha: Diagrama *The Colloquy of Mobiles*. Exposición *Cybernetic Serendipity* en el *Institute for Contemporary Arts* de Londres, 1968.
 Gordon Pask's North American Archive
 11. *Organizational Plan as program*. Dibujo de Gordon Pask para el Subcomité cibernetico del Fun Palace. Pask Archives. 1964

- Palace. Pask Archives. 1964
 12. Dibujo de Cedric Price para el *Fun Palace*. 1964. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal
 9. Gordon Pask and the Musicolor. 1953
 10. Left to right: Diagram: *The Colloquy of Mobiles*. *Cybernetic Serendipity* Exhibition at the London Institute

- for Contemporary Arts, 1968. Gordon Pask's North American Archive
 11. *Organizational Plan as program*. Gordon Pask sketch for the Fun Palace cybernetic subcommittee. Pask Archives. 1964
 12. Cedric Price sketch for the *Fun Palace*. 1964. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal



11



12

Institute for Contemporary Arts. The *Colloquy of Mobiles* proposal was interactive much in the same way William Grey Walter's *Tortoises* were. The project consisted of 5 glass fibre mobile units, two feminine and two masculine, hanging from the ceiling, 3.5m off the ground, sensitive to light and sound stimulation with the use of sensors. Visitors were able to intervene in this process using flash lights and mirrors. It would therefore be fair to say that *The Colloquy of Mobiles* functioned as a Social System. Pask mentions Aesthetically potent environments (Pask, 1978) very much like those environments equipped with attributes that allow interaction, systems that have the capacity to interact with users.

When the British group Archigram was inaugurating Living City at the ICA in 1963, Pask was already beginning to develop a much more sophisticated system of interactive architecture for the *Fun Palace* project.

The technological input

In 1963 Cedric Price formally invites Gordon Pask to take part as expert advisor in the *Fun Palace* project. Gordon Pask's emergence foments the creation of the Cybernetics Subcommittee for the *Fun Palace* that was eventually to be chaired by him. Pask uses a primitive computer, The Random Machine, to produce different data combinations that generate diagrams for the functioning of the *Fun Palace*. The logistic analysis conducted by the Cybernetics Subcommittee assumed that at least 5 main activities would be executed simultaneously for a target audience of 3000 to 5000 subjects per day. These activities would be overlapped in periods of days or hours depending on the nature of the activity. The Cybernetics Subcommittee developed mathematical models concerning statistical, psychological and social aspects of the project. These models used real poles regarding activities to be undertaken in the *Fun Palace* that were then translated by the Cybernetics Subcommittee in 1964 as an organizational draft 5.

That same year, the Cybernetics Subcommittee led by Pask produced the first cybernetic diagram for the *Fun Palace* (Fig. 11).

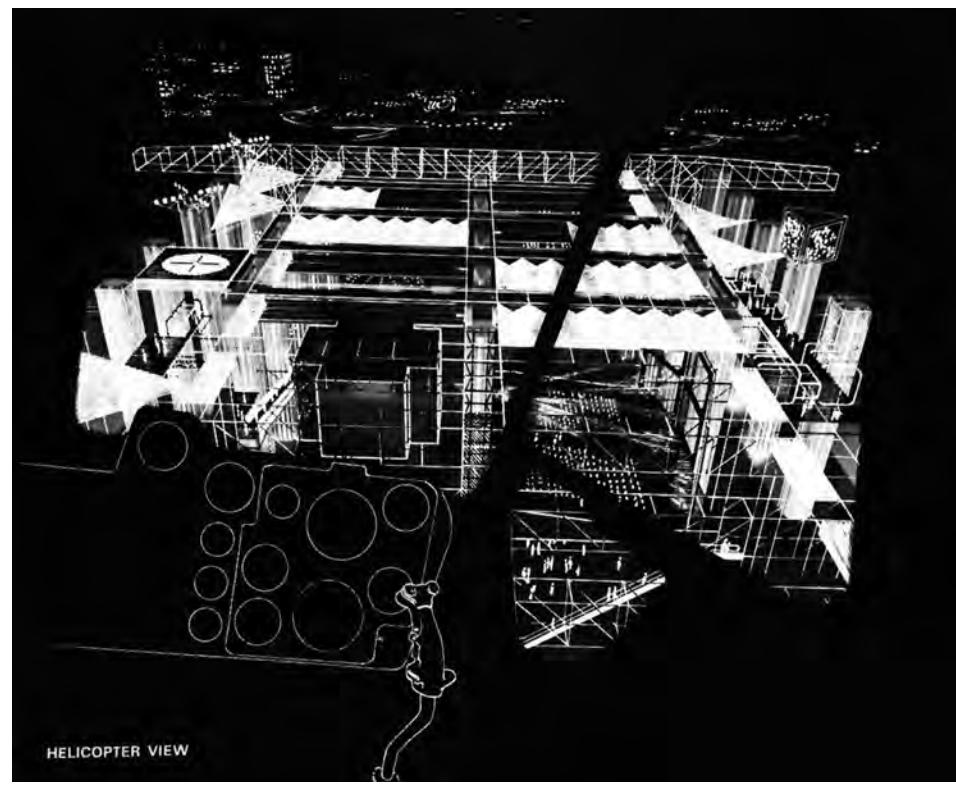
Price then embarks on the translation of Pask's diagrams proposing material components- ramps, corridors, mobile units, floating walls, floors and ceilings, suspended auditoriums connected

13. Dibujo de Cedric Price del *Fun Palace*. Imagen desde un helicóptero, con el panel de control en primer plano, 1965. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal
14. De izquierda a derecha: Primer Dibujo de Cedric Price para el piloto del *Fun Palace*, 1963. *Organizational Plan* de Gordon Pask para el *Fun Palace*, 1964. Planta para el *Fun Palace* de Cedric Price, 1964. Gordon Pask's North American Archive. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal
15. De izquierda a derecha: *Diagramación cibernetica*, Gordon Pask en British Cybernetics Foundation, 1961. Área de intercambio Madeley para el proyecto de *Potteries Thinkbelt* de Cedric Price, 1965. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

with gantry cranes- although immaterial components- vapour barriers, optical barriers, air curtains, horizontal fog dispersal devices and vertical blinds- defied the physical presence of architecture. In actual fact, some of the components were designed to last ten years whilst others were non-reusable (Fig. 12). There is a 1964 helicopter view drawing (Fig. 13) that clearly depicts the nature of the Fun Palace as a virtual structure that does not differ substantially from present-day videogames. In this drawing, Price deliberately introduces a control panel in the foreground, resembling the remote control of the machine/building that lies beneath.

The methodological input

Price found the documents generated by the Cybernetics Committee absolutely fascinating, in particular in terms of the representation techniques, codification modes, structuring of ideas and decision making procedures. The repercussion of Pask's ideas on Cedric Price's work is of crucial importance; not only is a specific feature of the Fun Palace Project developed by the Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee, but in actual fact Gordon Pask introduces a new approach to the architectural project. A designing method that will be present in Price's work from that moment onwards, both in terms of conceptual and graphic viewpoints. We can ultimately asseverate that there is a Price before Pask and a Price after Pask. The Fun Palace progresses from a set of small sized figurative drawings (Fig. 14)- possibly inspired in the ephemeral structures that Price had seen in the 1951 Great Britain Festival- to a multiple project, an organization with no shape or form, represented by means of the sketch-diagrams with which we are all familiar today. This design strategy will be present in all of Price's subsequent work. Cybernetics and Architecture will again meet in several other



13

modelos utilizaban encuestas reales sobre las actividades a realizar en el Fun Palace que fueron traducidas por el Cybernetics Subcommittee en 1964 como borrador de organización 5.

Ese mismo año, el Subcomité Cibernetico dirigido por Pask produce el primer diagrama cibernetico para el Fun Palace (Fig. 11).

Price empieza a traducir los diagramas de Pask, para ello propone elementos materiales -rampas, pasillos móviles, paredes flotantes, suelos y techos, auditorios suspendidos conectados por grúas-pórtico- pero los elementos inmateriales -barreras de vapor, barreras ópticas, cortinas de aire, máquinas de dispersión de niebla horizontal y persianas verticales- desafían la presencia física de la arquitectura. De hecho, había elementos dentro del complejo diseñados para durar más de una década y otros para un solo uso (Fig. 12).

Existe un dibujo de 1964, a vista de helicóptero (Fig. 13), que refleja claramente el carácter del Fun Palace como edificio virtual no muy alejado de los

videojuegos actuales. En este dibujo, Price introduce, conscientemente en primer término un cuadro de mandos, como si fuera el control remoto de la máquina -edificio- que está debajo.

El *input metodológico*

Los documentos generados por el Comité Cibernetico, fascinaron a Price, sobre todo, por los modos de representación, las formas de codificación, por la estructuración de las ideas o los procedimientos de toma de decisiones.

La repercusión de Pask en la obra de Cedric Price es de una importancia capital, pues no sólo desarrolla una aspecto específico del Proyecto Fun Palace, a través del Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee, sino que Gordon Pask introduce una nueva manera de acercarse al proyecto de arquitectura. Un método proyectual que estará presente en la obra de Price a partir de ese momento, tanto desde un punto de vista conceptual como gráfico. Podemos decir que existe un Price antes, y otro, después de Pask.



13. Cedric Price sketch for the *Fun Palace*. Sketch taken from a helicopter with the control panel in the foreground, 1965. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

14. Left to right: Cedric Price, first drawing for the *Fun Palace* pilot, 1963. *Organizational Plan for the Fun palace* Gordon Pask, 1964. Layout for the *Fun Palace*, Cedric Price, 1964. Gordon Pask's North American Archive. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

15. Left to right: *Cybernetic Diagramming*, Gordon Pask, British Cybernetics Foundation, 1961. Exchange area Madeley, *Potteries Thinkbelt* project, Cedric Price, 1965. Cedric Price Fonds Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

El Fun Palace pasa, de ser una colección de pequeños dibujos figurativos (Fig. 14) –posiblemente inspirados en las estructuras efímeras que Price había visto en el Festival de Gran Bretaña en 1951– a ser un proyecto múltiple, una organización sin forma, representado mediante los dibujos-diagrama que todos conocemos.

Esta estrategia proyectual aparecerá a partir de ese momento en toda la obra de Price. La cibernetica y la Arquitectura se encontrarían en la obra del arquitecto británico en varias ocasiones más (Fig. 15). En Potteries Thinkbelt (1965), en el Inter-action Center (1972), donde Price edifica algunas de las ideas del Fun Palace, o en el Generator (1978), un proyecto más puramente cibernetico y más cercano al trabajo del Architecture Ma-

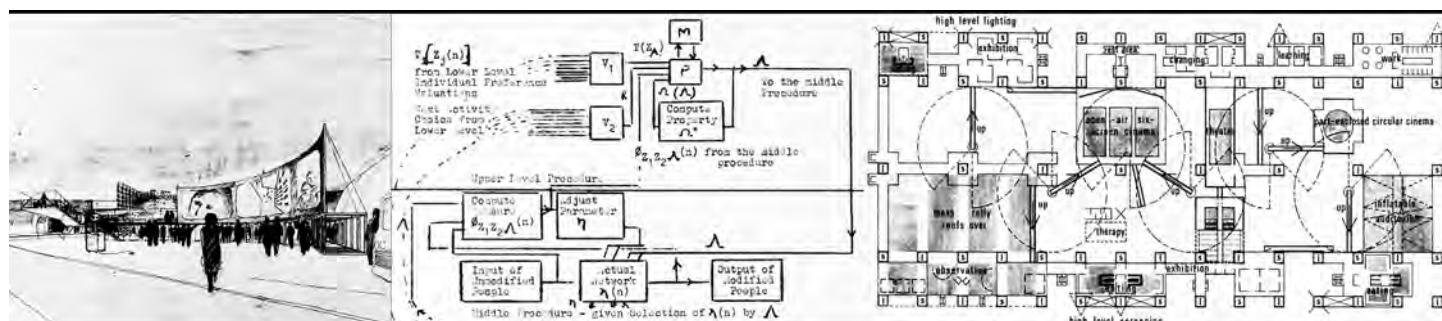
chine Group de Nicolás Negroponte en el MIT.

La estrategia gráfica de bandas reprogramables, regresará en 1982 con la influyente propuesta de Rem Koolhaas para el Parque de la Villette (Fig. 16), que relatará las ideas de Price mucho mejor que el propio Price. Y las ideas de Pask, y sobre todo la metodología que se deriva de ellas, se materializarían en 1995 en la Mediateca de Sendai de Toyo Ito, que ya había hecho su versión del Musicolor de Pask unos años antes (Fig. 17).

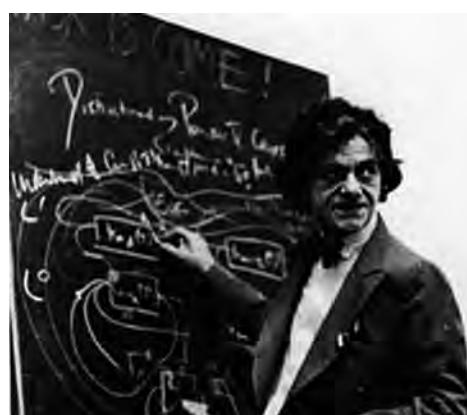
Pero el Fun Palace aparecerá otra vez con más claridad en 1989 de la mano de Rem Koolhaas en su propuesta para el Concurso de la TGB de Paris en 1989 (Fig. 18) en una estrategia proyectual que aparecerá una y otra vez en la historia de la arquitectura. ■

works designed by Price (Fig. 15). The 1965 Potteries Thinkbelt, the 1972 Interaction Centre Price in which some of the ideas originated in the Fun Palace project take form, or the 1978 Generator, a more purely cybernetic project that lies closer to the concepts of MIT's Nicolás Negroponte Architecture Machine Group. The graphic strategies of re-programmable cells will return with Rem Koolhaas's 1982 Parque de la Villette (Fig. 16) that will in fact portray Price's ideas clearer than he would have been capable of. Whereas Pask's ideas, and very specifically the methodology derived from them, will be materialized in Toyo Ito's 1995 Sendai Multimedia Library, that had already carried out its own version of Pask's Musicolor a few years back (Fig. 17).

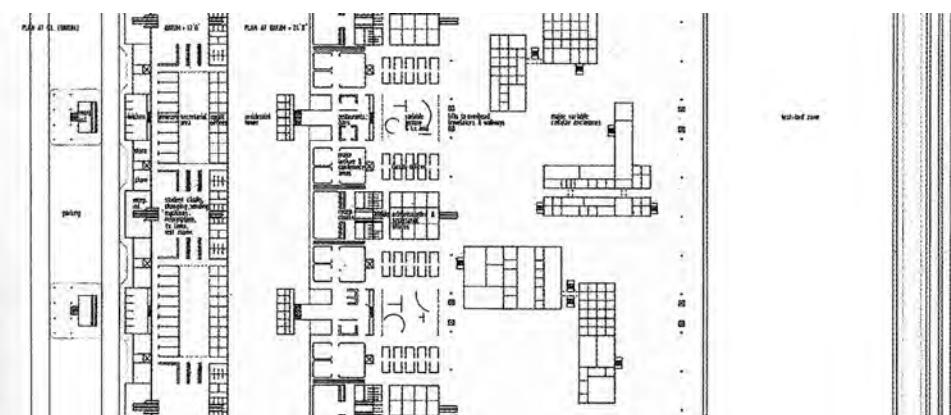
The Fun Palace will nonetheless emerge in its clearest form in 1989 through Rem Koolhaas's proposal for the Paris TGB competition (Fig. 18) in the context of a designing strategy that will return again and again in the history of architecture. ■

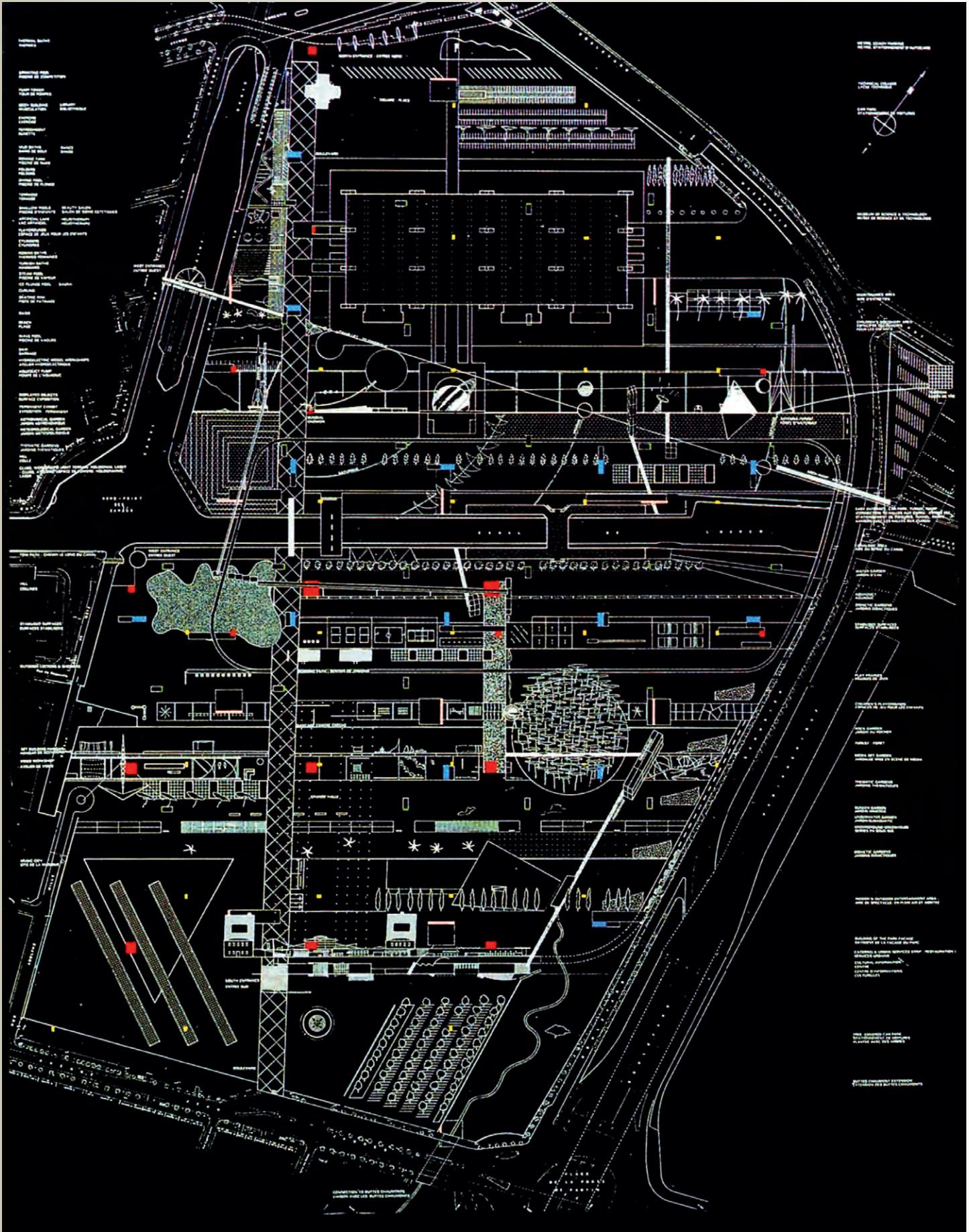


14



15







16. Dibujo de Rem Koolhaas para el concurso del Park de la Villette en 1982. En S,M,L,XL. Monacelli Press 1995
 17. Torre de los Vientos de Toyo Ito, Yokohama, Japón, 1986. Fotografía Tomio Ohasi. Revista 2G. N2. 1997

Notas

- 1 / Tecnología aquí se refiere a IT (information Technologies) o Tecnologías de la Información. Incluyendo Teorías de Sistemas, ordenadores, hardware y software, electrónica, semiconductores, internet, telecomunicaciones y servicios computacionales.
 2 / ARPANET nace en 1969 aunque el primer registro de interacciones a través de una red digital es una serie de memorandums escritos por J.C.R. Licklider of MIT en Agosto de 1962 sobre el concepto de "Galactic Network" dentro del proyecto de Investigación DARPA.
 3 / Paul Finch en conversación con Fernando Jerez. Londres. 12 de Junio 2012
 4 / Hayles considera un tercer periodo (1980-presente) focalizado en la virtualidad, que ampliaría en exceso del alcance de esta comunicación.
 5 / *Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee questionnaire*, 1964. Cedric Price Archives.

Referencias

- ASHBY, W. R., 1996. *Design for a Brain: The Origin of Adaptive Behaviour*. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.
- ASHBY, W. R., 1957. *An Introduction to Cybernetics*. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.
- EZARD, J., 2002. Joan Littlewood. *The Guardian*, September, 20, pp. 23.
- HAYLES, N. Katherine, 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- HAYWARD, R., 2001. *The Tortoise and the Love Machine': Grey Walter and the Politics of Electroencephalography'*. London: Science in Context.
- JOHNSTON, J., 2008. *The Allure of Machine Life: Cybernetics, Artificial Life, and the New Ai*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- LITTLEWOOD, J., 1994. *Joan's Book*. London: Methuen
- MATHEWS, S., 2007. *From Agit- Prop to Free Space: The Architecture of Cedric Price*. London: Black Dog Publishing.
- PASK, G., September 1969. The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics. *Architectural Design*, no.39.
- PASK, G., 1960. *The Natural History of Networks*. In *Self-Organizing Systems: Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary Conference*. New York: Pergamon, pp. 232-63.
- PASK, G., 1971. A Comment, a Case History and a Plan. In *Cybernetics, Art, and Ideas*. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphics Society, pp.76-99.
- PASK, G., 1964. *Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee questionnaire*. Montreal: Cedric Price Archives.
- PRICE, C., 2009. *Cedric Price, Interview by Monica Pidgeo*. London: BD Online.
- SANDERSON, Michael, 1982. *Education and Economic Decline in Britain: 1870s to the 1990s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.81.
- WIENER, N., 1948. *Cybernetics: or the Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. New York: Wiley.

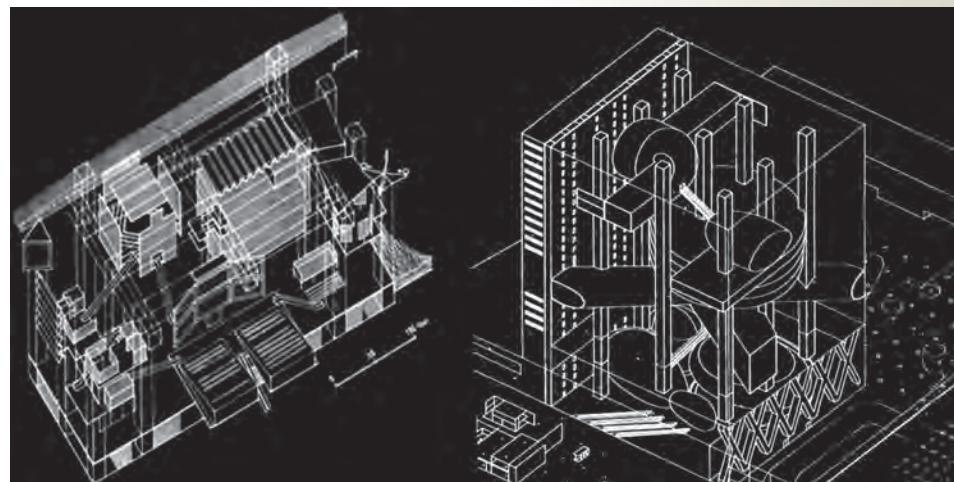
18. Dibujo de Rem Koolhaas para el concurso TGB Biblioteca de Francia 1989. En S,M,L,XL. Monacelli Press 1995

16. Rem Koolhaas, drawing for the Parque de la Villette competition, 1982. En S,M,L,XL. Monacelli Press 1995

17. *Wind Tower, Toyo Ito, Yokohama, Japón, 1986*. Photography: Tomio Ohasi. 2G Magazine. N2. 1997
 18. Rem Koolhaas, drawing for the TGB Library competition, France, 1989. S,M,L,XL. Monacelli Press 1995



17



18

Notes

- 1 / Technology here refers to IT, Information Technologies. This includes System Theories, Computing, Hardware and Software, Electronics, Semiconductors, Internet, Telecommunications and Computing Services.
 2 / ARPANET is born in 1969, although the first register of interactions through a digital network is in fact a series of memorandums written by J.C.R. Licklider from MIT in August 1962 on the concept of a "Galactic Network" within the research project DARPA.
 3 / Paul Finch in conversation with Fernando Jerez. London. June 12th 2012
 4 / Hayles takes into account a third period from 1980 to the present day, focused on virtuality, ultimately enhancing the effect of this form of communication in excess.
 5 / *Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee questionnaire*, 1964. Cedric Price Archives.

References

- ASHBY, W. R. 1996. *Design for a Brain: The Origin of Adaptive Behaviour*. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.
- ASHBY, W. R. 1957. *An Introduction to Cybernetics*. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd.
- EZARD, J., 2002. Joan Littlewood. *The Guardian*, September, 20, pp. 23.
- HAYLES, N. Katherine, 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- HAYWARD, R., 2001. *The Tortoise and the Love Machine': Grey Walter and the Politics of Electroencephalography'*. London: Science in Context.
- JOHNSTON, J., 2008. *The Allure of Machine Life: Cybernetics, Artificial Life, and the New Ai*. Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- LITTLEWOOD, J., 1994. *Joan's Book*. London: Methuen
- MATHEWS, S., 2007. *From Agit- Prop to Free Space: The Architecture of Cedric Price*. London: Black Dog Publishing.
- PASK, G., September 1969. The Architectural Relevance of Cybernetics. *Architectural Design*, no.39.
- PASK, G., 1960. *The Natural History of Networks*. In *Self-Organizing Systems: Proceedings of an Interdisciplinary Conference*. New York: Pergamon, pp. 232-63.
- PASK, G., 1971. A Comment, a Case History and a Plan. In *Cybernetics, Art, and Ideas*. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphics Society, pp.76-99.
- PASK, G., 1964. *Fun Palace Cybernetics Subcommittee questionnaire*. Montreal: Cedric Price Archives.
- PRICE, C., 2009. *Cedric Price, Interview by Monica Pidgeo*. London: BD Online
- SANDERSON, Michael, 1982. *Education and Economic Decline in Britain: 1870s to the 1990s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.81.
- WIENER, N., 1948. *Cybernetics: or the Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. New York: Wiley.