

ROOMS

FRANCISCO JARAUTA, 2002

1. To Inhabit

Ever since Platon's Seventh Letter, one idea has guided reflection on human dwelling. The city, par excellence, was the space of social and political experiment. And its construction was the challenge faced by all civilisations. "To save the polis" appeared as the moral horizon of all thinking. Architecture adopted this challenge, rewriting over and over again the ideas that challenge, rewriting over and over again the ideas that made it possible. An internal correspondence governs the order of ideas and that of dwelling. In *Eupalinos*, Paul Valéry made it quite clear, however, that all projects are made of the same substance as doubt. A limit that architecture obstinately endeavours to transcend.

2. Glass Architecture

Walter Benjamin interpreted it as the manifesto of a new era. Paul Scheerbart's *Glaserarchitektur* marked a threshold separating periods of time, ways of constructing and of dwelling. Fascination with transparency provided subjectivity with the capacity for illusion sought by Expressionism. An interior time that was exhibited in the radiant scenario of Bruno Taut's *Glashaus*. As early as 1914, the distance between interior and exterior was already quite subtle. A distance that would rule over the destiny of the modern.

3. House of Ice

In *Korrektur*, Thomas Bernhard describes it as the perfect house, dominated by strict proportions and order. Its soul is geometric and, in its interior, a cold light embraces the void, the silence imposed by lack of communication. Absence transforms this space into ice, and everything attains the strange restlessness of the forest. Names are suspended and presence is replaced by a fleeting gleam. The slow steps of the wait are barely glimpsed.

4. Escapes

"The house of our age does not yet exist", wrote Mies van der Rohe in *Die Form* in 1931. "However –proceeded Mies- the transformation of our way of life demands its fulfilment". Some years later, Le Corbusier noted, "where is the house that is neither a prison or a mirage, the constructed house and the spiritual house? Where can we find it? Nowhere or hardly anywhere. It is necessary therefore to break the game with the utmost urgency and to begin to construct for mankind". A construction that will bear the marks of successive escapes and imprisonments towards an interior, one that will make the mirror of illusions or the void of silence its own.

5. Nomadic Woman

Pao: Dwelling of Tokyo Nomad Woman is the project that Toyo Ito is constructing for nomadic woman of Tokyo. The traditional house loses all its meaning and is transformed into a nomadic tent,

the “pao”. Lightweight and mobile, suitable for solving the body’s minimum requirements and ready to be moved swiftly to any point of the megalopolis. A minimum structure will protect the interior, the function of which has been restricted to solving the slightest needs of the modern nomad: an intelligent place for information; another, for a brief rest; and finally a place where they can put on their make-up and thus enter into the realm of dreams. The dividing line between interior and exterior had never been solved in such a radical way as in the Pao houses.

6. Building Rest

Mónica Alonso conceives and constructs other spaces. We do not know whether it is an obsession or whether it is a deliberate protective flight. The series entitled *Construindo o descanso* (gris, amarelo, verde) warns us of a determined wish for retirement and safety. Tidy interiors, excluded memory, suspended time. A place, places, constructed “for rest”. Fatigue, pain and the extreme metaphor of illness are implied. These are safe, therapeutic places. A contrast that polarises once again the logic of a violent exterior and the search for peaceful interiors. Rarely has this distance been covered with such a severe disposition. *Construindo o descanso 3* warns us, however, of the fragile balance of that construction, that will be unable to avoid the winds. An instant –that of rest– can simulate and make real what no idea has been able to build.

7. Spaces of Dreams

What was previously rest, is now dream, *Somniurizado 1* and *2*, *The Cápsulas MAMA*, *The Dormitorios Terapéuticos* open other scenarios that divide and transform the previous silence, giving rise to the time of dreams. A line of suspension that denies the habitual presence of the obvious and metaphysically recreates the oneiric order of infinite stories. This is the desire of the true scribe of dreams, a desire sharpened by the difficult struggle to suspend death. The entire history of the body is that of its demarcation, that of the network of marks and signs that divide it up, in order to be able to present it from a supposed unity that forgets the suture. This is where all the subjects that adopt the specific therapies suggested by Mónica Alonso, as exemplified in *Comunidade en Vermello CV02*, come together. In short, a series of spaces constructed so that the representation of the impossible, of everything that leaves the trace of its violence on the body after its withdrawal, is finally made possible.