

**The EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONDITION of the MAGAZINE:
ARQUITECTURAS BIS and its EDITORIAL BOARD
(1974-1985)
The case of Manuel de Solà-Morales and Rafael Moneo**

Alejandro Valdivieso
Master in Design Studies – History and Philosophy of Design
Advisor: K. Michael Hays

May 11, 2016

Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming. My name is Alejandro Valdivieso and today I am going to introduce you to the magazine *Arquitecturas Bis*, published in Barcelona from 1974 to 1985.

Before starting the presentation, I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Michael Hays, for the time and help, as well as to Professor Rafael Moneo, who has been also very helpful as a second reader. I have been indeed fortunate to listen to their comments and observations on the topic. I would also like to express my special gratitude to my area coordinators.

The thesis argues how *Arquitecturas Bis* contributed to built an 'after-modern' philosophical and historical self-consciousness approach, as part of a bigger scenario that included several North American and European magazines during the mid-1970's and 80's.

The aim is therefore to understand how the magazine was a significant sign of an age that brought the rise of architectural theory in a context of critical reading of modernism and the consequent emergence of theories and histories of 'resistance' or 'reaction', together with the engagement and reception to the whole domain of Cultural Theory.

When I refer to the "the epistemological condition of the magazine" ; I

understand the magazine as a vehicle for translation and production of architectural knowledge, beyond the outdated dialectical theory-practice. In this sense, the thesis also sets out to show the way in which the specific case of *Arquitecturas Bis* worked as a vehicle for a “transatlantic” translation between Europe and the US, through Spain, positioning Spanish architectural practice and scholarship internationally, and introducing international debates into the Spanish agenda.

The History of architecture is not just made up of buildings and designs, it is also made up of texts, writings capable of translating architectural ideas... what means “to write”?

“To write: to try meticulously to retain something, to cause something to survive: to wrest a few precise scraps from the void as it grows, to leave somewhere a furrow, a trace, a mark or a few signs”

Georges Perec, Species of Spaces and other pieces



Fig. 1: Dummie of the cover and cover of AB 1 (1974)

The first issue of the self-styled so-called “little magazine” *Arquitecturas Bis* was published in Barcelona in 1974. Proclaiming itself as a magazine devoted to current architectural affairs, (“información gráfica de actualidad”, in Spanish), the first number lacked any kind of editorial stand but consciously pursued a strong international and cosmopolitan scope, with an emphasized reference to Louis Khan’s death, and with the publication of the work of Richard Meier in the Bronx, New York.

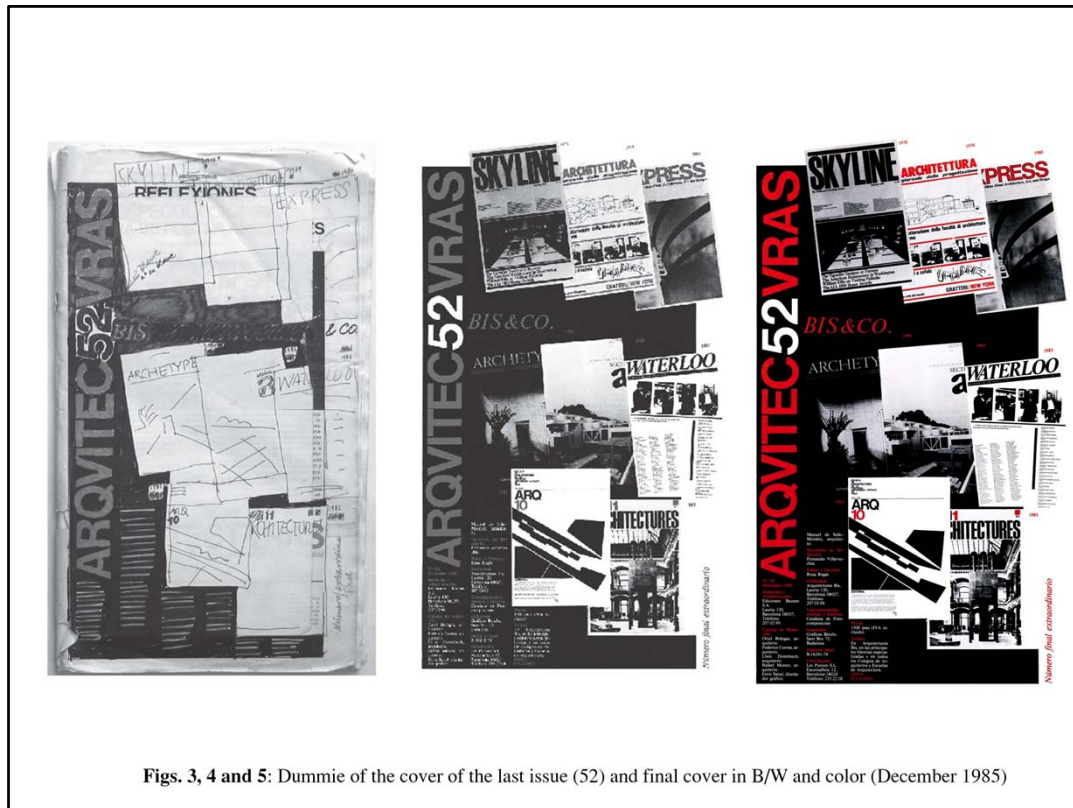
Figs.: Dummie of the cover and cover of AB 1 (1974).



Arquitecturas Bis lasted for just a little more than eleven years. From May 1974 until the last issue (number 52) was published in December 1985. The journal published a total number of 32 single and 10 doubles issues.

The division of the content within each issue did not respond, apparently, as it happened in other similar reviews published within the same period of time, to any consistent option or to a predetermined editorial scope. The seemingly lack of a specific editorial policy since the publication of the first number can be addressed as the most distinguishing feature of the magazine.

Fig.: Covers of *Arquitecturas Bis* displayed in order (1974-1985).



Figs. 3, 4 and 5: Dummie of the cover of the last issue (52) and final cover in B/W and color (December 1985)

Although the last issue of the magazine included an organized index –by numbers, by subjects (as history, theory & criticism, texts, architects & works and book reviews) as well as by authors–, the magazine did not organize beforehand the content among thematic or other possible categories, but it rather worked more spontaneously in the preparation of every issue, which finally could appear to be very coral or heterogeneous by itself, but also very different from each other. This is to say that every number had not only a different way of organizing materials, but also a different way of displaying them, and it's precisely here where the graphic design played a capital role working hand-in-hand to the written word.

Figs.: Dummie of the cover of the last issue (52) and final cover (December 1985).



Fig. 6: Aby Warburg (1866-1929), *Atlas Mnemosyne* (1927-29)

How to collect the cultural meaning of architecture and how to display it through the magazine? Thus, how can we collect the parceling of the world? To make an atlas is to relinquish the synthetic *tableau*. But, is it not preferable to arrange everything like in a table or a *plateau* (a tray), and thereafter observe them through the particular quality, modifiable according to always possible re-compositions of their encounters?

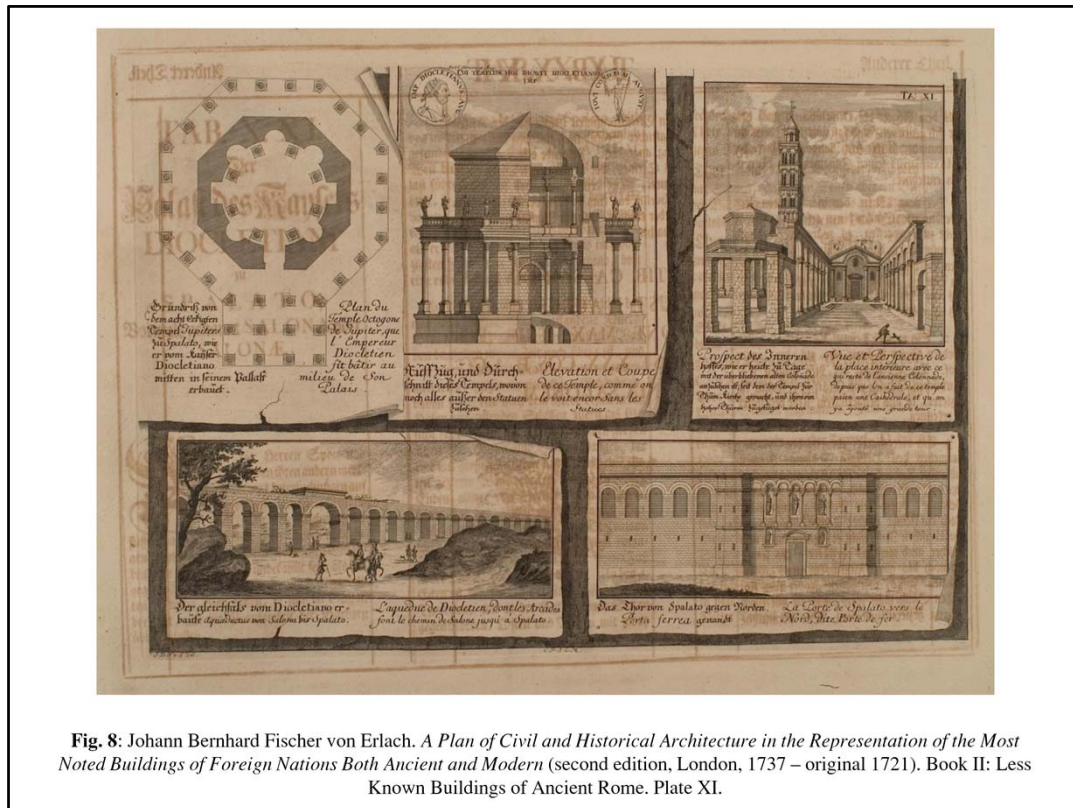
Fig.: Aby Warburg (1866-1929), *Atlas Mnemosyne* (1927-29).



Fig. 7: Front and back cover of issue number 26 of *AB*. January/February 1979 dedicated to the work of Robert Mallet- Stevens (1886-1945). Plan of Paris whit Mallet-Stevens buildings.

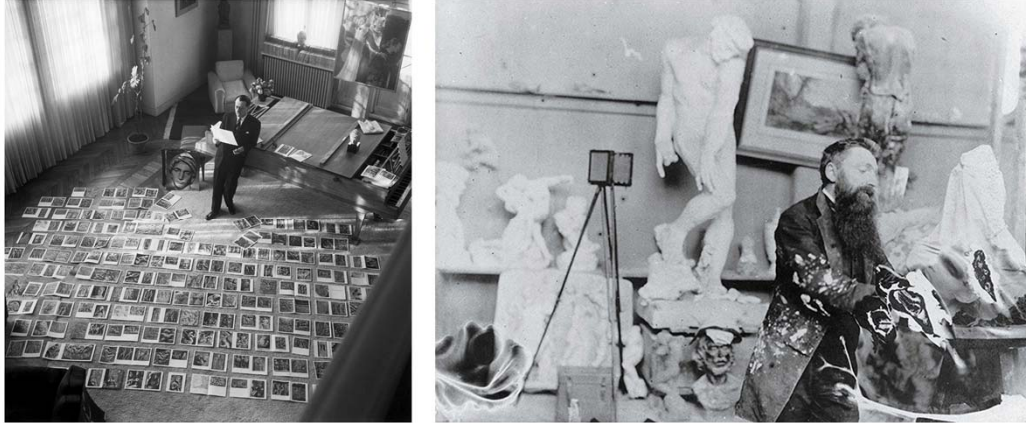
In this respect, the magazine contributed to make architecture understandable as a tool for recollection and synthesis. Thus, what objects inhabit the magazine? How are they disposed? Which are the foot notes and cross references of his narrative? Its *paratext*? Can we assume an unconscious act of collecting? Or, as happened with Aby Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne* (an unfinished project as the magazine) a deliberated attempt to map the imaginary of modern architecture embedded to its previous legacy?

Fig.: Front and back cover of issue number 26 of *AB*. January/February 1979 dedicated to the work of Robert Mallet- Stevens (1886-1945). Plan of Paris whit Mallet-Stevens buildings.



Can we then understand architecture as a tool for recollection and synthesis? If we look back in time we can trace the moment at which point “architectural knowledge began to be pursued by antiquarians, in image and in text, for both its truth value and its status and material evidence” as Professor Erika Naginski has said (“Historical Pyrrhonism and Architectural Truth”). Today, questions should be raised about the way in which architecture faces history, represents and translates it. Hence, ¿how to built the whole of architecture? What if it is about seeking for the deferred fragments that composes it?

Fig.: Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656 – 1723). *A Plan of Civil and Historical Architecture in the Representation of the Most Noted Buildings of Foreign Nations Both Ancient and Modern* (second edition, London, 1737 – original 1721). Book II: Less Known Buildings of Ancient Rome. Plate XI.



Figs. 9 and 10: Andres Malraux's imaginary museum, *Le Musée imaginaire* (1947 - ̈) and Auguste Rodin in his studio in Paris (circa 1910)

Are the fragments on Von Erlach's plate the same ones that appeared in Rodin's studio at the beginning of the last century? The same ones as those recollected by Warburg? Or the same ones as those assembled, disassembled and reassembled montages of photographic reproductions that create Malraux's imaginary museum, amongst other seminal archival manifestations? In the end, can we find a common denominator between the process of assembling, grouping and displaying works of architecture and the way in which architecture is produced and historicized?

Figs.: Andres Malraux's imaginary museum, *Le Musée imaginaire* (1947 - ...) and Auguste Rodin in his studio in Paris (circa 1910).

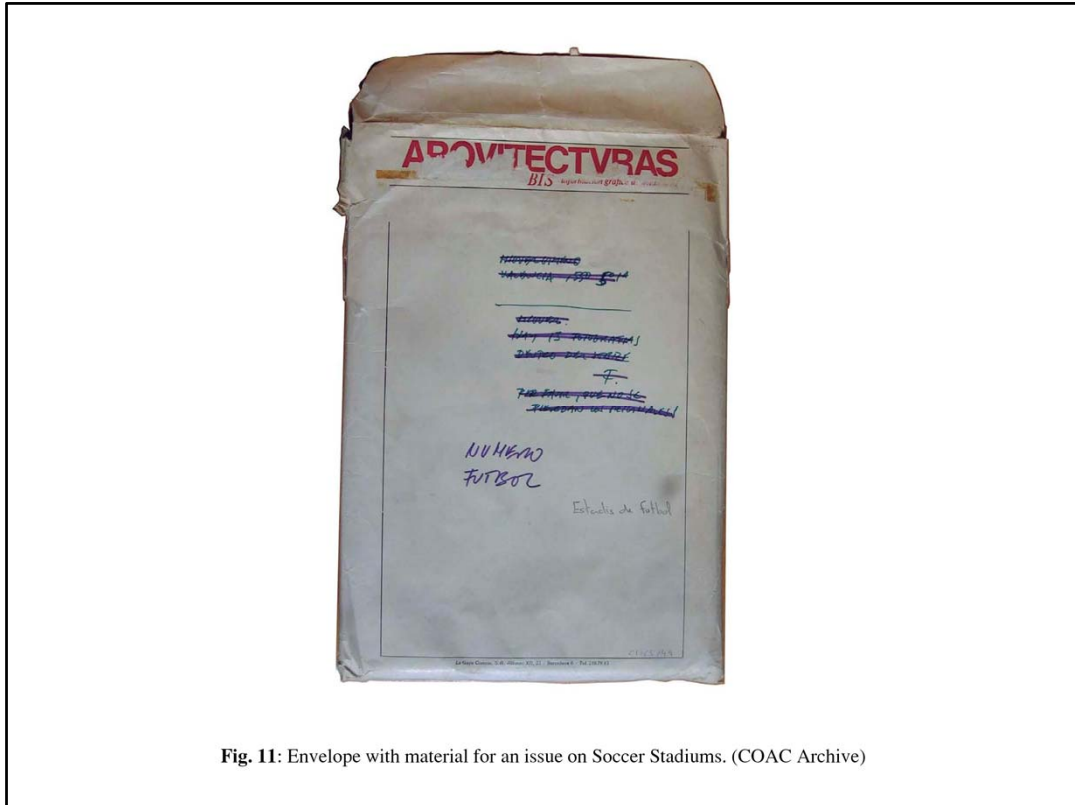
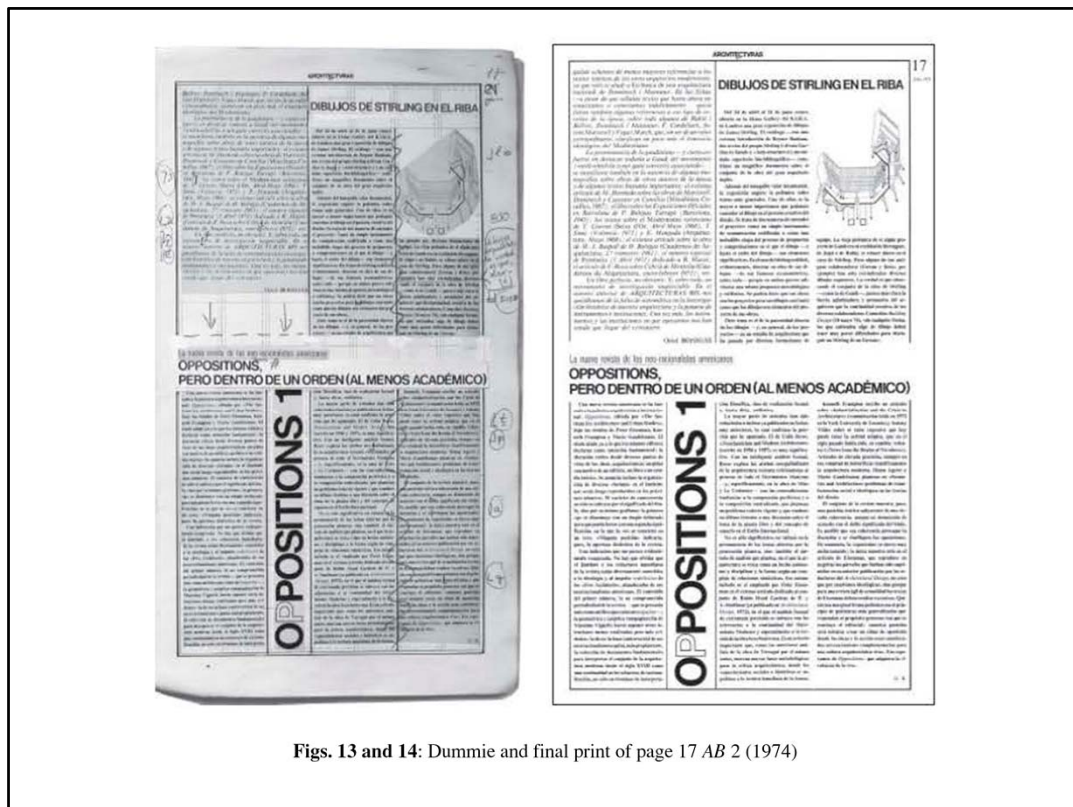


Fig. 11: Envelope with material for an issue on Soccer Stadiums. (COAC Archive)

How did *Arquitecturas Bis* pursue this process of recollection and synthesis?

The way in which we understand and practice architectural theory today has its origins in the rise of History and Theory mainly held in European and North American architectural discourses in the 1970's. The rise of theory and engagement with History took place intensely in the printed space, besides the physical and official space of the Schools of Architecture or other academic or professional institutions. Independent magazines that, reminiscent of the first avant-garde magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, were able to shape a new critical space committed to practice and education. The printed space became the space where the architectural discourse was discussed for transformation.

Fig.: Envelope with material for an issue on Soccer Stadiums. (COAC Archive)

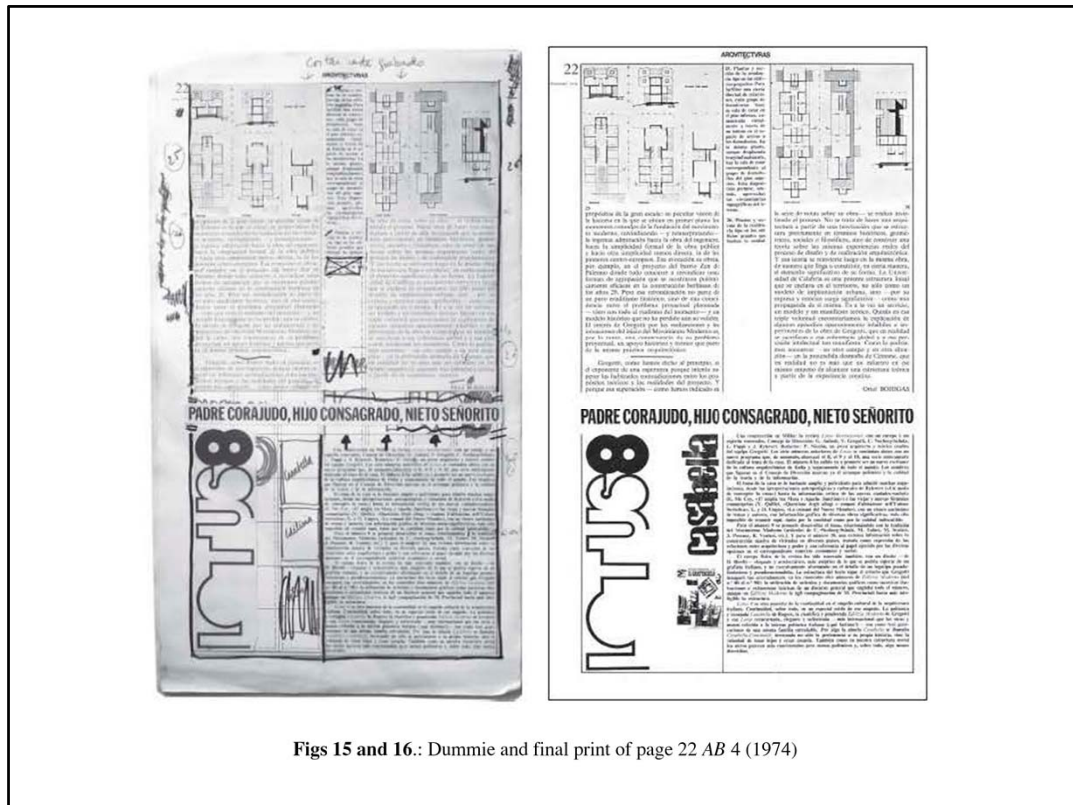


Figs. 13 and 14: Dummie and final print of page 17 AB 2 (1974)

The magazines that best exemplified this rise of History and Theory held were *Lotus International*, *Oppositions*, and *Arquitecturas Bis*, published respectively in Milan, New York and Barcelona.

Oppositions: A journal for ideas and criticism of Architecture was founded by Peter Eisenman, Kenneth Frampton and Mario Gandelsonas and was published in New York from 1973 to 1984 by the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies producing a total of 26 issues. Other architects and historians became editors or associate editors of the magazine, such as Anthony Vidler (since issue number 6), or Kurt W. Foster, Diana Agrest or Joan Ockman.

Fig.: Dummie and final print of page 17 AB 2 (1974).

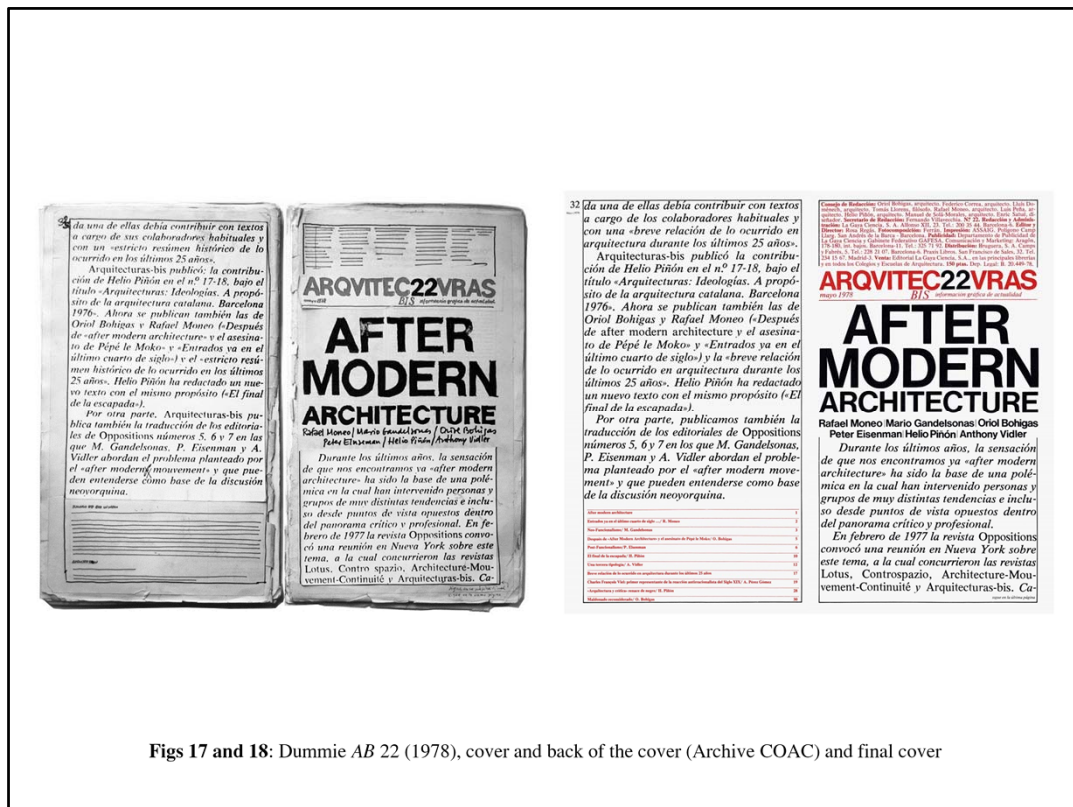


Figs 15 and 16.: Dummie and final print of page 22 AB 4 (1974)

Lotus International (since 1974), first named *Lotus* (numbers 1-8, from 1964 to 1975), has been published in Milan since 1964. Formerly published by its founder Bruno Alfieri (1964-70), the magazine after Alfieri was in the 1970's directed by Carlo Pirovano, with Pierluigi Nicolini as editor in chief, and a committee that included Gae Aulenti, Vittorio Gregotti, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Lionello Puppi, Joseph Rykwert, Oriol Bohigas and Kenneth Frampton, amongst others.

These magazines were able to uniquely identify the distance and differentiation between the exercise of theory and criticism, design practice and the 'progetto', working as a vehicle for communication and debate; propounding to do so, the edition of a careful selection of writings, the translation *ad hoc* of texts coming from different reviews in different languages, as well as by publishing diverse works and projects, recovering valuable architectures overlooked by the official history.

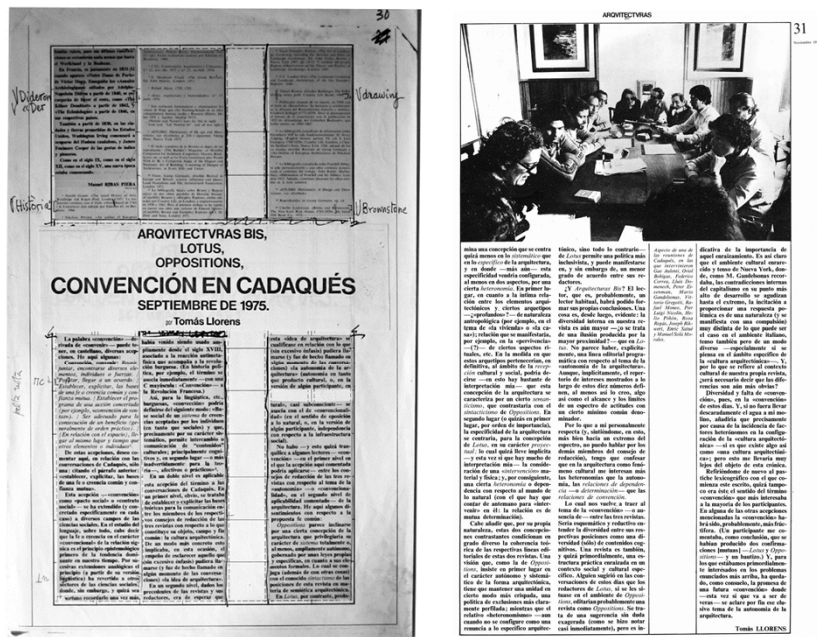
Fig.: Dummie and final print of page 22 AB 4 (1974).



Figs 17 and 18: Dummie AB 22 (1978), cover and back of the cover (Archive COAC) and final cover

Oppositions, *Lotus* and *Arquitecturas Bis* practiced an 'after-modern' philosophical and historical self-consciousness that contributed to consolidate a break with the traditions of modernism. As an example, the monographic issue of *Arquitecturas Bis*, from 1978, with original texts by Rafael Moneo, as well as texts translated *ad hoc* to Spanish and originally published as editorials in *Oppositions* (*Neo-Functionalism* by Mario Gandelsonas originally in number 5 or *Post-Functionalism* by Peter Eisenman in number).

Fig.: Dummie AB 22 (1978), cover and back of the cover (Archive COAC) and final cover.

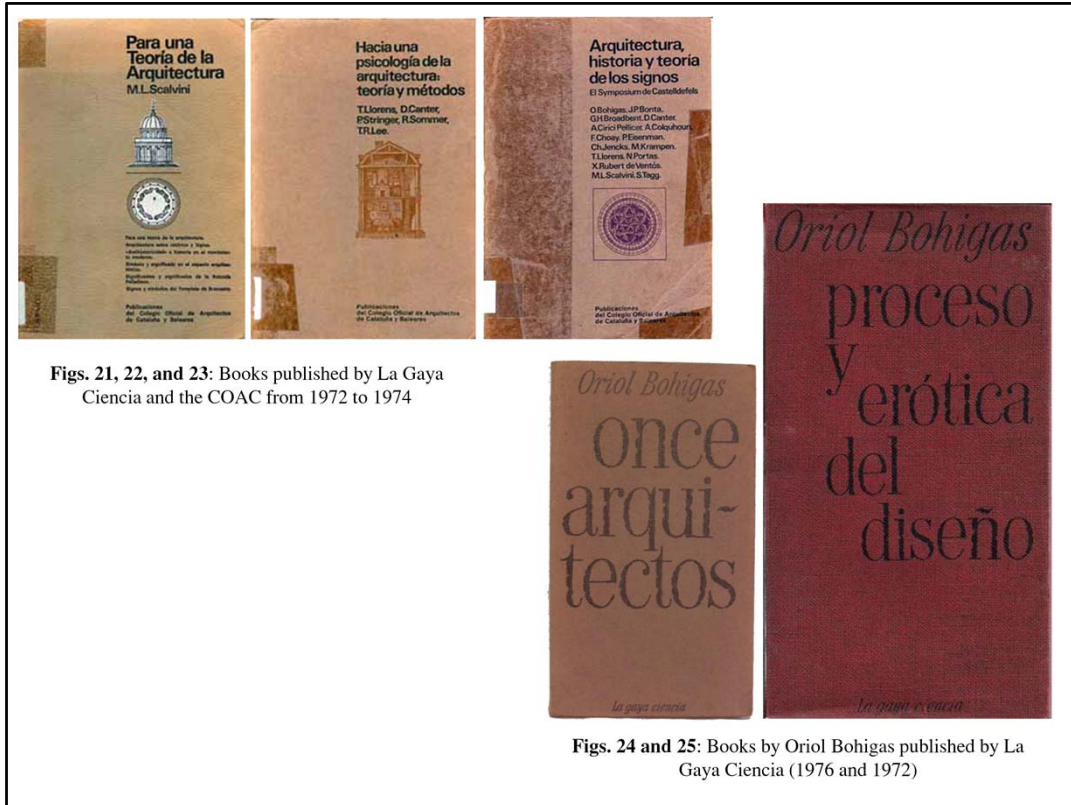


Figs. 19 and 20: Dummie AB 10 (1975), page 30 and final page 31

These magazines were grouped together not only because of their common theoretical stand, but also because they were well connected somehow or other, directly and indirectly, by their editors, specially through the different meetings they held together. The first took place outside Barcelona in 1975, and included *Lotus*, *Oppositions* and *Arquitecturas Bis*. The second one took place in New York in 1977 and included also the French magazine *A.M.C.*, the Italian *Controspazio* and “a couple of specially invited guests such as Ada Louis Huxtable, Colin Rowe or Richard Meier”.

PAUSA -----

Figs.: Dummie AB 10 (1975), page 30 and final page 31.



Figs. 21, 22, and 23: Books published by La Gaya Ciencia and the COAC from 1972 to 1974

Figs. 24 and 25: Books by Oriol Bohigas published by La Gaya Ciencia (1976 and 1972)

The publisher and Editor in Chief of *Arquitecturas Bis* was the writer and Catalan intellectual Rosa Regàs, who directed the independent publishing house La Gaya Ciencia in Barcelona. She, together with the architect Oriol Bohigas, and the graphic designer Enric Satué, were the prime movers of the editorial project at the beginning, and responsible of putting together a list of emerging figures within the discipline of architecture and design to work on the editorial project. La Gaya Ciencia's publishing catalogue was specialized in literature, poetry, politics and architecture. Regàs had been working closely with the local branch of Architect's Association in Catalunya (COAC) in the publication of several books since the late sixties.

Figs.: Books published by La Gaya Ciencia and the COAC from 1972 to 1974.

Figs.: Books by Oriol Bohigas published by La Gaya Ciencia (1976 and 1972).



Fig. 26: Editorial Board of AB. From left to right; Solà-Morales, Regàs, Satué, Moneo, Peña Ganchegui, Correa, Bohigas and Domènech

In addition to the “non-official” three founding editors (Regàs as Editor in Chief, Bohigas and the graphic designer Satué, the list of editors was completed with the architects and professors Federico Correa, Lluís Domènech, Rafael Moneo, Helio Piñón, Manuel de Solà-Morales and the philosopher Tomás Llorens. The Basque architect Luis Peña Ganchegui joined the editorial board with double issue 17/18. From 1977, Fernando Villavecchia, by then a young architecture student, joined as the Editorial Board secretary.

The magazine arranged a very efficient internal structure that actively participated in the production and edition of all the numbers, generating around 500 writings, about 30% of the total content, stemming news, notes, theoretical writings, historical essays, criticism articles, and books reviews. The editors of the magazine created a complementary team. Their similarities and differences gave the magazine its specific *aura* and shaped its contents. The fact that the magazine did not have apparently a concrete editorial scope, fact that is sometimes due to the strong personality of a unique director or editor that largely influences an entire publication, gave importance to the group of editors and the way in which they worked together.

Fig.: Editorial Board of AB. From left to right; Solà-Morales, Regàs, Satué, Moneo, Peña Ganchegui, Correa, Bohigas and Domènech.



The editors of the magazine were all practitioners, professors and active critics and writers, their work, although sometimes convergent, was in most of the cases, focused on different facets and areas of study. *Arquitecturas Bis* did not had a 'tableau' where contents were discussed; neither they had a place, sort of magazine's headquarters. They rather meet in Rosa Rega's house or in some glossy restaurant in Barcelona, *Il Giardinetto*, designed by editor Federico Correa and his partner Alfonso Milá, where every member of the editorial board brought something to the common shared tray, something that came directly from their ones different architect's tables.

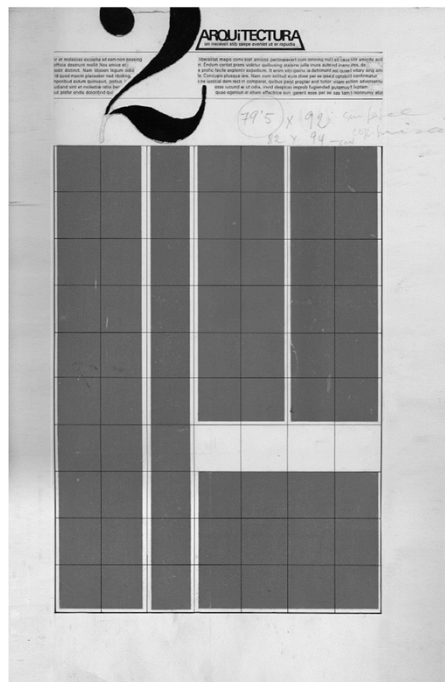


Fig. 28: Preliminary cover layout for AB. (Satué Archive)

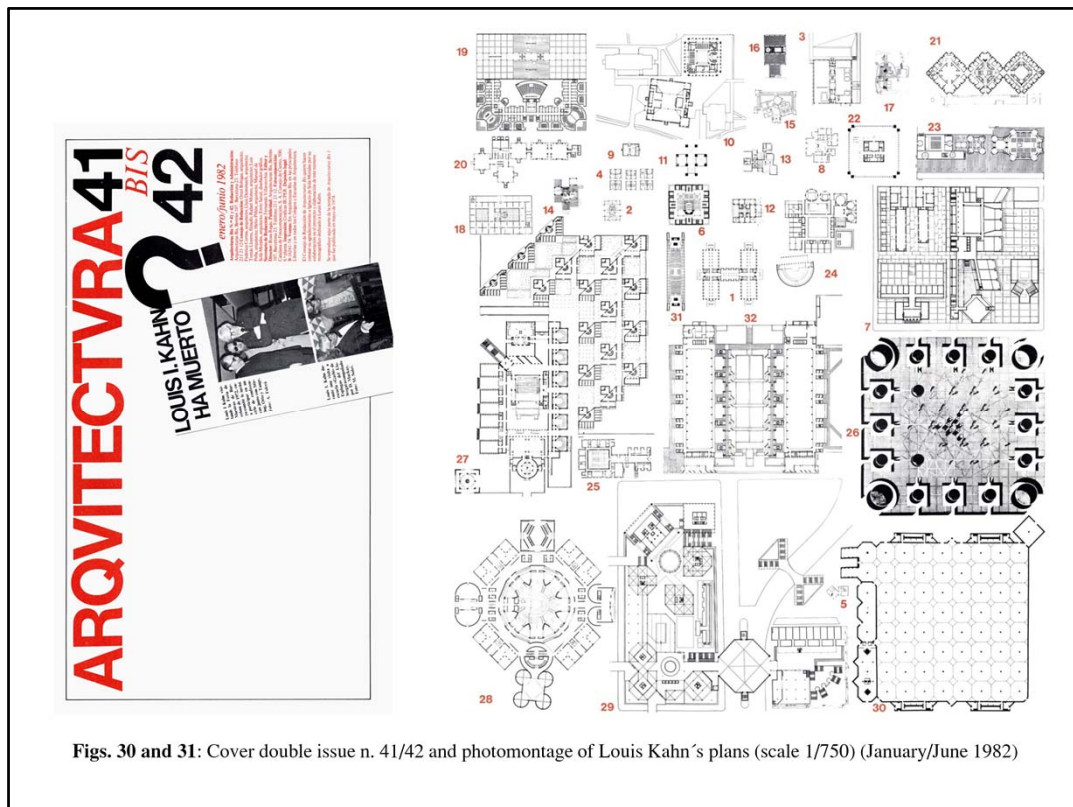


Fig. 29: Preliminary page layout for AB. (Satué Archive)

Arquitecturas Bis editorial formula was novel in the sense that allowed a group of young professionals working together. This editorial strategy was aligned and embedded with the graphic format, where Satué, as another member of the editorial board, not just a designer that added a glossy patina to the sum of all the parts.

Fig.: Preliminary cover layout for AB. (Satué Archive)

Fig.: Preliminary page layout for AB. (Satué Archive)



Figs. 30 and 31: Cover double issue n. 41/42 and photomontage of Louis Kahn's plans (scale 1/750) (January/June 1982)

But the 'revolutionary' goal of the magazine was not the graphic format in itself, but the fact that this format worked together, inseparably, with the content, which at the same time was the result of an heterogeneous editorial board that filtered contents directly from their own architect's tables or academia positions on a flexible and dynamic layout, which allowed an absolute and completely transgressor formulae of convergence between text and image, text and project; and ultimately between theory and practice, dissolving its apparent and academic opposition.

Figs.: Cover double issue n. 41/42 and photomontage of Louis Kahn's plans (scale 1/750) (January/June 1982).



Figs. 32, 33 and 34: Covers. Issues number 12 (March 1976), 19 (November 1977) and 25 (November 1978)

As Josehp Rykwert said in the letter he wrote to the magazine to be published in its last issue: [...] "It did so in a graphic form which was quite new, particular to it, a form which was critical not only verbally, but also visually – of visual material" [...]. The covers of the magazine exemplify this critical attitude: In some of them just text is displayed, using different sizes and distributions...

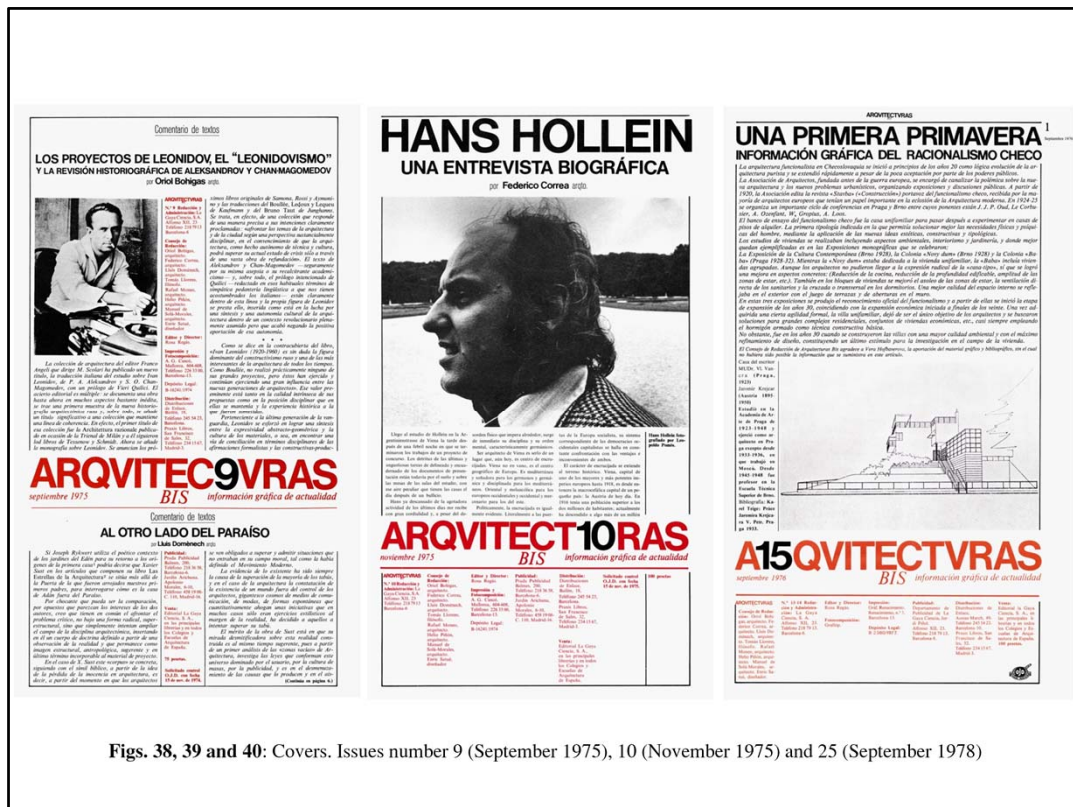
Figs.: Covers. Issues number 12 (March 1976), 19 (November 1977) and 25 (November 1978).



Figs. 35, 36 and 37: Covers. Issues number 6 (March 1975), 11 (January 1976) and 21 (March 1978)

Some of them, display big photographs of buildings...

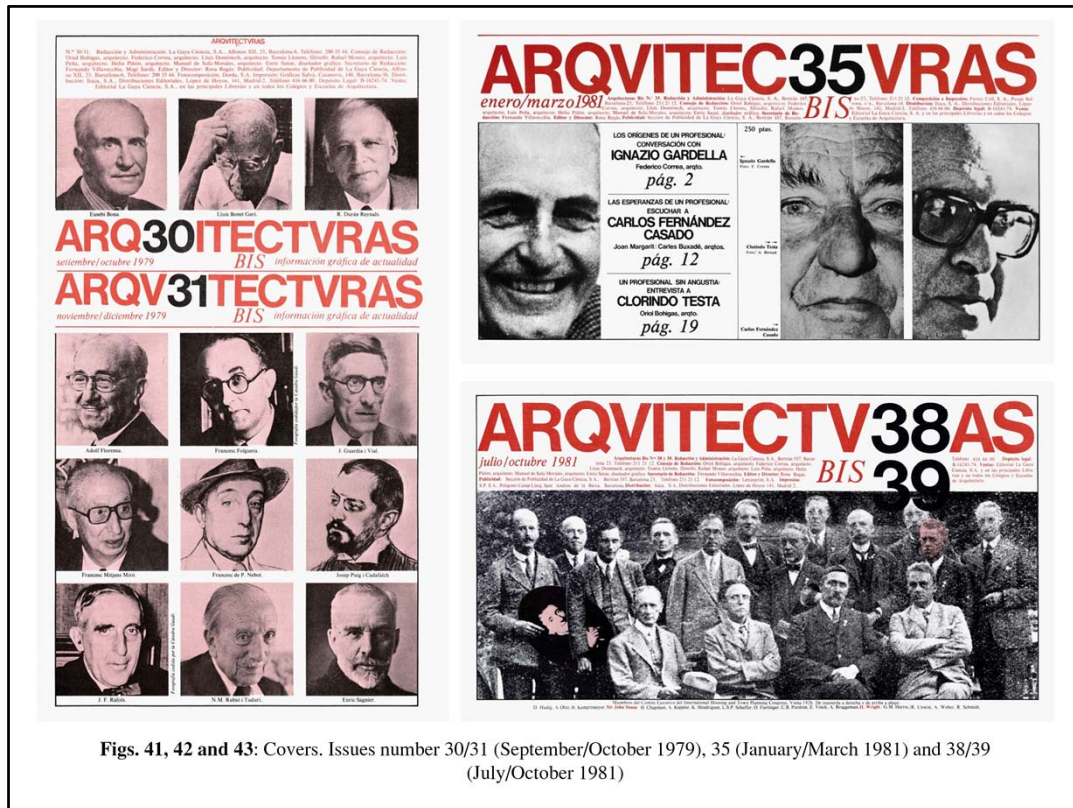
Figs.: Covers. Issues number 6 (March 1975), 11 (January 1976) and 21 (March 1978).



Figs. 38, 39 and 40: Covers. Issues number 9 (September 1975), 10 (November 1975) and 25 (September 1978)

Other combined text and image (either photographs or drawings)

Figs.: Covers. Issues number 9 (September 1975), 10 (November 1975) and 25 (September 1978).



Figs. 41, 42 and 43: Covers, Issues number 30/31 (September/October 1979), 35 (January/March 1981) and 38/39 (July/October 1981)

Also, some of them vindicate the figure of the architect with the use of the 'modern' portrait...

Figs.: Covers. Issues number 30/31 (September/October 1979), 35 (January/March 1981) and 38/39 (July/October 1981).



Figs. 44, 45, and 46: Original photo by Català Roca for the cover of *AB 45* (December 1983). (COAC Archive); Dummie for the cover and the back of the cover of *AB 45* (December 1983). (COAC Archive) and *AB 45* (December 1983), cover and back of the cover.

And finally, some other, recreate intense urban architectural atmospheres...

Figs.: Original photo by Català Roca for the cover of *AB 45* (December 1983). (COAC Archive); Dummie for the cover and the back of the cover of *AB 45* (December 1983). (COAC Archive) and *AB 45* (December 1983), cover and back of the cover.



Fig. 47: Mock-up for anniversary post-card. From left to right: Rafael Moneo, Manuel de Solà-Morales, Tomás Llorens, Oriol Bohigas, Rosa Regàs, Fernando Villavecchia, Luis Peña Ganchegui, Federico Correa, Helio Piñón, Enric Satué, Lluís Domènech. (Satué Archive)

Each of the editors of *Arquitecturas Bis* faced the production of the magazine from a different perspective, although working together in group and committed to the idea that the review had to work as a vehicle for a new theory. Jointly and separately, they performed the theoretical anxiety and the spirit of the time. Each editor emphasized a particular theoretical affiliation and a reactive approach to the whole domain of architecture culture.

While, as aforementioned, the editor in chief, Rosa Regàs represented the editorial, social and literary dimension of the magazine, Enric Satué represented the graphic and visual dimension of the magazine.

I will now make a very brief introduction of two of the editors, Bohigas, the third prime mover of the editorial project, together with Regàs and Satué; and Solà-Morales. After that I will speak a little bit more about Moneo and his texts.

Fig.: Mock-up for anniversary post-card. From left to right: Rafael Moneo, Manuel de Solà-Morales, Tomás Llorens, Oriol Bohigas, Rosa Regàs, Fernando Villavecchia, Luis Peña Ganchegui, Federico Correa, Helio Piñón, Enric Satué, Lluís Domènech. (Satué Archive).



Fig. 48: Oriol Bohigas (Barcelona, 1925) (author's manipulation)

In 1974, Bohigas was expelled (he denied to accept the professorship he had obtained due to political issues) as professor of the School of Barcelona. Due to the loss of contact with the cultural environment of the university, Bohigas had to reinvent himself: Without a space where to express their political and pedagogical ideas, he understood the necessity to promote and create new spaces or platforms for cultural discussion. This fact can be addressed as one of the reasons that fostered the foundation of *Arquitecturas Bis*.

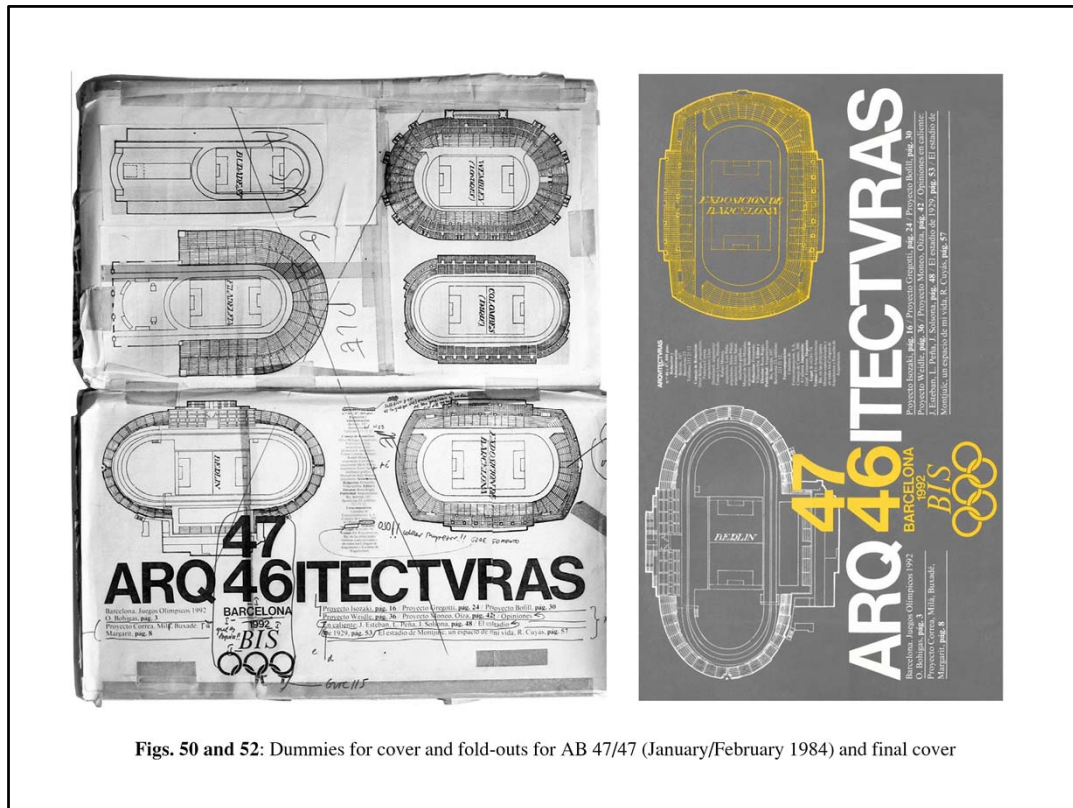
Fig.: Oriol Bohigas (Barcelona, 1925).



Figs. 49 and 50: Dummie of the cover of AB 28/29 (May-August 1979). (COAC Archive) and final cover

It could be said, in this respect, that Bohigas was one of the main protagonists of the magazine; he was one of the founders, and by far, the editor that produced more content, but much more than this, the magazine served him as a platform for his 'political' career as the leader of Barcelona's urban transformations held in the 1980's and 1990's. In such a way, the magazine worked as an effective vehicle for the purpose of the professional careers of some of its editors; Bohigas' political leadership seems difficult to be dissociated from his cultural commitment, very well exemplified within *Arquitecturas Bis*.

Figs.: Dummie of the cover of AB 28/29 (May-August 1979). (COAC Archive) and final cover.



Figs. 50 and 52: Dummies for cover and fold-outs for AB 47/47 (January/February 1984) and final cover

In 1977, Bohigas will return to the school and become the dean until he is called by the new government of the city to take the lead of the Department of Urbanism. When Bohigas became responsible of the urban renewal plan of Barcelona heading the celebration of the Olympics in 1992, the magazine had published around 30 issues, and important amount of the content had been already focused not only on the architecture of the city, but on Barcelona as a real and direct case-study. Bohigas will then have the opportunity to translate what he had displayed, portrayed and disseminated within the publication into real –and public action– on the existing city.

Figs.: Dummies for cover and fold-outs for AB 47/47 (January/February 1984) and final cover.



Fig. 53: Manuel de Solà-Morales (Vitoria, Basque Country, 1939) (author's manipulation)

The same engagement with the urbanism of Barcelona, characterized the work of Solà-Morales. When the first issue of *Arquitecturas Bis* launched, he had already developed a robust bibliography in urban theory and was a renowned professor and urban planner.

Fig.: Manuel de Solà-Morales (Vitoria, Basque Country, 1939).



Figs. 54 and 55: Mosaic of Catalan magazines published in *Lotus 23* (1979), page 4, and cover

As happened with other editors, Solà-Morales was also involved in other editorial projects, a common ground in the intellectual scenario of Barcelona at that time, where a large number of journals used and displayed the city as its major subject of study. Proof of this was for example his collaboration with Gustavo Gili's publishing house: "a role through which we would put in the hands of students and professionals all the texts by colleagues of his abroad that drew his attention." He was responsible for the "Ciencia Urbanística" Collection between 1967 and 1980, and for the "Materiales de la Ciudad" collection between 1974 and 1976.

Fig.: Mosaic of Catalan magazines published in *Lotus 23* (1979), page 4, and cover.



Figs. 56 and 57: Cover of AB 40 (November/December 1981) and page 9

Solà-Morales became engaged with academia very young, becoming a full-professor of Urban Planning at the School of Barcelona in 1969 –after a training period at Harvard with Sert and in Rome with Quaroni (some of whose works will be later translated into Spanish by himself)–. He founded the “Laboratorio de Urbanismo de Barcelona” (LUB): An academic platform and research lab that was committed with the aim of doing urbanism a concrete practice. Solà-Morales was very much aware that spreading urbanistic knowledge was central to consolidate the disciplinary field of urbanism and urban design, and somehow or other, that it is what he did as an editor of *Arquitecturas Bis*, proving the academic dimension of the magazine, this is to say, its operability as a didactic and pedagogical platform.

Figs.: Cover of AB 40 (November/December 1981) and page 9.



A new approach to urbanism and to urban theory and planning was filtered and disseminated through the magazine that resembled the methodological innovations he introduced in academia through the LUB, a self-reflective method that can be proved in the contents focused on Urban history –aiming to recuperate urban history as a source of knowledge– or in the contents on Barcelona, that became also as space of knowledge and application.



Figs. 60 and 61: Dummie AB 23-24 (1978) cover, with Català-Roca's image of Sáenz de Oiza's Bilbao Bank in construction (COAC Archive)

On the other hand, Moneo was the only member of the editorial board that did not come directly from Barcelona's intellectual environment. During his chairmanship at the School of Barcelona, he continued living and working on his practice in Madrid, travelling every week from Madrid to Barcelona. This position as a "double agent" can be considered to be decisive in some of the materials the magazine published. Such is the case, for example, of the double issue entirely focused on Madrid, that can be compare to the issue dedicated to Cataluña published some time before.

Fig.: Dummie AB 23-24 (1978) cover, with Català-Roca's image of Sáenz de Oiza's Bilbao Bank in construction (COAC Archive).

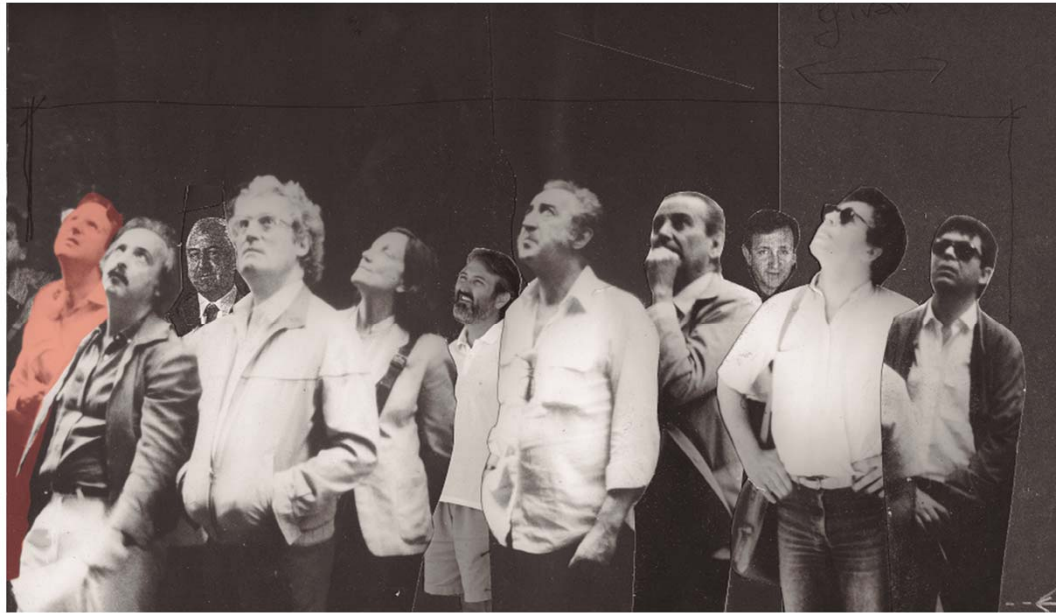
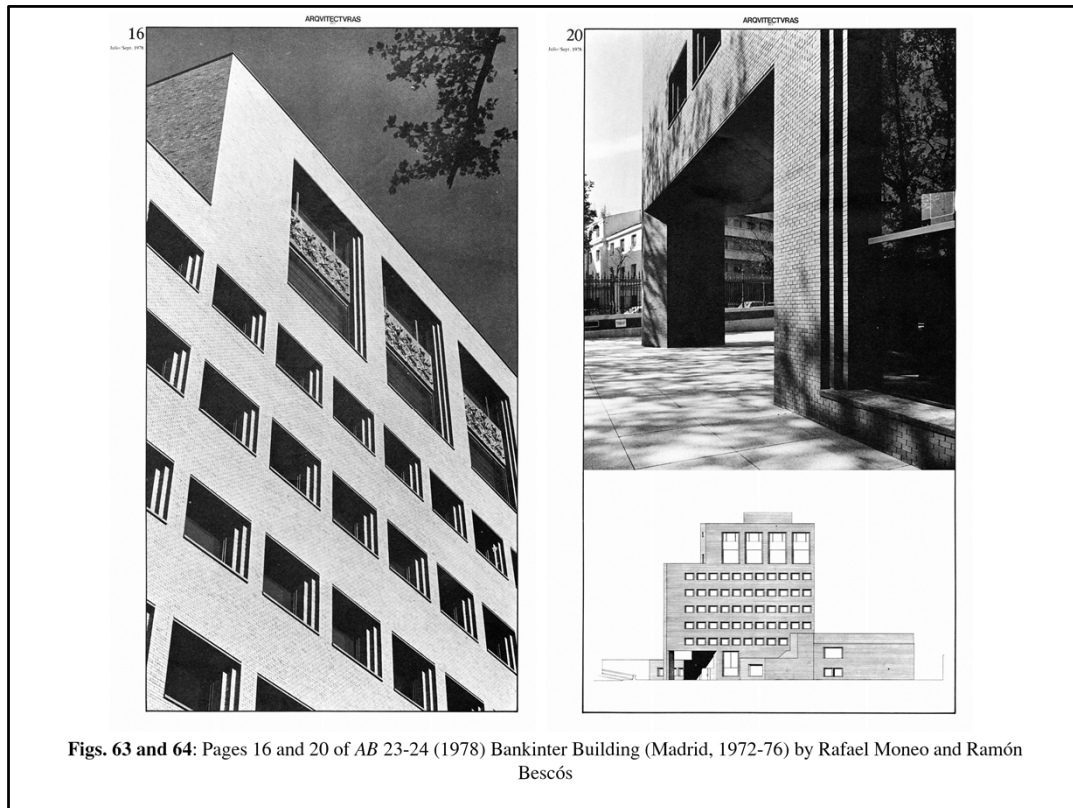


Fig 62.: Rafael Moneo (Tudela, Navarra, 1937) (author's manipulation)

In 1985, when the last issue of the magazine was published, Moneo was already working as Chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard University. The life of the magazine frames the period that goes between the first years of Moneo's Chair in Barcelona, his return to the School of Madrid and his arrival to Harvard. Early before, Moneo gave his last lecture as "Kenzo Tange Visiting Professor of Architecture". The lecture, under the title "The Solitude of Buildings", consciously and deliberately showed at the very end three of his works –the Bankinter building in Madrid, the Logroño Town Hall and the Roman Museum in Mérida, the construction of which was currently finishing up– in order to exemplify his argument: "Why buildings instead of projects [designs]?" he started saying.

Fig.: Rafael Moneo (Tudela, Navarra, 1937).



Moneo claimed on the connection that existed in the past between project [progetto] and production, between design and built work. This is to say; he was indirectly introducing to the audience of the school the radical pedagogical stance he was going to conduct for the next 5 years, an effort to bring the existing gaps between academia and the professional world; a struggle to dissolve opposition between theory and practice and its Manichaeian dialectical. In fact, we must say that one of the achievements that brought Moneo to Harvard was precisely his condition as both a remarkable figure within theoretical debates, or in other words, his work as writer, historian and professor; and his experience as practitioner, as a builder. As it has already been addressed, at the time Moneo's arrival in Harvard, North-American architectural education "was under attack for its exclusive interest in theoretical debate and speculative paper-based architecture, and apparent lack of concern for the actualities of practice"

Just before the start of *Arquitecturas Bis* editorial adventure, Moneo's theoretical commitment and teaching endeavor was successfully supplemented by his practice.

Figs.: Pages 16 and 20 of *AB 23-24* (1978) Bankinter Building (Madrid, 1972-76) by Rafael Moneo and Ramón Bescós.



Fig. 65: Manuel de Solà-Morales and Rafael Moneo, debating a project for Mallorca (1986)

But before 1974, while teaching in Madrid and Barcelona, Moneo could verify that the gap between the academic theoretical debates and practice had started to become wider. These issues were already addressed by Moneo in his teaching positions in Madrid, as well as in the writings he produced from the mid-1960's to 1970, upon his return from Rome from the Spanish academy, having the opportunity to come into first hand contact with the roman architectural and artistic environment that allowed him to reflect on architectural history and theory. The Italian scenario was not only a great influence for Moneo, but for other members of the magazine, such as Solà-Morales or Bohigas. The 'italianophilia' of the magazine is another key point to be discussed.

Fig.: Manuel de Solà-Morales and Rafael Moneo, debating a project for Mallorca (1986).



Figs. 66 and 67: Pages 1 and 2 of AB 4 (November 1974)

Almost all of the content Moneo published in *Arquitecturas Bis* was entirely dedicated to Twentieth-century contemporary architects, with the only exception of John Soane, albeit Soane is not a twenty-century architect, Moneo's approach to his work allows us to understand his figure at least as a 'contemporary figure', in an historical sense.

Aldo Rossi, together with Vittorio Gregotti were one of the first contemporary architects Moneo wrote about, just before publishing in *Oppositions* the text "Aldo Rossi: The Idea of Architecture and the Modena Cemetery," translating Rossi's figure to the American public.

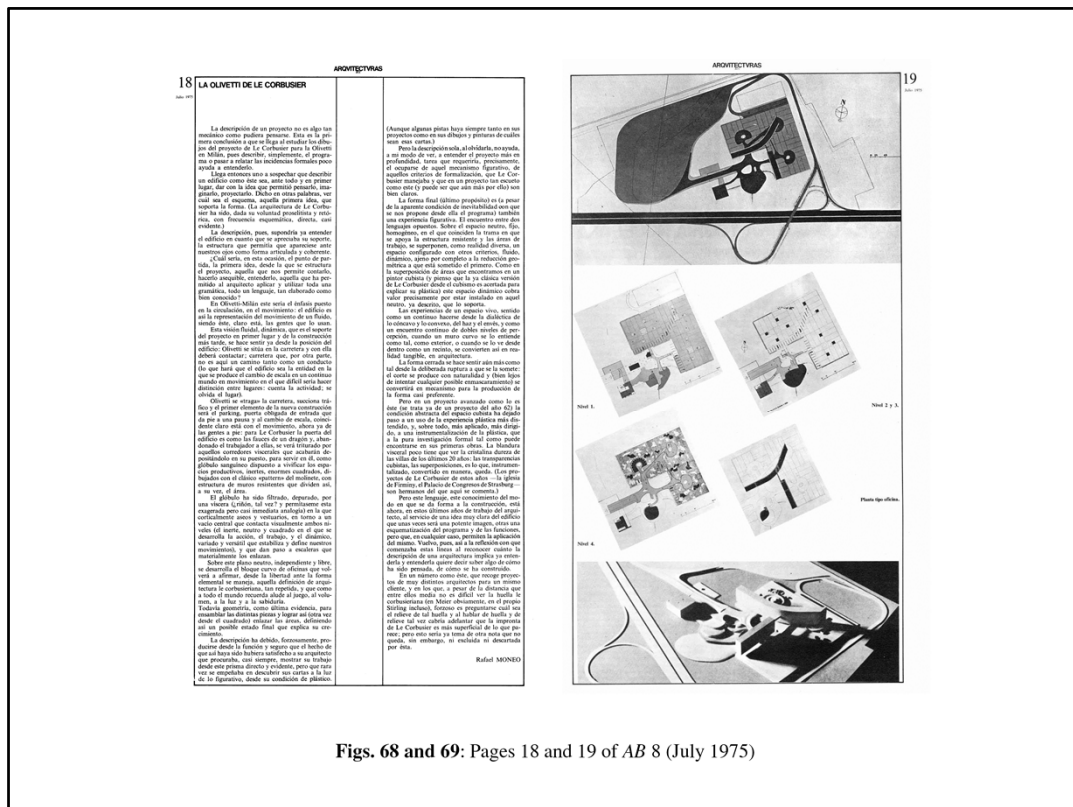
As stated in Rossi's and Gregotti's text, Moneo considers architecture to be a conscious and deliberate fact of culture whose meaning is to be sought. This definition of architecture will be the thesis on which the contents of this issue will find their basis, similar also to the way Moneo will approach the work of other contemporary architects within the magazine.

Arquitecturas Bis brings up the importance of architecture as cultural event –the theoretical commitment, the obligation to understand the *raison d'être* of architecture previous to the professional activity– that in the case of the "critical architect" (Rossi or Gregotti) is revealed as a need that gains a special meaning in a time in which the exercise of the project [progetto] and Theory were growing

apart to be constituted as disciplines removed from the architectural practice.

Buildings are capable of establishing a body of knowledge for architecture. Could it be the other way round: is knowledge (History) the one responsible of shaping our cities, our goals and desires? As Moneo says, that is precisely the risk of all architects that 'make theory': his work becomes flagrant 'ad hominem' argument in front of their theory.

Figs.: Pages 1 and 2 of AB 4 (November 1974).



Figs. 68 and 69: Pages 18 and 19 of AB 8 (July 1975)

Moneo insists on the importance of the text. In his own words, an referring to the magazine: “The format already showed our concern with texts; as a matter of fact, it looked like a newspaper. This is actually the opposite of what happens with magazines today; almost no one writes with the intention of being read by anyone else. A magazine is, after all, an object to be seen, to teach, to be consumed in some way. Our magazine was still like a book, linked to a culture of reflection” [...] (Rafel Moneo, 2010)

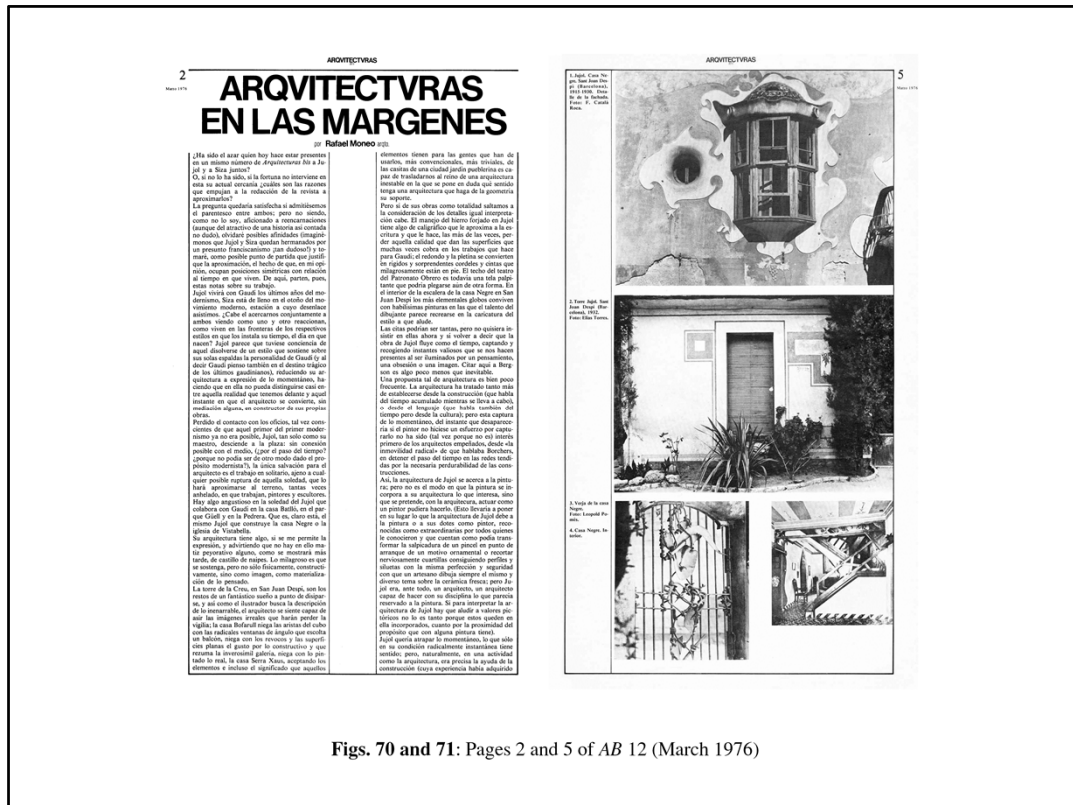
Within Issue number 8 Moneo wrote about Le Corbusier –“La Olivetti de Le Corbusier” [“Le Corbusier’s Olivetti”]– and the projects the Swiss architect did for Olivetti in Milan. He insists on how the description of a specific architecture implies already making it understandable, and how understanding it means acquainting the way in which it was thought, and the way in which it was built.

In his text on Le Corbusier, Moneo asks himself about the way in which architecture should be studied and analyzed, from a point of view rather than the architect’s. Moneo insists in finding the idea that made it possible, that allowed the architect to think it, to imagine it, to design it, and finally, to build it. What is the scheme that supports form?

Thus, form Moneo, theoretical ideas are to be understood as developing out of practical solutions and there is always a direct convergence amidst the way ideas

are built and through representation.

Figs.: Pages 18 and 19 of *AB 8* (July 1975).



Figs. 70 and 71: Pages 2 and 5 of AB 12 (March 1976)

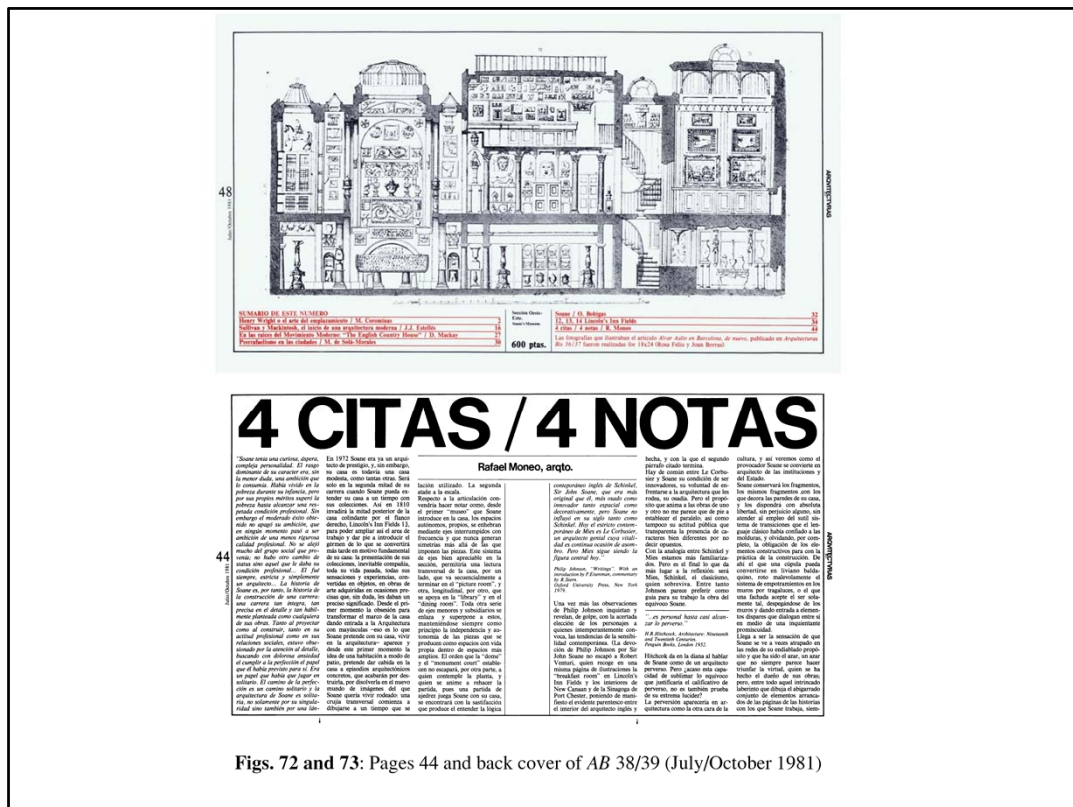
As happened with the text he wrote about Rossi and Gregotti, barely two years after, in issue number 12, he committed again an approach to another pair of architects, in this case, to the modernist Catalan architect, disciple of Gaudi, Josep Maria Jujol, and the Portuguese Álvaro Siza Vieira. In 1976, Siza was an emergent Iberian architect, and the magazine published, along with Moneo's 'opposition' writing, a kind of criticism of contemporary work.

Moneo placed Siza's work into a historical context and made possible the lecture of his works with an analytic and critical eye rather than a descriptive one. The text, published under the title "Arquitecturas en los Márgenes" – ["Architectures within the margins"]– tried to find convergences in the work of both architects in the sense that they both occupied symmetrical positions in relation to the historical time that had framed their architecture. Whilst Jujol would live together with Gaudi the last years of modernism in Cataluña; Siza was in the 1970's framing his work within the fall term of the modern movement.

Moneo will end up analyzing buildings by Jujol and Siza. Moneo's words insisted in the importance of considering theoretical ideas to be a consequence of the development out of practical solutions, of buildings, of confronting architecture with society and reality as in the past. This claim is highly important in order to understand Moneo's architectural philosophy and design approach: the importance of History, as a corpus of knowledge for the design process, and the

confrontation with reality (construction and materiality, landscape and city).

Figs.: Pages 2 and 5 of *AB 12* (March 1976).



Figs. 72 and 73: Pages 44 and back cover of AB 38/39 (July/October 1981)

Moneo will publish again a text dedicated to an architect and his work five years later. The title: “4 citas, 4 notas” [“four quotes, for notes”]. It was focused on the work of Soane and more specifically on his house-museum in London. The text was articulated around four quotes of four Twentieth-century architecture historians: (in order of appearance within the text) Philip Johnson –*Writings* (1979) –; H. R. Hitchcock –*Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1952)–; John Summerson –*Georgian London* (1962)– and Emil Kaufman –*Architecture in the Age of Reason, Baroque and Post-Baroque in England, Italy and France* (1955)–. Not coincidentally, Moneo prefaced the Spanish translation of Kaufman’s book in 1974.

Figs.: Pages 44 and back cover of AB 38/39 (July/October 1981).



Hence, what may have in common Gregotti, Rossi, Le Corbusier, Jujol, Siza, Soane, Kahn or Mies? Moneo's writings within the magazine, especially those ones focused on the work of several architects underlie some of the issues he addressed in 1985 at Harvard as well as the ones he had been developing in his chair in Barcelona and Madrid. On the one hand, these texts allow us to elucidate his concern on the "figure of the architect" and embrace his humanist vision of the architect as cultured intellectual; how contemporary architects establish its relation with History? On the other hand, and embracing the aforementioned concern, Moneo's text addresses the boundaries or margins (to use his own words) between *progetto* and building, and definitely how the construction of buildings is finally capable of shaping theory. It is precisely here where Moneo deals with construction –technique– itself and with representation –drawing and modelling–.

Figs.: Pages 2 and 3 of AB 44 (July 1983).

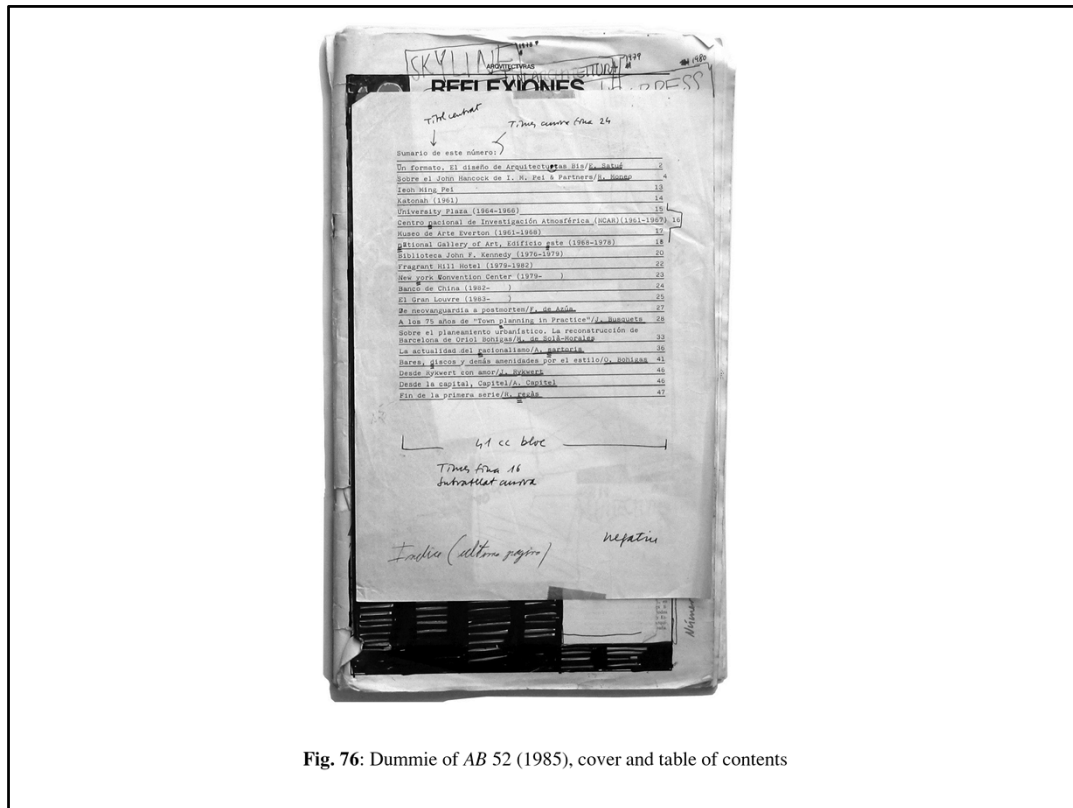


Fig. 76: Dummie of AB 52 (1985), cover and table of contents

Finally, why writing, why texts, why magazines, why *Arquitecturas Bis*. Quoting Dostoyevski (Notes from the underground): “But there is another question: precisely why, for what purpose, do I want to write? If it isn’t for readers, surely I could just remember everything without putting it down on paper? Exactly: but on paper it will be somehow more impressive. There is something awe-inspiring about it, one sits more severely in judgement on oneself, one’s style is enhanced. Besides, perhaps I really shall get relief from writing it down” (Unquote)

Fig.: Dummie of AB 52 (1985), cover and table of contents.