

ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD 2014

DIONISIO GONZÁLEZ BUSAN PROJECTS

Busan Project 4
2011
C.Print Diasec Mounted
100 x 220 cm

Busan Project 6
2011
C.Print Diasec Mounted
100 x 220 cm

On 25th June 1950 the North Korean army crossed the 38th parallel, the perimeter line that marked the border with South Korea. The attack was supposed to prevent any kind of arrest, to be devastating. But it was no dialogism, nor was it the irrational violence of a polemologist consecrated to human aggressiveness.

As a matter of fact Kim, the Prime Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, had already asked Stalin for support for this invasion, but the latter refused because he did not want to provoke a war against South Korea or the United States.

Stalin would change his mind a little later, because in any illegal, felonious or political enterprise, for its own security the group will demand that each individual commit an irreversible act and as Hannah Arendt said, this is in order to **"burn the bridges to respectable society, before he is admitted into the community of violence"**.

Actually a series of circumstances of removal, of clearing away began to occur, allowing Stalin to observe a kind of geopolitical fair weather, i.e. the victory of communism in China with the natural ensuing strengthening of communism in East Asia. The detonation of the first atom bomb by the Soviet Union, that sought-after metaphor of removing the walls from the air, of hidden, secret action by tenths of a second, which united it with the other great military power. The perception of a reduction in the interest of the United States in South Korea, first by leaving it outside of its defence perimeter, and then with certain refusals to provide aid. This was interpreted as an unaffected will, or misgovernment.

The Soviet Union soon began to consider reasons for falling in with the idea, not of providing mercenaries, but of mechanizing its North Korean ally, since the attack would be in its interests, as an assembly of troops in North Korea would increase the safety of the USSR in East Asia before Japan could re-emerge as a military might. And at the same time the war would improve relations with China, as it would decrease the possibility of bringing the United States closer to a society which was by now communist.

Kim paid a secret visit to the Soviet Union again in April of 1950, with that aim of unifying countrymen, and in the end Stalin allowed him to invade South Korea, placing emphasis on the fact that there would be no direct Soviet intervention, but assuring him that all the materials requested would be delivered to North Korea. Kim's strategy was to quickly capture Korea, in a few weeks, long before intervention by the United States was feasible. However, this strategy of hypertrophic vandalism ended up as a sapper's war.

Over three long, turbulent, restless years of struggle the cost was three million dead, with the Americans losing 54,000 men, a figure that comes very close to the 58,000 lost in Vietnam, although the latter was a war that lasted a decade.

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This conflict led to a deep-rooted fault, diplomatic stagnation and finally, an abruption that was rash and ill-advised by consensus in the face of the event of the Cold War which came closest to an outbreak of a Third World War. Ever since, the world has always heard of Korea as a war on hold, and some historians define it as the forgotten war. Perhaps because behind the devastation, behind the ruin, the flow of meta-heroic events or images of subsequent conflicts were not projected; conflicts no less significant politically, but mythically, as the Korean war once again enveloped the concept of homeland, which is at the same time extremely realistic, as it puts forward a rational anthropological identity in terms of life or death and, even worse, under an arms structure of planetary attenuation. Striking, this, when it was the certainty of death that drove men to seek immortal fame in events and words, and which also drove them to establish a political body that was potentially immortal. Which is why, returning to Hannah Arendt, “politics was precisely a means to escape from the equality before death”.

This conflict, which began on 25th June 1950 and ended on 27th July 1953, was the only time during the Cold War that the military forces of China, the Soviet Union and the United States (along with their allies) faced each other in a “traditional” war, unlike the subsequent wars which were only indirect confrontations between the superpowers. This war, which revolutionised the way in which subsequent international conflicts would be conducted, was the most relevant battle of the 20th century.

GOALS

To quote Martin Heidegger, in his essay on poverty, “Wars do not have the capability to historically decide on destinies because wars already rest upon spiritual decisions upon which they solidify themselves. World Wars too are incapable historically to decide on destinies. But for the people, World Wars and their outcomes can become an occasion that gives rise to a mindfulness. But such a mindfulness itself arises from other sources, which must begin to flow out of the ownmost of the people. This is why a self-mindfulness is needed in the alternating dialogue of the people with one another”.

During the Korean War (1950-1953), which left much of South Korea in a state of devastation, the city of Busan was also altered dramatically. During the early stages of the war, after the North Korean forces had conquered Seoul, large numbers of South Koreans were forced to flee south to Busan, which became the provisional capital of the South. This huge influx of refugees led to the creation of provisional districts which sprouted like weeds along the sides of the surrounding hills. Meanwhile, in Gukje Market, which emerged from the midst of the chaos of war, you could buy all kinds of products. For Busan, the war years gave rise to a boom in the local economy, and were a time when diverse elements and circumstances fused in a proverbial melting pot.

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This apparently historiographical introduction is entirely necessary for understanding the nature of the project we are concerned with. The following institutions: BUSAN METROPOLITAN CITY, BUSAN MUSEUM OF ART and the director of the BUSAN BIENNALE, have invited me, in succession, to collaborate with them as a result of the exhibition of mine in THE COLUMNS ART CENTER FOR VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS IN SEOUL, South Korea. The display was deemed the best exhibition held in Korea during the year 2008 by the magazine ART FORUM.

Firstly, the Director of Busan Museum of Art acquired a photograph measuring 200 cm x 900 cm for his museum. Subsequently this same director, along with the authorities of the city of Busan, proposed that I should make an intervention study on the degraded hills that surround the metropolis, a shabbiness caused by a process of dysfunctional and urban residential encampment generated during the diaspora or migratory years of the war and afterwards, during the industrial peak period.

After I had handed in the projects, the Director of the Busan Biennale invited me to take part in the Biennale to show these works. It was on the basis of this experience, too, that all of these institutions came up with the constructive project idea of actually putting these images into practice; in short, of taking them to a physical, functional level in the form of student residences, viewing platforms and/or museums as a way of alternating and coexisting amidst the licit tenure of the provisional neighbourhoods. And not as a result of displacement or suppression, but on the basis of consent and commixion of elements that rearm an entrepreneurial contexture and dissuade the repugnance inspired by the suburbs, by preventing forced demolition. If the project to intervene or construct from a stance of empiricism on the sides of the mountains does ultimately materialize, a cycle I have been pursuing for almost my entire artistic career will have come full circle.

Because incomprehensibly, it appears inopportune, in that it is illustrious, to stress to the municipal authorities that it is poverty which gives rise to the places of desolation and not the surroundings that create the poverty. Any invalidation, demolition, excavation or destruction through violence is no more than a sterile exercise in urban fumigation, which only implies a transfer and a cyclic initiation of housing obstinacy and violent constructive, identitarian and social disruption. A cycle which winds up being what Jeremy Seabrook defined as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The new town planning patterns are defined almost diacritically within a field of attraction and repulsion. One specific, containing case is the city of Busan, precisely because the elevation of our awareness of sensorial matter leads to a corresponding indifference to descending. We inhabit, in reality we take up residence in a filter that rejects everything undesirable to us, even though entirely unplanned places, that is, those which are disorganised in terms of town planning, are not necessarily poorly structured socially,

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or disjointed emotionally. I am familiar with numerous suburban slum realities in different countries - Brazil, Mexico, Peru, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria- and none of them conform identically to the others, but there can be no doubt that in nearly all of them there is disorder and scarcity or lack of services. But whilst in some of them non-compliance or criminality co-exist, in others there is a horizontal, foreseeable enterprise, where what is public is not differentiated from what is private, where there is a social and communal framing and a shared-experience-based approximation of the scruple and uncertainty.

Busan – not the hyper-developed, metropolitan Busan, but the slummy Busan – is a strange conjugation of tectonic, almost geodesic barrier, it is an amphitheatre, and therefore more peri-urban than peripheralized. Its hills surround the city and from its conoid views one of the international ports with the highest rate of interchange in the world is weaned and flows out. It is a metropolis of nearly five million inhabitants with 1107 educational establishments. If this project regenerates part of its hyper-degraded areas - there are more than 225,000 in the world, with educational centres - the chances of increase in the outlying districts would prevent them from a kind of hiding in their holes, or shelter without influence, which was the reiterative mistake of many other segregated zones that have undergone an intervention which is not surgical, yet a plastic operation, but been left without substance and are doomed, as was ultimately the case in Sao Paulo, Lagos or Lima, to fail.

Education is a synonym of independence, of flow, of connectivity of data highways and access to jobs. THE BUSAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (BDI) and the BUSAN INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE FESTIVAL (BIACF)- the former is a centre established in 1992 to promote functional practices for urban problems – have invited me to exhibit my experience, both artistic and sociological, and to the presentation of the projects I designed for Busan in the BUSAN SYMPOSIUM ON PUBLIC ARTS, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF URBAN REGENERATION.