

Editorial note

Melisa Paz Miranda Correa

Escuela de Arquitectura UC

El Comendador 1916, Providencia, Santiago de Chile

Decolonizing Spatial Epistemologies: Rethinking Space, Time, and Design Through Indigenous Knowledges

Decolonizing Spatial Epistemologies gathers a fully Latin American dossier that advances a ch'ixi epistemology, coexistence without fusion, an interwoven yet non-assimilated fabric of worlds, in Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's sense (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010). The issue takes aim at the long-standing denial of coevalness by which scholarly and heritage regimes have located Indigenous peoples in another time instead of the present (Fabian, 1983). Rather than accepting linear, progressive chronologies, the contributions treat time as layered, situated, and plural, attentive to ritual, narrative, and territorial anchoring (De la Cadena, 2010). This temporal reorientation proceeds together with a spatial one: design is approached from within territories and relations, not above them, resonating with the Critical Zone's insistence on thick, earthbound interdependence and the refusal of abstract, placeless frames (Latour, 2018). In this sense, relational ontologies and ecologies of knowledge are not thematic additions but methodological grounds for architectural thinking that is pluriversal, more-than-human, and situated (Escobar, 2016; Haraway, 2016; Rahder, 2020; Coccia, 2019; Watson, 2019).

Our itinerary moves from south to north across Abya Yala to underscore coeval presence and territorial situated knowledge. In Tierra del Fuego, Chilean Patagonia, the essay on Vuelvo donde nunca estuve reads montage,

archival refusal, and site-based filming as spatial methods that enact return in Selk'nam territory, unsettling linear time and reclaiming narrative sovereignty. In the Central Andes of Chile, the study of pirca dry-stone systems shows how walls mediate transhumance, store ecological memory, and choreograph multispecies cohabitation, challenging divides between the living and the mineral that underwrite extractivist ontologies and tourism frameworks. In early-colonial Santiago, a genealogy of Elvira de Talagante, Águeda Flores, and Catalina de los Ríos repositions the city's Inka-to-Spanish transition through land, lineage, and performance, exposing gendered and Indigenous agencies muted by discontinuous historiographies. In the Alto Loa of Antofagasta, a situated reading of rock pictography in Taira, Lasana, and Chiu Chiu questions the fit of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage criteria and reframes heritage as a living, relational practice activated by contemporary communities rather than only by linear intergenerational transmission. In the Central Peruvian Rainforest, the reflection on Asháninka architecture rethinks dwelling via reciprocity, porous domesticities, and forest interdependence, opening alternatives to Western categories of property, privacy, and domesticity. In Quito's historic center, the visual ethnography of public launderettes attends to rhythm, texture, sound, and everyday care, showing how peripheral urban practices produce relational design imaginaries grounded in lived experience and more-than-human agencies.

Together, these articles align with Latin American debates on pluriversal ontologies and the epistemologies of the South, arguing that to decolonise architecture and design we must first decolonise space and time. Landscape appears not only as backdrop but as agent and archive; stone as material interfaces that mediate relations; cinema becomes spatial inquiry; and community practice is recognised as knowledge that resides between beings, places, and media (Escobar, 2016; Haraway, 2016; Rahder, 2020). Against the long-standing denial of coevalness that cast Indigenous worlds as "out of time", the issue treats temporality as layered and situated—accessible through ritual, narrative, and territorial anchoring (De la Cadena, 2010), and approaches design from within territories rather than above them, consistent with the Critical Zone's earthbound interdependences (Latour, 2018). Methodologically, we advance a ch'ixi ethos of coexistence (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010), and we work with decolonial analytics that decentre hegemonic frames in favour of relational, more-than-human practices (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Coccia, 2019; Watson, 2019; Raxworthy, 2018).

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