

Sara Fernandez-Trucios

Arquitecta, Estudiante de Doctorado
PIFVI Plan Propio, Departamento de
Proyectos Arquitectónicos
Universidad de Sevilla, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5905-6322>
sara.fdez.trucios@gmail.com

**Francisco Javier
Montero-Fernandez**

Doctor Arquitecto, Catedrático,
Departamento de Proyectos Arquitectónicos
Universidad de Sevilla, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0985-7612>
fmontero@us.es

Tomás García-García

Doctor Arquitecto, Profesor Contratado
Doctor, Departamento de Proyectos
Arquitectónicos
Universidad de Sevilla, España
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4575-7683>
tgarcia@us.es

LIVING IN BLINDNESS. HOUSES, ATMOSPHERES, AND PERCEPTIVE LANDSCAPES THROUGH THE EYES OF SOME 20TH-CENTURY MASTERS

HABITAR EN LA CEGUERA. CASAS, ATMÓSFERAS Y PAISAJES PERCEPTIVOS A LOS OJOS DE ALGUNOS MAESTROS DEL SIGLO XX

MORANDO NA CEGUEIRA. CASAS, ATMOSFERAS E PAISAGENS PERCEPTIVAS ATRAVÉS DOS OLHOS DE ALGUNS MESTRES DO SÉCULO XX.



Figure 0. Black Box en Lund,
1972. Source: Previously
unreleased images courtesy of
Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm.

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RESUMEN

Jorge Luis Borges confesó, en más de una ocasión, que su modesta ceguera no era la dramática oscuridad que el sentido común cree, sino mas bien un refugio que en su caso se fue construyendo en un lento crepúsculo. Al finalizar su discurso de recepción del grado Honoris Causa de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Chile, el escritor argentino narraba la lenta despedida de su vista y la sensación placentera de entrar en un nuevo espacio habitable más rico, profundo y creativo. Confiando en la ceguera como paisaje introspectivo, como espacio habitable donde se da cita a la fantasía con el realismo, es en este contexto que, el ensayo propone habitar con el pensamiento un espacio doméstico ingrátido e infinito. Otros artistas lo consiguieron - Groussac, Monet, Homero, Joyce, Herzog, Pallasmaa e Italo Calvino- convirtiendo esta especie de ceguera inducida en una habitación íntima y creativa, en la cual acomodarse al final de sus vidas. El profesor Yeager introduce este relato haciéndonos ascender a los cielos en busca de un espacio inspirador, negro y profundo. La casa soñada por Manuel Parra y Danilo Veras, nos aleja de la luz para descubrimos a nosotros mismos en una experiencia sensitiva única. De la mano del maestro Lewerentz se dará cita en este ensayo a algunas experimentaciones arquitectónicas con una singular caja oscura, un medioambiente asfáltico y negro: black box en Lund. *Habitar en la ceguera* nos sugiere una revisión de nuestro campo perceptivo, habitando con la imaginación estos lugares introspectivos en los que las leyes parecen haber desaparecido. La ceguera, como afirmaba Borges en aquel discurso, hace que el cuerpo se una al espacio para soñar con un nuevo habitar más poético y creativo (Figura 1)

Palabras clave: ceguera y habitar; paisajes perceptivos, Chuck Yeager; Manuel Parra-Danilo Veras, Lewerentz-Anshelm.

ABSTRACT

Jorge Luis Borges confessed, on more than one occasion, that his modest blindness was not the dramatic darkness that common sense believes but rather a refuge that, in his case, was built in a slow twilight. At the end of his speech to receive the Honoris Causa degree from the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Chile, the Argentine writer spoke about the gradual parting of his sight and the pleasant sensation of entering a new, richer, deeper, and more creative living space. Relying on blindness as an introspective landscape, as a habitable space where fantasy meets realism, it is in this context that the essay proposes to inhabit, with thought, a weightless and infinite domestic space. Other artists achieved it - Groussac, Monet, Homer, Joyce, Herzog, Pallasmaa, and Italo Calvino - turning this kind of induced blindness into an intimate and creative room in which to settle at the end of their lives. Professor Yeager introduces this story, making us ascend to the heavens in search of an inspiring, black, and profound space. The house dreamed by Manuel Parra and Danilo Veras leads us away from the light to discover ourselves in a unique sensory experience. From the hand of the master Lewerentz, this essay will bring together some architectural experimentations with a singular dark box, an asphalt and black environment: black box in Lund. *Living in blindness* suggests a revision of our perceptual field, imaginatively inhabiting these introspective places where laws seem to have disappeared. Blindness, as Borges mentioned in that speech, makes the body join the space to dream of a new, more poetic, and creative dwelling. (Figure 1)

Keywords: Blindness and living, perceptual landscapes, Chuck Yeager; Manuel Parra-Danilo Veras, Lewerentz-Anshelm.

RESUMO

Jorge Luis Borges confessou, em mais de uma ocasião, que sua modesta cegueira não era a escuridão dramática que o senso comum acredita que fosse, mas sim um refúgio que, no seu caso, foi construído em um lento crepúsculo. No final de seu discurso para receber o título Honoris Causa da Faculdade de Filosofia e Letras da Universidade do Chile, o escritor argentino relatou a lenta despedida de sua visão e a agradável sensação de entrar em um novo espaço habitável, mais rico, mais profundo e mais criativo. Confiando na cegueira como uma paisagem introspectiva, como um espaço habitável onde a fantasia se encontra com o realismo, é nesse contexto que o ensaio propõe habitar com o pensamento um espaço doméstico leve e infinito. Outros artistas conseguiram isso - Groussac, Monet, Homer, Joyce, Herzog, Pallasmaa e Italo Calvino - transformando esse tipo de cegueira induzida em um cômodo íntimo e criativo no qual se instalaram no final de suas vidas. O professor Yeager apresenta essa história fazendo-nos subir aos céus em busca de um espaço inspirador, negro e profundo. A casa sonhada por Manuel Parra e Danilo Veras nos afasta da luz para nos descobrirmos em uma experiência sensorial única. Das mãos do mestre Lewerentz, este ensaio reunirá algumas experiências arquitetônicas com uma singular caixa escura, um ambiente asfáltico e negro: black box em Lund. *Habitar na cegueira* sugere uma revisão de nosso campo perceptivo, habitando com a imaginação esses lugares introspectivos nos quais as leis parecem ter desaparecido. A cegueira, como Borges afirmou naquele discurso, faz com que o corpo se junte ao espaço para sonhar com um novo habitar, mais poético e criativo (Figura 1)

Palavras-chave: cegueira e habitar; paisagens perceptivas, Chuck Yeager; Manuel Parra-Danilo Veras, Lewerentz-Anshelm

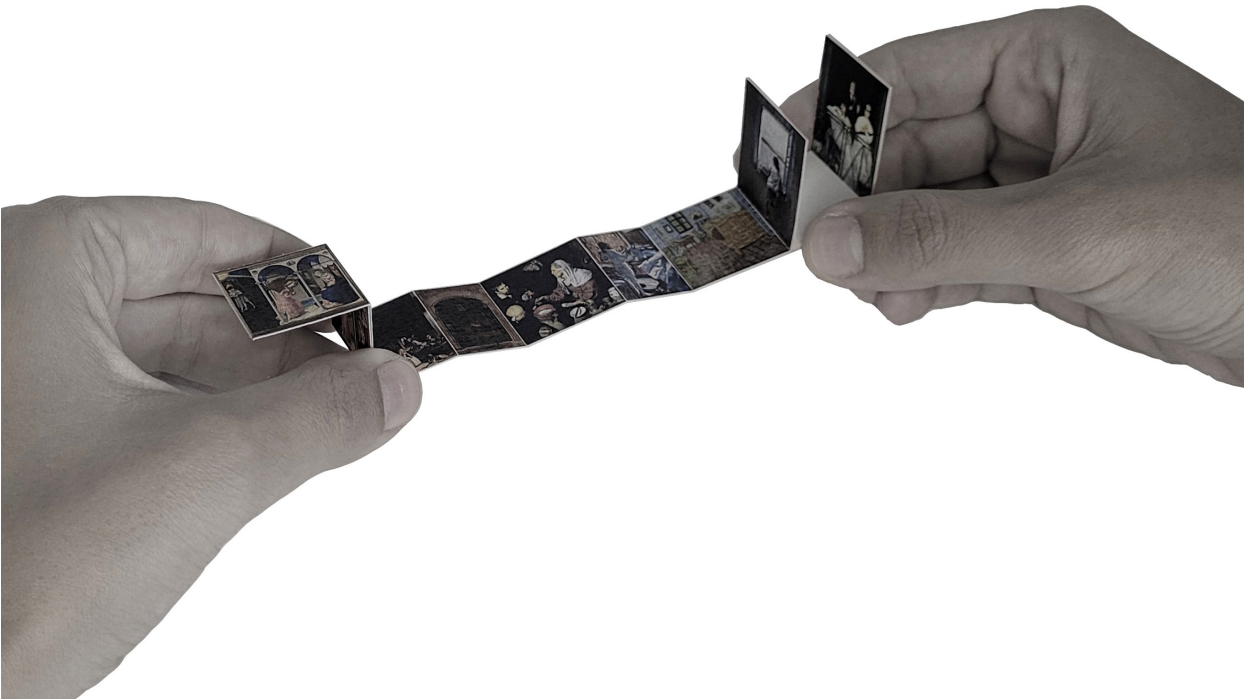


Figure 1. Cartographies of the house: inhabiting thresholds - sample 00. This polyptych aims to define the house from beginning to end, from threshold to threshold. It shows a folded sheet of rooms, where the entrance and exit are the elements that nuance and dilute the boundaries with the outside. A simple movement of the hands unfolds on the table the poetry of the perceptive landscapes that are part of our houses. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Black Atmospheres: Professor Yeager, 1950

This essay invites us to approach the world more deeply and sensitively. Through blindness understood as a house and shelter, this text of architecture immerses us in a dimension where words become landscapes, verses become houses, and their calligraphy an introspective atmosphere. Three houses and three masters who inhabit a common space: blindness. Three life experiences bring us into a state of consciousness where emotions and feelings can be explored in a more accessible, more profound, and more sensitive way. Three domestic miniatures, at the antipodes of each other, are the very essence of this poetic dwelling about which we write.

Living in blindness explores beauty in everyday details, words, symbols, the petite, and what shelters us, and makes us happy. A poetic living that suggests we experience reality more intensely and meaningfully, finding beauty in the most subtle details and revealing the underlying harmony when we close our eyes. This text is an inner, unpublished, and inaugural journey that invites us to explore our emotions, reflect on our existence, and share our experiences uniquely and personally. A weightless and deep poetic living, where every word becomes a threshold that transports us to a world where imagination, creativity, and fantasy reign. This essay is an invitation to inhabit the world with poetry and discover the house hidden in each verse.

There was an American pilot whose flying skills and maneuvering abilities became legendary during World War II, to the point that some

considered him a supernatural being. Professor Chuck Yeager was chosen to head the supersonic secret. In October 1947, at 24, he broke the insurmountable barrier contradicting many physicists' advice and conventional wisdom. Yeager was a pure creature of movement and speed and one of the most instinctive pilots the American Air Force ever had (Hutchinson, 1969).

Lieutenant General Fred J. Ascani said of him, "He was the only pilot I had flown with who gave the impression that he was part of the cockpit instrumentation. He was so in sync with the machine that more than being flesh and blood, he seemed to be an extension of it." (Yeager, 1994).

Yeager routinely had his students climb above the first limit of the atmosphere to give them a taste of outer space, the real space, as the professor liked to say. An aerial zone where the atmosphere becomes black, blind, and silent, but in the molecular structure of the air, it still maintains the aerodynamic lift force.

In November 1994, Yeager published an article about his methodologies and tactics when flying. The text consists of three parts, outlining the basic principles for deforming and dilating the threshold of any envelope. For the teacher, there was only one maxim that he tried to transmit to his students: to close their eyes, to live in blindness in order to, in this intimate solitude, learn to see more (Perec, 2001) **1** of what your adversary is capable of seeing (Sartre, 1972). That is, to free the eyes from objects and conventional habits that follow an object-oriented vision. Yeager teaches us to close our eyes to see the whole space, to truly and completely assimilate it. "To explore the aerospace qualities of the atmosphere, it is not necessary to see; it is enough to let yourself go" with your eyes closed; to let the inner dynamicity move, dance, listen, like an ethereal floating body, free of obstacles and forming part of the machine (Kwinter, 2002).

Yeager taught generations of pilots how to fly effectively in the air, using risky dives in this blindness. It was an ideal place for the practice of dangerous maneuvers where time and gravity seemed to stop. This wild sky - his home, as the General used to call it- was the very source of creativity every day; this living space showed great potential to experiment with new flight techniques. The General used this region of space as a laboratory to practice: the strange density of that blind air, the prevailing silence, and unusual gravity values benefited the creation and testing of new flotation techniques, allowing the student to experience things that were not possible in the real world (Flammarion, 1902).

Suddenly, the roof of the sky had become an immense and unlimited unknown plain and a landscape open to imagination and fantasy (Figure 2) (Yeager, 1965):

1 Perec (2001) "Do we know what is important? [...] Nothing catches our attention. We can't see. We have to go slower, almost awkwardly. [...] Force you to see more simply" (p.84).

Figure 2. Black atmosphere.
Flight training. Beyond 80,000 feet. Source: Yeager, Ch. (1994).



“It’s almost impossible to explain the feeling in that place, it was as if I was part of that Mustang, an extension of that damn accelerator. That blindness made me feel so connected to that plane that I was piloting it to the limit of its capabilities. I couldn’t see but felt the engine in my bones. I couldn’t see but felt the dashboard rattling when I entered a stall. I couldn’t see, but its smell indicated that I had reached the maximum level of maneuverability. In this other region of space, I could fly by instinct. I tell my students that we must listen to the air and follow its flow, but to do so, we must first learn to see without eyes.”

Let these atmospheres act as introspective landscapes where a certain emotional and perceptive sensitivity grows; let these tactics and thresholds act as an introduction and methodology to this essay that invites us to immerse ourselves in two case studies that, we think, exemplify well the idea raised in this issue of the journal: turning our gaze towards a transcendent dwelling, which evokes fantasy, creativity and the sublime. A poetic, richer, more profound, and more creative living proposes a revision of our perceptual field (Bachelard, 1957).

All that is left is to get ready for the journey. A journey inside a more human and profound living, where the flame that illuminates it is not the light but its absence. Let us fearlessly enter this thick shadow to blindly discover a world full of perceptive experiences. Who could doubt there is poetry in that house dreamed up by Manuel Parra and Danilo Veras? A unique way of thinking and doing, with which one can model the dreams of habitable spaces, impossible in other latitudes. Who could doubt that there is poetry in the green blade that grows in the immensity of that black ocean? That lachrymatory of smells made to the master's measure as a chest of his thoughts. A house and a black asphalt box in which Lewerentz was, little by little, shutting down his life.

Perceptive landscapes: the dream house. Manuel Parra-Danilo Veras, Mexico, 1997

Danilo Veras Godoy, an architect born in Houston (Texas) in 1949, graduated from the University of San Carlos (Guatemala) in 1975 and died in Cuernavaca (Mexico) in 2007; he received the inheritance of finishing a house started by the architect Manuel Parra Mercado (1911-1997), considered one of the greatest Latin American architects of the twentieth century (Cruz, 2016). The assignment came about after the master's death, by his express wish, after he visited, already blind, the house where Danilo lived. Like Borges, Parra became blind in a slow twilight when he still had things to see, and even without vision, he never stopped doing.

For some reason, Parra wanted to know Danilo Veras's house. He explored it by touching all its interior elements with extreme delicacy, following various paths that made him stretch or bend down and crouch from here to there, caressing the floor. Parra recognized Danilo's architecture by touching it, caressing it with his hands, and feeling its echoes (Seguí, 2001). With this inspection, Parra made Danilo his spiritual heir, pointing him out as an architect with the necessary sensitivity to finish the works that would have to be interrupted because of his death.

Parra, almost blind, projected modeling proposals with his hands, which he then directed indicatively helped by the visual appreciation of his wife. Parra's blind projects are models and peculiar drawings where hands play the singular role of explorers and determiners of the voids and their envelopes. Parra's models are shells, empty bowls with wires, and clay. The drawings are thick strokes where the architect subtracted incredible voids with an eraser (Ortiz, 1984). The portrait of Manuel Parra made by his friend, the painter Naret (José Terán), uses these same issues, blinding his left eye in the black of the drawing until it disappears and veiling the right eye between his fingers with a dazzling white spot (Figure 3).

It is necessary to imagine those hands acting, first in the amplitude of the air or on the warm and extensive surface of the paper, inventing movements that probe virtual contents, marking implausible footprints

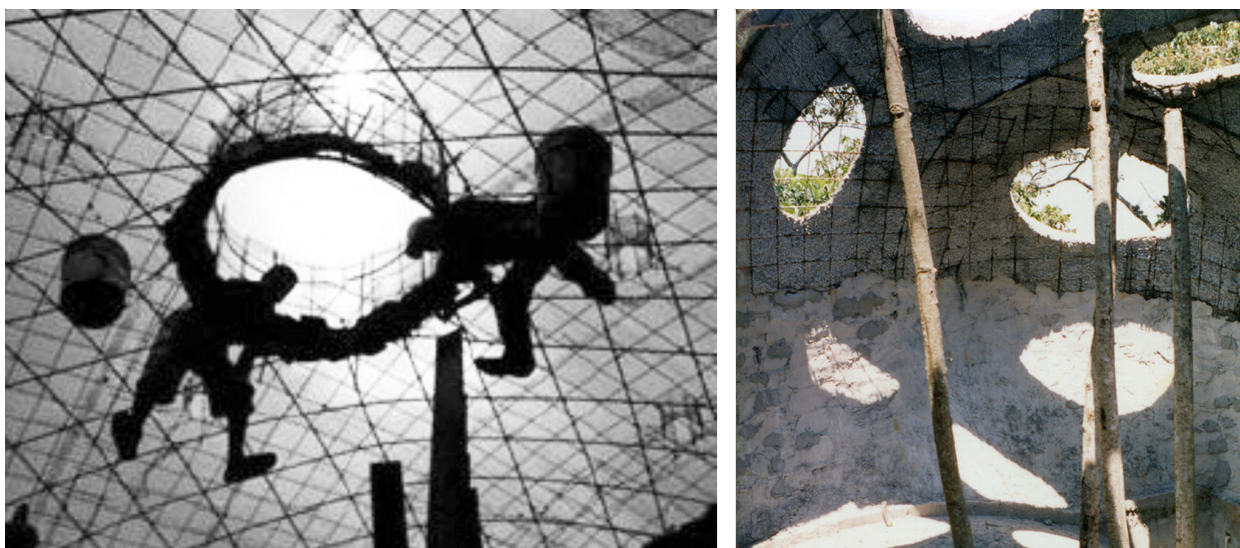


Figure 3. Manuel Parra, architect. (left) Portrait by José Terán (Naret), 1969. (right). Drawing made by the architect, The Dream House, 1970. Source: Cruz, L. (2016).

in space. These hands think Juhani Pallasmaa would affirm (Pallasmaa, 2006). It is necessary to imagine the repetition of these movements until they become structured, memorizable, and scaled outlines. And then, it is possible to imagine these same hands, transformed into superficiality, delimiting the edges where the empty outlines reached are to be housed, making other types of movements, now invested with touch to caress the matter of their construction.

In a conversation with Javier Seguí in Xalapa (Mexico), Danilo confessed to feeling a certain unease caused by the glimpse that he could finish his unfinished house, the one that the master had commissioned him years ago, as so it was. I like to imagine Danilo Veras finishing that house in thoughts, with his eyes closed, dreaming it as his master would have done, immersed in voluntary and sensitive darkness without plans, memories, or normative rules. Danilo became a sculptor of hollows, which he modeled day by day in the privacy of that blind house. Cast domes, subtle nerves, whimsical cantilevers, or folded slabs that gently push us, inventing situations, fabricating wills. A unique way of thinking and doing, with which one can model the dreams of habitable spaces is impossible in other latitudes (Figure 4).

This imagined house is not seen. This house is lived by touching, caressing, and feeling its echoes. This house is modeled with the eyes closed, handcrafted, like pottery, shaping the material until it becomes a concentrated covering loaded with perceptual significance. Like small milestones that evoke parallel



existences, like urns destined to contain dreams in their voids and vital interstices. Letting the body act, move, touch, listen, like an ethereal thought free of attachments, listening to the echoes of the voids, smelling the materials and their shadows.

That house could have served as a mental scenography for José Saramago in his novel *Ensayo sobre la ceguera* (Essay on Blindness) (Saramago, 1997), where he states that architecture would continue to exist even if we were all blind. We would move by feeling the walls, dragging our feet along the floor; and trying to build in our memory an image formed by hardness, textures, temperatures, and cold or hot surfaces. I try to imagine how the drawings of these architectures would be; perhaps they would be closer to the idea of engraving, or maybe they would be lists of precise indications for the perception of space; coordinates, measurements, and surface finishes would be agglutinated on the paper. What I am sure of is that - as Saramago advances in his essay - we would move from the visual values, color, size, and shape that dominates the contemporary architectural project to appreciate new poetic living with values linked to touch: winds, temperatures, hardness, polished; or to sound: reverberations, sounds, shadows, reflections. We would appreciate the difference between the superficial coldness and acoustic reflection of a polished stone versus the warm touch and sound quality of felt; we would discover new materials and new ways of using them (Le Breton, 2010).

In that dream house, the floors would become of greater importance in the creation of new spaces; any small bump or the slightest ramp would attract our attention and form part of the creative speculation of the project, and new situations would lead us to occupy all kinds of levels without discontinuities such as those produced by the stairs. The walls would play as floors with slight concavities to grasp with our fingers. We would oppose the sharp edges in sculptural molded and polished corners and

Figure 4. Danilo Veras - architect and sculptor of hollows. Cast domes, ribs, pillars, and holes in the matter. Source: Casa de los Milagros, Coatepec, Veracruz (Mexico), 2002. Source: Seguí, J. (2001).

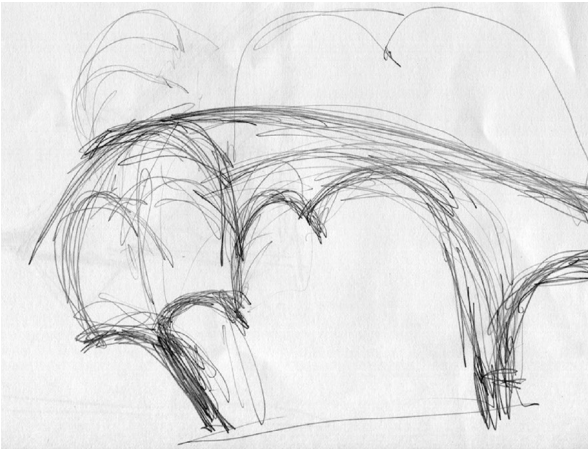


Figure 5. Danilo Veras, House of Dreams. (left) Thought drawing: shells, empty bowls, wires, and clay (right) The architect, in the garden of his house, modeling a scale model of one of the rooms of the Dream House. Danilo Veras makes habitable miniatures, small enlarged worlds. He understands living in a poetic way: as a scaled miniature that models and gives life with its hands. Source: Seguí, J. (2001).

warped surfaces, forcing us to slide our hands along them. Hands would play a decisive role; our fingers would slide through the mortar, looking for the shapeless difference between materials. In that dream house, I have seen its inhabitants caress the walls of its rooms, run their fingertips excitedly along the roughness of the clay, and feel the dark touch of the skin of its chairs (Figure 5).

**A house and a floating box: black box.
Klass Ahshelm-Sigurd Lewerentz, Lund, (Sweden), 1969**

If there is an architect, a master, who has worked with darkness as the substance of the architectural project, if there is a space in the history of architecture that simulates the sensations described so far in our essay, it is that weightless and dark black room, black box, made by the master Sigur Lewerentz, for his personal and creative use. A house and a black and asphalt box where Lewerentz himself was, little by little, shutting down his life. “Touch the brick, feel its rough surface” (Ahlin, 1987), he used to tell his disciples, as if one could attribute to his architecture the qualities rehearsed in Saramago’s novel.

It is 1969; Master Lewerentz is 84 years old. His frequent visits to the hospital during recent months forced him to travel constantly from Skanör. This, in addition to the death of his wife Etty, made Bernt Nyberg, a young friend and fellow student in the last years of his life, help him seek residence in Lund (Caldenby, 1998). He put him in touch with the architect Klas Anshelm, who gave him part of one of his houses. In the spacious back garden, under giant fruit trees, both built a small studio, the last of their black boxes, walls impregnated with asphalt and silver emulsions, where the master worked until the last days of his life (Curtis, 2004).

For this research, we have had the opportunity to be there, to immerse ourselves in the Lewerentz and Anshelm archives at the Stockholm Architecture Museum, to experiment, measure, and draw an unpublished drawing of it (Figure 6).

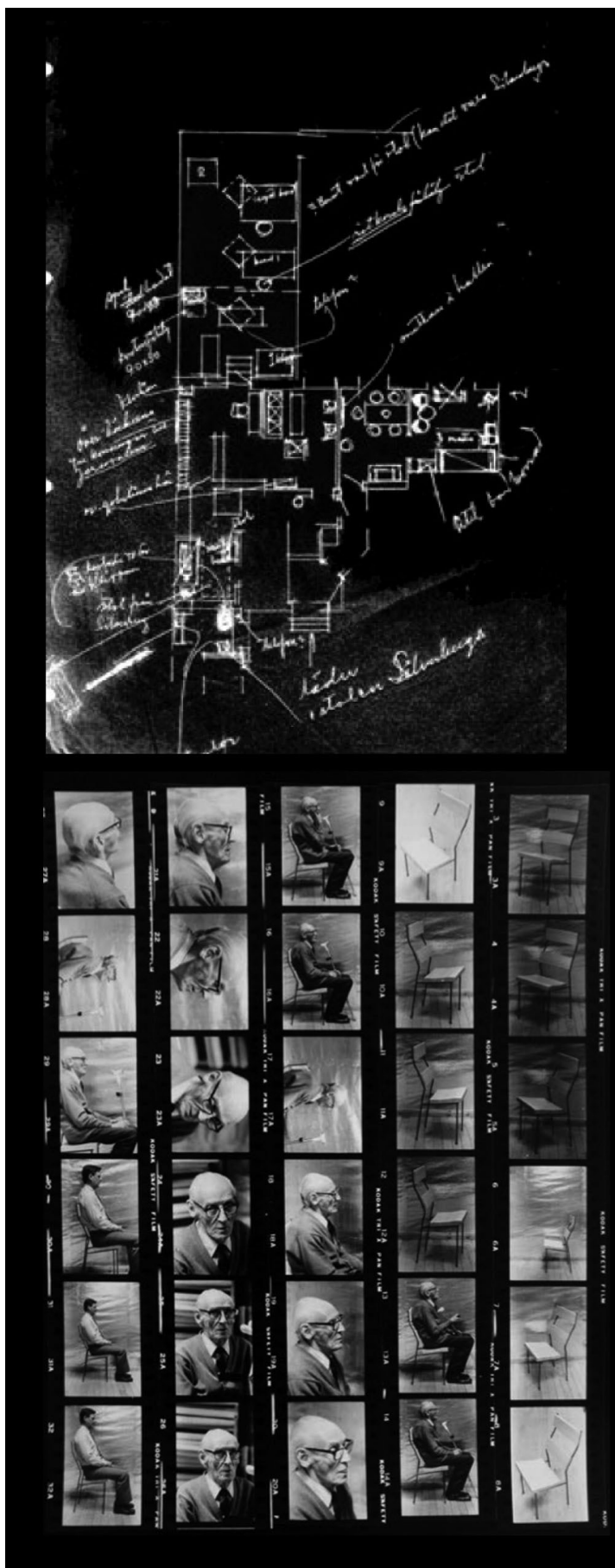


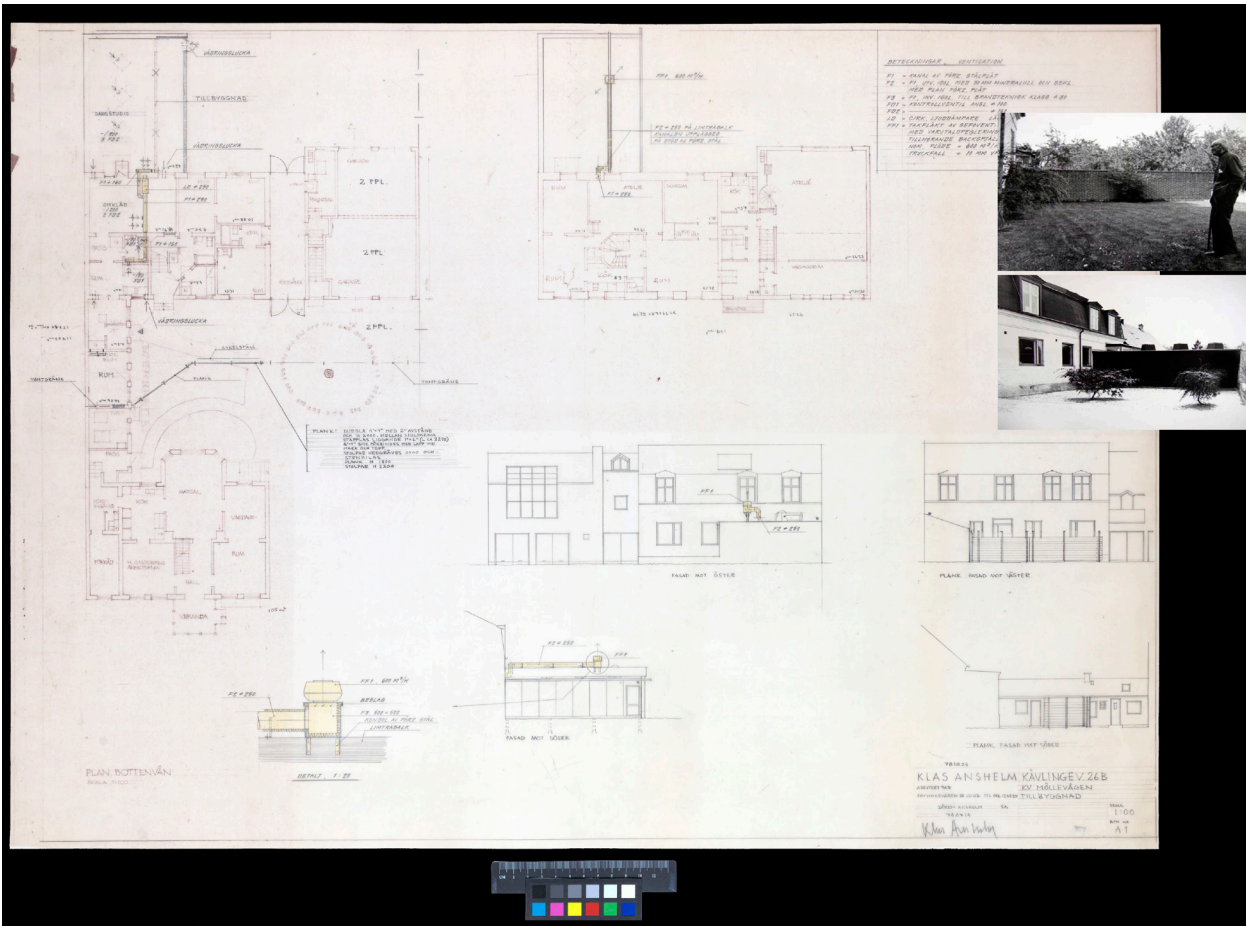
Figure 6. Black Box in Lund, 1972. The conversations around Lewerentz's table took place often, and it was Bernt Nyberg who especially documented this era. (top) The things of the master. Lewerentz made the drawing with the arrangement of his things in the house. (bottom) The photographs were taken on the occasion of the design of the chair and the table commissioned by the company Töreboda. Apart from Lewerentz, Nyberg and Anshelm appear around the chair. Architects who, together with Edman, formed what has become known as the Lund School. The three adjustable reading lamps that have always been on Lewerentz's table, lit up the conversations on which the works of these three architects were founded in the subsequent years. Source: Previously unreleased images courtesy of Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm.



Figure 7. 26 Kavlingeavagen in Lund, 1970. Floor plan and longitudinal section of the plot. Source: Drawing and images made by the author, 2012.

The house Anshelm gave to the master is in a quiet neighborhood, a short walk from the historic center and very close to the hospital he regularly frequented. It is an elongated plot, which gives access to each house built inside, three according to the original plans. There are certain differences compared to the planimetry consulted in the archives, mainly related to its variations to accommodate the master during the last years of his life. The constructions are grouped in a sequence accompanying the way of touring the plot. All of it must be understood as part of a vast, green, and wild garden, where trees, stones, benches, tables, and more or less regular constructions are glimpsed.

The first house, with a substantially quadrangular floor plan, with access from the front garden and rear exit to the intermediate plot, occupies its entire plan with two levels and a small attic and basement. It is the largest and gives its image to number 26 Kavlingeavagen Street. The second house, narrow and elongated, is where the master is installed. With an L-shaped floor plan, the building is supported by the side party wall and has access from the intermediate garden; unlike the first, its height is variable, with a low body and a two-story construction that delimits this intermediate space. Finally, the third house is installed as a bridge between the previous house and the other party wall, finishing closing the intermediate plot space. Jörgen Fogelqvist, an artist who maintained a close relationship with Lewerentz during these years, lived



there. Between both houses, an open passage on the ground floor allows access to the bottom of the plot, large and with lush vegetation, which becomes the real treasure that gives meaning to this domestic sequence (Figure 7).

K. Anshelm gives him part of the ground floor of one of these houses, the second partially occupying the ground floor and with access from the intermediate garden. Despite his age, Lewerentz was still active in his work; taking advantage of some walls in the back garden, the two devised a small space with almost no light and windows, a kind of black box that serves the master as a refuge and small studio. A few months passed from the moment Lewerentz moved to Lund, and the studio was built. It is a time when Lewerentz's relationship with Anshelm is consolidated due to the project and construction of this suggestive object.

Lewerentz's studio in Lund has always been seen as a contribution of Anshelm, to which Lewerentz moves when the work is finished. This statement is not entirely true. Due to the proximity of their homes, Lewerentz and Anshelm maintained a close relationship during the small project. The architects constantly exchanged impressions during 1969 and 1970, months when Lewerentz occupied the Lund house without the studio still being available (Figure 8).

Figure 8. 26 Kavlingeavagen in Lund, Klass Anshelm, 1970. Original floor plans of the house, submitted to the Town Hall for the construction of the Black Box. Above, the master in the back garden; the object is not yet built. Below, just finished. Source: Planimetry and images provided by Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm.



Figura 9. Black Box in Lund, 1970. Habitable miniature. Floor and section plan. Source: Drawings made by the author, 2012. Images courtesy of Arkitekturmuseet, Stockholm.

Black Box is a simple body of fifty square meters, a poetic experiment covered inside with aluminum sheets. Without windows, only three square skylights are placed according to their diagonal and an opening coinciding with the access steps from the house. A house and a box, airtight and smooth, wrapped in silver foil and a pine-boarded floor; designed as a precious piece of furniture where to store the last days of the master. It was built without foundation, directly on a gravel bed, since when they took this strange object to the City Hall, any attempt to fit it into the regulations was useless, reaching an agreement with the officials that it could be understood as a temporary construction. This is the magic of this space, which hangs from the ceiling floating above the garden. This box levitates suspended from a massive wooden beam supported on the old house and a backyard wall.

Black Box, a small interior space of 3x6x2 meters, is a chest and a box of thoughts, a habitable miniature where the senses are sharpened and specialized appropriately (Figure 9). A beautiful consequence of this



Figura 10. Interior of the Black Box in Lund, 2012. The vine the teacher patiently helped grow now occupies much of the space. Leaves, lithographs, and shadows on the aluminum walls.
Source: Images taken by the author, 2012.

way of building, in light floating on the earth, was the appearance of a vine through one of the joints of the wooden floor, which the teacher will patiently help to climb until he sees it reach the studio's ceiling. A tiny green blade grows in the middle of a black ocean that makes the intimate something sublime. During my visit to this place, I saw how that tiny sprout already envelops the entire space. Lars Berlin, its current owner, has turned that place into a fragment of his garden. There is no furniture, lamps, chairs, models, or drawings today; nature has been tamed to inhabit this place that Lars now lovingly pampers and preserves as if he were the soul of that space or who knows of the master himself. Black Box has thus become a lacrymatory of smells, plant prints, and fragrances that evoke other times and worlds (Figure 10).

The master slowly collects his things, and in the autumn of 1975, he begins to fade away. First, his legs and then his eyes, to slowly immerse himself in a black space, getting blacker and deeper. His last conversations were dedicated to Bert Nyberg, to whom he confessed the intimacies of his blindness. Almost fifty years later, that poetic experiment is still floating in this garden at number 26 Klavlingeavagen in Lund.

CONCLUSIONS

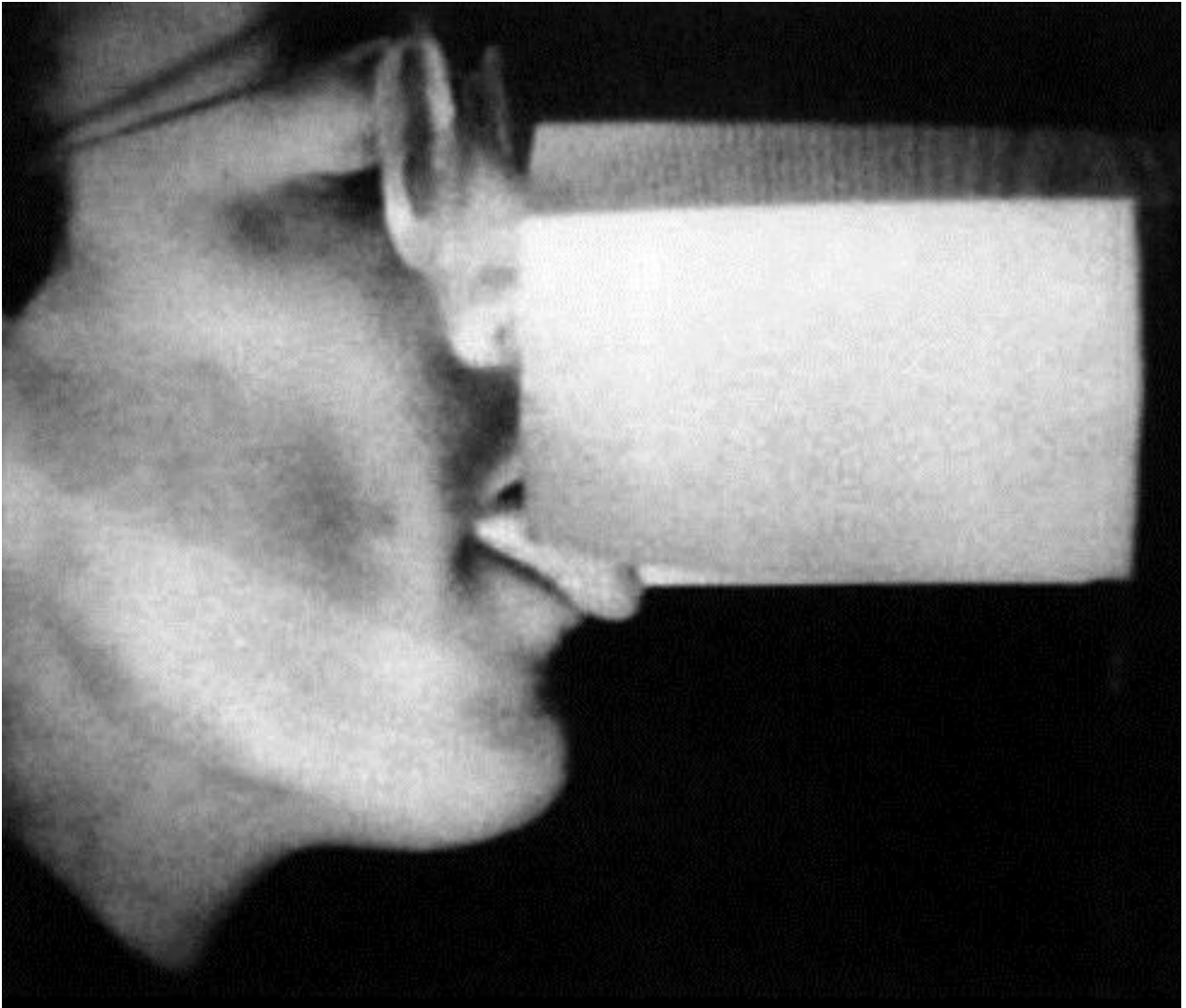
Intangible for a poetic living

For a long time, I have been obsessed with the experience of seeing and ceasing to see, seduced by the idea of achieving a kind of induced blindness, of seeing with closed eyes. In Six Proposals for the Next Millennium, the writer Italo Calvino (Calvino, 1998) stated that fantasy is a place without light. There is no better sentence to conclude this essay than to define these spaces as laboratories for our imagination and senses, where light cannot exist. This text suggests an idea for a time overflowing with images: not using the eyes. Not having eyes is like having nothing, and going blind does not mean not seeing but doing it with your hands or your hearing, taste, and smell, which is the best possible way to truly see things (Merleau-Ponty, 1975). The image that a young Herzog gives us is eloquent in this sense; with the model in his hands and his eyes closed, he looks at it with his tongue and caresses it with his salivary glands. Herzog licks the object to absorb ideas for his architecture; the eyes have not been enough, and the architect must sip the space to really taste it (Figure 11).

Deliberately turning off our eyes will lead us to forget the steps that anticipate behaviors, the paths of memory. To project without eyes means to do it inward, to recognize yourself in what surrounds you, as something yours, intimate and close. That is why the emotion of finding without the eyes supposes a moment of shared life, where you are the other; where the body is suspended in an immense black space. Moving without eyes will lead us to think without them, and when this happens, everything is new, appears for the first time, is born, and dies instantly. This idea will allow our senses to appear: blindness appears and, with it, the body (García, 2017).

Without eyes, we will discover the articulated movement of our body in space, feeling the rhythmic and fluid elements that inhabit it. Not having eyes does not mean being blind; it is instead the boundary between vision and the absence of sensory perception. A state where one can be, without becoming fully 2, maps for disorientation with which we will come to feel the energies of space and the gods that inhabit it. Without eyes, we will pay attention to the nuances, to what is not seen but heard; we

2 (PALAZUELO 2000) "A fragment of space that is neither on this side nor on the other, neither outside nor inside, that is the end and beginning at the same time, light and shadow at the same time, map and territory at the same time, so defining of the edge that it actually blurs all the edges" (quote/excerpt from the podcast *How to Be Pablo Palazuelo*. from the exhibition *Pablo Palazuelo. The Line as an Architectural Dream*), in <https://www.spreaker.com/user/11299905/como-suena-edificio-13-pablo-palazuelo>



will feel the temperature changes inside a wall or the wind's caress. Being an architect entails using the eyes this way, closing them to see the true space.

We have been taught to understand the structure of wood, the weight of the stone, and even the magical character of glass. Facing this technical field are the intangible, non-manipulated substances that constitute our natural environment and are the origin of the constructive materials we refer to as the earth, the vegetation, the rain, or the air. This essay aims to ensure that these intangibles, the essence of a new creative space, offer new possibilities to contemporary living (Holl, 2011).

As Borges stated in the speech summarizing this essay, "This induced blindness will allow us to explore with our mind other fields, other worlds; more intimate, more architectural, purer" (Borges, 2000). This new poetic, contemporary, and fresh way of living is a perceptive landscape: an environment where narratives, descriptions, sensations, confessions, events, and projects are embedded (Fernández-Trucios, 2023).

Figure 11. Jacques Herzog licking a model. Herzog runs his tongue over the paper surface. A gesture that we quickly associate with gustatory activities but that, applied to an inedible object, obtains an added value. It manifests this need to expand the perception of the material and spatial conditions of what has been tasted through the most intimate of the senses. The image is a still from the video recorded by J. Herzog in 1978 and was used by Luis Fernández-Galiano during the lecture given at the Juan March Foundation, Madrid, in 2011. Source: Image provided by Herzog & De Meuron, architects.

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