Recibido 7/2/2025
Aceptado 28/7/2025
https://doi.org/10.22320/07196466.2025.43.068.01

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EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION: A SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS

ARQUITETURA EFÊMERA COMO INSTRUMENTO DE TRANSFORMAÇÃO URBANA: UMA ANÁLISE SISTÊMICA

ARQUITECTURA EFÍMERA COMO INSTRUMENTO DE TRANSFORMACIÓN URBANA: UN ANÁLISIS SISTÉMICO

Figure 0. *Tribuna Vecinal*, PICO Colectivo, 2014, Venezuela. Source: PICO Estudio (2014).

CAPES - Fundação Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior

AS / Vol 43 / Nº 68 / 2025
ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

RESUMO

Derivado de uma pesquisa de mestrado já concluída, este artigo analisa o papel da arquitetura efêmera em transformações urbanas contemporâneas, investigando como suas características específicas — temporalidade, flexibilidade e desmontabilidade — podem contribuir para a promoção de mudanças no espaço público. O objetivo principal é avaliar o potencial da arquitetura efêmera como instrumento de requalificação do espaço urbano, sob uma perspectiva sistêmica e complexa. Por meio de uma metodologia qualitativa, baseada em revisão bibliográfica e pesquisa documental, foram examinados um conjunto significativo de projetos e teorias, abrangendo desde as contribuições seminais de Cedric Price e Archigram até intervenções contemporâneas na América Latina. A investigação revela que a condição efêmera, tradicionalmente vista como uma limitação, constitui uma qualidade estratégica, ao permitir maior experimentação e estar menos sujeita às restrições típicas de construções permanentes. A discussão realizada aponta que intervenções temporárias têm potencial significativo para ativar espaços subutilizados, catalisar processos de requalificação urbana e promover novas formas de uso e apropriação do espaço público. Conclui-se que a arquitetura efêmera, quando associada a uma abordagem sistêmica, configura-se como uma ferramenta projetual relevante para contextos urbanos que demandam intervenções ágeis e adaptáveis, especialmente em situações nas quais soluções permanentes seriam inviáveis ou inadequadas.

Palavras chaves: arquitetura efêmera, espaço público, intervenções urbanas, requalificação urbana, sistemas

ABSTRACT

Based on the findings of a Master's research project, this article examines the role of ephemeral architecture in contemporary urban transformations, exploring how its specific characteristics—temporality, flexibility, and ease of disassembly—can contribute to changes in public space. The primary objective is to analyze the potential of ephemeral architecture as a tool for renovating urban space from a systemic and complex perspective. Through a qualitative methodology based on literature review and document analysis, we examine a substantial set of projects and theoretical contributions, from the seminal works of Cedric Price and Archigram to contemporary interventions in Latin America. The research reveals that ephemerality, traditionally perceived as a limitation, can instead be a strategic asset, allowing for greater experimentation and requiring fewer commitments to the typical restrictions of permanent constructions. The discussion indicates that temporary interventions have significant potential to activate underutilized spaces, catalyze urban requalification processes, and promote new forms of use and appropriation of public space. We conclude that ephemeral architecture, when linked to a systemic approach, can be a relevant design tool for urban contexts that require swift and adaptable interventions, particularly in situations where permanent solutions would be unfeasible or inadequate.

Keywords: Ephemeral architecture, public space, urban interventions, urban requalification, systems

RESUMEN

Basado en una investigación de maestría finalizada, este artículo analiza el papel de la arquitectura efímera en las transformaciones urbanas contemporáneas, investigando cómo sus características específicas —temporalidad, flexibilidad y facilidad de desmontaje — pueden contribuir a la promoción de cambios en el espacio público. El objetivo principal es analizar el potencial de la arquitectura efímera como instrumento de renovación del espacio urbano, desde una perspectiva sistémica y compleja. A través de una metodología cualitativa, basada en revisión bibliográfica y análisis documental, examinamos un conjunto significativo de proyectos y teorías, desde las contribuciones seminales de Cedric Price y Archigram hasta intervenciones contemporáneas en América Latina. La investigación revela que la condición efímera, tradicionalmente vista como una limitación, se convierte en una cualidad estratégica al permitir mayor experimentación y requerir menor compromiso con las restricciones típicas de construcciones permanentes. La discusión realizada señala que las intervenciones temporales tienen un potencial significativo para activar espacios subutilizados, catalizar procesos de recalificación urbana y promover nuevas formas de uso y apropiación del espacio público. Concluimos que la arquitectura efímera, vinculada a un enfoque sistémico, puede constituir una herramienta de diseño relevante para contextos urbanos que demandan intervenciones ágiles y adaptables, especialmente en situaciones donde las soluciones permanentes serían inviables o inadecuadas.

Palabras clave: arquitectura efímera, espacio público, intervenciones urbanas, renovación urbana, sistemas

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ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

INTRODUCTION

Ephemerality in architecture, both in historical contexts and in specialized literature, presents various definitions and conceptual approaches. Authors as Fontes (2011), Jodidio (2011), Kronenburg (2000), Molina Escobar (1999), and Paz (2008) refer to this constructive modality as temporary, transitory, portable, or ephemeral architecture. When analyzing such designations, we find that the word "ephemeral" has its origins in ancient Greek *ephemeros* **(εφήμερος)**, which, in its original meaning, refers to something that lasts only a day or has a short duration. "Temporary" has its origin in Latin temporarius, derived from *tempus* (time), indicating the quality of something that exists for a specific duration. "Portable", also of Latin origin (*portare)*, refers to something you can carry with you. Finally, "transitory", from Latin *transire*, denotes something that crosses or passes without continuing.

The terms "ephemeral" and "temporary" indicate the importance of temporality in the design of these buildings, this being one of their central design premises. On the other hand, the terms "portable" and "transitory" elucidate the kinesis of these constructions, designed to be implemented in a place with the assumption that they will not remain there in a lasting way, being subsequently removed. All the adjectives mentioned apply to ephemeral architectural objects and highlight fundamental aspects of this modality.

Given the diversity of meanings and interpretations, this work presents an in-depth analysis of ephemerality in architecture, exploring its definitions and purposes. The general objective of this article is to examine the potential of ephemeral architecture as an instrument of requalification of urban space, from a systemic and complex perspective. Specific objectives include providing a conceptual and historical overview of the theoretical and technical contributions to temporary architecture, as well as critically examining its applicability as a catalyst for spatial and social transformations. The relevance of this study is justified by its current significance in Latin America, driven by the substantial production of ephemeral architecture carried out by collectives in several countries in the region (Blázquez, 2023).

The research employs a qualitative methodology, comprising a literature review and documentary research. The literature review was conducted from analytical categories, aiming to map and critically interpret theoretical approaches to ephemerality in architecture. The selection of authors, such as Kronenburg (2000), Molina Escobar (1999), and Paz (2008), was based on their influence and recognition in the field, as well as their consolidated and recurrent publications on the subject. The analytical categories related to the concepts, applications, and problems associated with ephemerality were established from the exploratory reading of the selected bibliography and served as the axis for the discussion outlined below. In addition, contemporary academic texts by Latin American authors, such as Balem and Reyes (2021), Barragán (2023), and Noguera (2023), were included in the review to update the debate and integrate perspectives produced in the region into current discussions.

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ISSN Digital 0719-6466

The documentary analysis, in turn, covered paradigmatic architectural projects, such as those of Cedric Price, Archigram, Buckminster Fuller, and Jean Prouvé. In addition, an overview of productions carried out by Latin American architectural collectives was presented, with a focus on the projects of the Venezuelan group PICO Colectivo. For the preparation of critical analyses, a systemic approach and complex thinking were adopted, based on the conceptualizations formulated by Von Bertalanffy (1975), Morin (2008), and Morin (2011). From these metatheories, it was sought to understand the system constituted by ephemeral architecture when inserted into the urban space, considering the interactions between its material, spatial, and symbolic elements, as well as the effects generated in social and urban dynamics.

The article is structured in three main sections: (1) theoretical definitions, where fundamental concepts of ephemeral architecture are discussed; (2) analysis of historical and contemporary examples, compared with the concepts addressed; and (3) discussion on the possibilities of contemporary application of temporary architecture and its relationship with urban space. Finally, the study's key findings are summarized in the final considerations.

CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

For Molina Escobar (1999), defining an ephemeral work in architecture may seem like a contradiction at first glance, since it contrasts the fleetingness and transience of the ephemeral with the solidity and permanence commonly associated with an architectural work. Thinking about an ephemeral architecture implies displacing the architectural project from this perennial place, since it presents itself as the harbinger of a near disappearance, so that its materialization already announces its own end (Molina Escobar, 1999).

Paz (2008) understands temporary architecture as a constructive modality associated with its end, since it only fully fulfills its designated function after being dismantled. The author asserts that a construction that presents itself temporarily in space challenges the very concept of architecture as a built and permanent space, a notion reinforced by a Eurocentric ideal of modernity. In contrast, Barragán (2023) problematizes the immediate identification between ephemerality and temporariness in architecture, understanding the ephemeral as a dense condition that concentrates meanings and effects within a limited period, linked to more extended temporalities, especially when articulated with broader social processes.

Historically, the idea of temporary and portable buildings is not new. Many cultures, with their own ideas of modernity, understand architecture as temporary and impermanent. Kronenburg (2000) points out that since construction began, human beings have resorted to temporary housing, notably native and nomadic peoples from different localities. However, these peoples developed sophisticated construction techniques for building shelters, which retain their historical relevance.

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ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
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Figure 1. Collective housing of a Yanomami village: a xapono comprising individual yaños.
Source: Survival Brazil (2016).

Molina Escobar (1999) notes that the act of building a project with the intention of its future demolition or dismantling is a practice that dates back to ancient cultures, such as those of the peoples of present-day Mexico, who lived under the belief of a cyclical time. In these societies, buildings were periodically demolished for renovation, and new buildings were erected on their ruins. Paz (2008) broadens this perspective by mentioning societies that conceive architecture as something perishable, integrated into the natural cycle of its materials and the lives of its users.

Yaño, temporary housing developed by the Yanomami people in the Brazilian and Venezuelan Amazon region, constitutes a significant example of vernacular ephemeral architecture. According to Benucci (2020), the *yaño* is characterized by a basic triangular structure comprising supports and beams, made from local materials such as wooden sticks, straw, and plant fibers; even though it might have included other elements. It serves both as a temporary shelter during raids and as a base for more permanent structures, including the so-called collective dwellings, known as *xapono* (Figure 1).

In the European context, Puente (2000) and Bergdoll (2010) identify two moments when ephemeral architecture reached a new level of importance. The first took place at the Great Exhibition of London in 1851 – the inaugural edition of the World Exhibitions[1] – for which

1 World Exhibitions are major international events where countries present scientific innovations, culture, and technological progress, aimed at promoting global exchange. The body responsible for its organization is the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), founded in 1928. Source: https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/about-world-expos.

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architect Joseph Paxton designed the Crystal Palace. The second took place at the National Exhibition in Paris in 1867, with the construction of *the Palais du Champ de Mars* and the introduction of the concept of a national pavilion. Both exhibitions contributed to consolidating the idea that modernity could manifest itself through temporary buildings, establishing them as instruments for disseminating industrial progress. Thus, ephemeral architecture not only materialized technical progress but also asserted itself as a symbol of innovation, while national pavilions functioned as representations of the power and identity of nations (Bergdoll, 2010; Puente, 2000).

Based on historical examples from major exhibitions, Bolaños Linares (2023) assesses that ephemeral architecture, although conceived as transitory, often acquires meanings or roles that exceed its intended duration, being, in many cases, preserved, reinterpreted, or reconstituted. Its permanence would be associated with the relationships it establishes with the urban fabric and with collective memory. Such a possibility, however, does not nullify its conception as an essentially provisional architectural object. When analyzing ephemeral buildings, we observe that one of their qualities comes from their becoming, a temporary state of existence that gives them, from the beginning, the condition of an event, as suggested by Molina Escobar (1999).

Paz (2008) argues that the potential of temporary constructions lies in their ability to transform spaces both functionally and symbolically, albeit for a specific period. In a systemic reading, the introduction of a temporary construction in an environment alters its dynamics and expands the purposes for which the space was initially conceived, creating new possibilities for use and interaction. Its ephemerality allows a strategic application, especially in places that would not support permanent buildings. In this sense, ephemerality is also valuable because it offers greater formal freedom, has an experimental character, and allows tensioning spatial relationships in the context in which they are inserted (Bolaños Linares, 2023).

According to Kronenburg (2000), the major social transformations resulting from the political changes and technological advancements of the turn of the millennium have led to dramatic changes in how the built environment is perceived. These transformations are confirmed up to the present, driven by the increasing computerization of capitalist modes of production, by the acceleration of ways of life – characterized by impermanence – and by the need to provide quick answers to urban questions. In this scenario, Noguera (2023) identifies ephemeral architecture as a tool with the potential to attribute new meanings to public spaces and reverse processes of devaluation and emptying, creating situations that capture collective interest and promote new social interactions. Hence, ephemerality proves to be a strategic tool, offering flexibility, adaptability, and alternatives for rethinking the built space.

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ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
ISSN Digital 0719-6466

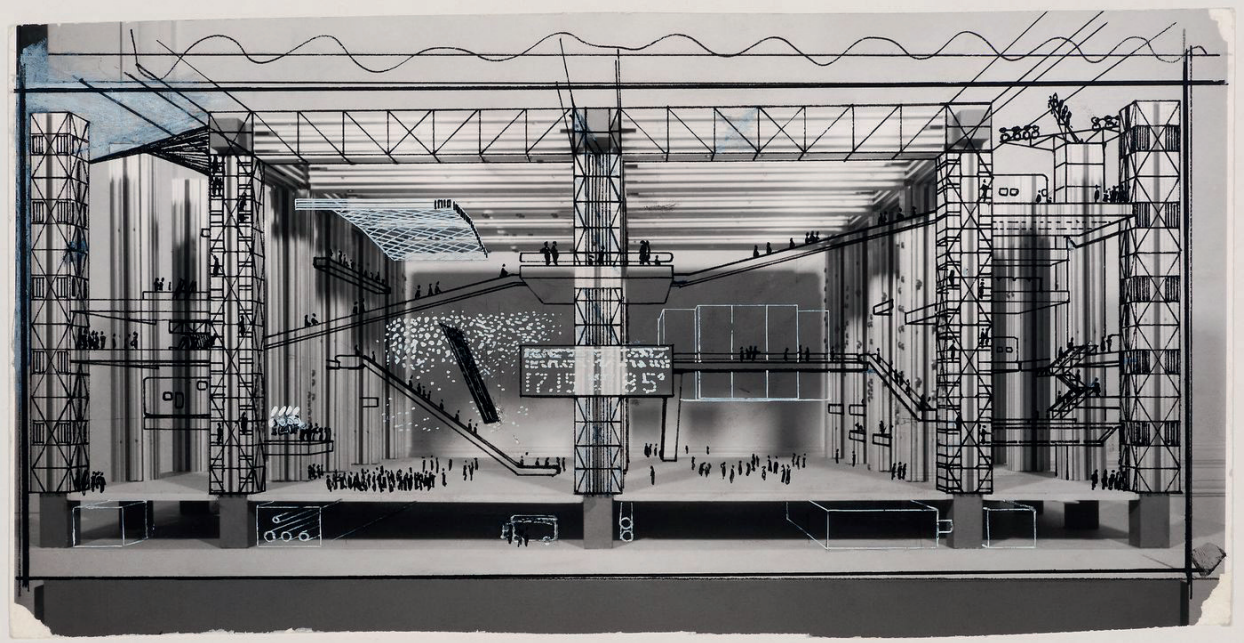

Figure 2. Interior perspective of the Fun Palace, 1964. Source: Cedric Price fonds / Canadian Centre for Architecture (1964).

ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS: CEDRIC PRICE AND ARCHIGRAM

In the 1960s and 1970s, English architects developed designs centered on the ideals of flexibility, instantaneity, and ephemerality. Influenced by new Mass Communication Technologies, progress in means of transportation, and grounded in cybernetics and a systemic vision of design, Cedric Price and the British group Archigram formulated innovative concepts for the architecture of the time (Cook, 1999; Dunn, 2012; Wilken, 2007), which remain relevant to this day.

Cedric Price held controversial convictions about heritage preservation, arguing that a structure should only be maintained as long as it was socially relevant (Mathews, 2006; Wilken, 2007). Price identified, in the United Kingdom, a tendency to extend the life of buildings far beyond their possible usability (Price, 1981), and he argued that once the relevance of a building has diminished, it should be demolished to make way for another. For him, the desire for changes in the built environment was inherent in its inhabitants, something that should be stimulated by architecture (Price, 2003).

Temporality played a central role in Cedric Price's thinking about architectural design, as it would be considered a fourth spatial dimension, in addition to length, width, and height (Almeida, 2006). In the *Fun Palace***2** project (Figure 2), which began in 1961, Price envisioned the possibility of modifications to the building over time, conceiving it as an open and highly porous system (Isozaki, 2003), in line with systemic thinking (Von Bertalanffy, 1975). As shown in Figure 2, the project was conceived as a large temporary multi-program entertainment center, comprising a steel structure on gantries, without fixed fences and with movable elements.

2 See: https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/archives/380477/cedric-price-fonds/396839/projects/399301/fun-palace-project.

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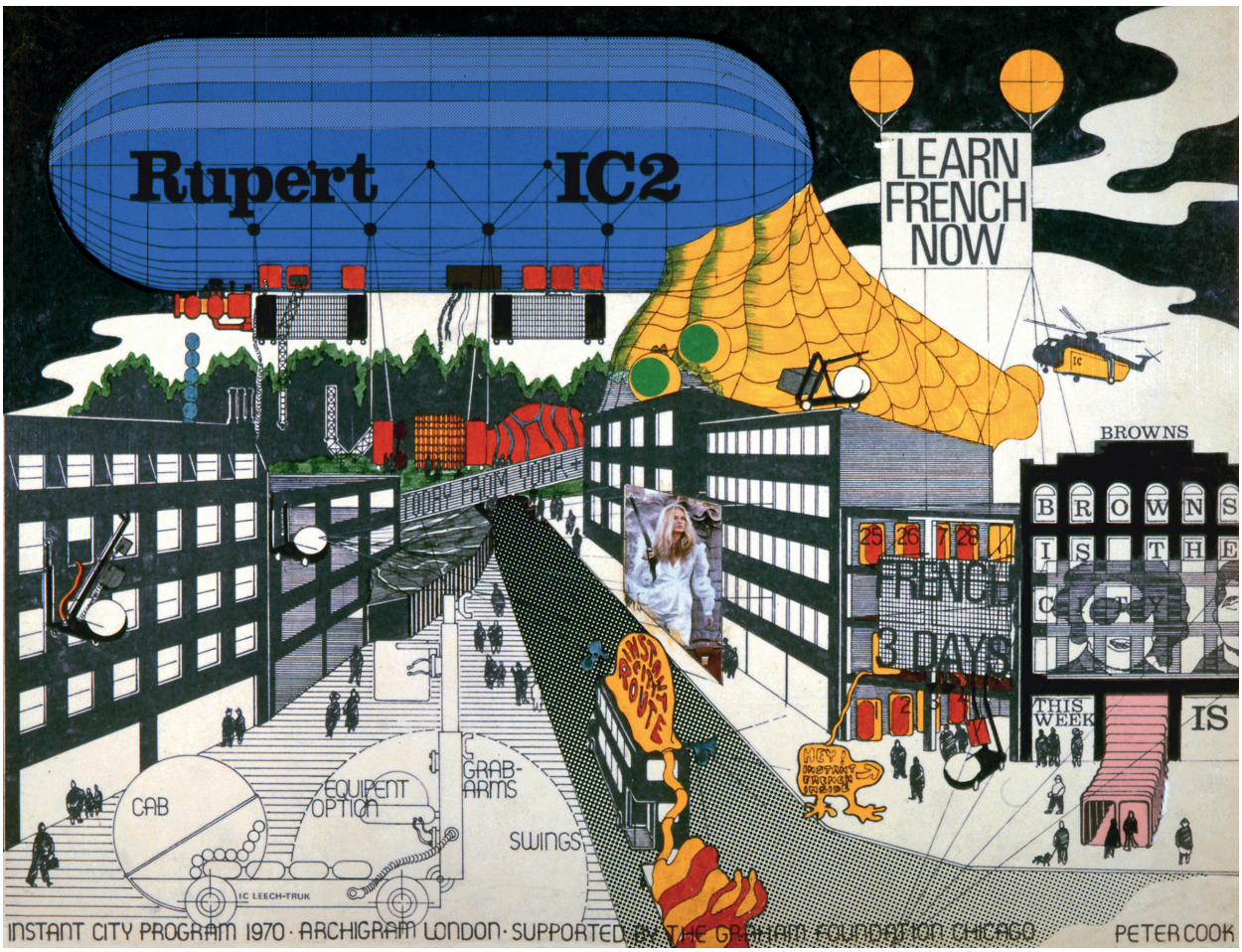

Figure 3. *Instant City*, version by Peter Cook, 1970. Source: Hobson (2020).

Through the integration between communication technologies and building components, the *Fun Palace* would function as a machine capable of adapting to the needs and desires of its users (Mathews, 2006).

This emphasis on user-machine interaction and the possibility of a building responding to its users' actions had its foundation in cybernetics**3**. The incorporation of feedback loop cybernetics as a design principle would characterize the *Fun Palace* as a result of this interaction cycle (Almeida, 2006), configuring it as a complex system (Morin, 2008) that is constantly in exchange with its users. Thus, the Fun Palace radically incorporated temporality and adaptability through the creation of a flexible structure capable of reconfiguring itself and modifying its own architectural program (Wilken, 2007).

With conceptions similar to those of Price, the British group Archigram recognized that architecture must transcend the fundamental principles of rigidity and stability to meet the economic, social, and cultural shifts of post-World War II European Society. The group advocated for an intrinsically systemic view as a means of addressing several simultaneous variables in a project. Systematization aimed to coordinate human needs, technological functions, and the environment as "[...] parts of a complete statement to

3 In addition to Cedric Price's proximity to the field, the cyberneticist and associate of the *Architectural Association School of Architecture*, Gordon Pask (1928-1996), participated as a consultant on the project.

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fuse each aspect into a positive, correlated whole" (Sadler, 2005, p. 118, translation by the author)**4**.

The group elaborated proposals based on mobility, flexibility, mutability, and ephemerality (Silva, 2004), conceiving one of its most representative works, the *Instant City***5**, conceptually illustrated in Figure 3, from cybernetic conceptual bases. In the proposal, the architects drew on the concept of a machine responsive to human feedback, which would regulate an environment conditioned not only by the assembly of its parts, but also by an infinite array of variables determined by the users' desires (Cook, 1999). The *Instant City* would function as a mobile and multimedia architectural complex, intended to provide a series of cultural events and information in localities far from the metropolises.

The proposal of the *Instant City* constitutes an architecture of the event capable of interacting with different communities and promoting an information network that interconnects several cities during its occurrence (Cook, 1999). According to Wilken (2007), the *Instant City* would act as a complementary system, articulator, and dynamizer of urban cultural processes. In this articulation, a systemic vision is evidenced, materialized in the creation of a complex network of information exchanges between different locations, capable of stimulating changes in the local context.

The works of Price and Archigram contribute to reflecting not only on the possibilities of architecture outside the *locus* of stable and durable constructions, but also on how to incorporate flexibility and changeability in temporary projects. Such experiences also elucidate a systemic and cybernetic understanding of architectural design, centered on the relationship between the architectural object and its users, as well as the environment in which it is situated. Both proposed architectural interventions as open and impermanent systems, with spaces that favored encounters and interactions, going beyond mere segregation of functions (Herdt, 2021; Sadler, 2005).

The *Instant City* allows thinking of temporary construction as an event in the place where it is installed, capable of assigning new uses and functions, so that its insertion would be able to modify the relationships between the parts that the system, constituted in that space, comprises. Finally, the works of these architects offer subsidies into understanding ephemeral architecture and its relationship with the environment as a complex system of interacting parts (Morin, 2011), which, for both Price and Archigram, represented a state of constant becoming and emergence of novelties (Isozaki, 2003; Sadler, 2005).

TECHNIQUE AND PREFABRICATION: BUCKMINSTER FULLER AND JEAN PROUVÉ

The notion of temporary architecture encompasses a wide range of techniques and design approaches. Although there is no direct link between

4 From the original: "Our job is to coordinate them as parts of a complete statement to fuse every aspect into a positive related whole."

5 See: https://platform-0.com/cook-peter-archigram-instant-city-1970/.

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ISSN Impresa 0716-2677
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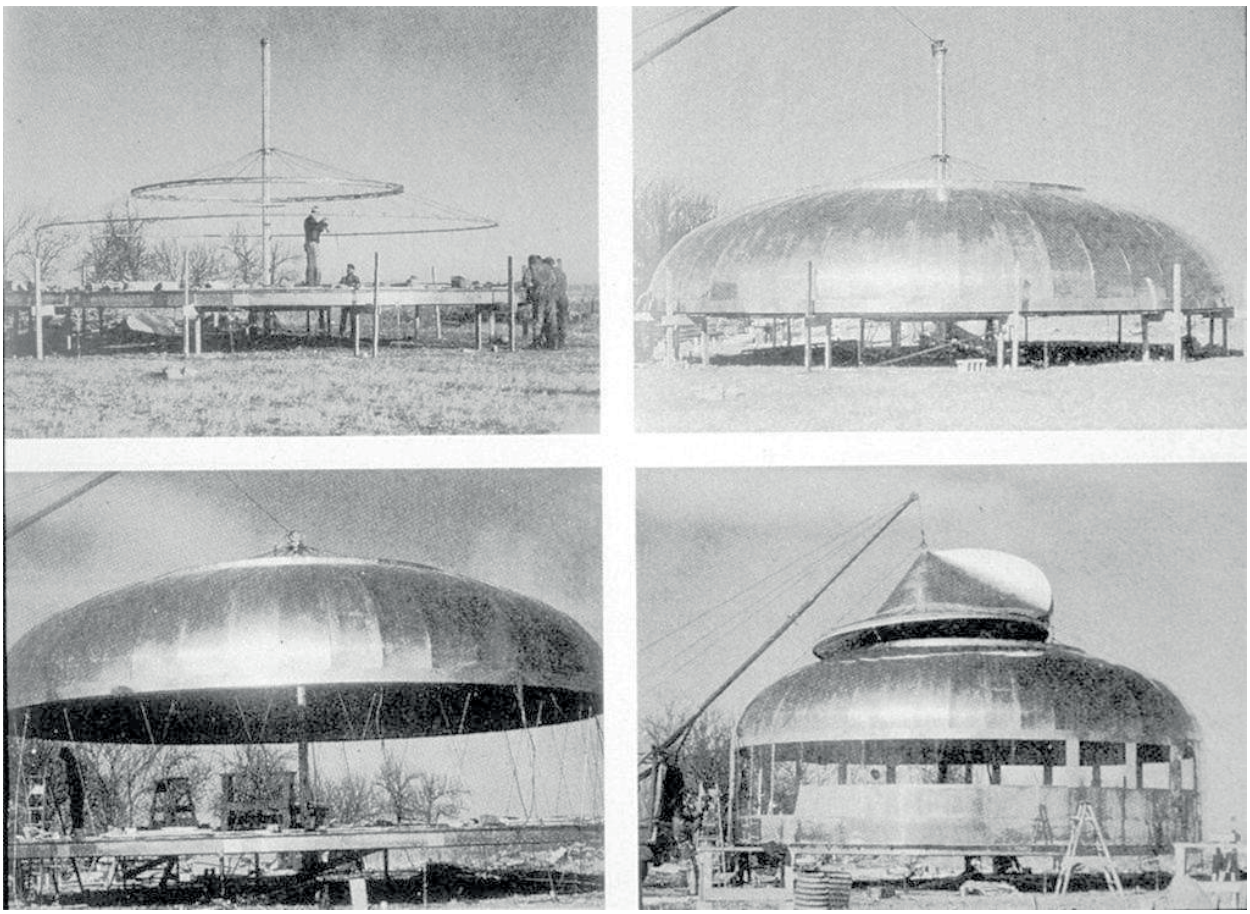

Figure 4. Assembly sequence of Fuller's Dymaxion House in Wichita, USA, in 1944. Source: The Estate of R. Buckminster Fuller. Compiled by Peter Lobner (2020).

the construction technology chosen and the ephemerality of a construction (Paz, 2008), it is considered that this relationship becomes fundamental when a design premise is adopted, that a building is temporary. In these cases, it is of paramount importance to choose construction techniques that favor assembly and disassembly, especially when a subsequent reassembly is sought. To discuss this relationship, we analyze the works of two important architects of the 20th century: the American Buckminster Fuller and the Frenchman Jean Prouvé.

Recognized exponents of architecture in its approach to industrial production, both sought to incorporate military technologies, developed mainly during World War II, to solve housing problems. Sadler (2005) states that Fuller in the United States and Prouvé in France adapted this technology for civil construction, taking advantage of the infrastructure and surplus supplies of the aircraft industry. The two architects employed metal components—mainly aluminum —and easy-to-assemble structures, as well as prefabricated building elements, to develop emergency residential units and other housing models in kit form.

Buckminster Fuller, in the original *Dymaxion House* project, developed a constructive system of facilitated assembly using abundant, reusable materials that featured a low-level finish and were optimized for transport, thereby facilitating mass production (Baldwin, 1997). Fuller designed the house to be

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ISSN Digital 0719-6466

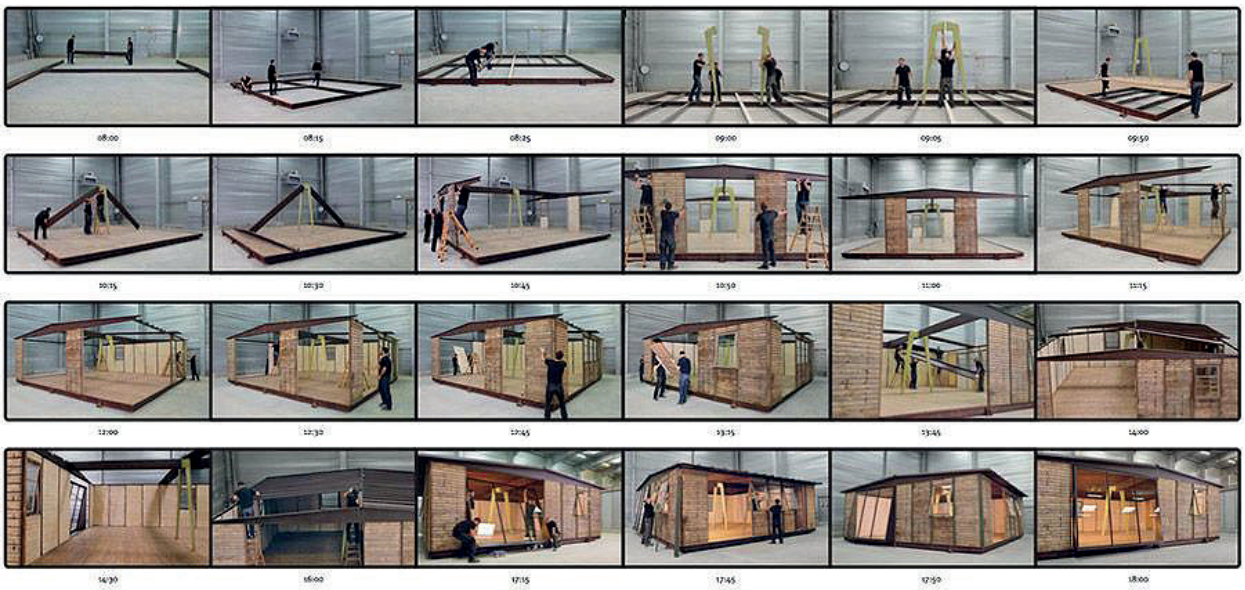

Figure 5. Assembly sequence of a collapsible 8x8 house. Prouvé's project from 1944. Prototype built by Patrick Seguin Gallery in 2013 in France. Source: Pictures of Galerie Patrick Seguin. Compiled by Peter Lobner (2025).

energy self-sufficient, capable of functioning without the need for external resources. In its original design, the *Dymaxion House* would be suspended from the ground using tension cables, supported by a central pillar with many functions that also served as a container for transporting its parts (Buckminster Fuller Institute, 2022). The project, conceived by Fuller in 1927, was only prototyped in 1944 with the Wichita house. Buckminster Fuller's original intentions were realized in the prototype, which was structured around a central mast with tension cables and raised off the ground, as shown in Figure 4. The house was installed in two days. The building required a minimal foundation because it is formed by lightweight components that can be carried by a single person, with minimal maintenance and energy costs (Baldwin, 1997).

Prouvé, in turn, had industrialization as a basic design premise, even in his works prior to World War II, and was based on workshop practice (Lavalou, 2005). As a response to the housing crisis of the time, the architect prepared several projects of prefabricated and collapsible houses, following some structural principles, such as: structuring with an axial metal portico; floor fixed on a grid of metal beams, so that the house only rested on the ground or with a minimal foundation; and independent sealing system, such as a curtain wall (Prouvé, 2024a). Like the demountable houses in Meudon, France, the components were lightweight, capable of being transported on a truck, and could be put together by a single person in a few days (Prouvé, 2024b). The construction system and the process of assembling collapsible houses**6** (Figure 5) present architectural principles similar to those of a temporary pavilion.

In the works of Fuller and Prouvé, important technical aspects are observed, which highlight the need to design construction systems thinking not only about their individual parts, but especially about the interactions between them. While the permanent building is typically conceived as

6 The *Palm Pavilion* (2006 – 2008),by Thai artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, references Maison Tropicale by Jean Prouvé. The pavilion is part of the collection of the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais. Source: https://www.inhotim.org.br/item-do-acervo/palm-pavilion-rirkrit-tiravanija/.

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a unitary structure, ephemeral construction is designed as a segmented building comprising smaller elements (Paz, 2008). It is in this sense that Kronenburg (2000) notes that temporary buildings are designed with the intention of facilitating their assembly in places far from their manufacture. Strategies adopted for transportation may involve systems of modular parts, parts transported in clusters as a partially complete package and then assembled on-site, and even architectural objects transported as a single piece.

Concerns with the partition of buildings for their transport and assembly are found in both studies analyzed. The notion of the architectural object as a kit of parts appears in the projects of Buckminster Fuller and Jean Prouvé, both of which constitute proposals that prioritized a facilitated assembly process and a reduced number of parts (Baldwin, 1997; Prouvé, 2024a). Price also designed the *Fun Palace* following this notion, conceiving it as a building of recombinant and quick assembly parts, formed by lightweight and detachable components (Isozaki, 2003). In addition, certain assembly procedures make it unfeasible to disassemble the architectural object later, as occurs in chemical joints of building elements (Paz, 2008). For disassembly to be possible, it is essential to think of processes that do not deform the parts or permanently interconnect them.

According to Kronenburg (2000), temporary buildings require simplified assembly and disassembly, leading to the adoption of construction strategies based on prefabricated systems, dry joints, and repetitive components. As already discussed, such strategies, advocated in the housing projects of Prouvé and Fuller -pioneers in the application of prefabrication for this purpose (Baldwin, 1997; Lavalou, 2005) -, show the importance of understanding, systemically, the parts that make up the construction and their interrelations for the development of collapsible buildings, guiding choices of transportation, assembly and storage of buildings. (Von Bertalanffy, 1975). The use of lightweight materials, the adoption of dry joints, the modulation of components, and the rationalization of the construction process exemplify how technical decisions can favor both the assembly and the eventual dismantling of the building. This understanding is related to the principles of flexibility and adaptability, as well as to the complex vision of the relationships between urban space, buildings, and users in the projects of Cedric Price and Archigram, particularly in their conception of ephemeral architectural solutions.

EPHEMERALITY AND THE PUBLIC SPACE

Considering the constructive particularities presented, we aim to understand how temporary architectural objects can serve as instruments of intervention in the public space, expanding the possibilities of their appropriation by users and addressing specific urban and social demands. This article presents a systematic and comprehensive analysis of this issue, illustrated with Latin American design examples that offer insights into the potential of ephemeral architectures to promote processes of spatial reconfiguration and requalification.

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ISSN Digital 0719-6466

It is understood here that the set formed by urban space, construction, and uses is a constituent part of a system (Von Bertalanffy, 1975). The urban space, devoid of the ephemeral architectural object, retains certain uses and dynamics among its parts. The insertion of the object or elements that constitute a temporary environment adds new parts to the space and, consequently, new interactions. The system is thus significantly altered, as the introduction of the building reorganizes flows, uses, and pre-existing relationships, enabling the emergence of new social dynamics (Morin, 2011). As Noguera (2023) highlights, such transitory systemic reconfigurations reactivate the collective use of the place and establish new symbolic links between users and public space.

An everyday example of a temporary intervention that significantly alters the individual-public space relationship is urban markets. The place of installation of markets, on usual days, performs specific functions: sometimes they are squares of low movement and noise; in others, roads of exclusive use for automobile traffic. The parts, in these cases, form an apparently consolidated system. With the market, a myriad of new objects and users begin to occupy the space, forming a new system, with other interactions and actors, endowing it with a totally different dynamic and enabling new emergencies.

At the end of the market, the objects will be removed from the site, and that system ceases to exist in that configuration. These objects can be stored or reused elsewhere, but the system they create is temporary. For Paz (2012), the creation of this transitional environment contradicts the consolidated image of the urban space designated exclusively for the same activity, as a closed system. Kronenburg (2000) and Fontes (2011) note that ephemeral installations, by temporarily modifying the landscape, can broaden and diversify an individual's vision of their environment, leading them to recognize both the positive and negative attributes better. In this context, Noguera (2023) argues that, although they disappear physically, ephemeral interventions can leave lasting marks on collective memory, transforming citizens' perceptions of the place and strengthening mobilizations for a more qualified use of public space.

Thus, from a systemic perspective, temporary interventions meet the conditions to modify the individual's engagement with public spaces, even those previously considered hostile or uninteresting. It has been found that temporary architecture can provide new roles for places that, at first glance, may not be suitable for other uses (Kronenburg, 2000; Paz, 2008). In addition, considering the exemption of some formalities that usually fall on permanent constructions, temporary architectural objects can function as experimentation laboratories, allowing designers and users to test and visualize new ideas in the field of architecture and urbanism (Fontes, 2011; Jodidio, 2011).

However, Barragán (2023) weighs in that the transformative potential of temporary interventions is weakened when they are carried out under the exclusive aegis of the private market, as support for promotions of large companies or media events. In this case, according to the author, ephemeral architecture tends to reinforce a logic of accelerated consumption, contributing to the commodification of urban space. Both Barragán (2023) and Noguera (2023) emphasize the importance

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Figure 6. *Polideportivo Reducido,* PICO Colectivo, 2017, Venezuela. Source: Edited by the authors, based on AGA Estudio (2016).

of developing a critical praxis for ephemeral architectures in Latin America, grounded in a systemic understanding of the region's sociocultural reality. This defends the development of its own thinking about ephemerality, its forms of materialization, and modes of application in urban requalification processes.

In this sense, Latin American architectural collectives that emerged in the first decades of the 21st century point to alternative architectural practices, often involving ephemeral buildings. According to Blázquez (2023), these collectives reinterpret forms of collective action from the previous century, such as Archigram itself, adopting collaborative models to respond to social, economic, and political transformations specific to Latin America. Recurrently, they work in direct contact with the communities, articulating the architectural practice with community participation. Such praxis approaches come close to what Balem and Reyes (2021) understand as insurgent urban practices: non-normative ways of making and using the city, which are placed as an alternative to hegemonic models**7**. These practices are characterized by temporary interventions and spatial transformations of short duration, but of significant political and symbolic impact.

Latin American collectives include República Portátil (Chile), Al Borde (Ecuador), Matericos Periféricos (Argentina), Arquitectura Expandida (Colombia), Arquitectura na Periferia (Brazil), and the PICO Colectivo (Venezuela). Among them, we identify in the Venezuelan group PICO Colectivo (2017) a practice of systemic and complex character that uses temporary architectural objects as instruments of requalification within a network, based on community demands (Morin, 2011; Von Bertalanffy, 1975).

7 On a scale different from that analyzed in this article, Mehrotra and Vera (2017) conceptualize as "ephemeral urbanism" the non-hegemonic practices that adopt temporary and flexible solutions to urban issues.

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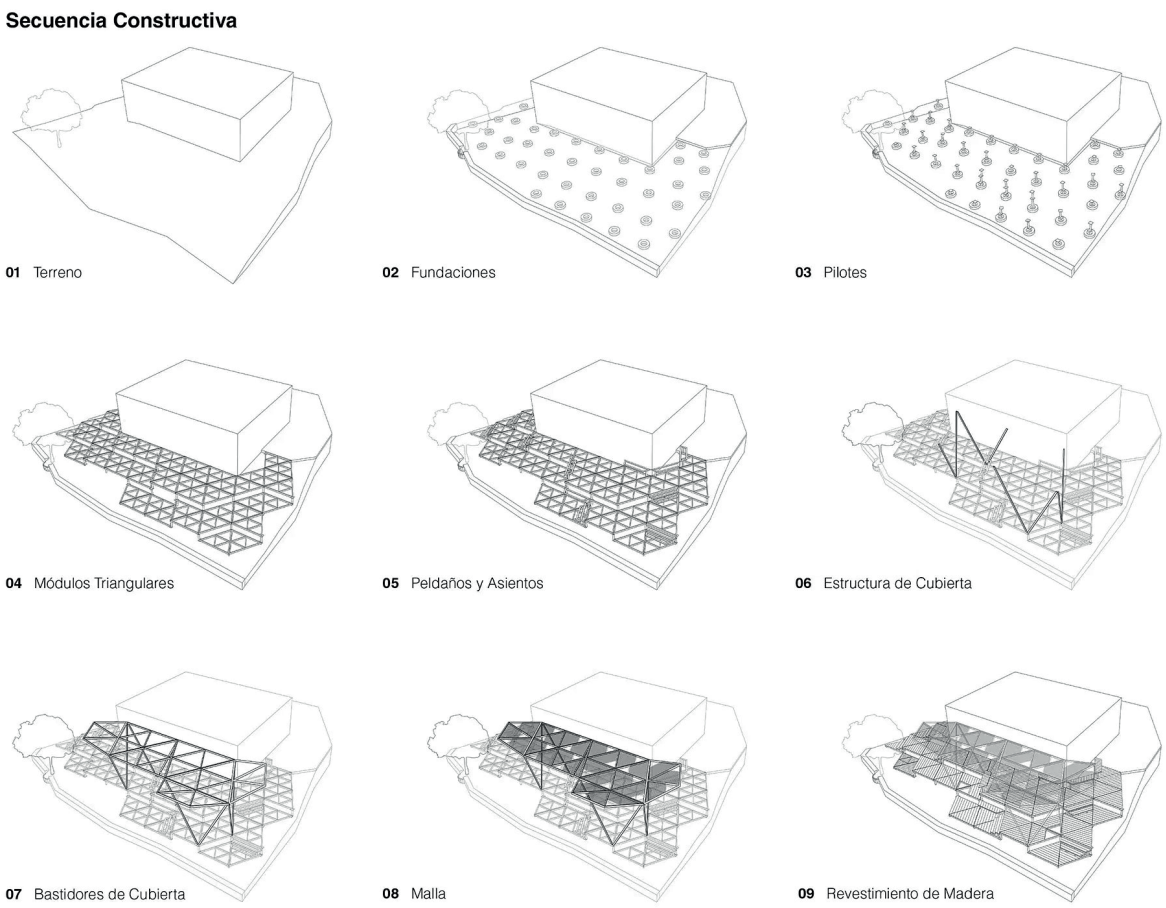
Figure 7. *Tribuna Vecinal*, PICO Colectivo, 2014, Venezuela. Source: PICO Estudio (2014).

Figure 8. Constructive sequence of *Tribuna Vecinal*, of PICO Colectivo. Source: PICO Estudio (2014).



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ISSN Digital 0719-6466

The PICO Colectivo design process (2017) involves local people, architecture students, and the use of donated or readily accessible materials, bringing together diverse agents and resources. The building is not conceived as an isolated solution, but as an instrument of spatial and social articulation capable of responding to multiple demands. As Vieira points out (2021), the construction aims to facilitate a broader social project, focusing on the activation of community organization processes in the economic, political, and cultural spheres. The *Polideportivo Reducido* project, also known as *Multideportivo La Canchita*, is an example of that approach. In Figure 6, it is observed that the group sought to integrate different uses in the reactivation of underutilized spaces, taking advantage of the terrain's dimensions and slope through the use of fixed and mobile elements. Recreational and living spaces are arranged in multiple layers, supported by retaining walls that interconnect two neighboring neighborhoods. The bleachers, a recurring feature in these interventions, serve as social mediation devices and a reappropriation of urban space.

The program of targeted interventions, *Espacios de Paz* (Spaces of Peace) (PICO Colectivo, 2017), is conceived by the group as a process of urban microsurgery, acting in segregated spaces – such as empty lots and residual public areas – to transform them into living spaces. An example, in the context of temporary buildings, is the *Tribuna Vecinal,* or Neighborhood Tribune project (Figure 7), which uses collapsible equipment to create a multipurpose public area. The construction of this project involved local actors and labor. In addition to requalifying the area, the group aimed to empower the community by integrating it into the design, construction, coordination, and management processes of the equipment. As a result, PICO Colectivo elaborated and built, together with the community, an architectural object replicable independently, once the assembly process was illustrated and systematized (Figure 8).

In the two projects, principles found in the works of Price, Archigram, Fuller, and Prouvé are observed. The construction systems of both employ prefabricated and lightweight components in metal structures that can be dismantled and reassembled. It is worth noting that PICO Colectivo's use of metal elements is strategic, as the group uses thin and small steel parts to facilitate transportation in densely built areas and expedite assembly with the community (Vieira, 2021). The metal structure offers durability and flexibility for constructions in areas of irregular and rugged morphology, as is typical in peripheral regions of large cities in Latin America.

PICO Colectivo's proposals reveal a systemic understanding, similar to Price's, when conceiving the architectural object as an instrument of intervention in the built environment. Price applied this principle to the building *Inter-Action Centre***8** (Herdt, 2021), putting into practice part of the precepts established with the *Fun Palace*. It aimed to create a community space that would serve as a facilitator of social interactions and cultural activities, acknowledging the emergence of improvements proposed by its users. As in the *Espacios de Paz* program of interventions, its installation

8 See: https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/archives/380477/cedric-price-fonds/396839/projects/406080/inter-action-centre.

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integrated a process of urban and social regeneration of the surroundings, acting as a requalifying device (Herdt, 2021). PICO Colectivo, as well as the other collectives mentioned above, reinterprets this logic of architectural instrumentalization from a Latin American perspective, employing ephemeral architectures as vectors of collaborative urban requalification processes, especially in environments neglected by the state.

FINAL REMARKS

Through the study of fundamental concepts and design approaches, this work demonstrates how temporary architectural objects can reconfigure spaces and engender new dynamics of use, promoting experiences that challenge established perceptions of places. It was found that transience, far from representing a limitation, is a strategic aspect, as it provides greater freedom of experimentation and reduces the link to formalities typical of permanent buildings, enabling interventions in contexts where permanent buildings would be unfeasible or inappropriate.

The projects examined – from the visionary proposals of Price and Archigram to the interventions of Pico Colectivo- demonstrate how temporary architecture, in the light of complexity, can provoke systemic changes in urban spaces. It was observed that, when an ephemeral building is inserted into the context, it acts as a disturbing element that triggers new interactions between users and the environment, allowing the system to reorganize into configurations richer in experiences and possibilities. In the *Polideportivo Reducido* and *Tribuna Vecinal* projects, we identified, in the Latin American context, how a project process can promote community articulation around a public facility. The architectural object of collective use, in turn, acts as an instrument of social reorganization and requalification of urban space.

It was found that the technical dimension, explored in the works of Fuller and Prouvé and reinterpreted in contemporary projects, is fundamental to enabling the transformative capacity of ephemeral architecture. Building systems based on prefabricated, lightweight, and collapsible components not only facilitates logistical aspects but also enables different levels of community involvement, as verified in the work of PICO Colectivo. This aspect reinforces the potential of temporary architecture as a device for communities to actively participate in the transformation of their territories, either through direct engagement in the construction or through the appropriation and resignification of the spaces created.

However, the analysis had methodological limitations. To formulate more precise statements about the potential of ephemeral architecture, it would be necessary to conduct longitudinal monitoring of the impact of different interventions on both the social dynamics of the communities served and on collective social memory. However, as objectified, fundamental aspects of the constructive modality were outlined, and its applications discussed from a systemic perspective. It is thus expected to contribute to the debate on

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ISSN Digital 0719-6466

ephemerality in architecture, supporting the formulation of a responsive design approach to contemporary demands.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AUTHORS CRediT

Conceptualization, C. N. & M.T.; Data Curation, C. N.; Formal analysis, C. N.; Acquisition of funding; Research, C. N.; Methodology, C. N. & M.T.; Project Management, M.T.; Resources; Software; Supervision, M.T.; Validation, M.T.; Visualization, M.T.; Writing – original draft, C. N.; Writing – review and editing, C. N. & M.T.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was carried out with the support of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) – Funding Code 001. The article is derived from topics covered in the Master's dissertation "Ephemerality and self-organization: Parametric design in the design of temporary public facilities", research carried out within the Nomads.usp group, from the Institute of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (IAUUSP).

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