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Thesis Abstract: "Complejo para el Séptimo Arte, Morelos"

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"*Complejo para el Séptimo Arte, Morelos*"
By Nadia Samir

"Cine-Teatro Morelos", is an old building of great cultural relevance, considered an urban reference. It is in charge since 1903 of the cinematographic diffusion, for all types of public, located in the historical center of the city of Cuernavaca, Morelos.

This project is a proposal for the recovery of the building, through the intervention of the interior space in order to promote the development of economic self-management of the Cinema, through commercial spaces related to film culture, as well as the art cinema in Cuernavaca. The project proposes spaces to make programs with a social character, with the intention of returning the feeling of belonging among the inhabitants of the city.

"Throughout its history, cinema has also been an enigma in its relations with the city, as it has a unique capacity to focus the public's attention on the projected images, which in turn transmit a sensory transformation of the urban body and the city itself on a large scale". (Stephen Barber)

The Research Problem

The construction of the Morelos Cinema was carried out in the 19th century and space was destined to theatrical representation. It is located in the center of the city of Cuernavaca - Capital of the State of Morelos, Mexico. Children, young people, and adults; students, businessmen, among other movie lovers have been influenced by the films shown in this cinema. It is considered a point of reference that favors social encounter and development, where there is the possibility of seeing film proposals that are different from those shown in commercial cinemas and on television.

"The media shape public opinion in order to put it at the service of the prevailing will. Any thought that cannot be immediately exploited for political purposes is simply discarded". (Rosellinni, 1977: 114-115). The cinema is a very important element for the current diffusion of culture, the creation of public attitudes and ideas about science and society, due to this means of communication great changes have been generated in history.

The property regime is municipal, however, there are not enough resources for the maintenance of the cinema, due to social, political and economic problems that the city of Cuernavaca has faced in the last decade. Cine Morelos is directed by Christian Hernández Figueroa, who took over in May 2014. Previously, the direction was in the hands of Miguel Ángel Mendoza, whose position he held for 4 years; currently, he is the Director of the Film Commission of the State of Morelos. (Interview with the manager of Cine Morelos, Gerardo Reyes)

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The total area of the land is 1173 m2 and the built area is 1551 m2. (Official Site of the Morelos Theater). The building has 2 levels for public use, in which 6 areas are distributed: the lobby, with space for ticket offices, candy store, cafeteria and lounge (length: 18.95 m, depth: 6.60 m and height: 3.64 m); the gallery, used for art exhibitions, photography, among others (length: 18. 95 m, depth: 4.70 m and height: 3.89 m); the cinema and video projection room, with capacity for 560 spectators, has 3 emergency exits to the north facade of the building (length: 25.90 m, depth: 21. 4 m and height: 4.60 m); the semi-circular stage, with two collective dressing rooms and one private one (length: 21.9 m, depth: 9.0 m - backdrop to the curtain 6.5 m and height: 4.45 m); the Miguel Zacarías hall, with capacity for 150 spectators, the emergency exit connects with the Gabriel Figueroa hall (length: 13. 60 m, depth: 9.63 m and height: 5.27 m); the Gabriel Figueroa hall, with a capacity for 125 spectators, has an emergency exit to the south side of the building (length: 13.60 m, depth: 9.63 m and height: 5.27 m). The total capacity of the hall is 1027 seats. The facade is flattened, on stone walls of 0.70 m; the level of the mezzanines is flat, made of concrete; the slab is gabled, made of a metal sheet.

The interior space of the building is divided by cement panels; the structure of the building is made of reinforced concrete. (Program of Support to the Cultural Infrastructure of the States - PAICE)

Many remodeling and architectural interventions have been carried out for its preservation, among them, one made by the architect Mauricio Rocha in 1994; however, nowadays society demands spaces that are similar to the cultural approach proposed by the cinema. The last remodeling was done in 2010, to which $26000000.00 was invested, after which the theater was only enabled as a cinema. The benefits obtained, are in relation to the projection and sound equipment, however, the interior architectural space is deficient. (Interview with the manager of the Morelos cinema, Gerardo Reyes).

There are architectural problems in operation and zoning because the spatial and environmental delimitation of the space is not noticeable. In addition, there are acoustic and lighting problems between the access area and the movie theater. The screening rooms do not comply with safety and maintenance regulations, so only one of three screening rooms is in operation.

Before the renovation, in 2010, there were alternative spaces within the cinema, managed as a concession, which provided income to the cinema, for its maintenance. In addition, they generated a greater number of visitors, as they complimented the film experience and were dedicated to different sectors of the population. Thinking about cinema from alternative spaces carries in itself an optional promise to be seen as a

documentation tool that materializes our complexity and the different forms of expression (Interview with the director of the Morelos cinema, Christian Hernández Figueroa, the Director of the Film Commission of the State of Morelos, Miguel Ángel Mendoza, and the Director of the Program of Support to the Cultural Infrastructure of the States, Erika Loana Plascencia). For some years now, multi-screen cinemas have proliferated in shopping centers, inviting people to consume with a commercial commitment, which is connected to the current system of cinema. (Amar V. Manuel, 2009).

The number of spectators varies, depending on the type of events held; when they are festivals, awards, (relevant events at a national or international level) there are up to 560 spectators per function/event, when the films, tend to be commercial (greater marketing and investment in production) the number of spectators is up to 300 people per function; in daily functions (documentaries, films) the number of spectators is up to 140. (Interview with the director of the Morelos cinema, Christian Hernández Figueroa)

According to the survey of a sample of 100 people. 82% of those interviewed are aware of the existence of the Morelos cinema, that is, most people in the city of Cuernavaca have a mental image of the Morelos cinema. Of that 82%, 14% mention never having visited the Cine Morelos, 18% visit it sometimes, 50% say they almost never visit it, and another 18% mention that they do not participate. 68% of those interviewed are in favor of alternative uses for the Morelos cinema, such as exhibition spaces, workshops, etc., that complement the film offers. 14% disagree and 18% did not answer the question.

Delimitation of the Project

With the realization of this research, a direct benefit is sought for the Morelos movie theater and the Secretariat of Culture, since by having a document that analyzes and explains the problems and spatial solutions of the building, it will be possible to investigate an architectural project that directly benefits society.

Although the work involves only the architectural environment, it is expected that the satisfactory results of this work will provide useful and motivating information for research in other subjects, in other academic units, or in other fields of knowledge or film issues; in this way, it is intended to create awareness among architects of the concrete benefits that scientific research can bring to daily practice in the performance of their profession.

The benefits also extend to the whole institution, since the information generated there will be greater clarity of the congruencies that the spatiality of the cinema has with the development of social activities and self-management.

Objectives of the Project

GENERAL

- To develop a proposal for the intervention of the interior space of the building, in order to give it a correct functioning and to create an integral cinematographic space.

PARTICULARS

- To manage the space of the cinemas, to develop a comprehensive architectural program (considering different social areas) in relation to the film offers.
- To give the building character and architectural identification in time-space, respecting the pre-existing facade.
- To develop a proposal that considers the security aspects for the population.
- To propose commercial spaces to extend the development of economic self-management of the building.
- To propose new open and closed spaces, to develop programs of social character.

Project Justification

This research seeks to review, analyze and interpret the space provided by the Cine Morelos for the screening of cultural, educational and art films, as well as the impact that the building has on the environment and on the social development of the population of Cuernavaca, with the aim of offering recommendations and proposals that promote the effective self-management of the building for its maintenance, without the need to obtain economic support only from the Secretariat of Culture of Cuernavaca.

Providing the population with adequate integral space is a means to develop a collective unconscious interested in aspects of social change and improvement. The following architects and architecture critics, highlight the fascination that the cinematographic typology has had during the time when the construction of movie theatres was at its peak, which makes these facilities unique references in the urban landscape to associate it with the idea of spatial modernity. “Of all the typologies, none is more fascinating in its design, nor more complex in its construction than the cinema”. (Clifford Worthington, 1931, quoted by Lacloche, 1981)

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One of the largest theaters in the country, which is still in operation, is located in the Cine Morelos; it has a capacity for 560 spectators. However, the design is not considered by many viewers to be adequate, due to the sightline and lack of sound containment in the space, which does not allow for the appreciation of the projected films. Space is not properly zoned, because the accesses to the room are located in the toilets and the projection booth, so it is notorious that there is no space security. There are two more rooms on the second level, which do not have emergency exits and are not accessible to people with different abilities. “Of all the buildings being built today, the cinema is one of those that must have the most modern attributes. [...] A Louis XVI style train station is an anachronism; a Renaissance style power station would make us laugh, an Empire style radio communications station would be ridiculous; a cinema that is not conceived in a contemporary style cannot be beautiful. (...) A cinema is indestructibly modern”. (Mallet-Stevens, 1924, p.25)

There is no clarity as to the architectural typology in the interior space of the Cine Morelos, however, it is possible to determine that it does not contain contemporary attributes. Furthermore, the interventions carried out in previous years have caused a loss of architectural style; likewise, it is identifiable that the interior style does not match the original facade.

The Cine Teatro Morelos is dedicated to the diffusion of cinema, “The cinema has no relation to the symphonic, spatial organization of the scenic devices. Its task is to clearly break with any imitation of the theater: the cinema has reached sufficient maturity to create its own architectural shape, and must express it one hundred percent”. (Frederick Kiesler, 1929, quoted by Beret, 1996, p 64)

The importance of the project lies in resignifying Cine Morelos, that is, returning to it the essence that differentiates it from any other cinema, both of cultural and commercial value, considering the correct functioning of spaces for the self-management of art cinema. This is proposed through the interior volumetric intervention, that is, modifying the entire internal space of the building, respecting the existing facade. Modify the size and number of rooms, and thus alternate different films. To create rooms and workshops to encourage film study and debate. Commercial spaces that generate culture and entertainment, such as a bookstore, cafeteria, candy store, bar. Integrate open areas -a rooftop patio, to generate outdoor activities, such as screenings or events.

Considering five utility criteria defined by Díaz-Barriga and Hernández (2002), this research is justified by the following:

- Convenience: The results of the research are intended to provide guidance for the integration of the Cine Morelos with the urban context and to make the best use of the building’s spatial capacities.
- Social relevance: The conclusions defined from this research are transcendental for society, as it develops a project that integrates all areas of the population of Cuernavaca, through an architectural program, formed by different activities of social interest, detected in evaluations and other organizations focused on film projection.
- Practical implications: The aim is to provide recommendations to promote the economic self-management of the Cine Morelos, as well as an increase in the number of visitors, in order to have a favorable impact on the maintenance and processes of film diffusion.
- Theoretical value: The research carried out will serve to review the appropriate architectural program for self-management and social integration in the Cine Morelos.
- Methodological use: The analysis of the collected data will contribute to proposals or guides for the spatial improvement of the building.
- Feasibility: The research is feasible since there is access to the administrative information of the Cine Morelos, as well as, to data provided by the Ministry of Culture.

Conclusions

As it happened with the big movie theaters, in the Cine Morelos it is necessary a cultural turn that maintains the different activities for the variety of ideologies that there are in our city, this way it is sought to reevaluate the site and to integrate it with the present time. A site that evolves with the passing of time but that conserves the essence that distinguishes it from other cinemas that “commercialize culture”.

A cinema that contributes knowledge in relation to cinematography and spaces for appreciation and relationship with the city. A cinema that integrates citizens to create and evolve culturally and socially. A cinema for society and to create the city. ”Complejo para el Séptimo Arte, Morelos”, the way to integrate ourselves into the cinematographic culture with the addition of new support areas for the cinemas... an auditorium (secondary cinema), a video library with studio modules and editing booths, a vault, a film museum, commercial sites for self-management, the addition of public space and areas for open-air screening. The necessary place for the integration of culture with society in Cuernavaca.