

ESSAY

Antonio Montes de Miguel

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Heritage For All

Cutting Theme: New perspectives: towards the smart urban heritage?

APPROACH.

Perhaps the heritage is a Present, in the sense of a Gift, for the Future.

Something present to be valued, that comes from the past to continue, projecting a better future.

Present that relates people to each other and to the physical space (conformed by the natural landscape and human architecture) and in addition to the mental space (determined by the human conventions of the moment) now with a new space, the Virtual, which comes as a disruptive and combining element of the spaces we had until now.

I would like to propose, in relation to time (past-present-future) an analogy or nomenclature proper to the process of Drawing:

-Projection; as an almost magical act of proposing futures, new possibilities, hypotheses in its first conception, born from the stroke.

-Trace; the stroke as record of these futuristic ideas, which will be recorded as the past at the very moment when the graphite comes off the paper or the ink dries.

Regarding the relationship of the human being with the environment, perhaps a key or at least an interesting element, just as the silences that separate the notes can define a musical

composition, is freedom, as a mute, elegant and dignifying element of everything that frames.

Freedom for all parts, while establishing the necessary relationships; Freedom for Nature to breathe (and humans with it) and in the necessary mechanisms of interaction and social communication, smartcity yes, but with the freedom and intimacy necessary for the dignity of people.

In this era of digital acceleration, in which technology is presented as the solution to all our problems, we will have to be careful that the alleged solution does not become a real problem for the aforementioned privacy parameters.

The fact that some people are willing to give up their rights, out of ignorance of free alternatives, does not mean that this is a necessary or even desirable path.

Especially when there are excellent Free/Libre and Open Source Software tools (FLOSS), which means in practice that these codes can be audited, improved and adapted to every need, in an open and clear way. In a collaborative way, either from R&D Universities to Municipalities or between institutions of any kind.

To point out here that the term "Collaboratively" could be crucial to have a future as a society in these times.

THESIS.

My thesis on memory throughout space focuses on XR or eXtended Reality (a compendium of Virtual/Augmented and Mixed reality) as a new tool to implement what Cicero determined as the method of the "Locci" or the Palaces of Memory that served Giordano Bruno so well.

I sense that one of them, the Augmented Reality, will be a very significant element, raising new paradigms in the conception of mental spaces, especially in cities, but also anywhere in the world.

Companies and above all, the big GAFA companies (Google/ Apple/ Facebook/ Amazon...) are now positioning themselves to monopolize all the contents that people might want (and need) in this Geo-Localized "Metaverse".

I would like to make two points here, the first one about the difference between wants and needs. Well, I think it is correct that a for-profit company offers its services on the "wants" created, as a product. But I think that "needs" are another matter, among them the access to cultural heritage, which I understand are a right and its accessibility must be guaranteed, in a safe way, respecting the integrity and privacy of the citizens.

This model involving free software should not be interpreted as free for Free, but as free for Freedom, and, as promoted by the Free Software Foundation, it should be as economically profitable as possible, with the benefit being passed on to the technical developers, as well as to the companies and to society as a whole. The only thing that should be respected in the license is the possibility of always being able to analyze, copy, vary and share the code.

There is a very interesting initiative, regarding this new layer of Augmented Reality, which mixes the georeferenced atoms of real space with digital information and vice versa, which is Open Augmented Reality Cloud; an open standard proposal for the interoperability of georeferenced systems, where everyone can access and link.

Open standards are imposed in the globalized world, from the HTML that Sir Tim Berners Lee gave to humanity, to the webXR of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).

Even these big companies are interested in the existence of a common language, in which each one can build its empire, go ahead with it, but I believe that there must be this open layer available to the needs of citizens and that this must be the one in which the History of cultural heritage is written.

For the question is not only WHO writes the history, but WHERE.

Thus having the opportunity to be able to capture, access and recover the history of places as much as to be able to edit it, in a continuous palimpsest that is life.

PROJECT MALAGUEIRA: Heritage for all.

Contributions for its nomination.

[Trans-disciplinary researchs]

I wish to raise now the example of the project in which I am involved right now; "Malagueira: Patrimonio de Todos. Criteria for its classification". A project to strengthen the candidacy of Évora as a World Cultural City for UNESCO for the year 2027.

A Present Heritage, Alive as the architect Álvaro Siza Vieira and his urban project of Malagueira, started in 1977 and still in movement, at the rhythm of the best things in life, attending to the "Festina Lente" towards a better and possible future.

My small contribution in this case, consists in being able to visualize the not yet built architecture of ASV with the help of VR.

Starting from his free-hand sketches on paper (sketches that he always makes with the common and accessible technology of a "bic" pen) with absolutely revolutionary and subtle concepts, the challenge lies in the translation of these Spatio-Temporal Poems to the VR space.

How to do this? In principle, trying to respect as much as possible certain principles of the architect's work:

-Economy of means (Malagueira's budget was tiny).

-Accessible to all (Portuguese room from the 70's).

-Creating community (always in his mind; creating neighborhood, life).

The counterparts of these principles in the digital world, always trying to maintain the life of the free hand drawn stroke are:

-Mozilla HUBS; a Virtual Reality environment where it is not necessary to have an expensive and proprietary device, but rather, based on open standards, and with an Open Software license as is that of MIT, with the code accessible to, if necessary, mount on a server itself where you can develop scalable proposals, from the most basic and free (25 people at a time, limited geometry) to the system that is required, for the number of people that is estimated, etc.

-Accessible with almost any smartphone, tablet, computer, of any system, as it is based on the browser and the W3C webXR.

-Anyone can access and communicate there with other people. Also log in if you have an email account, but always respecting the principles of privacy.

A space open to the citizen, like the neighborhood of Malagueira itself.

A space not finished, in continuous progression and with multiple uses, as many as the needs of each person at all times.

This project also contemplates in principle a version in AR, with the same purpose of visualization of the projected architecture, which although not yet built, is already a Present, a Gift to the Cultural Heritage.

The creation of this App is focused on cultural tourism. For my part, the proposal product of my research is also with FLOSS, following the standards of OARC, presenting geolocated the emblematic unbuilt buildings, but not in a hyperrealistic way (which consumes a lot of data and energy, but visualizing in space the freehand sketches of the Architect (in its translation to 3D made in my contribution) being able to move "inside" a spatial drawing.

It would also be interesting (as already proposed by some AR app) to be able to interact with the space, leaving a memory, a personal imprint, in a small corner or characteristic point, of what happened (or projected to happen) there, really increasing the palimpsest of social memory, located in some coordinates of the physical space and even endowed with movement over time.

At this point in time, I am afraid that having a certain "apocalyptic" approach is no longer science fiction, and it is all very well to think about smart cities, but it is still interesting to contemplate the scenario of an electrical blackout in the design and that the important things continue to function.

So that these georeferenced points of space have meaning independent of the digital layer, in case of failure,

A triple design: Digital + Physical + Social.

So that, in this double somersault that is the current technological advancement, it is possible to land on its feet, linking people and real spaces, such as the Neighborhood Association of the Malagueira neighborhood, where the most advanced devices of human knowledge are located ... people.

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