



Brasilia Archive and the urban spatial identity

The dominant, emblematic image of the metropolis Brasilia is the famously impressive design of the original city centre and its collection of architectural monuments. The exceptional circumstances of designing and creating a new city from zero, one which disavows traditional urban planning models, inspired a radically futurist vision. However the technocratic character of the city dominates to the detriment of its human aspect. The prohibition of street vendors in major public spaces has led to the creation of an urban environment with beautiful buildings and monuments, but which resembles a touristic mausoleum of futuristic architecture.

The project *Brasilia Archive* by the artists Lina Kim and Michael Wesely helps us understand a forgotten aspect of the peripheral spatial identity which from its beginnings the metropolis created. Composed of 4,000 digitally restored negatives, the archive reveals an unstudied aspect of the construction of Brasilia: the anthropological memory of its spaces, and the growth of its alternative spatial identity. The artists have salvaged an archive whose value extends well beyond the documentary record of construction within 1,000 days of one of the most contentious urban environments of the XX century. The project combines urban social anthropological practice with the reconstruction of a visual memory of the spatial institutionalization of a city.

Its point of departure is the deconstruction of a mediatic representation which identifies Brasilia with an architectural centre void of human content or values. Conceptually *The Brasilia Archive* induces an alternative reading of the city, one without chronological order *per se*, and which does justice to both "before" and "after" This is an archive whose grammar is articulated through the juxtaposition of images which explore the tension between two urban entities which are radically different and contraposed, but which at the same time are interdependent.

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