

Wayfinding

APRDELESP and Daniel Díaz Monterrubio

In 1969, the British illustrator Robin Bath took a photo of one of the entrances to the Balbuena station of the Metro Line 1 right after its inauguration, at the corner of Calzada Zaragoza and Calle 16 in eastern Mexico City. This photograph is from the archive of Lance Wyman who led the identity design for the Metro. The Metro system was supposed to open before the 1968 Olympic Games but it was not finished on time. In the foreground, the original sign post for the station stands with its pink flower pictogram. In the background, there are two buildings: one with fenced windows and a door shutter; and a second one with a plant, a birdcage, a water tank, washing lines and power cables on its rooftop. The buildings appear in bright, contrasting colors, and it would not be surprising if they were painted specifically for the photograph, Potemkin village-style, as it was done in other zones of the city during the Olympic games a year before. The only two people in the shot are two policemen who, from their extremely relaxed posture, one can assume were unaware the photo was being taken.

On a cloudy morning of november 2016, nine cameras on the roof of a Google Street View car took nine simultaneous photographs that were algorithmically stitched together to form a single 360° image of the same entrance of the Balbuena station, 47 years after its inaugu-

ration. This photograph, along with similar images from 2008, 2009, 2011, 2014, and 2015 are publically accessible through Google Maps. In the foreground, the entrance to the underground station is all boarded-up and was being renovated at the time, while the bare structure for the original sign post—now scrap metal—sits upside down on the corner. On top of the fence, there is a red sign indicating that the compulsory fee that the construction workers' union collects has been paid, although not necessarily that the said union is protecting the workers' rights in any way. In the background, both buildings remain: one is now a La Michoacana ice cream shop, painted pink and branded with paraphernalia, and the other has a green sign for a pharmacy, which matches the color of its facade. Of the three people in the photo, two of them clearly know they are being photographed by Google's nine-eyed camera, but there is a third subject, probably peeking into the construction site, perhaps again unaware of the loss of his anonymity.



Balbuena 1969



Balbuena 2016

APRDELESP (Mexico City, 2012) is an architecture office: a practice-as-research on space and its appropriation processes.

Some of their best-known case studies are Material Art Fair (editions: 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2016), MACOLEN (2016), Parque Experimental El Eco (2016), and CAFÉ ZENA (2012).

They have participated in the Chicago Architecture Biennial 2017: Make New History (2017), the digital archive for the Mexican Pavilion at the Biennale di Venezia - 15th International Architecture Exhibition (2016), the museography for the Archivo / Italia exhibition in Archivo Diseño y Arquitectura (2015), and the Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism and Architecture in Shenzhen (2013). They won the "Pabellón Eco" competition for Museo Experimental El Eco (2016) and were finalists for the 3rd Open Call for the Architectural Intervention for the Feria de las Culturas Amigas in Mexico City (2018).

They have published the books A Manifesto on the Appropriation of Space: a Methodology for Making Architecture (Gato Negro Ediciones, 2019) and Notes on Winnie-the-Pooh's house-tree (Ediciones Hungría, 2019). They were selected as one of the Seven Innovative Design Studios to Watch by Metropolis Magazine (2016), and their work has been published in PLAT, Harvard Design Magazine, Log, TANK MAGAZINE, and Scapegoat Journal.

Daniel Díaz Monterrubio (Mexico City, 1986) is an architect graduated with honours at Tec de Monterrey, and complimented his studies at Lund University in Sweden. In Mexico City, Daniel worked on housing projects at Fernanda Canales Arquitectura where he also co-ordinated the publishing of three books, including "Arquitectura en México 1900-2010: obras, diseño, arte y pensamiento" (Grupo Banamex, 2013); he has also collaborated at Rozana Montiel in a series of urban actions. He has written articles and reviews for Arquine and Arris Journal, and his graphic work has been featured in exhibitions at Archivo Diseño y Arquitectura and Abierto Mexicano de Diseño in Mexico City.

Daniel has also worked with Lee Mallet on urban studies for East London, and on residential and educational projects at Philip Meadowcroft Architects, both in London where he is based. Since 2016, Daniel works at Haworth Tompkins where he has been involved in a number of housing projects.

In 2019, Daniel designed and released, in partnership with Ediciones Hungría, "Construcciones Modernas S.A.", the first of a series of architectural illustrations as homage to Mexico City.