Cinematic Representation

Jardin El Carmen

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On a cold Sunday morning of September 2003, Claudio Torres[1] went to park Jardin El Carmen[2] equipped with a digital camera. He started a path in one corner, went around the park and then diagonally traversed it. As he walked he took photos of the path. More than 200 images were later compiled in chronological order to create a movie. But the result was not just a sequence of images giving the illusion of continuous movement. The result pictured processes of appropriation and dynamics of occupancy in urban parks in Mexico.

El Carmen was the first video in a series of cinematic diagrams I created to describe the impermanency of landscape. This project was part of my Masters research that focused on the temporal appropriations of Mexican urban parks.

After a series of static diagrams, I developed *El Carmen*, a device which has the potential of exposing the changes in a park's structure by reflecting multiple capabilities for new connections. The displacement of the camera through the park shows the relationships formed between the setting of the weekend market in the park and the unexpected juxtaposition of stands and trolleys. It becomes not only an illusion of movement, but a diagram, a description of potential relationships among elements, a map of possible worlds.[3] In Deleuze and Guattari's words, the diagrammatic machine does not function to represent even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality.[4]

Landscape processes implicated in *Jardin El Carmen* reflect the empathy that the former has for defining a new paradigm in the field of programmatic configuration. While the images for the video were taken in half an hour, the final edited animation does not show the route in real time, rather, it is a condensed two-minute journey. Consequently, the 'fast motion' of the animation was discarded in order to reveal this urban park's processes. The animation abandons the 'thin' duration of time, and becomes constant for all processes. Instead of looking for a quantitative synchronised order on the sequential images, I focused on the transformative morphogenetic processes.[5]

Unlike the cinematic diagram, *El Carmen* video does not replicate the reality through irreducible compressions of relationships. Nor does it intend to rediscover universal conditions for the cinematic diagram. Rather, it finds the conditions in which the diagram is produced.[6] These conditions reveal the park's social choreography, a homogeneous cloud of components where a cause-effect relationship maintains the landscape's formless and ever-changing structure. According to Stan Allen, multiple functions and action over time are implicit in the diagram.[7] Therefore, the separation of time from the actual animation bounds the park by a fixed force field, restricting visible transformations to a neutral force. This becomes only visible and effective when its components are positioned within a level of partial variables.

How do the park characters – shoe shiner, street vendors, car washers, etc – constitute themselves as subjects of a formal and organic scene? Individualisation of the characters and representation of their actions create unitary entities in relation to the landscape's events. This required the reduction of relationships and lines introduced in the scene to define the capacities of each component. The simultaneity of the external neighbourhood's activities and its relationships constitute the video as a multiplicity through a set of bifurcating and convergent lines. Sequential images generally give only an illusion of movement, yet *El Carmen* does not specify a beginning or end, rather, it represents a multiplicity of interconnected images.

El Carmen analyses the behaviour of a Mexican urban park on a Sunday morning. The animation identifies the park's multiplicity through one point of view. It utilises one point of view to identify a multiplicity where the terms or the elements are not as important as what there is between,[8] that is, the processes that define the multiplicity and singularity of park *Jardin El Carmen*. Its fraught existence does not lie only in the connections between activities, but in the image-order that they have.

The simulation of *El Carmen* allowed me to discover how things work and combine, later unveiling the mysterious principle of social choreography's functioning. The lines generated by the field of convections not only scramble images and activities, but expose the representational mode of the park by revealing the transformations that the system undergoes while walking through it. Time and park reach the *zone de voisinage*[9] where they become indiscernible yet heterogeneous. The representation of the park through the animation is consistent with the exceptional elasticity of time, and time is inferred as a reactor component of the park's system.

To view this video visit: **www.kerbjournal.com**

1 Claudio is my brother, and my source of information in Mexico while I was doing my Masters project.

2 Jardin El Carmen is a park in Puebla (Mexico) characterised by its centrifugal design in paths that lead to a fountain in the middle. This radical configuration is a common rule imposed by Spanish colonial design.

3 Stan Allen, 'Diagrams Matter', *ANY Architecture*, New York, vol 23, 1998, 16.

4 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, London: Athlone, 1998.

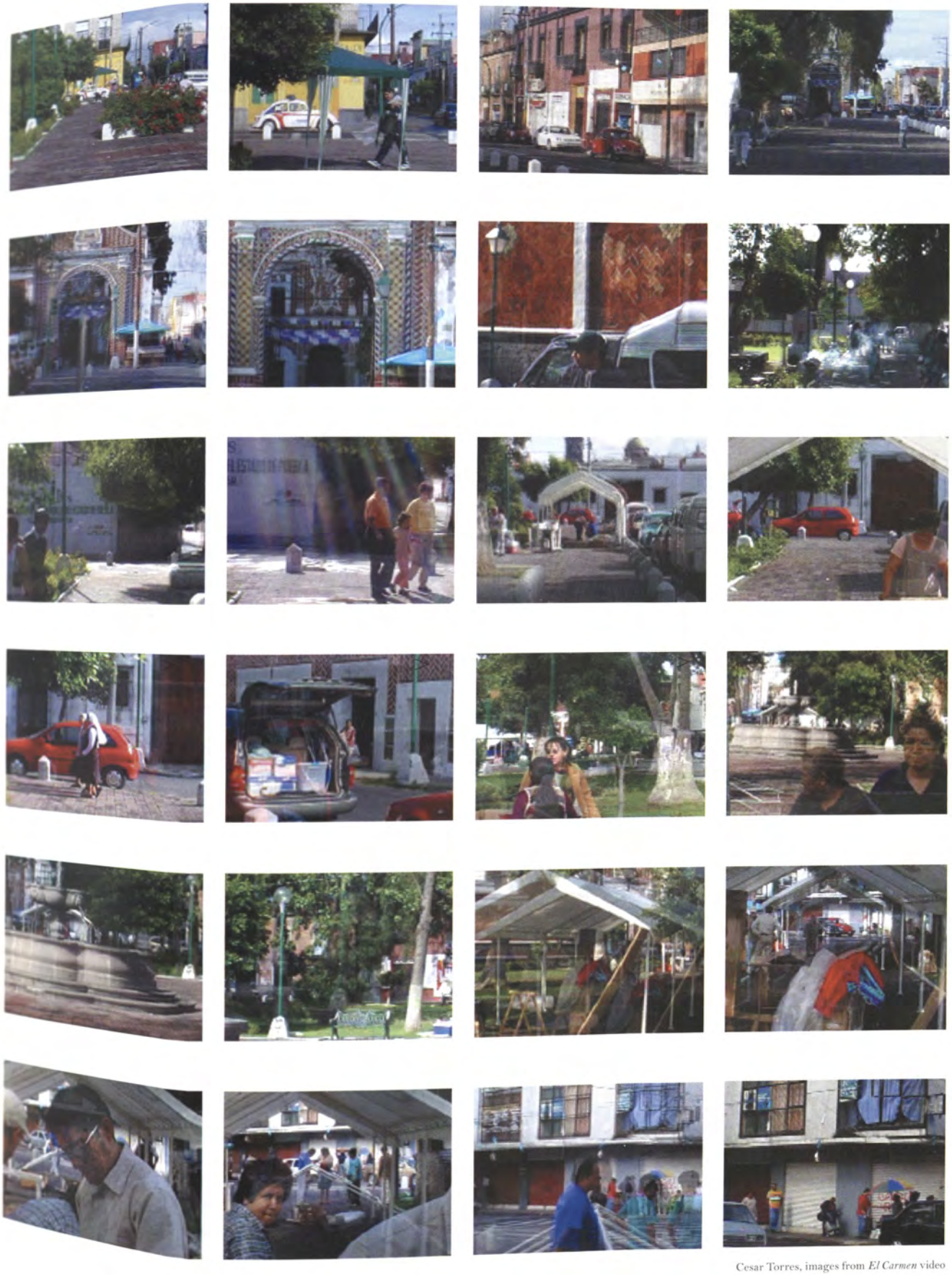
5 Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Towards a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*, London: MIT Press, 2002, 22.

6 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, vii.

7 Stan Allen, 'Diagrams Matter', *ANY Architecture*, vol 23, New York, 1998, 16.

8 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, Dialogues II, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, vii.

9 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, 19.



Cesar Torres, images from *El Carmen* video