

Cover with Jorge Oteiza's "Escultura para la capilla de la Escuela profesional de Buitrago, 1972-73," in *Nueva Forma* 89 (June 1973).



MÁS CONTEXTO / 30-31 / BILBAO

# BILBAO AND THE MAGAZINE NUEVA FORMA

Essay by Lucía C. Pérez-Moreno and Elena Martínez-Litago

It was in the 1960s when architects interested in organizing the past had enough historical perspective to present different narratives for Spanish modern architecture. The different books published throughout this decade documented buildings that were clearly influenced by the language of the International Style. Many of these buildings are now regarded as masterful examples of Spanish architecture culture. The main scope of these books was style, with the aim to document—especially through photographs—and demonstrate that modernity was a reality in Spain. At the same time, geographical aspects were latent, but not explicit, in the organization of those books, essentially because of the location of the buildings that were selected to be published. Madrid

and Barcelona were mainly the two cities represented, probably because there were only two schools of architecture in those years, one in each city. Therefore, the most relevant journals of architecture were also published in those cities: *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* (later called *Arquitectura*) in Madrid, and *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo* (later called *Cuadernos de Arquitectura y Urbanismo*) in Barcelona. In 1966, a new magazine of art and architecture titled *Nueva Forma* started to publish. It is remarkable that architects from the Basque Country, and also Navarre, had significant roles in much of its issues. The director and editors of *Nueva Forma* identified this territory as a third cultural area of Spain, highlighting the history and the architecture of the city of Bilbao.



Fig.1 Covers of: *El Inmueble*, March 1966, n.2; *Forma Nueva-El Inmueble*, April 1967, n.15; *Forma Nueva-El Inmueble*, August 1967, n.19; *Nueva Forma*, December 1967-January 1968, n.23-24.

### Editors, Title, and Director

In 1967, Juan Huarte Beaumont acquired a new little periodical titled *El Inmueble* that had started publishing a year earlier and was being run by the Spanish poet Gabino Alejandro Carriedo. Juan Huarte was the son of Félix Huarte, the head of a remarkable family in the Spanish history of art and architecture. They were originally from Navarre, but most of their companies and businesses were based in Madrid. They supported and funded the development of modern art and design in Spain, especially in the 1950s, becoming one of the most relevant families in the country. They sponsored the early work of remarkable Spanish artists, such as the Basque sculptors Jorge Oteiza and Eduardo Chillida, and the Madrilean painter Pablo Palazuelo, among

others. They also promoted experimental initiatives such as the cinema producer X-Films and the electronic and acoustic music group ALEA. The family owned several building construction companies: Huarte & Cía, HISA, and Imenasa. These companies were in charge of the construction of remarkable architectural projects that were later considered masterpieces of Spanish Modern Architecture, such as the Frontón Recoletos, designed by Secundino Zuazo and Eduardo Torroja (1935-1936), and the housing block Torres Blancas, designed by Francisco Javier Sáenz de Oiza (1960-1968).<sup>1</sup> Juan Huarte admired the work of the Italian entrepreneur Adriano Olivetti and the magazine *Zodiac*, of which he was in charge. Probably inspired by this, Juan Huarte's aim was to establish a similar kind

of magazine in Spain. His new commitment was not only to promote art and architecture, but also their spread throughout the media.

During the first year, Huarte's magazine enjoyed several titles. Originally called *El Inmueble*, it was changed to *Forma Nueva-El Inmueble* a few months later, becoming *Nueva Forma*, its final name, in September of 1967. There is not a clear consensus regarding these changes. The original magazine had a section about design, furniture, and decoration titled *Forma Nueva*. This section grew to become very significant, so its name was included in the title of the magazine. This second title, *Forma Nueva-El Inmueble*, was problematic due to the existence of Loewe's magazine *Forma*. It seems that the Spanish regulations at the

time did not allow two magazines to share the first word of their titles. Consequently, the title was changed once again to its final version, *Nueva Forma*. The subtitle of the magazine was also changed, from "*arquitectura, decoración, hogar*" (architecture, decoration, home) to "*arquitectura, urbanismo, diseño, ambientes, arte. Madrid-Barcelona-Bilbao*" (architecture, urbanism, design, environment, art. Madrid-Barcelona-Bilbao) (fig.1). Finally, the person in charge of the magazine also changed. The architect Juan Daniel Fullaondo, originally from Bilbao, became the main director of *Nueva Forma* in September of 1967, lasting until April of 1975 when the magazine finally closed. The fact that Bilbao was included in the new subtitle and that the new director was also from Bilbao—although working



Fig.2 Covers of the four issues of *Nueva Forma* that analyze the history of the city of Bilbao: *Nueva Forma* 34 (November 1968), *Nueva Forma* 35 (December 1968), *Nueva Forma* 36 (January 1969), and *Nueva Forma* 37 (February 1969).

and living in Madrid—were not anecdotal decisions. Fullaondo and Huarte shared the desire of positioning this territory as a cultural reference in Spain. It was not casual, either, that the cover of the first issue run by Fullaondo was a portrait of the Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza.

#### Bilbao, its Architecture and Architects

In June of 1967, Juan Daniel Fullaondo published an essay about Bilbao in the magazine *Arquitectura*, the main architecture magazine in Madrid. He summarized the history of the urban development of the city as a way to praise and discuss the end of the urban planning for Asua Valley, a new important urban expansion for the city designed in 1962.<sup>2</sup> This article was the starting point for a series of articles later published in four special issues of *Nueva Forma*, from November of 1968 until February of 1969. Issues 34 to 37 were entirely dedicated to examining the history and the architecture culture of Bilbao (fig.2).

The first chapter of issue 34, “Análisis Urbanístico,” documented and discussed the main historical decisions of the urban

planning of Bilbao, from prehistoric settlements to modern developments.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the discussion, Fullaondo highlighted three relevant moments in history that transformed this city: the nineteenth century urban expansion, the “Conferencia de la Bastida” in 1923, and the new plan of 1943, which was directly related with the urban expansion of Asua Valley. Fullaondo’s writing not only showed a critical interpretation of these designs, but also questioned previous readings from historians such as Caro Baroja and Leopoldo Torres Balbás.<sup>4</sup> This fact was important so that the readers could appreciate the writers who previously had valued the relevance of the city. In doing so, Fullaondo essentially presented to the reader a maritime city with a remarkable industrial and commercial po-

tential that grew along the Nervión River with mindful respect for the landscape. The second chapter presented an architectural analysis of the city.<sup>5</sup> Fullaondo focused on the cultural backwardness of Spain in comparison with the rest of Europe due to the Civil War (1936-1939) and the economical crisis that followed. He also discussed the historicist and eclectic architecture that still persisted in some areas of the country. Nevertheless, he presented an organization of the past using Ortega y Gasset’s idea of the “Generation” creating a genealogy of outstanding local architects whose work was essential to understand the development of the city. The writing first discussed the pioneer career of the engineer and architect Alberto del Palacio, who invented the suspension-transported bridge, the

Fig.3 Santiago Amón, “Universo y poética de Alberto del Palacio,” in *Nueva Forma* 60-61 (January-February 1971): 54-55; Alberto del Palacio’s suspension-transporter Bridge of Bizkaia (1893); Juan Daniel Fullaondo, “Análisis Urbanístico,” in *La arquitectura y el urbanismo de la región y el entorno de Bilbao 1* (Madrid, Alfaguara, 1969), 231.



first being Bridge of Bizkaia (1893). This design would later influence other engineers, such as the French Ferdinand Arnodin who became internationally renowned because of his cableway bridges. In 1971, *Nueva Forma* edited a special issue (issue 60-61) about the life and career of Del Palacio, as a vindication of his pioneer yet unknown work. This issue discussed his designs as civil engineering decisions that influenced the landscape of the city, consequently changing the understanding that people had of the Nervión River (fig.3). In subsequent issues, Fullaondo discussed the career and work of four generations of local architects who shared architecture cultural values. According to Ortega, a generation was a whole group, which is coetaneous and lives in and be-

longs to the same circle. The idea of a generation, therefore, does not imply anything more than these two factors: to be of the same age, and to have some kind of vital contact.<sup>6</sup> The second issue, “Bilbao 2,” was a wide study about the regional architecture of Bilbao. According to Fullaondo, it was necessary to understand its long tradition due to the relevance of its building construction system used in the architecture built in the city during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Names such as Manuel María Smith, José Luis de Oriol, Ángel Libano, Guimón Bastida, and Emiliano Ammann were part of this first generation of Basque architects.<sup>7</sup> Despite their historical relevance, their architecture was still so influenced by traditional

and regional architecture that they could not be considered modern architects (fig.4). In contrast, the following generation was quite remarkable due to their clear affinity with the European new architecture.<sup>8</sup> Mario Camuña, Secundino Zuazo, Pedro Ispizua, Tomás Bilbao, Manuel Galíndez, and Luis Vallejo were architects who showed a special interest in German expressionism and the architecture lead by Eric Mendelsohn. Among others, Fullaondo highlighted three projects as the most representative of this generation: the houses of Tomás Bilbao in Indauchu (1934), the Briñas School of Pedro Ispizua (1932-1933), and the Equitativa building of Manuel Galíndez (1932). Despite the high quality of the second generation of Basque architects, Fullaondo considered the 1940s as a step backwards

regarding architectural culture, as it was the case for the rest of Spain. In his own words, “most of the buildings constructed in the early forties [were] not part of the history of architecture.”<sup>9</sup> Only a few examples could be highlighted for following modern principals. The Santamarina Sanatorium designed by Eugenio Aquinaga in 1942 was an example of a building that overcame the national and collective interest for historicism (fig.5), looking for international references, particularly in Finnish architecture and the work of Alvar Aalto. Continuing with Fullaondo’s genealogy, José Chapa, Francisco Hurtado de Saracho, Álvaro Libano, and Rafael Aburto would be the following generation, the third generation of Basque architects who mainly worked in the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> All of them could be considered modern

Casa de vecinos y sánia en la Gran Vía, de Bilbao.

Grupo de casas en la Gran Vía.

Grupo de casas en la Gran Vía.

Casa de alquiler de T. Allende en Las Arenas.

Casa de alquiler en Las Arenas.

Casa de alquiler en Bilbao.

El arquitecto Manuel María Smith.

**SMITH**

**EL MAR EN PERSONA**

He aquí el mar alzado en un abrir y cerrar de ojos de pastor.  
 He aquí el mar sin sueño como un gran miedo de tréboles en flor.  
 Y en postura de tierra, sumisa al parecer.  
 Ya se van con sus lanas de evidencia su nube y su labor.  
 A la sombra de un olmo nunca hay tiempo que perder.

Crédula exquisita, la oscuridad sale a mi encuentro.  
 Mi frente abriga la corteza del pan que llevo dentro.  
 Cortado a pico sobre un pájaro inseguro.

Y así me alejo bajo la acción del piano  
 que me cose a las plantas precursoras del mar.  
 Un ciervo de otoño baja a lamer la luna de tu mano.

Y ahora a mi orilla el mundo se empieza a desnudar.  
 Para morir de árboles al fondo de mis ojos.

Mis cabellos se llenan de peces de penumbra  
 y de esqueletos de navíos forzosos.

Sin ir más lejos,  
 tú eres fría como el hacha que derriba el silencio  
 en la lucha entre el paisaje y su golpe de vista.

Mas cuando el cielo exporta sus célebres pianistas  
 y la lluvia el olor de mi persona,  
 cómo tu hermoso corazón se traiciona.

**JUAN LARREA.**

Hotel Carlton en Bilbao.

Fig.4 Manuel María Smith, from the "first generation" of Basque architects, in *Nueva Forma* 35 (December 1968): 63.

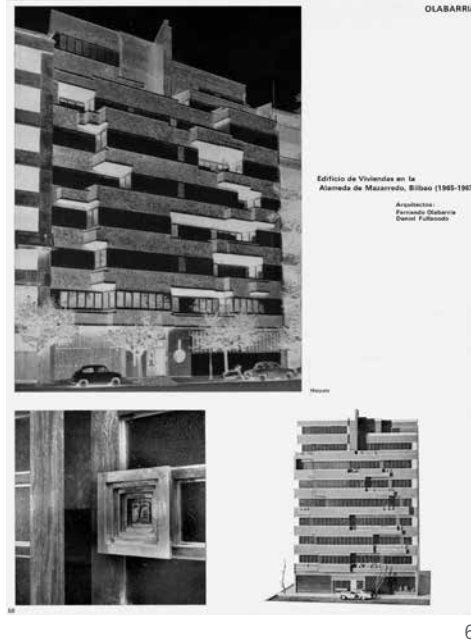
Sanatorio Antituberculoso "Santa Marina" en Bilbao (1942)

Arq.: Eugenio Aguinaga

Fig.5 "Santa Marina Sanatorium in Bilbao (1942)," by Eugenio Aguinaga, in *Nueva Forma* 36 (January 1969): 11.

Fig.6 Housing building in Alameda de Mazarredo, Bilbao (1965-1967), by Fernando Olabarria and Juan Daniel Fullaondo, in *Nueva Forma* 37 (February 1969): 56.

Fig.7 Cover of the issue about Rafael Aburto, in *Nueva Forma* 99 (April 1974), and the issue about José Luis and Felix Iñiguez de Onzoño and Antonio Vázquez de Castro, in *Nueva Forma* 102-103 (July-August 1974).



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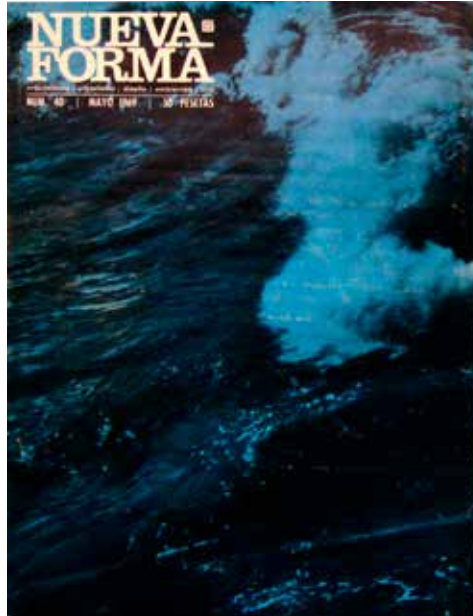
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and, in particular, rationalist. All of them were clearly influenced by the masterpieces of Le Corbusier and Giuseppe Terragni, among others. The 1950s were years in which a large number of social housing developments were constructed, in response to the need to build inexpensive dwellings due to the devastation caused by the Civil War. Fullaondo considered the new development of Caño Roto in Madrid (1957-1968) as the turning point for a new generation of architects whose work evolved into the framework of organicism.<sup>11</sup> The Basque architects José Luis Iñiguez de Onzoño and Antonio Vázquez de Castro, the authors of Caño Roto, did not believe in limiting architecture to the formal dictates of the Modern Movement. Their architectural goal was to serve the human needs of daily

life. This was the main characteristic of the fourth generation that was also represented by other architects such as Rufino Basáñez, Fernando Olabarria, Miguel de Oriol, and Fullaondo himself (fig.6). In pointing out organicism as the main influence of these architects, Fullaondo was influenced by the writings of the Italian historian and critic Bruno Zevi. He argued for a synthesis of the history of art and architecture based on successive cycles of creativity and regression, a vision that he inherited from his main philosophical influence, Benedetto Croce. Therefore, organic architecture was a progression from rationalism, a positive evolution that transcended the linguistic canons of orthodox functionalism to inspire the creative spirit of the author, which in his opinion had been bound and corseted.

Once *Nueva Forma* published these four volumes about the history and architectural culture of the city of Bilbao, the magazine continued publishing special issues on the career and work of Basque architects and artists. These volumes were the first monographs that compiled their careers and the work of all of them. From the last two generations, *Nueva Forma* published monographs about Rafael Aburto (issue 99 in 1974), and José Luis Iñiguez de Onzoño and Antonio Vázquez de Castro (issue 102-103 in 1974) (fig.7). Other architects who were not from Bilbao but from other areas of the Basque Country and Navarre also had special issues on their work. In 1969, issue 40 was dedicated to José Manuel Aizpurúa, the leader of the Northern Group of the GATEPAC (*Grupo de Artistas y Téc-*

*nicos Españoles para la Arquitectura Contemporánea*), a group close to the ideals of the CIAM. Among other projects, the Club Náutico (Donostia, 1929-30) stands out. Built in partnership with Joaquín Labayen, it is considered a masterpiece of Spanish Modern Architecture and was the only Spanish project to be featured in Henry-Russel Hitchcock and Philip Johnson's well-known book *The International Style*.<sup>12</sup> (fig.8) In 1973, issue 90-91 was dedicated to the career and work of Teodoro Anasagasti and Víctor Eusa from Bizkaia and Navarre, respectively (fig.9). Fullaondo considered both of them as examples of the influence of German expressionism in the architecture of the 1930s. Along with these issues, younger architects, with short but promising careers, were also



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considered for special volumes, such as Luis Peña Ganchequi from Donostia, and Fernando Redón, Rafael Moneo, and Patxi Biurrun, from Navarre. In underlining the culture of the Basque Country, *Nueva Forma* also published special issues on the work of Basque artists. The most outstanding were the sculptors Jorge Oteiza and Eduardo Chillida (fig.10). Other youngest Basque artists who were in close contact with Oteiza and Chillida also had articles and issues published by *Nueva Forma*, including Nestor Basterrechea, Agustín Ibarrola, and José Antonio Sistiaga. While he was in charge of the magazine, Fullaondo published two books that compiled and extended with better photo essays most of the documentation about Bilbao already discussed. The editorial *Alfaguara*—also

owned by the Huarte family—published both books under the title: *La arquitectura y el urbanismo de la región y el entorno de Bilbao I* (1969) and *La arquitectura y los arquitectos de la región y el entorno de Bilbao II* (1971).

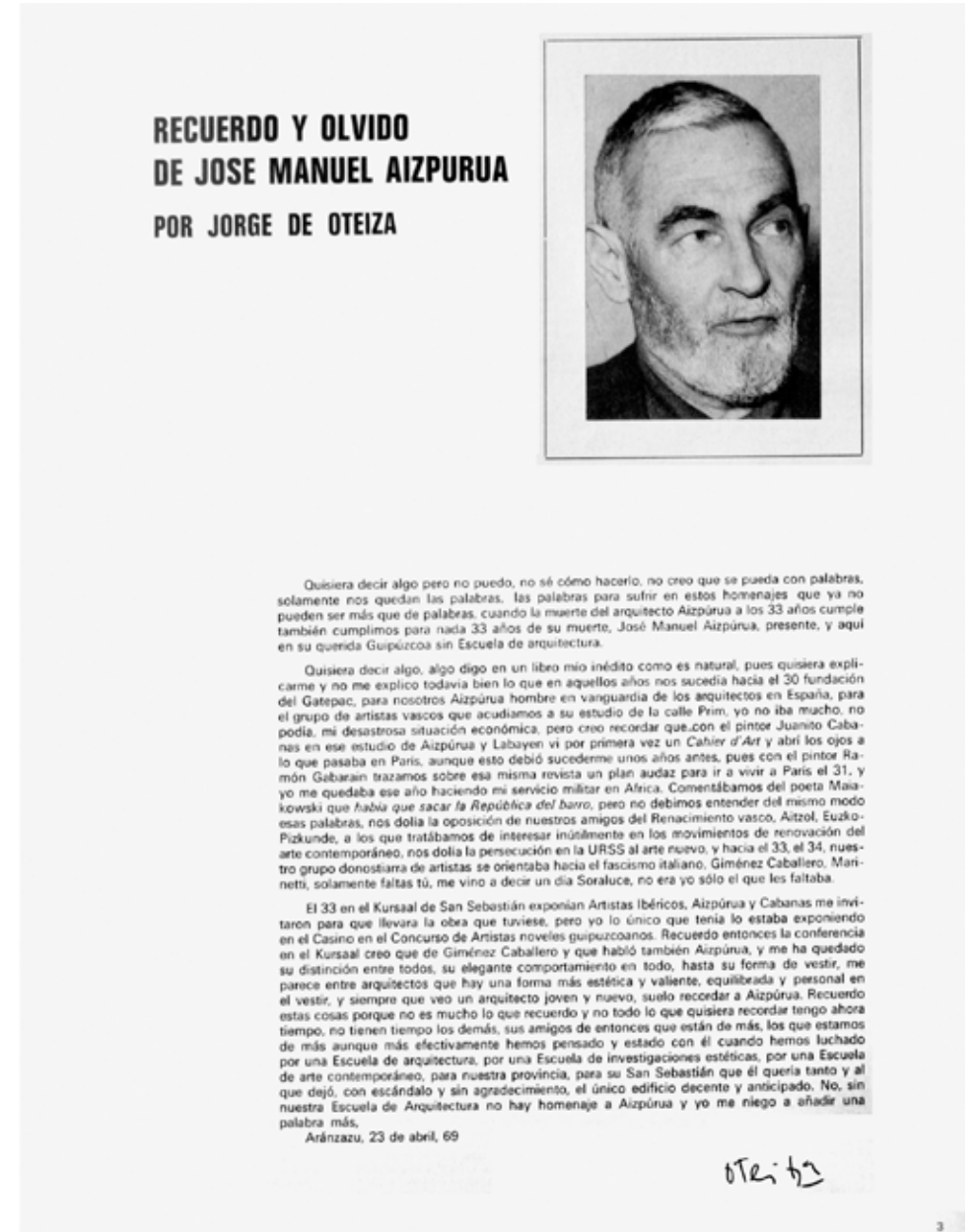


Fig.8 Cover of the issue about José Manuel Aizpurúa, and letter by Jorge Oteiza, in *Nueva Forma* 40 (May 1969): 3.



Fig.9 Cover of the issue about Teodoro Anasagasti and Víctor Eusa, in *Nueva Forma* 90-91 (July-August 1973); "Casino Eslava, 1931," by Víctor Eusa, in *Nueva Forma* 68 (September 1971): 18-19.



Fig.10 Cover with Jorge Oteiza's, "La desocupación de la esfera, 1957," in *Forma Nueva- el Inmueble* 14 (March 1967).

**Toward a Third Cultural Area**

Fullaondo's writings always accepted Madrid and Barcelona as the main areas of architectural culture in Spain. Nevertheless, the amount of articles and special issues about the work and career of architects from the Basque Country and Navarre is an expression of his interest in pointing out this area as the third cultural outstanding territory of the country. *Nueva Forma* became a magazine where all these architects and artist found a shared platform to see their work interpreted as a whole. It was necessary as a way to defeat the feeling of being a disarticulated number of individuals who did not have a common way to express their ideals. It is remarkable that in some writings, Fullaondo used the term 'School of Bilbao' as a way to identify

young Basque architects such as Basañez or Larrea, despite the fact that there was not a real school of architecture in these years.<sup>13</sup> Thus, this amount of writings is also a manifestation of the editor's concern about spreading the architectural culture of the Basque Country and Navarre throughout the rest of Spain, and especially in Madrid where the magazine was published.

**Endnotes**

- 1 Javier Martínez González and Marta García Alonso, "Building Modern Spain: Some Notes on Huarte y Cía," in *Nuts & Bolts of Construction History. Culture, Technology and Society*, vol. II, eds. Carvais, R., et al. (Paris: Picard, 2012), 99-106.
- 2 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "Bilbao: Historia urbanística," in *Arquitectura* 102 (June 1967): 27-36.
- 3 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "Bilbao: Análisis Urbanístico," in *Nueva Forma* 34 (November 1968): 5-81.
- 4 Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "La edad media," in *Resumen histórico del urbanismo en España* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1968), 1-107.
- 5 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "Bilbao: Análisis Arquitectónico," in *Nueva Forma* 34 (November 1968): 82-118.
- 6 José Ortega y Gasset, "La idea de las generaciones" in *J. Ortega y Gasset, En torno a Galileo* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1967), 51-52; 1st edition, *En torno a Galileo* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1962).
- 7 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "La Primera Generación," in *Nueva Forma* 35 (December 1968): 67.
- 8 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "La Generación de Zuazo," in *Nueva Forma* 35 (December 1968): 75.
- 9 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "La Tercera Generación," in *Nueva Forma* 36 (January 1969): 10.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "La Generación actual," in *Nueva Forma* 37 (February 1969): 4.
- 12 Henry Russel Hitchcock and Phillip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1932).
- 13 Juan Daniel Fullaondo, "Rufino Basañez," in *Nueva Forma* 37 (February 1969): 35.