It is the premiere of José Val del Omar’s *Fuego en Castilla* [Fire in Castile] at the 1961 Cannes Film Festival. Extinguished torches emit a strong resin smell. Vegetal patterns flood the walls, ceiling and main floor of the auditorium. Sound comes from the front of the room, but also from the back. On the screen, seventeenth century Spanish Baroque sculptures flicker at such a frantic speed that viewers have trouble grasping their actual forms. At their entrance to the room, spectators had been given a leaflet identifying the “electronic” film as the “ardent firmament to Mysticism [*el firmamento ardiente a la Mística]*.”

On the back of the leaflet, the word “TactilVisión” was superimposed on the picture of a caged macaque. Indeed, the transformation of the movie theater into a multi-sensory environment was meant to reinforce what Val del Omar described as the *tactil* effects of the film:

> synesthetic experiences attempting to recover the original haptic qualities of vision by creating a bodily response approaching religious ecstasy. Ultimately, Val del Omar wished that this synesthetic system and its mystical import would quickly expand through the wide-spread adoption of television in Spain.

This dissertation examines the spatial discourses tethered to the introduction of electronic media in Spain during the 1950s, focusing on the theoretical, technical, and artistic practice of José Val del Omar (1904–1982). Consultant at large of the Ministerio de Información y Turismo [Ministry of Information and Tourism] since its constitution in 1952, Val del Omar would after 1956 concentrate on advising the creation of Televisión Española [Spanish Television Channel].

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2. In coining the neologism *tactil* (*tak til*)—which resulted from the removal of the accent of the Spanish *táctil* (*tak ‘til*)—Val del Omar intended to give a better semantic response to an alternate mode of synaesthetic apperception entangling sight and touch. By displacing the stress of the term to the snap of the vowel i, Val del Omar believed that the sounding of the word produced a haptic, shocking reaction: this particular orthography transformed the term into a synesthetic device in and of itself. Román Gubern, *Val del Omar, Cinemista* (Granada: Diputación de Granada, 2004), p. 67.
Over the course of his long career, both in individual practice and institutional engagement, Val del Omar attempted to redesign every element configuring the cinematic and televisual apparatuses.

During the 1960s, the work of Reyner Banham on technological and environmental comfort (consolidating the influence of the media theories of Marshall McLuhan in the architectural field) prompted a conceptual dematerialization of architecture into energy flows, information, and environmental forces. More recent architectural history has attempted to show how these narratives undergirded the development of a variety of spatial artifacts, from multimedia spaces to American corporate architecture. While these works pose technological and scientific advancements as the attendant outcomes of processes of rationalization, the specific case of Spain proves how these fields also contributed to the survival of certain forms of religiosity including mystic rituals and ecstatic experiences. Particularly in Spain, the introduction of media technologies was imbricated with emerging scientific disciplines such as bionics while infusing electronic media with spiritual import.

Through its resulting spatial products, this dissertation investigates the reconciliation of the Francoist construction of the political subject—oscillating between a strict Catholic asceticism controlled by ecclesiastic orders and fascist body politics—with the robust consumerism promoted by the expansion and implementation of new US-led global networks in Spain. Furthermore, my study uses the figure of Val del Omar to elucidate the tensions created by his entanglement of technology and science with mysticism and forms of popular religiosity. Unlike with other European totalitarianisms, Spain’s fascist party, La Falange, was only able to gain power through the formulation of Nacional Catolicismo [National Catholicism], a conflation of State apparatuses and Catholic ecclesiastic power that, partially adopting the traits of fascism, monopolized culture, education, and science during the early years of the regime.3 Although acknowledging the importance of the modernizing effects of this new order in the 1950s, Francoism still stuck to Spain’s religious exceptionalism within this post-industrial global network, continuously singling out the country’s role as the “spiritual promontory of Europe.”4 During the first years of the regime, the Francoist State attempted a “Christianization” of science and technology, commanded by the Consejo Superior de Administraciones Científicas [Superior Council of Scientific

3 The relation of Spanish Francoism to German Nazism and Italian Fascism is still a matter of contention. Although there are a large amount of commonalities between Francoism and the fascist regimes that emerged in Germany and Italy during the beginning of the twentieth century, the heterogeneous base undergirding the Spanish dictatorship requires a distinct approach. See the positions of Tony Judt, Postwar Europe since 1945 (London: Heinemann, 2005); Raymond Carr, Modern Spain, 1875-1980 (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

4 [“España, promontorio espiritual de Europa, proa avanzada del alma continental, es el umbral natural de Europa, nexo y soldadura espiritual de tres continentes, momento clave en el existir histórico del mundo, de este mundo, de este planeta que vosotros habéis contribuido a unificar, a hacer más apretado, más compacto y solidario.”] “Esta Mañana Salen de España los Tres Astronautas Para Seguir su Viaje.” ABC (September 29, 1969), p. 34.
Administrations]. Its director, the soon-to-become-priest José María Albareda, was in charge of integrating scientific and technological development under a single, theological umbrella ruling every aspect of the Francoist State in a strict manner. In that sense, mysticism and popular religiosities dissented from Weber’s notion of modernity as a process of “disenchantment” and proposed a different kind of political order from Nacional Catolicismo in offering the subject direct access to the Divine independently from any hierarchical mediation.

After the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration sought to consolidate a geostrategic alliance with the Franco dictatorship to ensure the curtailment of potential communist expansion throughout Western Europe. Following the 1953 Madrid Agreements [Pactos de Madrid] that settled US military bases in Spanish sovereign territory, the Franco administration received economic aid and technical tutelage from the United States in order to modernize the country’s crippled economic and industrial infrastructures. In 1957, the substitution of fascist-affiliated ministers with technocrats associated with the ultra-conservative Catholic institution Opus Dei perfectly converged with capitalism’s “theological value of work.” Through the guidance of US state agencies like the International Cooperation Administration, and the action of a conglomerate of institutions—including the Ford Foundation, UNESCO, the World Bank, and companies like IBM and Remington Rand—Spain’s preexisting scientific and technologic research was suddenly plugged into a system constructed upon economic globalization, the consolidation of information technologies, and the revalorization of communication.

The 1964 agreement between Spain and the US that allowed Spain to use American satellite bandwidth, and the 1965 installation of data circuits linking Spanish territories and US military

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5 Recent work by historian of science Lino Camprúbi has explored the connections between the Consejo Superior de Administraciones Científicas and logics of religious redemption. In her work attempting to unfold the entanglement between ideology and architecture in early Francoism, architectural historian Maria González Pendás has analyzed the relationship between Albareda and architect Miguel Fisac, who designed the majority of buildings of the Consejo Superior. See María González Pendás, *Architecture, Technocracy, and Silence: Building Discourse in Franquista Spain* (New York: Columbia University, PhD Dissertation, 2016); Lino Camprúbi, *Engineers and the Making of the Francoist Regime.* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014).

6 The Opus Dei is a religious organization founded in 1928 by José María Escrivá de Balaguer to promote spirituality through daily actions. José V. Casanova posed the highly provocative thesis that modernization was only possible in Spain due to the convergence of capitalism’s undergirding protestant ethics, as formulated by Max Weber, and Opus Dei’s ethics, breaking from the traditional “bad conscience” of the wealthy Catholic. José V. Casanova, *The Opus Dei Ethic and the Modernization of Spain* (New York: New School for Social Research, PhD Dissertation, 1982).

7 Felicity D. Scott recently surveyed the role of institutions such as the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, and the UN in the architectural and territorial implications of US postwar hegemony, especially in relation to the developing world. See Felicity D. Scott, *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity / Architectures of Counterinsurgency* (New York: Zone Books, 2016).

8 The new forms of subjectivity resulting from the organization of power as deployed under these new parameters have been described by Gilles Deleuze in “Control and Becoming” and “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” both reproduced in *Negotiations 1972-1990.* Translated by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 169-182.
bases to the American mainland, cemented a popular fascination with real-time transmission. During the 1960s, attempts to render these seemingly immaterial processes perceptible haunted the rhetoric of the Francoist regime. Francoist administrators insisted on the invasion of the Spanish “fortress” by “the power of waves, film and television” that “flies through the spaces … vitiating the purity of our ambient environment [ambiente].” After 1960, when the Spanish government and the Eisenhower administration agreed to build a NASA tracking station on Great Canary Island, there was an increasing infusion of real-time transmission with a spiritual import: Val del Omar saw in the transmission capacities of the first artificial telecommunications satellite Telstar (launched into orbit in 1963) a prophetic guidance to mystically orient the subject of the television era. Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza insisted that the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, encountered the fourteenth century figure of the Count of Orgaz in outer space “set into orbit” by El Greco’s Baroque pictorial visions.

Although primarily developed during the 1950s and ‘60s, Val del Omar’s project was more acutely tied to the avant-garde cinematic experiments, especially to Dadaist and Surrealist film of the 1920s and 1930s, than to the offspring of their postwar deferred action. Advocating for alternatives to symbolic meaning, the filmmaker reconfigured cinema as a non-textual form of communication supported by forms of popular religiosity and mysticism. According to Val del Omar, the use of textual symbolic systems based on code repetition limited the subject’s freedom of expression, suggesting that the association between instinctual reactions and words helped

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12 Film critic Thomas Beard has pointed to the singular “breadth and trans-generational nature” of Val del Omar’s work. In a career that spanned from the 1920s to the early 1980s, his work was in dialogue with the early cinematographic efforts of the Dadaists and Surrealists in the 1930s, with the cinematic experiences of the 1940s and 1950s, like those of Peter Kubelka and Kenneth Anger, and with the Expanded Cinema experiences of Stan VanDerBeek during the 1960s and 1970s. Thomas Beard, “José Val del Omar A lo Largo de Tres Vanguardias.” In Eugeni Bonet et al, Desbordamiento de Val del Omar (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2010), pp. 40-47.

assimilate the individual to the masses.\textsuperscript{14} But the recording and transmission of instincts enabled by the cinematic apparatus allowed spectators to relate to their environment, and to unconsciously absorb it through the establishment of simpatía, the Spanish term used to render Wilhelm Worringer’s notion of \textit{Einfühlung} (as mistranslated by philosopher José Ortega y Gasset). Despite Val del Omar’s repeated use of this term, simpatía has been overlooked in scholarly accounts of his film theories. After the Spanish Civil War, Val del Omar responded to the effects on science and technological infrastructures of military agreements with the United States with theories on perception that sought to combine mysticism with new developments in science, as well as pseudo-scientific experimentation on the senses, demonstrating a growing interest in para-psychological phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance.\textsuperscript{15}

To give scientific credibility to his thesis on simpatía, Val del Omar resorted to the progressive development in Spain of bionics and bioethical discourses (such as for example, the building habits of primates). These scientific disciplines displaced the prevailing natural theological axioms that interpreted the design “precision” in animals’ building techniques as grounded in a divinely bestowed instinct.\textsuperscript{16} Val del Omar characterized animal vision as exemplifying a commotional, purely instinctual communication to be enacted through new media, which the human subject had retained in her phylogenetic structure during its evolution from ameba to hominid. Furthermore, this perceptual system—understood as capable of bypassing the codes of language instilled by education in the human mind—would be able to overcome the “unethical” uses of spectacle on the subject and its impact on the subject through imitation.

Val del Omar’s ideas on the sensorium were first tested in the transformation of movie theatre architecture through the implementation of new cinematic technologies, (such as Cinemascope, Cinerama and Vista-Visión), introduced by the American film industry during the 1950s to win back popular audiences increasingly seduced by network television.\textsuperscript{17} Val del Omar was deeply


\textsuperscript{15} Val del Omar tied the development of bioelectronics to a “clarification of the telepathic phenomenon,” directly pointing to the work of Leonid Vasiliev as “discover[ing] that telepathy, suggestion and clairvoyance are functions of the modest instinct.” José Val del Omar in “Dilema y Poder.” Sáenz de Buruaga, Gonzalo, and María José Val del Omar (ed.), \textit{Val del Omar: Sin Fin} (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1992), pp. 221-222.


\textsuperscript{17} Although televisal infrastructures were still underway in Spain, the new commercial ties between that country and the US accelerated the implementation of these audiovisual systems. For a comprehensive history on the introduction of these multiple projection formats, see John Belton, \textit{Widescreen Cinema} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Alison Griffiths, \textit{Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View} (New York: Columbia University
critical of solutions focusing on the enhancement of the material qualities of the image that overlooked the psychic-physiological, ethical, and sociological possibilities ingrained in the same medium. Val del Omar would attempt to restore these social qualities via a complete overhaul of the existing cinematic apparatus. In this regard, the filmmaker argued for the spatial singularity of the movie theater, converting its space into a multi-sensory environment through the intensification of its darkness and illumination, and the implementation of unique sensorial devices such as “surround sound,” seat equipment with vibratory effects, the release of inductive smells, or the catering of specially flavored snacks.\footnote{Although some of his propositions preceded these devices, Val del Omar was well acquainted with architectural projects retrospectively hinged in histories of the expansion of the moving-image: he had personally visited Edgar Varèse’s multimedia \textit{Poème Électronique} featured at Le Corbusier and Iannis Xennakis’ Philips Pavilion in Brussels '58 as well as the Eames’ \textit{Think} at the IBM Pavilion in the 1964 New York World’s Fair, and was fully aware of the technical innovations conforming Robert Breer and Billy Klüver’s E.A.T.’s Pepsi Pavilion in Expo Osaka ’70.} By extension, the filmmaker’s interests would shift from cinema to televisual space after the introduction of the television broadcasting system by the Francoist administration in the mid-1950s. Val del Omar proposed the creation of a national social club, whose members would communicate in real-time through the coordination of TV with radio, telephone, and 8/8 cameras. This program sought to convert every space on the televisual network into a point of audiovisual data transmission and reception, dismantling the binary distinction between studio production and domestic reception. This system anticipates the modes of network connectivity that would reign supreme with the implementation of fiber-optic circuits.

Methodologically, the aim of this dissertation is not to offer a monographic survey of Val del Omar, but to use his multifaceted production as a means to uncover discourses on space and perception that emerged from the introduction of electronics in Spain by a totalitarian regime, emphasizing his involvement with aesthetic ideologies and political institutions. Though he patented more than seventy audio-visual inventions, actively participated in different state organizations, and wrote prolifically, preexisting scholarship on the artist has reduced his work to his filmic production. The quasi-hagiographic depiction of Val del Omar as a solitary genius has obscured some of the larger debates surrounding his multi-media practices with a number of interlocutors in a variety of disciplines.

More recently, there have been a few attempts to rebuild a potential intellectual milieu framing Val del Omar’s work within wider historical circles. For example, in his reorganization of the permanent collection of Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Museum director Manuel Borja-Villel attempted to position Val del Omar within a wider international artistic context, however this

restitution overlooked the filmmaker’s mysticism, which sits uncomfortably within modernist narratives. Esperanza Collado situated Val del Omar’s practice within an international history by tracing the transformation of film to Expanded Cinema.\textsuperscript{19} Javier Ortiz-Echagüé situated the work of the filmmaker next to the practice of artists Yves Klein and Jorge Oteiza under the pretext that they shared an interest in the space race.\textsuperscript{20} Despite the inclusiveness of recent expanded aesthetic discourses, however, these accounts largely neglect to address in depth Val del Omar’s involvement with state institutions, and fail to account for the effects of his work within the Francoist context. Moreover, such scholarship has evaded a spatial and architectural account of Val del Omar’s ambient projects, which is the main undertaking of this dissertation.

\textbf{Chapter Structure}

The dissertation parcels Val del Omar’s work into five different synchronic chapters. In avoiding a strictly chronological order, it attempts to depart from merely biographical readings so as to map a simultaneous engagement with overlapping discourses and institutions. Either in an explicit manner or by emphasizing Val del Omar’s discourse within specific historical and social contingencies, each chapter focuses on the filmmaker’s engagement with a particular institution, including state agencies and international corporations.

Trying to situate the Spanish case within a wider international context, the \textit{first chapter}, “\textit{Media Space (1949-1964)},” examines the transformation of the movie theater under the pressures of emerging televisual infrastructures during the 1950s and early 1960s. Val del Omar’s arguments at the time coincided with some of the social, aesthetic, and institutional preoccupations with cinematic space shared by the pioneers of “expanded cinema” such as Robert Breer and Stan VanDerBeek, with whom Val del Omar attended the II International Experimental Film Competition at the 1958 Brussels World Exhibition.\textsuperscript{21} This chapter also relates the spatial and architectural concerns in Val del Omar’s own projects—including the sound piece \textit{Auto Sacramental Invisible}, “with 8 reproduction channels and indications of lightning, smell and flames”(1949), and the overflowing projections configuring the mise-en-scène of the short film \textit{Fuego en Castilla}.

\textsuperscript{20} Ortiz-Echagüé, Javier. \textit{Yuri Gagarin y el conde Orgaz: Mística y Estética de la Era Espacial (Jorge Oteiza, Yves Klein, José Val del Omar)} (Alzuza: Fundación Museo Jorge Oteiza Fundazio Museoa, 2014).
\textsuperscript{21} Val del Omar participated in the contest with \textit{Aguaescupo Granadino/La Gran Seguiriya}. Although scholars like Thomas Beard and Esperanza Collado have pointed to the similarities between the work of Val del Omar and American filmmakers Stan Brakhage, Kenneth Anger, and Stan VanDerBeek, their shared presence at the 1958 Brussels World Exhibition has passed unnoticed.
(1961)—with the commissions by the Ministerio de Información y Turismo such as the ten experimental installations placed in the Spanish Pavilion at the 1964 New York World Fair. In addition, the chapter also inspects Val del Omar’s relation to the itinerant theaters, cinema domes, and exhibition spaces simultaneously developed for the Ministerio by architect Emilio Pérez Piñeiro (1935-1972).

Although primarily developed during the 1950s and 1960s, Val del Omar’s theories of perception were inchoate during his involvement with the Misiones Pedagógicas [Pedagogical Missions], an educational initiative set up by the Second Republic to alleviate the levels of illiteracy in rural Spain. Val del Omar identified the ecstatic reactions of the villagers attending their first screening as the outcome of cinema’s appeal to the subject’s unconscious. The second chapter of this dissertation, “Theories of Perception (1948-1982),” examines Val del Omar’s theories through a close interpretation of the relation between religious ecstasy and instinctual communication as it appears in his writings. At the end of the 1940s, Val del Omar started to refer to the villagers’ ecstatic experience of cinema (while for example, watching films of Charlie Chaplin) as similar to religious ecstasies associated with the Baroque era of seventeenth-century Spain. Since the turn of the twentieth century, art historians have insisted on connecting seventh-century Spanish Baroque to the descriptions of rapture by Saint Theresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross, and have interpreted the work of artists like El Greco as the psycho-physiological by-product of ecstatic experience. At first glance, this approach towards Baroque aesthetics seems to align with Nacional Catolicismo’s revival of Imperial Baroque architecture and art, invoked to recall the entanglement of religious, military, and political hegemony of the Spanish Empire. The deeply reactionary character

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22 No graphic documentation of these events has survived.
24 Five archival folders of Val del Omar’s written production remain unexplored (Email exchange with Pihuca Baquero Navarro, Director of the Val del Omar Archives, June 8, 2016). The volumes that contain a selection of Val del Omar’s writings are: José Val del Omar, Sin Fin; José Val del Omar; Javier Ortiz-Echagüe (ed.), Escritos de Técnica, Poética y Mística (Madrid: Ediciones de La Central MNCARS, 2010); José Val del Omar; Elena Duque (ed.), Val del Omar. Más Allá de la Órbita Terrestre (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Cultura de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, BA Festival de Cine Independiente, 2015). The poems written by Val del Omar had also been edited as José Val del Omar; María José Val de Omar and Gonzalo Sáenz de Buruaga (eds.), Tientos de Erótica Celeste (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 2012).
25 This line of inquiry was started by one of Val del Omar’s mentors, Manuel B. Cossío. During the late 1940s and 1950s, scientific interests emerged around Baroque sculpture and painting. Some of the volumes published in this regard that Val del Omar was acquainted with are: Luis de Castro’s Un Médico en el Museo [A Doctor in the Museum] (1954), a psycho-physiological study of the Baroque sculptures at the National Museum of Religious Sculpture of Valladolid using modern psychology; doctor Gregorio Marañón’s dressing up the patients of El Nuncio Mental Asylum in Toledo—most of them affected by the modern traumatic experience of war neurosis—in order to prove that the deformed physiologies of El Greco’s figures responded to mentally-ill models; and Aldous Huxley’s writings on El Greco, which situated the painter as a precedent of the heightened forms of perception enabled by modern sensory alteration.
of this restitution of the Baroque made it significantly different from other stylistic revivals such as the Italian “neo-Baroque,” emerging in the 1950s. Val del Omar’s pseudo-scientific reconstructions of seventeenth century Baroque sensorium were actually used to prove the corruption of vision provoked by unethical uses of cinema. Val del Omar refuted, for example, the idea that all figures in El Greco’s paintings were deformed due to the artist’s presumed “astigmatism”—a theory promoted by quasi scientific art historical accounts from the beginning of the century. On the contrary, the filmmaker argued that it was modern vision that flattened El Greco’s paintings and perceived them as deformed. For several of his films, Val del Omar invented systems of rotating convex and concave mirrors that would produce deformed images meant to recover the Baroque’s original visual order.

In the 1960s, Val del Omar’s practice started to move towards recent developments in science, with special attention to animal psychology and physiology. According to the filmmaker, the introduction of sciences such as bionics confirmed the knowledge already intuited by Spanish mystics. The third chapter of this dissertation, “Animal Instinct (1955-1982),” addresses the impact of different scientific and philosophic discourses on the animal in the reformulation of environmental perception. Val del Omar’s work elucidates the tensions and convergences between two contradistinctive approaches to this topic at the time. On one side, the filmmaker accepts the equivalence between animal and automata undergirding bionics, following which perception is cast as a data-processing device capable of high environmental adaptation. On the other, Val del Omar’s work responds to the ethical redefinition of notions of culture as to include the social and instrumental behavior of certain animals. The main objects of study in this chapter are a group of Val del Omar artifacts from the series Óptica Biónica Energética Ciclo-tactil [Ciclo-tactil Energetic Bionic Optics] (1969), and their correspondences with scientific electronic replicas of the visual organs of horseshoe crabs and higher mammals made by the Laboratorio de Bioelectrónica y Biónica [Laboratory of Bioelectronics and Bionics] in Madrid. Val del Omar’s engagement with these animals is absent from any scholarly account of the artist, as is his relation to the Laboratorio, whose almost intact archive is informally kept at the Museo de Informática «García-Santesmases» (MIGS) in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

26 See Alexandre Cirici, La Estética del Franquismo (Barcelona: Gustau Gili, 1977) in comparison to Gillo Dorfles, Barocco nell’Architettura Moderna (Milan: Politecnica Tamburini, 1951).
27 The work that first started this discourse is Germán Beritens. El Astigmatismo del Greco: Nueva Teoría que Explica las Anomalias de las Obras de Este Artista (Madrid: F. Fé, 1914).
28 Val del Omar stated, “Now researchers in bionics discover what Saint John of the Cross already knew, that clairvoyance is a function of the humble vital instinct that orients the flight of creatures.” [Ahora los investigadores de la Biónica descubren lo que San Juan de la Cruz ya sabía, que la clairividencia es función del humilde instinto que guía el vuelo vital de las criaturas.] José Val del Omar, “Alrededor de la Cultura de la Sangre. Palabras a propósito de la proyección de las películas en el colegio Pío XII (1965).” Escritos, p. 247.
Discourses on television gained momentum after the mid-1960s, when public broadcasting was finally normalized in Spain. The fourth chapter, “Television (1956-1982),” inspects the spatial products resulting from the introduction of this medium during the late 1960s. It examines Juan Velasco Viejo’s design for the Ciudad de los Periodistas [Journalists’ City] (1968-70). The project intended to offer housing tailored to the professional profile of the Asociación de Prensa de Madrid [Madrid’s Press Association] increasing number of members. In 1972, Val del Omar moved to the Ciudad to start the construction of the Laboratorio PLAT (Picto-Luminico-Audio-Tactil) (1972-1982), a technological merzbau centralized around a rudimentary cockpit where the filmmaker reassembled all of his former inventions. Although the filmic production resulting from the PLAT technology has been recently studied, these approaches evade a sustained interpretation of the design and spatial logics of this assemblage of media instruments, recently reconstructed in the Centro Nacional de Arte Reina Sofia.

During the early 1970s, popular culture interpreted real-time transmission as cluttering the environment with dematerialized audiovisual content. New lighting technologies, like holography and laser, offered a visualization alibi representing the invisible data surrounding the subject. The fifth chapter, “Static Electricity (1962-1982),” inspects the epistemologies derived from the use of technological apparatuses that apparently rendered environmental systems perceptible. Val del Omar’s investigations of visibility and invisibility, which were the object of his experiments with lasers, are used to disentangle discussions on the manifestation of environmental conditions around the IBM Headquarters in Madrid (1966-68). The building was designed by Miguel Fisac, with whom the filmmaker participated in the 1961 Sonimag [International Fair of Sound and Image] in Barcelona. Right after its construction, the IBM Headquarters needed to be refurbished, as the building proved uninhabitable due to the high level of static electricity caused by the large concentration of computers, lightning infrastructures, and electrical circuitries.
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