



From necrotopias to thalassopias:
designing spatial (dis)continuities in Calatrava's Museum of Tomorrow

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An urban mobility node

- Funded by the City of Rio de Janeiro, the *Roberto Marinho Foundation* (part of the *Globo* media group and involved in favela redevelopment that forced poor people from their homes), Banco Santander, BG Project, and the government of Brazil
- Controversies: unearthing of the wharf where slaves disembarked, the cornerstone of the Old Customs House and several artefacts of heritage value – removal of homes/evictions in adjoining community of *Mora da Providência*
- Created by Santiago Calatrava with contributions by Brazilian and American artists
- Embedded in Rio's infrastructural urbanism: project to revitalise *Porto Maravilha*, with demolition of an elevated highway and construction of underground traffic tunnels, a light-rail tram service, a new art museum and kilometres of walking, cycling and leisure areas opening up along the city centre's waterfront
- Intended (a) **artistically** as a narrative of human contribution to the Anthropocene (b) **politically** as Rio 2016 landmark architecture (c) **economically** as global tourism generator

Between materialised utopianism and non-utilitarian artwork

- Palimpsestic materiality of project: constructed in previously abandoned *Praça Mauá* previously plagued by chronic flooding and sewage seeping into the drainage system of the city, with *Porto Marvillá* as crime-infested area (**'empty grounds'**)
- A dual 'choreotopographic tour' or ritualistic journey through cultural sites for global visitors, in long-stretching areas for walking and cycling by the port and in the Museum's narratives of ecosystemic erosion, combining *necrotopias* with *thalasso(to)pias*



Entrance: Gaia inspired by Calatrava's 'Madonna with Child' neo-vitalist sketches

*Only from bad comes happy ending:
necrotopian scenarios (the pillars of human excess)*

“We have lived on earth for 200,000 years ... Since 1950 we have modified the planet more than in our whole existence ... We are more ... We consume more ... More ... More ... More.” (Watts, 2016)



*Only from bad comes happy ending:
necrotopian scenarios
(the speed of anthropocenic destruction)*



*Only from bad comes happy ending:
necrotopian scenarios
(humanity and nature are ONE ecosystem)*



Only from bad comes happy ending: necrotopian scenarios (Our future is in our hands)



- Interactive games allow visitors to shape alternative futures:
 1. measurements of the visitor's ecological footprint
 2. calculation of how many planets are needed to support mankind if everyone on earth had the same living standard
 3. decision-making on energy sources, finance and land usage to support or diminish humanity's survival prospects

From too much mobility to reflexive mobility

Tjurunga: a symbol of learning, fertility ritual power and the ability to cope with change



Reflective pool: the shock of the real (Rio's human ecologies and its mobilities' consequences)



From necrotopias to thalasso(to)pias

- ‘**Artistic worldmaking**’ as a journey: death as essential precondition in utopian planning, imagining alternative pathways in Rio’s dark liquid modernity
- The sea as symbol of change, facilitating the visitor’s move from affective to emotional and then cognitive/aesthetic consciousness
- The Museum’s ‘artistic imagineers’ such as Calatrava or Meirelles mediate, subvert or revise certain ‘mobile situations’ staged ‘from above’ (Jensen, 2013) in terms of planning, design and regulation, and then acted out or staged ‘from below’ by consociates in interactions (Jensen et.al., 2016, pp.27-28)
- Though relevant to considerations about the built environment, *Porto Maravilha*’s regeneration has to be placed in a wider non-representational framework (Thrift, 2007; Vannini, 2015), to examine performances of Self and communal belonging in the Anthropocene