Antennas of transmission on the beach of Pals, Catalonia in 2005 before disassembly

Wikipedia
SETTING

The former broadcasting station Radio Liberty is a child of the Cold War era. The Western view of the world was to be disseminated behind the Iron Curtain. With the fall of the Wall, the idea became obsolete and the facility was abandoned in the early 2000s. Since then, the buildings have been left to decay.

It is an interesting aspect that the American founders of Radio Liberty made a pact with the Spanish dictator Franco to set up the broadcasting facilities at the height of Girona in Catalonia, on the pristine beach of Pals. Radio-technical considerations - the sea surface interacting with the atmosphere as a mirror of short-wave emissions and the perfect orientation of the bay - outweighed this contradiction with their mission.
The Radio LIBERTY buildings were designed in the modernist style of the 1950s. Each part of the functional ensemble radiates with its architecture the optimism typical of this era, embodying the ideal of a functional ensemble. A group of buildings with offices, accommodation and social rooms as well as an infrastructure hall configure the body set in a residual natural landscape. An ecosystem of dune vegetation that persists as intact and unique reserve in the immediate context of vacationer neighborhoods including a golf course. The intimidating presence of the now dismounted, incredibly big scale antennas acting dismissively during decades, made this landscape possible. A landscape that also includes the ruins of an ancient coastal village.

PROJECT
This remaining territory becomes our field of work in its entirety. Here we want to competently develop the architecture we have found and think it together with the landscape. The ruined buildings raise the question of how we continue to build this idealistic post-war architecture in a careful manner and under current premises. A new radically public programming with the three focal points of education, nature and conservation will help us to achieve a paradigm shift. The new uses will involve the territory. Our aim will be to find a balance between the concept of the natural reserve that needs to be protected and a new ecosystem that combines use and landscape in a sustainable way.
fragment of the corporate mural
Google Maps
PROGRAM
The first approach will be done in groups and will concentrate at defining the project area and the protected natural park with a system of ways, structures to capture and transform solar energy as well as to collect and use rain water in a poetic way. A more careful look at the specific outer spaces for each individual project will start within this frame and be completed during the development of the different programs:

1 Research Centre with Co-Work Spaces and Offices
2 Natural Park and Cold War Museum with Specialised Library
3 Art Gallery with Activities’ Room and Shop
4 Assembly Room and Cantina
5 Work Spaces and Residence for the Staff
6 Residence for Unaccompanied Minors and for Researchers
7 Residence for School Groups with Seminary Rooms

STUDY TRIP
There will be a study trip to Pals, Catalonia from the 9th to the 11th of October 2022.

SUMMARY
The term sauvegarde is approached holistically from the side of care with the will to assist, protect, and therefore save. Design proposals grow out of the will to understand, looking for an overall critical view on the preexisting; built structure as well as landscape.