

## **OSKAR VON MILLER FORUM**

Press Release

### **Building Gravity – a view on the contemporary architecture scene in Latin America**

**A lecture by Fernando Luiz Lara, University of Texas, Austin, USA on 25 June 2015 at 6:30 pm at the Oskar von Miller Forum**

Gravity has always been a fundamental component of architecture and in Latin America it has not been any different. In very basic terms we are always trying to hold up heavy things to protect us from the elements. This challenge, literally, looms over our heads. The reference to gravity is important here because it defines an important difference between the twentieth and the twenty first century approach to technology. If the twentieth century was all about defying gravity with lightness –as Oscar Niemeyer’s Pampulha, Félix Candela’s churches, or Eladio Dieste’s brick vaults were trying to do–, the twenty first century expresses the weight – tectonically and materially– and the effort it makes to hold up structure. Gravity, then, becomes an important issue to struggle with; the word in Spanish and Portuguese being widely used also to connote urgency, significance, and earnestness.

Fernando Luiz Lara is the author of recently published "Modern Architecture in Latin America: Art, Technology and Utopia", the first comprehensive text to cover the history and development of modern architecture throughout Latin America. Designed as a survey and focused on key examples/paradigms arranged chronologically from 1903 to 2003, this volume covers a myriad of countries; historical, social, and political conditions; and projects/developments that range from small houses to urban plans to architectural movements.

In his presentation, Prof. Fernando Luiz Lara will offer a comprehensive survey of Modern Architecture in Latin America and how this is connected with the latest movements in modern architecture today. He will outline the development of multiple and parallel branches/historical strands of architecture and their interconnections across countries.

#### **About Fernando Luiz Lara**

Fernando Luiz Lara, PhD, is an architect and Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where he also serves as Chair of the Brazil Center at the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. He teaches seminars on 20th century Latin American architecture and urbanism, as well as studios related to the continent’s current urban challenges. Previously Dr. Lara taught at The University of Michigan (2004-2009); Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (2002-2004); PUC-Minas (1995-2002) e Lawrence Tech University (1999-2000). He currently serves as Professor Colaborador at the Graduate Program in Architecture, Universidade Federal da Paraíba. Always concerned with the public debate around the built environment Fernando Lara has written eight books and many articles in academic and professional journals as well as the general media. Fernando Lara is member of the Brazilian Institute of Architects, and the Brazilian DOCOMOMO, the international committee for documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the modern movement. Lara has also been active in his native country as a critic, researcher and educator.