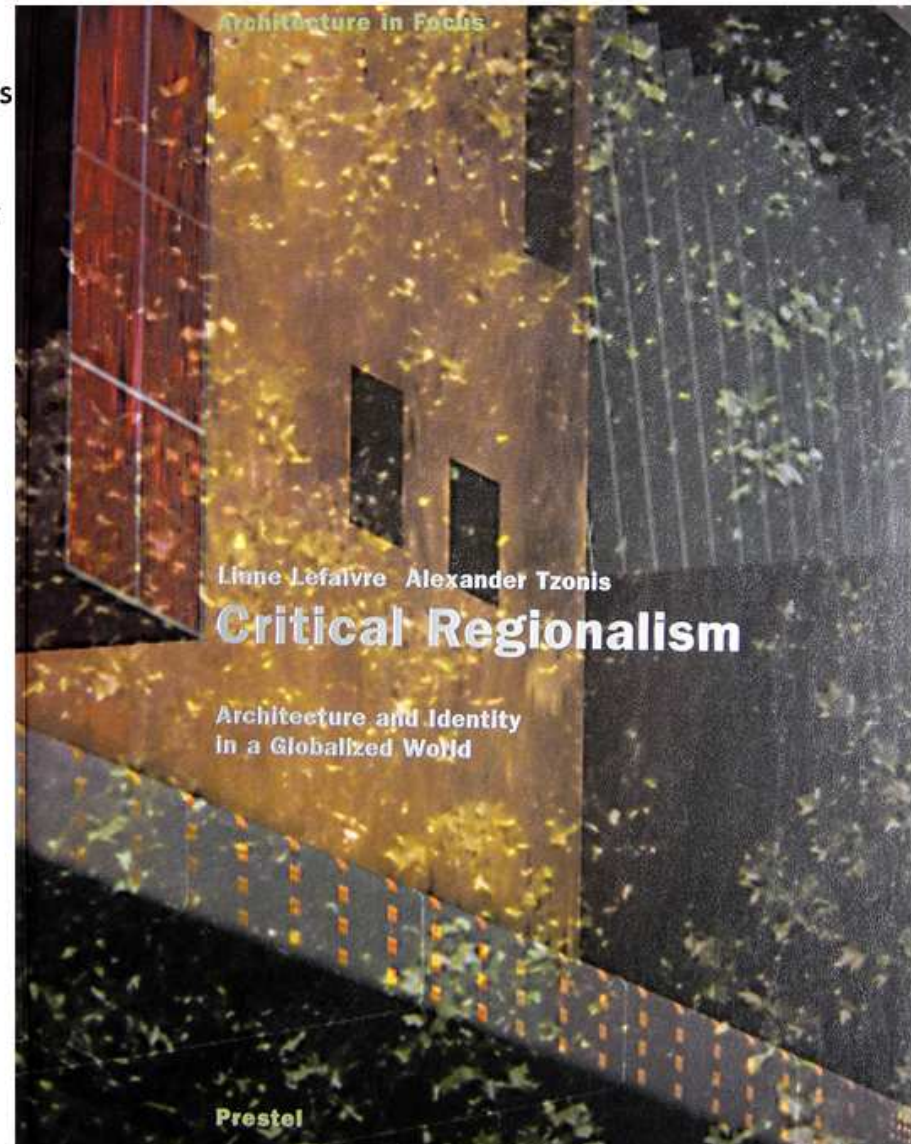


**CRITICAL REGIONALISM
ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY IN A
GLOBALIZED WORLD
LIANE LEFAIVRE AND ALEXANDER TZONIS**

**106 110 : GERMAN DEL SOL
HOT SPRINGS LANDSCAPE, HOTEL
AND HORSE STABLES, SAN PEDRO DE
ATACAMA, CHILE. 1998 2000.**

**2003
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Germán del Sol

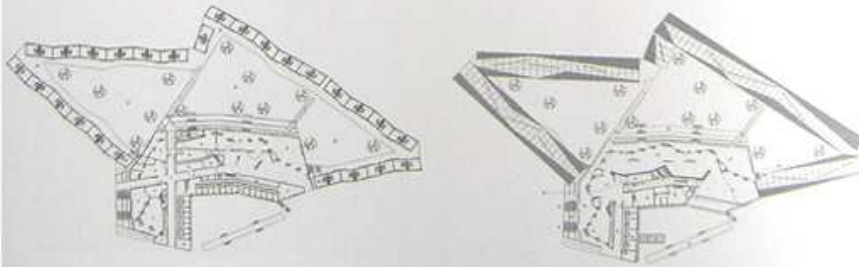
Hot Springs Landscape, Hotel and Horse Stables, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile 1998–2000

For a short distance in its 450-kilometre-long course, the Loa River flows through a valley with a semi-desert climate halfway between Antofagasta and Valparaiso. The river has always been part of the place's identity, known for its natural hot springs, wells and beautiful landscapes. When the time came to develop the location for leisure and tourist activities, an all-encompassing solution was sought, bringing together hiking, horseback riding and bathing.

Architect and structural engineer Germán del Sol's project, is an entire complex linked through a zigzagging path—that recalls Dimitri Pikoulas' original Land Art project for the Acropolis and Philipposos Hill—that follows the winding river bed, in harmony with the topography, like a form of Land Art. This type of construction, according to del Sol, evokes simplicity and spontaneity. There are many natural pools in which to bathe in the area that have been used since ancient times, as two local houses nearby prove. Raised boardwalks treat the grassy pentry and provide a unique viewpoint for gazing at the long winding river. This particular aspect of the landscaping is meant to pay homage to the beauty of the land and make sustainable use of the pools.

In addition, two basic white structures house the baths and make the surrounding wilderness stand out. As for the horse stables, they are centred around two slightly irregular shaped plazas. The jagged outlines of the complex reinforce the roughness of the overall context. The buildings are dotted with holes that let sunbeams illuminate the penitents and to give a view of the resting horses and long drinking fountains. In the actual swimming pools the water is kept still, gently bubbling over the edges and serving to irrigate the surrounding gardens—emblematic of the gentle way this project blends with the natural environment.

Tourism tends to be a slight on regional landscapes and ecosystems. Should tourism be stimulated altogether? The alternative is sustainable tourism, exemplified in this project. It intrudes as lightly as possible upon the natural environment. Among its remarkable features is this boardwalk, elevated above the natural vegetation and wildlife.

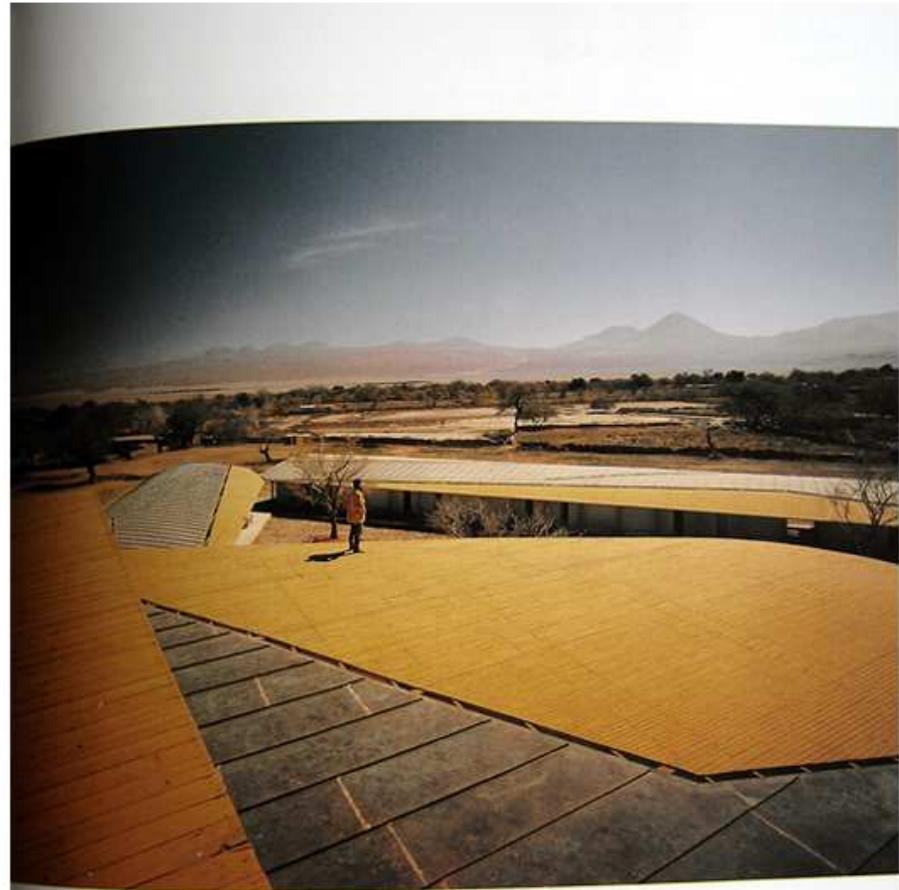
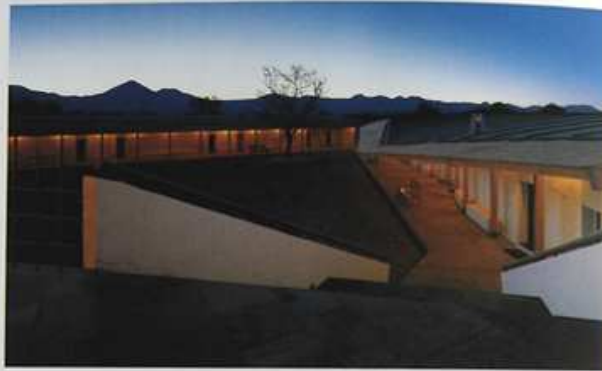


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German del Sol
Hot Springs Landscape, Hotel and Horse Stables, San Pedro de Atacama, Chile 1998 - 2000



Waste is kept to a minimum in this tourist complex, and recycling is a maximum, including the water of the swimming pools, masonry, and the heated water is supplied by natural hot springs. The architecture is low-tech and employs traditional building techniques and materials, cutting down on unnecessary transportation.