



Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura



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To the Admissions Board of Umea University, Umea School of Architecture:

Sevilla, Spain, July 10<sup>th</sup> 2017.

Hereby I recommend Dr Pablo DeSoto as a candidate for the Senior Lecturer in Architecture position offered by Umea School of Architecture.

I met Mr. Pablo DeSoto in the early 1990s as he was a student at the University of Sevilla School of Architecture, and myself a young lecturer. I probably heard about a media project he was preparing on the Balkans War, entitled Belgrade-Sarajevo, and soon we became acquainted. Then I met him again in Los Angeles, California, where I lived for some time, in his way to a personal research project in Tijuana, the Mexican border town. Some time later, both of us back in Sevilla, we participated together with other students and activists in some pioneering urban interventions connecting citizens' demands and the use of the Internet and free software, organized in an informal group that gave itself the names of *wewearbuildings* and later on *hackitectura.net*.

This later group became a more formal one whose core was made up by Sergio Moreno, Pablo DeSoto and myself. During the 2000s, we worked together, smoothly moving between architecture, activism, emergent technologies, art and theory-production, having our works published in numerous sites and exhibited in venues such as ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, LABORal Art and Industrial Creation Centre Gijón or BIACS Sevilla Art Biennial, among many others – that no doubt he would be documenting in his CV. I dare to say that some of the projects that we developed together during this period became cult-objects among the alternative-critical digital global scene: *Fadaiat: Freedom of Movement*, *Freedom of Knowledge* and the *Critical Cartography of the Straits of Gibraltar*, *WikiPlaza* or *Mapping the Commons* (Athens-Istambul-several cities in Brazil).

During these period we organized together several educational activities and workshops where we acted as directors-tutors, deserving several prizes for their productions, among others, on mapping Gaza during the 2008/09 war at the Architecture School of Alicante, probably the most experimental one in Spain; on mapping the Commons, at Greece National Contemporary Art Museum at Athens, the results of which and its follow-up by DeSoto received the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, *Elinor Ostrom Prize*. Mr DeSoto served, too, as a *Honorary Assistant* at my own courses at the Sevilla School of Architecture in 2010/2011.

After those years, Mr DeSoto continued with his research and artistic works in Cairo, Japan and Brazil, culminating, in a way, with his remarkable PhD thesis, presented at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, centered on the arts and citizen science in the *Anthropocene*, where he makes our previous shared digital



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and political interests converge in a more explicit way with ecological concerns.

Dr. DeSoto is one of the brightest and most inspiring colleagues I have ever met. I would highlight his extraordinary capacity to discern the emerging new and conflictual among the clutter of our contemporary cultures, as well as his creativity and the strongest determination pursuing his visions - that I was lucky to share with him for more than a decade. He has also a very outstanding global perspective on contemporary culture, technologies and art due to his extensive travels and intensive/extended experiences in some of the most critical nodes of today's networked-world.

Eventually, in a personal register, I can say that he is a most caring colleague, and that he transmits *Spinozian joyous passions* to those who work and share ideals with him.

I am convinced that it would be an extraordinary experience for any student to have him as a teacher - I wish I would have had someone like him myself in my student years. Therefore I can very confidently recommend him for the Senior Lecturer in Architecture position your school is offering these days. It is my certainty, that he will perform at the highest level and will fulfill your expectations. Should you have any further inquiries regarding Dr DeSoto please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

José Pérez de Lama Halcón  
Senior Lecturer (Profesor Contratado Doctor)  
Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura  
Universidad de Sevilla (Spain)  
Fab Lab Sevilla founder and Director  
E-mail: [perezdelama@us.es](mailto:perezdelama@us.es)  
Tel. (34) 649 142511