

# POLIMORFO

Revista de ArqPoli - Escuela de Arquitectura / Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico  
ArqPoli Journal - School of Architecture / Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico

CIDADLAB  
PUERTO RICO <sup>en</sup>  
*Orlando*

**Polimorfo es publicada bianual por / Polimorfo is published twice yearly by**

ArqPoli - Escuela de Arquitectura - Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico  
ArqPoli - School of Architecture - Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico

**Edición y diseño / Editing & Design**

Marcelo López Dinardi  
Oscar Oliver Didier

**Corrección / Proofreading**

Neeltje Van Marissing

**Traducción / Translation**

Pilar García de Castro  
Maritza Hernández

**Contacto / Contact**

**Polimorfo**

Escuela de Arquitectura - ArqPoli  
Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico  
Apartado Postal 192017  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00919-2017

T. 787.622.8000 Ext. 694  
info@revistapolimorfo.com  
www.revistapolimorfo.com

**Impresión / Printed**

Graphic Printing

Derechos Reservados Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico 2009  
Copyright Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico 2009

## Editorial / Editorial

Esta revista pretende ser una ventana a ArqPoli en la que se difunda el producto intelectual trabajado por los diversos segmentos dentro y asociados a la Escuela. Es desde el énfasis en lo multidisciplinario que surge el título de la Revista Polimorfo, en el que se plantea una publicación que albergue y asuma múltiples formas, sin temor a entremezclarlas y de ponerlas a dialogar entre sí. Para nosotros, las limitaciones auto-impuestas, las categorías uniformes y los grandes temas se descartan al verse como posibles adversarios del entendimiento plural e interdisciplinario que tanto nutre nuestro pensamiento arquitectónico actual. A la vez, nos posicionamos con gran escepticismo ante la inclusión del raciocinio pos-teórico en algunos círculos académicos y de producción arquitectónica actual. Teoría y práctica, en vez, se funden en Polimorfo, que tiene como propósito principal echarle un vistazo a nuestra condición contemporánea por medio de artículos, ensayos, reseñas de proyectos y entrevistas, y donde siempre existirá un tema de portada que plantee una problemática particular.

El tema principal de esta edición es Puerto Rico en Orlando, que presenta los hallazgos del curso de CIUDADLAB, que estudió el fenómeno de la diáspora, el intercambio de costumbres e imaginarios de un destino que ausculta a diario el tema de lo puertorriqueño. El que viaja, inevitablemente emplea el deseo como motor idealizador del territorio que habita y, en ocasiones, es desde afuera donde uno mejor se conoce a si mismo.

This magazine aspires to be a window to ArqPoli, in which the intellectual processes of the diverse segments in and associated to the school can be disseminated. It is from an emphasis on the multidisciplinary that Polimorfo's title comes about, where a publication sets out to assume multiple forms without fear to intermix and place them in dialogue with each other. For us, auto imposed limitations, categoric uniformity and thematic wholeness are avoided when seen as possible adversaries to the plurality of thought that currently defines our architectural views. At the same time, we position ourselves with great skepticism amidst the inclusion of post-theoretical rationale in some academic circles and in current architectural production. Theory and practice are instead fused in Polimorfo, which has as its main purpose to gaze at our contemporary condition by means of articles, essays, project reviews and interviews, and where there will always be a cover story that exposes a particular theme.

The cover story of this first edition is Puerto Rico in Orlando, where the findings of the CIUDADLAB course, that studied the diaspora phenomenon, the interchanges of cultural customs and the imaginaries that help shape and produce them, are critically scrutinized. He who travels unavoidably employs desire as a motor for the idealization of the territory he is inhabiting, and on occasions, it is from the outside that one gets to know oneself better.

CIUDADLAB  
PUERTO RICO en  
Orlando

# Índice / Index

## Portada / Cover

Ciudadlab: Puerto Rico en Orlando / Ciudadlab: Puerto Rico in Orlando Ciudadlab .....	10
“...exit 75B...¡esa era!, ¡Mierda, nos pasamos!...” / “...exit 75B...that was the one!, Damn it, we missed it!...” Marcelo López Dinardi .....	18
Un verano en Orlando: Reflexiones sobre un viaje / A Summer in Orlando: Reflections on a Voyage Deepak Lamba Nieves .....	26
Un breve escape al urbanismo del súper-pretexto / A Brief Escape to the Urbanism of the Super-pretext Oscar Oliver Didier .....	32
Suburbios soberbios: Apuntes sobre la condición contemporánea de la emigración puertorriqueña a Orlando / Superb Suburbs: Notes on the Contemporary Condition of the Puerto Rican Emigration to Orlando Luis A. Flores Dumonty .....	40

## Artículos / Articles

La estética de esfumarse: lo efímero y la búsqueda de la permanencia / The Aesthetics of Vanishing: The Ephemeral and the Search for Permanence María T. Martínez Díez .....	48
Rock, consumo, identidad, domesticidad / Rock, Consumption, Identity, Domesticity Javier Santiago-Lucerna .....	52
Ocio y negocio: las nuevas geografías del espacio público / Leisure and Business: The New Geographies of Public Space Nadya K. Nenadich .....	58
Apuntes polimorfos sobre China / Polymorph Notes on China Juan Carlos Rivera .....	64
QUEUE 02: ¡ULTRA-THICK! . . . Super Sweet Fabián Silvano Morales .....	72
Los medios digitales y la hipernarrativa: Reimaginando [xxxEL SITIOxxx] / Digital Media and the Hypernarrative: RE-IMAGinING [xxxSITExxx] Stephen Sears .....	78

## Proyectos / Projects

- 88..... **Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis**  
Experimentación, representación y material / Experimentation, Representation  
and Material
- 98..... **BIG Bjarke Ingels Group**  
Evolución y transformación de la forma / Evolution and Transformation of  
Form
- 110..... **Dolly Arquitectos**  
El resultado de lo superficial / The result of the superficial

## A Fondo / In Depth

- 118..... **Soldiers and Tourists: The subjective selves of Puerto Rico's Modern  
Architecture**  
Miguel Rodríguez Casellas
- 124..... **Carefully Reading the Generic City and Junkspace: From an affirmative  
description of urbanity to an experiential pessimism of our built  
environment**  
Oscar Oliver Didier
- 130..... **Pulsating Architecture::  
Spheres of Possession :: 8 Fragments**  
Félix Jiménez

## Entrevista / Interview

- 136..... **Entrevista a Denise Scott Brown y Robert Venturi / Interview to Denise Scott  
Brown and Robert Venturi**

# Colaboradores / Contributors

## BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group

Bjarke Ingels Group - BIG - es un grupo de 85 arquitectos, diseñadores, constructores y pensadores con sede en Copenhague, que labora dentro del campo de la arquitectura, el urbanismo, la investigación y el desarrollo. Bjarke Ingels Group - BIG - is a Copenhagen based group of 85 architects, designers, builders and thinkers operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism, research and development.

## Dolly Arquitectos

Desde el 2004 hasta la fecha, Dolly Arquitectos se dedica al libre ejercicio de la arquitectura y del diseño en varias de sus formas. Algunos de sus proyectos han sido desarrollados en conjunto con agencias de publicidad y de diseño gráfico, con quienes han podido diversificarse de manera más ágil y exitosa. Como parte de esta diversificación, en 2006 ingresan al rubro de la televisión, en donde han desarrollado casi una veintena de proyectos. Since 2004, Dolly Architects has dedicated itself to the unrestrained practice of architecture and design in its various forms. Some of its projects have been developed collaboratively with advertising and graphic design agencies, with whom they have been able to diversify in a more agile and successful way. In 2006, as part of this diversification, the group joins the field of television, developing twenty something projects.

## Luis A. Flores Dumont

Principal de Luis Flores Arquitectos, C.S.P. Completó su bachillerato en Arquitectura en la Universidad de Tulane. Por 20 años, fue socio de Marvel, Flores, Cobián y Asociados. Ha sido profesor de Diseño en la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad de Puerto Rico y en ArqPoli: la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico. En 1993 fue exaltado como *Fellow* del Instituto Americano de Arquitectos y, en el 2004, fue galardonado con el Premio Henry Klumb que otorga el CAAPPR. Principal of Luis Flores Architects, C.S.P. He completed his bachelor's degree in architecture from Tulane University. For 20 years, he was a partner of Marvel, Flores, Cobián and Associates. He was a design professor at the School of Architecture of the University of Puerto Rico and in ArqPoli: The School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. In 1993 he was elevated to *Fellow* of the American Institute of Architects and in 2004 he was awarded with the Henry Klumb Prize of the CAAPPR.

## Félix Jiménez

Es profesor de Estudios Culturales en la Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, en Puerto Rico, y es profesor invitado de Literatura Comparada en la Universidad de Columbia. Es también profesor invitado de Teoría en ArqPoli. Jiménez estudió Literatura Comparada en la Universidad de Yale. Es el autor de *Vieques y la prensa: el idilio fragmentado*, y *Las prácticas de la carne: construcción y representación de las masculinidades puertorriqueñas*. Es co-editor

de *La cultura material del deseo: objetos, desplazamientos, subversiones*. Su próximo libro se titula *De oído: fonografía e interferencias*. Félix Jiménez is professor of cultural studies at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón in Puerto Rico and visiting scholar in comparative literature at Columbia University. He is also visiting professor of theory at ArqPoli. Jiménez studied comparative literature at Yale University. He is the author of *Vieques y la prensa: el idilio fragmentado*, and *Las prácticas de la carne: construcción y representación de las masculinidades puertorriqueñas*. He is coeditor of *La cultura material del deseo: objetos, desplazamientos, subversiones*. Forthcoming is his book *De oído: fonografía e interferencias*.

## Deepak Lamba Nieves

Fue el Director de Investigaciones del Centro para la Nueva Economía, una organización de investigación y desarrollo de política pública con sede en San Juan, Puerto Rico. En ArqPoli ha dictado cursos de investigación y urbanismo. Posee una maestría en Planificación Urbana de la Universidad de California en Berkeley y, en el otoño de 2008, comenzó sus estudios doctorales en Planificación y Desarrollo internacional en MIT. Sus áreas de especialidad son: instituciones y desarrollo económico, la economía del conocimiento y diseño de políticas públicas.

Lamba-Nieves was the Director of Research at the Center for the New Economy, a San Juan-based economic development think-tank. He has offered courses on research design and urbanism at ArqPoli. Deepak holds a master's degree in city planning from the University of California at Berkeley and joined MIT's doctoral program in planning and international development in the Fall of 2008. His areas of expertise are: institutions and economic development, the knowledge economy and public policy design.

## Marcelo López Dinardi

Cursa su primer año de Arquitectura en la ciudad de Valparaíso, en Chile, y obtiene su título de arquitecto por la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico en el 2004. Ha colaborado en varias firmas de arquitectura en Puerto Rico desde el año 1999. Es co-fundador tanto de *onourb.com*, durante los años de estudio, como de *ciudadlab.com*, actualmente. Es profesor de Diseño, Investigación y Representación en ArqPoli donde también organiza y modera la Serie de Mesas Redondas y la Serie de Conferencias del 2009. Es, además, co-fundador de Polimorfo.

Coursed his first year of architecture in the city of Valparaíso in Chile, and in 2004 obtained his title from the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. Since 1999, has collaborated in various architectural firms in Puerto Rico. Is co-founder of both *onourb.com*, during his study years, as well as *ciudadlab.com* currently. Professor of design, research and representation in ArqPoli, where he as well moderates and organizes the Roundtable Discussion Series and the Lectures Series of 2009. Is also co-founder of Polimorfo.

## LTL Architects-Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis

Los trabajos de la firma Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis (LTL) compuesta por Paul Lewis, Marc Tsurumaki y David J. Lewis han sido publicados y exhibidos internacionalmente. La firma recibió en el 2007 el Premio Nacional de Diseño de Interiores del Museo Nacional de Diseño del Cooper Hewitt, y fue seleccionada como una de las seis firmas cuyos trabajos se exhibieron en el pabellón norteamericano de la Bienal de Arquitectura de Venecia. Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis (LTL), composed by Paul Lewis, Marc Tsurumaki and David J. Lewis, has been published and exhibited internationally. The firm received the National Design Prize of Interiors of the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum in 2007, and was selected as one of six firms exhibited in the North American Pavilion in the Venice Architectural Biennale.

## María T. Martínez Díez

Tiene un doctorado de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid en Sociología de la Comunicación. Es catedrática asociada del Departamento de Comunicación de la Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, y enseña en el programa graduado de Medios y Cultura Contemporánea. Fue *International Research Fellow* de la Fundación Kettering y *Scholar in Residence* de la New York University. Se especializa en temas de cultura visual. Su más reciente publicación fue *Cultura material del deseo*, que editó junto a Félix Jiménez. Holds a doctorate degree from Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Communication Sociology. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Universidad del Sagrado Corazón where she teaches in the graduate program of Media and Contemporary Culture. In addition, she was an International Research Fellow for the Kettering Foundation and a Scholar in Residence at New York University. She specializes in Visual Culture. Her most recent publication is *Cultura material del deseo* which she edited with Félix Jiménez.

## Fabián Silvano Morales

Estudió en la Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico, y obtuvo su grado profesional de arquitecto en 2003. Luego de 'juguetear' con asuntos de invención (o innovación), 'escapó' y, en otoño de 2005, comenzó estudios en la Academia de la 'Cranbrook Academy of Art'. Culminó allí su maestría en Artes Plásticas en 2008. Fabián, a quién siempre han apasionado arquitecturas e imágenes, encuentra fascinación en distorsionar cámara y medios fotográficos; siempre investigando cómo 'disparar' ('to shoot') puede significar 'diseñar', sobre la mesa del arquitecto. Fabián Silvano Morales attended the School of Architecture, at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, and earned a professional degree in Architecture (2003). After toying with invention, & innovation, he 'flew away' and by fall 2005 enrolled in Cranbrook Academy of Art, earning a Master of Fine Arts (2008). Passionate on architecture...and imagery, Fabián loves to stretch camera and software;

always inquiring how 'to shoot' becomes 'to design', on the architect's drawing table.

### **Nadya K. Nenadich**

Comenzó sus estudios en la Universidad de Puerto Rico y se tituló como arquitecta en 1997 por Pratt Institute. Nenadich posee una maestría en Conservación de Columbia University en Nueva York. Es candidata a doctorado por la Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura. En Madrid, fue redactora de las revistas *Arquitectura Viva* y *AV Monografías*. Actualmente es profesora y decana asociada de ArqPoli.

Nadya K. Nenadich began her studies at the University of Puerto Rico and she obtained her title as an architect from the Pratt Institute in 1997. Nenadich holds a Master's Degree in Conservation from Columbia University in New York. She is a doctoral candidate by the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura. In Madrid, she was a redactor for *Arquitectura Viva* and *AV Monografías* magazines. Currently she is a professor and the Associate Dean of ArqPoli.

### **Oscar Oliver Didier**

Obtuvo su maestría en Diseño Urbano de la Universidad de Harvard y su bachillerato de la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico (ArqPoli). Su interés por las repercusiones cotidianas del urbanismo contemporáneo lo llevaron a ser uno de los editores de la revista *Onourb* (2001-2004) y co-creador de *Ciudadlab*: un difusor data-analítico de diversos contextos urbanos incluyendo las ciudades de Moscú y Orlando. Actualmente, es profesor en ArqPoli donde dirigió el ciclo de conferencias del 2008: "Revisitando la retórica arquitectónica de la Neovanguardia".

Obtained his master's degree in urban design from Harvard University and his bachelor's degree from the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (ArqPoli). His interest for the everyday repercussions of contemporary urbanism led him to be one of the editors of *Onourb Magazine* (2001-2004) and co-creator of *Ciudadlab*: a data-analytic diffuser of different urban contexts including the cities of Moscow and Orlando. He is currently a professor at ArqPoli, where he directed the 2008 lecture series: "Revisiting the Rhetorical Masters of the Architectural Neo-Avant-Garde".

### **Juan Carlos Rivera**

Sociólogo egresado de la Universidad de Loyola, Chicago, es especialista en sociología urbana, teoría social y etnografía como método de investigación y análisis social. Es profesor de Historiografía, Ética e Investigación en ARQPOLI. Sus trabajos más recientes giran en torno a los siguientes temas: Cine y ciudad; espacialidades, identidades y epistemologías alternativas; Puerto Rico en las redes globales de "lo urbano"; movilidades y relaciones de poder en la experiencia urbana, entre otros. Graduated as a sociologist from the University of Loyola Chicago with a specialty in urban sociology, social theory and ethnography as a

method of investigation and social analysis. Professor of historiography, ethics and research in ArqPoli. His most recent works have gravitated towards the following themes: Cinema and the City; Spaces, Identities and Alternate Epistemologies; Puerto Rico in the "Urban" Global Networks; Mobilities and Power Relations in the Urban Experience, among others.

### **Miguel Rodríguez Casellas**

Es el decano actual de ArqPoli: la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico. Completó su bachillerato en Puerto Rico y su maestría en la Universidad de Princeton. Trabajó por dos años con el Office for Metropolitan Architecture en Holanda. En el 2001 diseñó la convocatoria del Proyecto de Arte Público, programa que dirigió hasta el 2005. Una serie de artículos publicados en los últimos años han dejado ver su lado crítico y reflexivo frente a un país con el cual sostiene una relación bipolar de fascinación y desarraigo. Current dean of ArqPoli: the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. Completed his bachelor's degree in Puerto Rico and master's degree from Princeton University. Worked for two years in the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in Holland. In 2001, designed the competition for the Public Art Project, program he directed until 2005. A series of articles published during recent years have made us aware of his critical and reflective stance towards a nation with whom he sustains a bipolar relationship of fascination and disenchantment.

### **Javier Santiago Lucerna**

Posee una maestría y estudios doctorales en Psicología Social-Comunitaria de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Trabajó por diez años en el sector sin fines de lucro en proyectos para deambulantes y personas con problemas de adicción. Se ha dedicado a estudiar temas relacionados con la música popular y la adolescencia, habiendo publicado en revistas profesionales y libros editados en Puerto Rico y en los Estados Unidos.

Has a master degree and doctoral courses in Social-Community Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico. Worked for 10 years in the non-profit sector in service projects for homeless and substance abuse populations. Has studied extensively the relationship between popular music and adolescence, publishing several articles in peer reviewed journals both in Puerto Rico and abroad.

### **Stephen Sears**

Fundó el Center for Imaginative Urban Mapping (CIUM) como un colaborativo investigativo multi-disciplinario para recapacitar paisajes metropolitanos marginados. Es profesor asistente en el Departamento de Arquitectura Paisajista de la Universidad de Illinois. Recibió su grado de maestría en Diseño Urbano de la Universidad de Harvard y el Premio de Roma en Arquitectura Paisajista de la Academia Americana en Roma. Stephen Sears founded the Center for Imaginative Urban Mapping (CIUM) as

a multi-disciplined research collaborative for re-casting marginalized metropolitan landscapes. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois. He received a Masters degree in Urban Design from Harvard University and the Rome Prize in Landscape Architecture from the American Academy in Rome.

### **Denise Scott Brown**

Es una arquitecta, planificadora y diseñadora urbana, teórica, escritora y educadora, cuyas ideas y trabajos han influenciado a arquitectos y planificadores mundialmente. Scott Brown participa en la gama amplia de proyectos arquitectónicos de Venturi, Scott Brown y Asociados, y es *principal* a cargo de múltiples proyectos en planificación urbana, diseño urbano y planificación de campus. Sus años de experiencia en trabajos interdisciplinarios y sus enseñanzas, contribuyen al alcance y profundidad inusual del diseño arquitectónico de la firma.

Denise Scott Brown is an architect, planner and urban designer, and a theorist, writer and educator, whose work and ideas have influenced architects and planners worldwide. Ms. Scott Brown participates in the broad range of Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates' projects in architecture and is principal-in-charge for many projects in urban planning, urban design, and campus planning. Her years of experience in interdisciplinary work and teaching contribute to the firm's unusual breadth and depth in architectural design.

### **Robert Venturi**

Fundador principal de VSBA. Deriva su reputación de ambas, su arquitectura y sus escritos teóricos y críticos. La enseñanza, oratoria y escritura de Venturi han recibido atención amplia y evaluación crítica. *Complejidad y Contradicción en la Arquitectura* (Editorial del Museo de Arte Moderno, 1966) ha sido traducido y publicado en 18 idiomas, incluyendo una edición Samizdat en checoslovaco. Se le ha otorgado el AIA Classic Book Award. Otros premios de Venturi incluyen el Premio Pritzker de la Arquitectura (1991), y la Medalla Presidencial Nacional de las Artes (1992).

Robert Venturi, founding principal of VSBA, derives his reputation from both his architecture and theoretical and critical writings. Mr. Venturi's teaching, lecturing, and writing have received widespread attention and critical review. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (Museum of Modern Art Press, 1966) has been translated and published in 18 languages, including a Samizdat edition in Czechoslovakian. It has been honored with the AIA's Classic Book Award. Mr. Venturi's awards also include the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1991) and the Presidential National Medal of the Arts (1992).

# PORTADA



COVER

# CIUDADLAB Puerto Rico en Orlando: la fantasía de la huída

por Ciudadlab

CIUDADLAB es un curso-seminario de análisis y difusión que examina los modos en que la teoría, el debate y la observación crítica proveen herramientas alternas para el entendimiento de la ciudad contemporánea. CIUDADLAB aborda los modos y las representaciones que, a diario, impactan e informan nuestras costumbres, identidades y deseos, que tan impregnados quedan dentro del paisaje construido.

En esta ocasión, se tomó como objeto de estudio el fenómeno de Puerto Rico en Orlando. Inspirado, en gran medida, por lo ordinario y lo cotidiano, nos embarcamos a estudiar la diáspora masiva de los puertorriqueños a la Florida central. El éxodo ha sido una condición recurrente de nuestra sociedad. Históricamente, ha incluido ciudades como Nueva York y Chicago, pero, a diferencia de estas otras migraciones, la de Orlando ha sido enmarcada por una aparente continuidad cultural que minimiza el efecto de ruptura que induce toda relocalización.

Nuestro objetivo principal es descifrar la relación entre el deseo y las maneras como se imagina la ciudad contemporáneamente en Puerto Rico, asignando un rol específico a Orlando como fábrica de imaginación fantástica, en contraposición a la banalidad cotidiana de un paisaje indiferenciado por el auto. La migración, es por un lado, una extensión cultural de las recurrentes ansias por escapar y volver a empezar pero, también, es el reencuentro con una forma de genericidad urbana que cada vez es más común en Puerto Rico. Si la fantasía estimula la escapada original, el resultado de la relocalización es una vuelta a lo familiar. A diferencia de las ciudades antes mencionadas, altamente jerarquizadas y diferenciadas, en Orlando, la distinción entre sectores y vecindarios no puede ser reconocida fácilmente, en parte, por tratarse de un territorio enfrascado en una expansiva agenda de privatización que homogeniza todo lo que toca.

El estudio nos redirigió a campos tan diversos como la etnografía y la antropología, alejándonos cada vez de la arquitectura y el urbanismo, todo ello para poder entender las contradicciones narrativas de los puertorriqueños en Orlando. Vale preguntar, entonces, ¿se podrá generar un proyecto autónomo de la arquitectura?, o ¿será crucial producir nuevas herramientas de investigación interdisciplinarias para lograr entender estas nuevas manifestaciones cuya presencia en lo social contrasta con su invisibilidad territorial?

## CIUDADLAB Puerto Rico in Orlando: the fantasy of the escape

CIUDADLAB is an analysis and diffusion seminar course that examines the modes in which theory, debate and critical observation provide alternate research tools for the understanding of the contemporary city. CIUDADLAB approaches the modes and representations that daily impact and inform our customs, identities and desires that are so imbedded in our built landscape.

On this occasion the Puerto Rico in Orlando phenomenon was taken as a subject of study. Greatly inspired by the ordinary and the everyday, we embarked to study the massive diaspora of Puerto Ricans to Central Florida. The exodus has been a recurrent condition of our society. Historically, it has included cities like New York and Chicago, but contrary to those other migrations, Orlando's has been framed by an apparent cultural continuity that minimizes the rupture effect that relocations usually provoke.

Our main objective is to decipher the relationship between desire and the ways in which the contemporary city is imagined in Puerto Rico, assigning a specific role to Orlando as a factory of fantastic imaginations, in contraposition to the daily banality of an undifferentiated landscape by the car. Migration is, on one side, a cultural extension of the recurrent longing of the need to escape and begin again, but it also is a reencounter with a form of generic urbanity that is evermore common in Puerto Rico. If fantasy stimulates the original escapade, the result of the relocation is a return to the familiar. In opposition to the before mentioned cities, highly hierarchized and differentiated, in Orlando the distinction between sectors and neighborhoods cannot be easily recognized, in part for it being a contained territory in an expansive agenda of privatization that homogenizes everything that it touches.

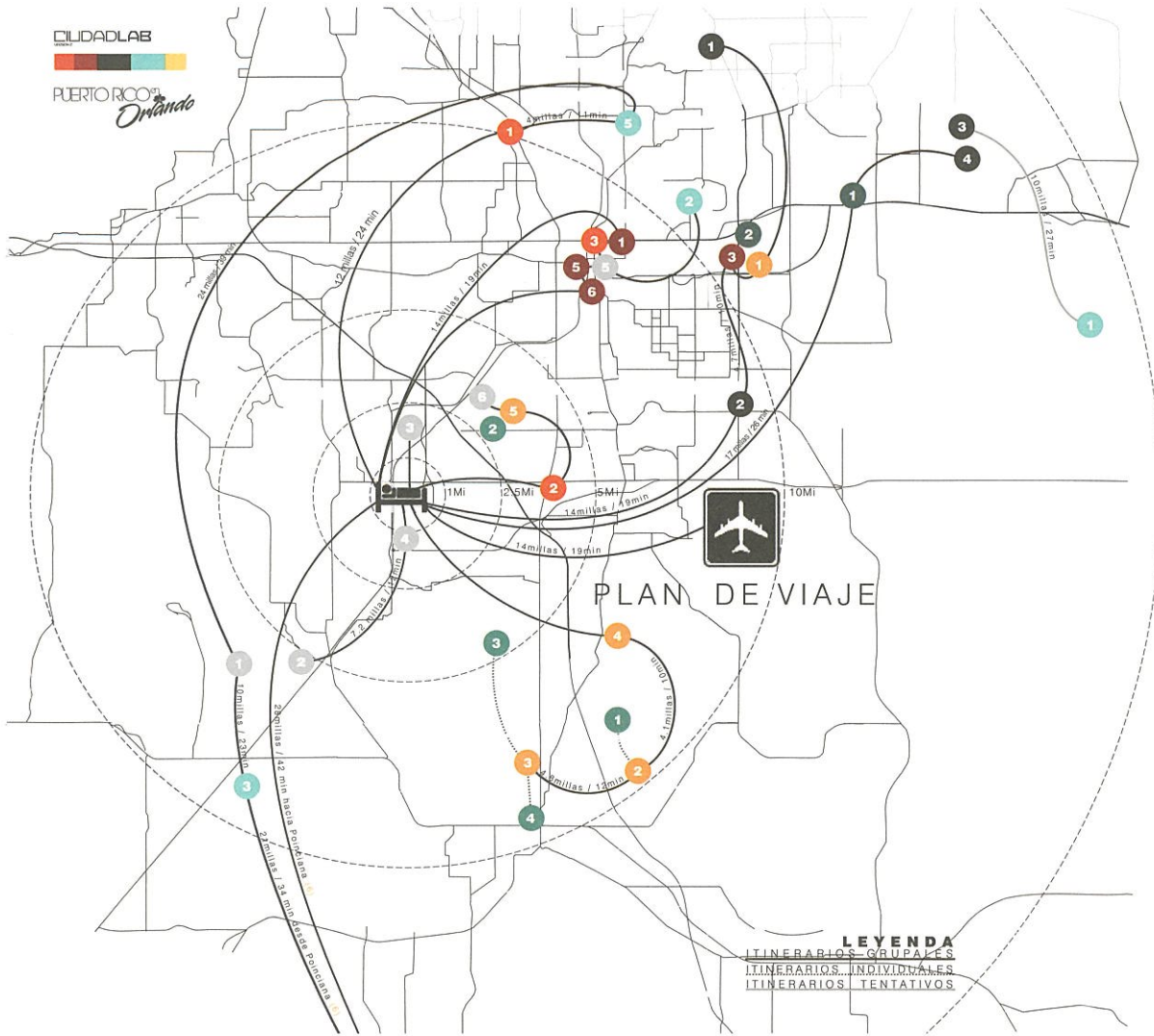
The study redirected us to such diverse fields as ethnography and anthropology, each time distancing us from architecture and urbanism, all of this to be able to understand the narrative contradictions of the Puerto Ricans in Orlando. It is worth to ask then, can we generate an autonomous project of architecture? or would it be crucial to produce new tools of interdisciplinary investigation in order to understand these new manifestations who's presence within the social contrasts with its territorial invisibility?

## Estudiantes / Students

Ana Rebecca Campos  
Yeidee De La Torre  
Edgar García  
T. Sebastián Grøgard  
Melanie Gutiérrez  
Gabriel Piovannetti  
Shalom Velázquez

## Profesores / Professors

Deepak Lamba Nieves  
Marcelo López Dinardi  
José Lorenzo Torres  
Nadya K. Nenadich  
Oscar Oliver Didier  
Miguel Rodríguez Casellas



- V I D E O S
- GRABADORA
  - ENTREVISTAS
  - FOTOGRAFÍAS
  - DIBUJOS
  - CAMINATAS
  - OBSERVACION
- 20Mi

## ITINERARIO

	jueves_31/05/2007	viernes_01/06/2007	sabado_02/06/2007	domingo_03/06/2007	lunes_04/06/2007	martes_05/06/2007	miércoles_06/06/2007	jueves_07/06/2007	
12:00 a.m.									12:00 a.m.
01:00 a.m.	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	HOTEL	01:00 a.m.
02:00 a.m.									02:00 a.m.
03:00 a.m.									03:00 a.m.
04:00 a.m.									04:00 a.m.
05:00 a.m.									05:00 a.m.
06:00 a.m.									06:00 a.m.
07:00 a.m.	AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL MUNDO MARÍA							TRANSPORTE ORLANDO INTERNACIONAL	07:00 a.m.
08:00 a.m.		DESAYUNO	DESAYUNO	DESAYUNO	DESAYUNO	DESAYUNO	DESAYUNO		08:00 a.m.
09:00 a.m.		TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE		09:00 a.m.
10:00 a.m.		ORLANDO POLICE DEPT SERVICES	LEADON WOODS CONCHA NEVADA	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTE	ORLANDO - SAN JUAN	10:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m.	¿?	ALMUERZO	PUBLIC SABORA	ALMUERZO	ALMUERZO	ALMUERZO	ALMUERZO	RECOGIDO DE MALETAS	11:00 a.m.
12:00 p.m.									12:00 p.m.
01:00 p.m.									01:00 p.m.
02:00 p.m.									02:00 p.m.
03:00 p.m.	MAMI - ORLANDO RECOGIDO DE MALETAS TRANSPORTE								03:00 p.m.
04:00 p.m.									04:00 p.m.
05:00 p.m.	HOTEL	TRANSPORTE							05:00 p.m.
06:00 p.m.									06:00 p.m.
07:00 p.m.	CENTRO DE CONVENCIONES	HOTEL							07:00 p.m.
08:00 p.m.									08:00 p.m.
09:00 p.m.									09:00 p.m.
10:00 p.m.									10:00 p.m.
11:00 p.m.									11:00 p.m.
12:00 a.m.									12:00 a.m.

## Edgar García

“Son muchos los puertorriqueños que se han movido o fantasían con reubicarse en el área de Orlando y Florida central. Motivados, en gran parte, por un aparente sentido de seguridad, el cual no se limita a la protección de la ciudadanía frente a la criminalidad, sino que apela a un equilibrio con el contexto social, político, económico, cultural y natural, muchos deciden rehacer su vida dentro de este territorio.”

“There are many Puerto Ricans that have moved or fantasize with relocating to the Orlando and Central Florida area. Motivated in part by an apparent sense of security, which is not limited to the protection of citizens from crime, but appeals to an equilibrium with the social, political, economic, cultural and natural context, a lot decide to remake their lives inside this territory.”

“Queda pues, un Puerto Rico matizado con un aura de inestabilidad e inseguridad, contrapuesto a un Orlando sublimado a nivel de ‘paraíso’ seguro. Un panorama que ha contribuido al traslado de cientos de miles de puertorriqueños al área de Florida central desde finales de la década de los 80s.”

“We are left then with a Puerto Rico that is stigmatized with an aura of instability and insecurity, in opposition to an Orlando that is sublimed to a level of secure ‘paradise’. A panorama that has contributed to the diaspora of hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the Central Florida area since the end of the 80’s.”

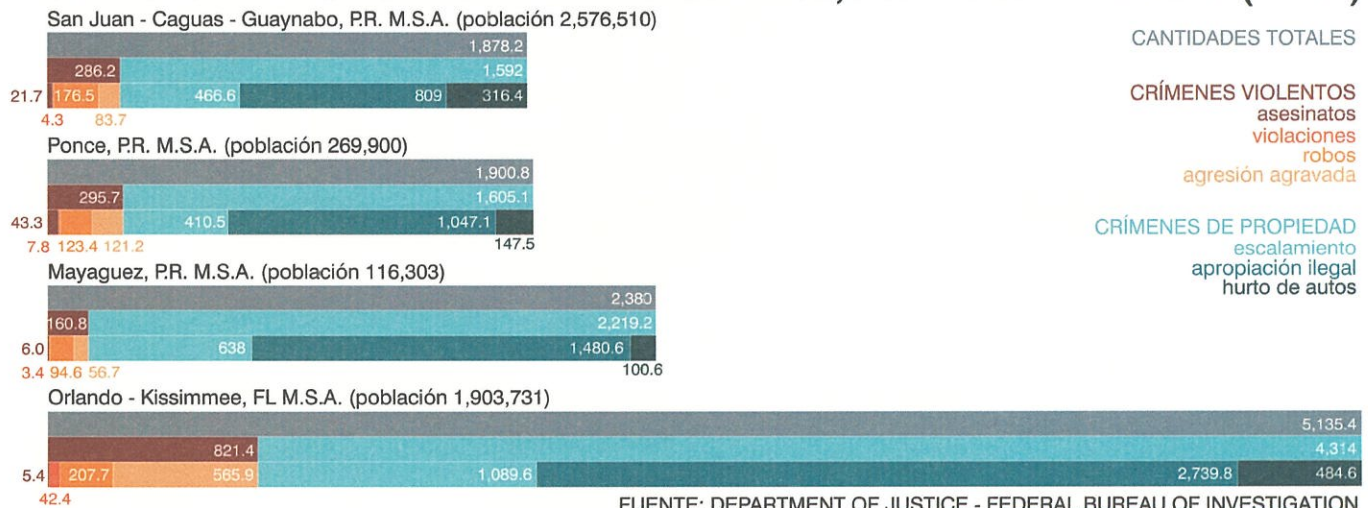
“La construcción del imaginario de seguridad donde se engrandece a Orlando a un nivel paradisíaco se nutre, en muchas ocasiones, de fuentes extremadamente editadas como vivencias de terceros, promociones sobre el destino y vacaciones esporádicas como turista. Este panorama propicia que en ocasiones se piense que Orlando es Disney, entendiendo que, al vivir en el destino, se mantiene la sensación de seguridad y disfrute recibida en la experiencia como turistas.”

“The imaginary construct of security, where Orlando is exalted to a paradisiac level, is nurtured, on many occasions, by extremely edited sources such as lived experiences of tertiaries, promotions about the destination and sporadic vacations as tourists. This panorama provokes that in occasions Orlando is thought as Disney, provoking the understanding that living in the destination includes the sensation of security and enjoyment received in the experience as tourists.”

“Ciertamente, en Orlando ocurren menos asesinatos por habitante que en Puerto Rico, pero eso no significa que los individuos se encuentran 100% protegidos. En el 2006, Orlando fue catalogada como la séptima ciudad más peligrosa, de los Estados Unidos, según Morgan Quitno Corporation. Esa posición la adquieren por tener unos de los índices más altos de la nación en crímenes violentos y de propiedad, inclusive, mucho más altos que en Puerto Rico. El único crimen que tiene mayor incidencia en la Isla es el asesinato, pero el aumento de 188% entre el 2004 y 2006 llevó a Orlando a ocupar la posición número uno en aumento de asesinatos a nivel nacional.”

“It is certain that in Orlando there are less homicides per inhabitant than in Puerto Rico, but this does not mean that the individuals will find themselves 100% protected. In 2006 Orlando was categorized as the seventh most dangerous city in the United States, according to Morgan Quitno Corporation. They acquire this position for having one of the highest indexes in the nation in violent and property crimes, inclusively, much higher than in Puerto Rico. The only crime that has a higher incidence on the island is homicide, but the increase of 188% between 2004-2006 led Orlando to occupy the number one position in increase in homicides at a national level.”

### RAZÓN DE CRIMINALIDAD POR 100,000 HABITANTES (2005)



“El problema es que muchos se trasladan pensando que la percepción de seguridad y disfrute recibida en la experiencia como turistas es análoga con la vida en Orlando. Esta apreciación elude escenarios donde el destino parece ser más una movida insegura que un parque de diversiones.”

“The problem is that many move thinking that the perception of security and enjoyment received in their experience as tourists is analogous to living in Orlando. An appreciation that eludes scenarios where the destination seems to be a more insecure move than a theme park.”

“Existe un éxodo de compañías con sede en Puerto Rico que han decidido expandirse a Orlando, Florida. Entre estas se encuentran, la Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples, el Banco Popular y el periódico El Nuevo Día. Algunas de estas empresas, después de ubicarse y acostumbrarse al nuevo ambiente, han logrado expandirse en el territorio gracias al interés cultural que han demostrado tener. Participan y organizan actividades con fines de promover la cultura puertorriqueña y así atraen a los puertorriqueños a usar sus servicios. Luego, los clientes puertorriqueños le comunican al resto de los hispanos sobre los “buenos servicios que ha traído su país a Orlando para su beneficio.”



“An exodus of companies with headquarters in Puerto Rico that have decided to expand to Orlando, Florida. These include, La Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples, Banco Popular and El Nuevo Día newspaper. After locating and becoming accustomed to this new environment, some of these companies have been able to expand in the territory thanks to the cultural interest they have demonstrated to have. They participate and organize activities in order to promote the Puerto Rican culture and that way they attract Puerto Ricans to use their services. Afterwards, the Puerto Rican clientele communicate to the rest of the hispanics about “the really good services that their country has brought to Orlando to their benefit.”



“Los negocios reconocen esa sed de la cultura y se aprovechan para atacarlos con anuncios y actividades que promuevan la cultura (que ellos buscan y ‘necesitan’) para que ellos se sientan identificados y participen de sus servicios. No sólo eso, además, se sienten identificados con el idioma (el español) y la compañía en sí, ya que algunos en Puerto Rico han visto su publicidad o han utilizado sus servicios. Por lo tanto, estas compañías, al llegar tienen un beneficio, el conocimiento del boricua y la lengua, que compartimos los hispanos.”



“Businesses recognize this thirst for culture and they bombard them with publicity and activities that promote the culture (that they long for and ‘need’) to take advantage of them and make them identify and participate of their services. Not only that, in addition they feel identified to the language (Spanish) and the company itself, since some in Puerto Rico have seen their publicity or used their services. In that sense, these companies have a benefit when they arrive, the understanding of the “boricua” and the language that hispanics share.”



“Tanto los puertorriqueños como los productos y las compañías fingen la existencia de un espacio de Puerto Rico en Orlando. Las compañías de Puerto Rico y los productos cooperan que la gente mantenga su cultura, para que se puedan adaptar y acostumbrarse más fácilmente y los puertorriqueños ayudan a las compañías a expandir sus negocios al mercado hispano en general. Aunque un poco perversa la relación (en la que la compañía que busca expansión y dinero logre crear una “familia” con los clientes) se puede entender que es necesario para el puertorriqueño acostumbrarse a un espacio que, en principio, carece de sentido cultural.”



“Puerto Ricans, the products and the companies all alike recreate the existence of a space for Puerto Rico in Orlando. The companies from Puerto Rico and the products cooperate in the people maintaining their culture so that they can adapt and accustom themselves more easily, and the Puerto Ricans help the companies to expand their markets to hispanics in general. Even though the relationship is a bit perverse (in that the company that seeks expansion and money is able to create a sense of ‘family’ with the client) it can be understood that it is necessary or the Puerto Rican to become accustomed to a space that in principle lacks ‘cultural meaning.’”

## Melanie Gutiérrez

“Ocurren varios factores por los que hubo un aumento significativo de puertorriqueños en Orlando, se dice: ‘la mayoría de los puertorriqueños que vienen aquí, vacacionan por Disney, le gusta lo que ven, y se quieren quedar a vivir allí’. Se estima que alrededor del año 1960 se acumula suficiente capital para que la clase media puertorriqueña pueda darse un viaje de ocio.”

“Various factors occur for there to be a significant increase of Puerto Ricans in Orlando, it is said: ‘the majority of Puerto Ricans that come here, vacation in Disney, they like what they see, and they stay to live’. It is estimated that around the year 1960 enough capital is accumulated in order for the Puerto Rican middle class to be able to take a leisurely trip.”



“Se prolonga este ciclo en nuevas referencias de placer, en nuevos parques temáticos y negocios de la ciudad que toman a Disney como precedente. También existen los ‘espacios públicos’ llamados ‘downtown’ o la versión de Universal Studios: ‘City Walk’, que resultan ser una experiencia gratuita, tematizada y consumerista. Estas zonas apelan a las actividades sociales y reintegran al ciudadano local, a la fantasía vacacional.”

“This cycle is prolonged with new pleasure references, with new theme parks and city businesses that take Disney as a precedent. ‘Public spaces’ also exist that are called ‘downtown’ or Universal Studio’s version: ‘City Walk’; that turn out to be a free, thematized and consumerist experience. These zones appeal to the social activities and reintegrate the local citizen to the vacation fantasy.”



## Yeidee De La Torre

En Orlando, la población de puertorriqueños está compuesta de 212,406 personas, lo que es igual al 52% del total de habitantes hispanos del área. Ciertamente se ha convertido en un grupo con un alto poder decisional en distintos niveles (político, económico y social) y lo hace protagonista y antagonista del espacio existente.

In Orlando, the Puerto Rican population is composed of 212,406 people, which is equal to 52% of the total hispanic inhabitants of the area. Certainly it has turned into a group with a strong decisional power at different levels (political, economical and social) and makes them protagonists and antagonists of the existing space.



“Luego de los estudios de la Cumbre Hispana impulsados por la Cámara de Comercio de Orlando y su vice-presidenta, Vilma Quintana, la Cámara de Comercio entendió que era importante analizar las capacidades de los puertorriqueños dentro del área. Con el estudio del Hispanic Summit se dieron cuenta de que la presencia de los puertorriqueños en Orlando aportó más de 4.2 billones de dólares en el 2005. Sin embargo, los puertorriqueños que viven allá sienten apatía por la política y no les interesa formar parte en las elecciones de sus políticos.”

“After the studies held by the Hispanic Summit sponsored by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and its Vice President, Vilma Quintana, the Chamber of Commerce understood that it was important to analyze the capacities of Puerto Ricans in the area. With the study the Hispanic Summit realized that the Puerto Rican presence in Orlando contributed more than 4.2 billion dollars in 2005. However, the Puerto Ricans that live there feel apathy to the politics there and are not interested in forming part in the elections of politicians.”

“Al adentrarnos en aquellos espacios habitados, primordialmente, por puertorriqueños en Orlando, encontramos rasgos muy similares entre los patrones de asentamiento de la Isla y los de Orlando. Observamos el surgimiento de una nueva forma de patriotismo, un renovado sentido de orgullo patrio. Muchas de las casas habitadas por puertorriqueños exhiben características que gritan: ¡BORICUA! como lo son el despliegue de banderas de Puerto Rico, el típico altar a la virgen en el patio delantero, el uso de rejas en puertas y ventanas, los *flood lights* con sensor de movimiento en los garajes y hasta el uso de amapolas y matas de plátanos para decorar los jardines.”

“Upon entering the spaces primordially inhabited by Puerto Ricans in Orlando, we find features that are quite similar between the urban patterns of the Island and those of Orlando. We observe the emergence of a new form of patriotism, a renovated sense of native pride. Many of the houses inhabited by Puerto Ricans exhibit characteristics that scream: BORICUA! like the huge amount of Puerto Rican flags, the typical altar to the Virgin Mary in the front yard, the use of security bars in the doors and windows, flood lights with motion sensors in the garages and even the use of poppies and plantain plants to decorate the gardens.”

“Han pasado diecisiete años desde que se inició esta ola heterogénea de puertorriqueños que, aún hoy, deciden emigrar hacia Orlando. Sin embargo, aunque el enfoque mediático de las bienes raíces continua seduciendo la imaginación del puertorriqueño, lo que encontramos en el área de Orlando contrasta con lo que continuamente se nos presenta.”

“Seventeen years have passed since the beginning of this heterogenous wave of Puerto Ricans that, even today, decide to migrate to Orlando. However, even though the mediatic focus of real Estate continues to seduce the imagination of the Puerto Rican, what we find in the area of Orlando contrasts with what is continually presented to us.”

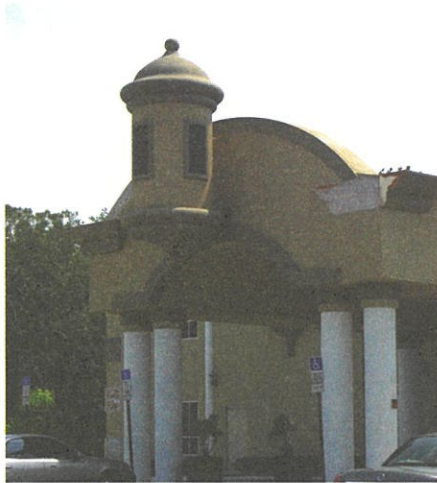
“Al estudiar el mercado de bienes raíces en Orlando, encontramos que la trayectoria del mismo es muy similar a la situación en Puerto Rico; tanto en precio por área cuadrada, como en precio por localización. Parejo al de Puerto Rico, el mercado de bienes raíces en Orlando sufrió una transformación. Hace diez años, cuando las áreas urbanas estaban muy deterioradas, los desarrolladores adquirieron tierras baratas en donde producían en masa el ‘Sueño americano’. Por consiguiente, la gente buscó refugio en los suburbios y estos proliferaron sin control y sin medida. Debido a la creciente demanda de propiedades en las áreas suburbanas de Orlando, los precios de las propiedades escalaron drásticamente.”

“When studying the real estate market in Orlando, we find that its trajectory is very similar to the situation in Puerto Rico; in the pricing of square footage as in the pricing of location as well. The same as in Puerto Rico, the real estate market in Orlando suffered a transformation. Ten years ago, when the urban areas were very deteriorated, the developers acquired cheap land where they could produce the ‘American Dream’ in massive quantities. As a consequence, people found refuge in the suburbs and these proliferated without control or measuredness. Due to the ever increasing demand for properties in the suburban areas of Orlando, the property prices dramatically increased.”

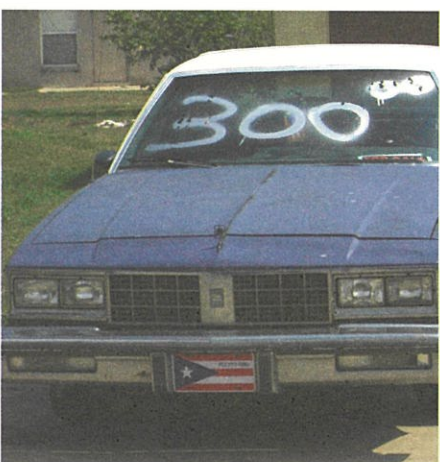
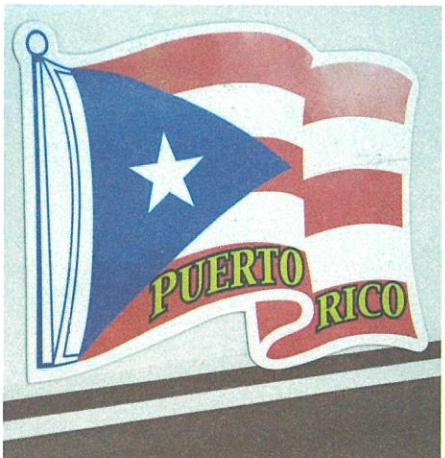
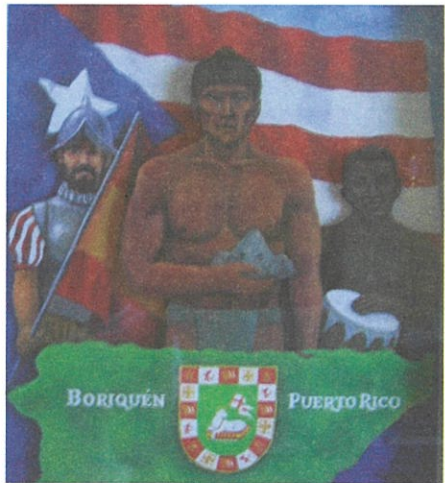


“El incremento en el valor de las propiedades, hace imposible que un gran número de puertorriqueños se conviertan en dueños de hogares. Quienes reúnen la cantidad necesaria para comprar una propiedad, se ven obligados por el Estado a pagar una póliza de seguro que no sólo protege el préstamo hipotecario, sino que, también, tenga cubierta por concepto de responsabilidad pública. Además, el nuevo propietario se ve obligado a pagar impuestos sobre el valor ‘real’ de la propiedad (a diferencia de Puerto Rico). Por consiguiente, la mayoría de la clase trabajadora de puertorriqueños en el área de Orlando se ve obligada a alquilar y, aún así, la mayoría necesita tener dos o tres trabajos para poder cuadrar su presupuesto.”

“The increase in property value made it impossible for a great number of Puerto Ricans to acquire their home. Those who are able to meet the necessary quantity to buy a property are obligated by the State to pay an insurance policy that not only protects the loan but also has to cover by concept of public responsibility. In addition, the new owner is obligated to pay taxes on the ‘real’ property value (unlike in Puerto Rico). Consequently, the majority of working class Puerto Ricans in the Orlando area are obligated to rent and even like this need to have two or three jobs to make ends meet.”







# “...exit 75B... esa era!, ¡Mierda, nos pasamos!...”

por Marcelo López Dinardi

Si la experiencia de analizar el territorio de la ciudad de Orlando había sido confusa en papel, tratar de ubicar a la ciudad consigo misma fue aún peor. Porque el territorio que comprende la ciudad es mayormente plano, y su tridimensionalidad se confunde con una imagen que evoca aun más su propia representación imaginada. Su cartografía ha sido predicada como muchas otras de la nación por estrategias suburbanizantes y un crecimiento lineal derivado de una vialidad exagerada. Como el territorio es vasto, no hubo problema para realizar las carreteras anchas predilectas de los vehículos sobredimensionados. La zonificación se encargó, tempranamente, de separar las distancias entre los distintos usos programáticos de la ciudad, cometiendo el error típico de dicha práctica: no cualificar la forma y el crecimiento urbano. La inexistencia de una concepción regional del territorio ha permitido un desarrollo que ni siquiera corresponde a un desparramamiento urbano. No hay centro que pauté la referencia, sino, más bien, un salpullido de conglomerados residenciales y comerciales. Y la fantasía de su motor económico -los parques temáticos- selló en definitiva el territorio armado de un rompecabezas pensado inacabado.

Recorrer el territorio de Orlando es moverse de un punto a otro sin, necesariamente, haber llegado a ningún lugar o, de otro modo, desplazarse en un espacio sin tiempo. La experiencia de movilidad en la ciudad constituye, más que una secuencia de conectar, uno de los principales elementos disociativos de la fantasía. Vivir en Orlando significa someterse a la idea de ser partícipe de una feliz ilusión o una realidad simulada. Este lugar se ha concebido como la imagen de la fantasía y, claro está, a menos que no se esté en un trance, sabemos que la realidad es algo más concreta. Pero esa concreción real de Orlando no significa que sus habitantes no estén sumidos en un mundo imaginado que los convence más que cualquier otra realidad. Bastan los ejemplos de las comunidades nuevo urbanistas encabezadas por *Celebration* que han hecho de sí mismas una realidad hiper-real que se sirve de su artificialidad viva para insertarse en el conglomerado del mundo mágico de Orlando. Las contradicciones entre realidad y fantasía se ven latentes en las expresiones resultantes de los puertorriqueños: “el lado oscuro de Orlando, Disney”, “esto luce ser un paraíso y no lo es”, aunque a la vez otros afirman “vivo más tranquila”.

Pero, ¿de qué se trata Puerto Rico en Orlando? ¿Por qué se muda el puertorriqueño? ¿Cuál es el rol que tienen la cartografía, la experiencia

espacial plana y la fantasía en el imaginario del puertorriqueño? ¿Qué ocurre una vez se llega a la tierra prometida? El puertorriqueño se muda porque no le queda otra, porque Orlando está ahí, a la vuelta de la esquina, como si fuera una extensión de San Juan, porque ya lo dijo el vecino o el amigo del pariente, porque “se vive mejor”, porque “hay más oportunidades” pero, sobre todo, por una ilusión preñada de ingenuidad. Las múltiples percepciones de crisis en la Isla han provocado la voluntad de la huida, y Orlando se presenta en el panorama como apéndice extra-muros de nuestro concentrado territorio. Se puede encontrar un pedazo de la 65 de Infantería, de la carretera de Los Filtros, de Levittown y de muchas típicas urbanizaciones cerradas o *gated communities*, como se les conoce allá, pero con casas de madera, paneles de yeso y un imaginario estilístico tan banal como el nuestro.

La mayoría de los resultados que pudimos extraer de las entrevistas y las conversaciones en nuestra visita a la ciudad nos arrojaban un plano decisional lleno de ilusión, vinculado, necesariamente, a la fantasía de Disney y los parques temáticos con la realidad concreta de vivir en Orlando. Sin duda, la conjetura principal de la diáspora puertorriqueña fue decir que en Orlando hay una “mejor calidad de vida”, entiéndase que en Puerto Rico hay mucha criminalidad, que la política es un desastre, que la crisis fiscal, que la educación es mala, que no hay oportunidades y, por supuesto, que (casi) todo lo de afuera es mejor. Pero sobre qué Orlando ofrece



realmente como mejoría para la calidad de vida, fue siempre una respuesta difícil de evidenciar. El denominador común fue, en el mejor de los casos, y más como artimaña, que en Orlando “hay más espacio”, pero ya volveré a esto.

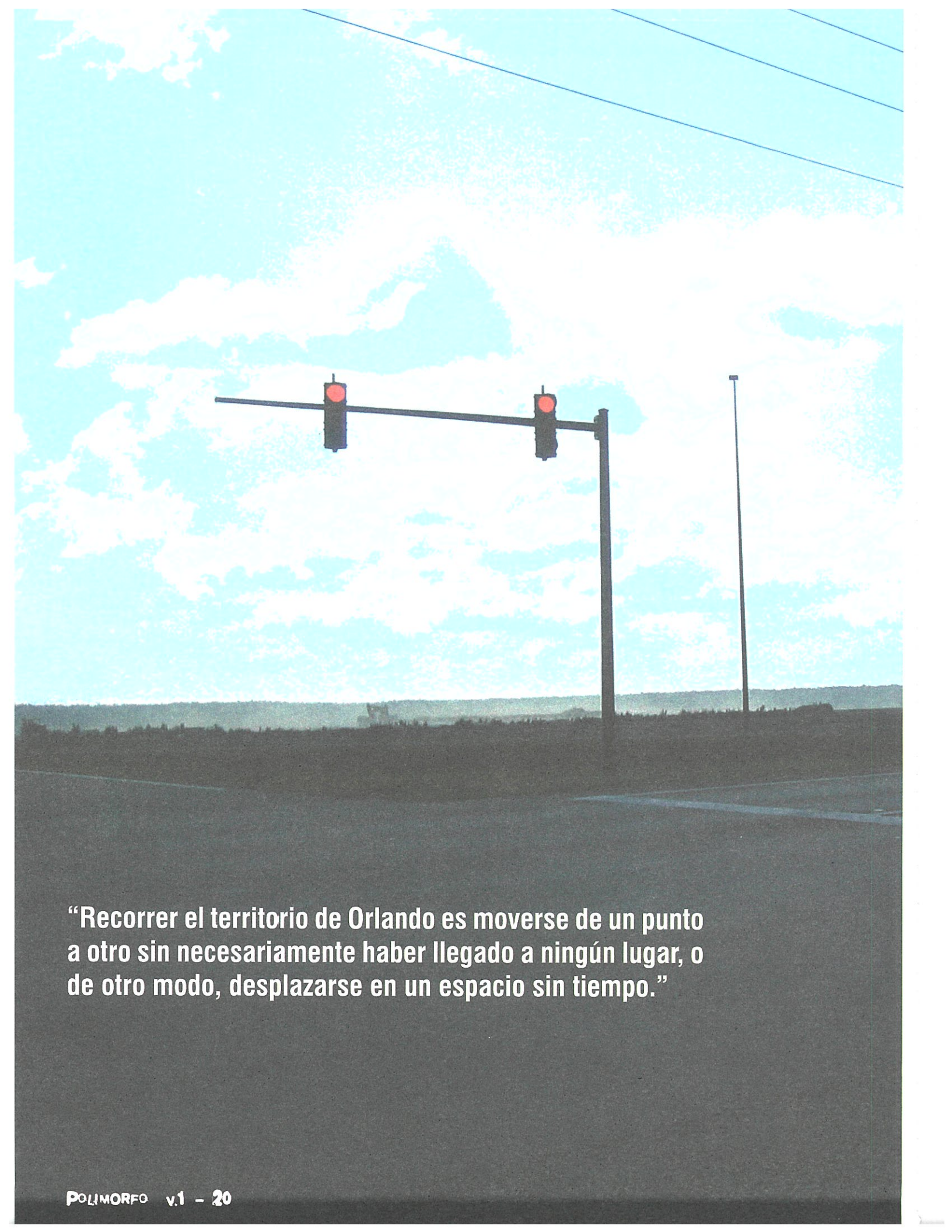
Explico algunos de los casos. La educación en Orlando está, necesariamente, ligada a la localidad o, mejor dicho, está zonificada. Esto significa que sus hijos pueden asistir solamente a las escuelas que le pertenecen al lugar donde viven. Si vive en una comunidad (término que para muchos describe el conglomerado de casas suburbanas, pero que no incluye la convivencia con su vecino) de bajos recursos, media o promedio, esa será la educación que obtendrá. Si vive en una comunidad prominente y opulenta, así serán las aportaciones que recibirán las escuelas para patrocinar la educación. Claro está, la definición de comunidad

está dada en gran medida por el mercado de bienes raíces y, si usted no vive en un barrio de altos ingresos económicos, la educación de sus hijos no será de las más envidiadas. A juzgar por la localidad de la mayor concentración de puertorriqueños, la educación obtenida no es necesariamente una mejoría. Dos aspectos que son radicalmente opuestos a cómo ocurre aquí en la Isla, usted lleva a sus hijos donde quiera y pueda pagar, le quede en su vecindario, o a treinta minutos de él. En este caso, la relación de convivencia entre el individuo y el territorio no se limita a la establecida por los patrones del sistema de educación y ese vínculo de libertad con la tierra es más evidente aquí en la Isla.

Otro caso de importancia que se deriva del anterior es el mercado de bienes raíces. Los impuestos a la propiedad, a diferencia de Puerto Rico, se tabulan sobre el precio del inmueble al año en curso,

Izquierda: Puertorriqueño recién llegado a Orlando, Florida  
Left: Newly arrived Puerto Rican in Orlando, Florida  
Abajo: Hora pico en la tarde en la autopista I-4, Orlando, Florida  
Below: Afternoon rush hour at I-4 highway, Orlando, Florida





“Recorrer el territorio de Orlando es moverse de un punto a otro sin necesariamente haber llegado a ningún lugar, o de otro modo, desplazarse en un espacio sin tiempo.”



lo que significa que son mucho más altos que los que se pagan en la Isla. El resultado es un choque económico para el puertorriqueño que se muda sin conocer los pormenores de la compra de propiedad, así como los gastos de mantenimiento de cada urbanización o comunidad. No menos importante es el aparente sentido de seguridad que tiene el puertorriqueño en Orlando y, aunque sin duda hay menos asesinatos, no se está exento de crímenes violentos y de pedofilia (motivados por los parques temáticos). De todas maneras, una mirada por los lugares donde habita la mayor población boricua nos deja en evidencia otra de las contradicciones latentes, que por la propia seguridad, porque no se conoce ni al vecino, los niños no pueden salir a jugar a la calle y la convivencia social en el vecindario es consecuentemente pobre. Y esto se extraña en la diáspora, “echamos de menos el ambiente, la vida social”. Es muy probable que esta falta de vida social la podamos adjudicar, en parte, a dos condiciones básicas del matrimonio boricua con el territorio, que la extensión de la ciudad coarta las relaciones de un grupo informe y que, a la vez, su condición de inmigrantes los mantiene atados a establecer vínculos marginados en el tejido social/cultural. Que no se sorprenda nadie de que me esté refiriendo a los inmigrantes, porque como se nos dejó saber “aunque somos ciudadanos, somos inmigrantes”. A pesar de la ciudadanía estadounidense, el puertorriqueño es visto como un extranjero, como un latino-univisión más que llega a los Estados Unidos en busca de una mejor vida. “El discrimen es bien fuerte”, aseguran algunos. Y esa carga cultural del inmigrante se traduce no sólo en sus dinámicas de apropiación del lugar, sino también en su trabajo. Común fue escuchar que cada quien tiene dos o tres trabajos para poder sobrellevar el costo de vida que implica la ciudad: “la vida es bien dura para la gente”, “los números y la gente miente”, las declaraciones de los entrevistados hacen eco del desfase que existe entre la representación mediatizada de la fantasía de Orlando y la realidad en que se encuentra el desterrado. Y esto no significa que el trabajador esté menos preparado porque, ciertamente, hay un grupo de profesionales que ha encontrado un lugar de trabajo allá. Sin embargo, está sujeto a los mismos vaivenes de la incertidumbre laboral y a aceptar, en muchos casos, beneficios menores a los que se reciben en Puerto Rico.

Las múltiples explicaciones para la migración no lograron -al menos en el desenlace de una semana de travesía en la ciudad- articular una explicación clara para la huida. La conjetura de que allá “hay más espacio” sirve de metáfora para componer, quizás, una de las hipótesis de Puerto Rico en Orlando: que el problema de la ciudad, o mejor aún, de la no ciudad que tenemos, tiene que ver más con nuestra pertenencia a ella. En Puerto Rico no nos sobra el espacio, pero buscamos cada día conquistar un municipio cercano a nuestro simbólico centro





metropolitano para separarnos más unos de otros. Le tenemos miedo a la diferencia, a la convivencia híbrida, a la cercanía del otro, a tener que formar parte de un espacio común finito. El problema no es tener más o menos espacio, es querer pertenecer, o no, a un espacio tolerante capaz de establecer vínculos sociales que armen el tejido que requiere la ciudad. Puerto Rico existe en Orlando como un espejo de sí mismo, como una huida simbólica de querer tener más espacio para la intolerancia y el desinterés de lo público. La imagen de Puerto Rico se ve retratada con claridad en Orlando, nos seduce la fantasía banal de Disney, lo temporero y lo desechable. La no-historia de la ciudad nos permite reconstruir nuestra identidad con las imágenes llenas de ilusión que identifican la ciudad. El territorio vasto nos entrega el deseo de lo infinito tan latente en la Isla. Puerto Rico pareciera servir de escenario para imaginar todo aquello posible sólo en la realidad. En fin, aproveche su próxima visita a Orlando para entender un poco más a quién quiere como vecino, ya sabe, la salida que dice Guavate es la ruta del lechón asado y la que dice aeropuerto es el camino a la tierra prometida del ratón Mickey. |||||



**“...exit 75B... damn it, that was the one, we missed it!...”**

If analyzing the area of the City of Orlando was confusing on paper, the attempt to situate the city within itself was even worse. Since the area comprising the city is mainly flat, its three-dimensionality becomes confused with an image that evokes even more its own imagined representation. Its cartography has been proclaimed, as many others in the nation, for its suburbanized strategies and its lineal growth derived from an exaggerated road system. Due to the vastness of its territory, it wasn't problematic building the preferred wider roads for oversized vehicles. Zoning prematurely took charge of separating the distances between the city's different programmed uses thus committing the typical error of such a practice by not qualifying form or urban growth. The inexistence of a regional concept of the territory has allowed a development that does not even correspond to an urban sprawl, since there is no center to serve as a guideline, but rather to an outbreak of residential and commercial conglomerates. And the fantasy of its economic engine – theme parks – definitely sealed off a territory made of unfinished thought-out puzzles.

Driving through Orlando is like moving from one point to another without necessarily arriving to a particular

place or, in other words, shifting about in timeless space. Rather than constituting a sequence of connections, experiencing mobility in the city is one of the main dissociating elements of fantasy. To live in Orlando means surrendering yourself to being a participant within a happy illusion or a simulated reality. This place has been conceived as the image of fantasy, and it is clear that if we are not in a trance, we know that reality is something more concrete. But this real concreteness of Orlando doesn't mean that its inhabitants aren't immersed in an imagined world that convinces them more so than any other reality. There are enough examples of New Urbanist communities, headed by Celebration, that have made themselves into a hyper-real reality which makes use of its live artificialness in order to insert itself into Orlando's magical world of conglomerates. The contradictions between reality and fantasy are latent within the expressions of Puerto Ricans: “Disney: Orlando's dark side”, “It appears to be paradise, but it isn't”, although at the same time others affirm, “My life is more peaceful”.

But what is Puerto Rico in Orlando all about? Why do Puerto Ricans move there? What role do cartography, the flat spatial experience, and fantasy have in the Puerto Rican imaginary? What happens once one arrives to the promised land? Puerto Ricans move because they have no other choice, because Orlando

is around the corner, so to speak, as if it were an extension of San Juan, because a neighbor or a relative's friend already said “one lives better”, because “there are more opportunities”, but above all, because of a bursting illusion of ingenuity. Multiple perceptions of crises on the Island have provoked the desire to flee, and Orlando is present in the panorama as a city-wall appendix of our highly concentrated land. One can find a piece of the 65th Infantry Avenue, Los Filtros road, Levittown, and many typical closed or gated communities as they are known there, but with wooden houses, gypsum board, and an aesthetic imaginary as banal as our own.

The majority of the results that we obtained from interviews and conversations during our visit to the city showed us a decision-making level filled with illusion, inevitably linking theme parks and the Disney fantasy to the concrete reality of living in Orlando. Without a doubt, the main conjecture of the Puerto Rican diaspora was to say that in Orlando “there is a better quality of life”, meaning that in Puerto Rico the crime rate is high, politics are disastrous, there are fiscal crises, poor education, scarcity of work opportunities, and of course, (almost) anything outside the Island is better. But on what Orlando can really offer to improve the quality of life was always difficult to prove. The common denominator was, in the best of cases, and used more as a ruse than anything else, that



in Orlando “there was more space”, but I will get back to that later.

To explain several cases in point, education in Orlando is necessarily linked to location, or better said, zoning laws are applied, which indicate that your children can only attend schools that are located in the area where they live. If you live in a middle to average low-income community (a term that for many describes conglomerates of suburban homes, but doesn't include adjacent neighbors), so will be the education received. If you live in a prominent and opulent community, so will be the contributions paid to the school in order to sponsor education. It is also clear that the definition of community is given in great measure by the real estate market, and if you do not live in an economically high-income area, education for your children will not be one of the most envied. To judge by the location which has the highest concentration of Puerto Ricans, the education available is not necessarily an improvement. These two aspects are radically opposed to what happens on the Island, where you can enroll your children in any school you can afford, whether it is in your own neighborhood or thirty minutes away. In this case, the relationship between individuals and territory is not limited to the patterns established by the education system, and this freedom of mobility is more evident on the Island.

Another important aspect that derives from the aforementioned is the real estate market. Property taxes, different from Puerto Rico, are based on

the value of the property of the present year, which indicates that they are much higher than those paid in the Island. The result becomes an economic conflict for the Puerto Rican who moves without knowing the details about buying property or what the maintenance expenses are for each gated community. Not less important is the apparent sense of security that Puerto Ricans have in Orlando, and although, without a doubt, there are fewer murders, it is not exempt from violent crime or those committed by pedophiles (motivated by theme parks). Anyway, a glimpse into the places where most Puerto Ricans live reveals evidence of other latent contradictions: for security reasons, since people don't even know their neighbors, children can not play in the street, and social coexistence is consequently poor. Statements such as, “we miss the environment and social life” are prevalent in the diaspora. Most likely this lack of social life can be adjudicated in part to two basic conditions of the Puerto Rican marriage with territory: the city's extension restricts the relationships of a formless group, and at the same time, immigrant status keeps people tied to developing marginal links within the social/cultural network. Let no one be surprised that I am referring to immigrants, because as we've been told “even though we are citizens, we are immigrants”. In spite of being United States citizens, Puerto Ricans are seen as foreigners, as one more Univision-like Latino who arrives in the United States in search of a better life, and some of them assure us that “strong discrimination exists”.

This cultural burden of the immigrant translates not only to the dynamics of settling in a place, but also in his work. It was common to hear that everyone has two or three jobs to be able to overcome the cost of living in that city: “life is hard for the people”, “numbers and people lie”, statements made by those interviewed echo the gap that exists between the power of the media in heightening the Orlando fantasy and the reality in which the exile finds himself. This doesn't signify that the worker is less prepared, because there is a group of professionals which certainly has found a place to work. However it is subject to the same fluctuations of labor uncertainty and to accept, in many cases, lesser benefits than those received in Puerto Rico.

Multiple explanations about migration did not manage – at least after a week of traveling in the city – to articulate a clear explanation for flight. The conjecture that “there is more space” over there serves as a metaphor perhaps to make up one of the hypothesis of why Puerto Ricans go to Orlando: that the problem of the city, or rather of the no-city that we have, has more to do with our belonging to it. In Puerto Rico we have no left-over space, but each day we look for a town that is near our symbolic metropolitan center to separate ourselves more from others. We fear differences, hybrid coexistence, nearness of others, and having to form part of a finite common space. The problem is not having more or less space, it is the desire to pertain or not to a space that is tolerant and capable of establishing social ties that provide the network a city requires. Puerto Rico exists in Orlando as a mirror of itself, as a symbolic flight to have more space for the intolerance and disinterest of the public. The image of Puerto Rico is clearly pictured in Orlando, the banal fantasy of Disney World, the temporary, and the disposable seduce us. The city's non-history permits us to reconstruct our identity by images replete with illusions that identify the city. The vastness of the territory fills us with the desire for the infinite so latent in the Island. Puerto Rico appears to serve as a background to imagine all that is possible only in reality. So, take advantage of your next trip to Orlando and think a little more about who you might want as a neighbor, you already know, the exit that says Guavate leads to roast pork and the one that says Airport leads to the promised land of Mickey Mouse.

Vivienda típica de un vecindario de puertorriqueños  
Typical house in a Puerto Rican neighborhood



# Un verano en Orlando: Reflexiones sobre un viaje

por Deepak Lamba Nieves

Transitar por Orlando significa enfrentarse a unas experiencias duras que pueden evocar sentimientos contradictorios, agrídulces. Para los que fuimos en busca de datos etnográficos que nos sirviesen de material académico, la nueva meca de la diáspora isleña--que en los ochenta va perdiendo su referente como parador mágico para convertirse en parada obligada de la guagua aérea--fue un destino espinoso donde el aura de fantasía se desvanecía en un instante para revelar prácticas ásperas de supervivencia transnacional.

Al igual que en el mito de la expedición de Juan Ponce de León hacia la Fuente de la Juventud, son muchos los que salen hacia la Florida en busca de una mejor vida, llena de oportunidades y lejos de la podredumbre provinciana. No obstante, para algunos, la experiencia dista mucho de ser totalmente placentera y se convierte en una brega incesante que se maneja con un discurso que raya entre la negación y la justificación tipo "a lo hecho, pecho." Otros, se instalan sin reparos y encuentran su lugar en el mundo, cerca de Mickey Mouse y Carlos Arroyo, disfrutando de las supuestas ventajas del primer mundo que han fabricado, sin tener que "masticar el difícil".

II. La práctica del vaivén es muy común para los boricuas, según nos explica el antropólogo Jorge Duany en su libro *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move*. En ese constante bandeo, principalmente entre los Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico, se configuran nuevas identidades a partir de un entrecruce cultural que desdibuja las fronteras tradicionales y redefine contextos espaciales. Es decir, la migración circular se ha convertido en un fenómeno importante que trastoca las definiciones duras y osificadas del discurso nacionalista en torno a la puertorriqueñidad y nos presenta oportunidades para redefinir la geografía de lo patrio a través del sujeto transnacional.

No obstante, la migración a la Florida central de nuestros días no es la misma que se dio a Manhattan o a Hartford a mediados del siglo XX. En la era de Manos a la Obra, la migración al norte sirvió como una herramienta de desarrollo económico. La sobrepoblación, la carencia de trabajos y la escasez de ingresos atentaban contra la transición del monocultivo a la industrialización. Se exportó mano de obra excedente que alimentó las líneas de ensamblaje y las brigadas de recolectores agrícolas en diversos enclaves norteamericanos mientras se recaudaban remesas monetarias que aliviaban

la pobreza en un país que intentaba remozar sus instituciones económicas y redefinir la relación política con su colonizador. En aquel entonces, el acto de brincar el charco se enmarcó y promovió como parte de una política desarrollista; era necesario abrir la válvula de escape para poner en marcha un proyecto modernizador.

Aunque los primeros boricuas que llegaron a la Florida formaron parte de los programas auspiciados por el gobierno isleño para trabajadores agrícolas en los cincuenta, no fue hasta los sesenta y setenta, gracias a la especulación de bienes raíces propiciada por la apertura de Disney World, que se empezó a registrar una presencia puertorriqueña en el área. Mientras el proyecto económico del ELA empezaba a dar señales de desgaste, se abrían oportunidades de empleo e inversión en el estado más cercano. Cuentan las historias que en los ochenta, los pasillos de Plaza las Américas se veían invadidos por agentes de bienes raíces ofreciendo viviendas a precios de remate en la Florida central. Los *infomercials* en los canales locales resaltaban la vida en urbanizaciones tipo *resort* con accesos a los parques de diversión bajo un manto de tranquilidad que contrastaba con la vida en Puerto Nuevo, Bayview y Levittown. Era posible escaparse de la recesión económica, las altas tasas de desempleo y el crimen desmedido que atentaban contra las expectativas de una clase media que se iba desentendiendo del destartado proyecto muñocista. Mientras la generación de los tomateros salía escoltada de la mano por el gobierno, los nuevos expatriados abandonaban el terruño huyendo de la ingobernabilidad y los desajustes de la mal administrada postindustrialización.

III. Nuestra encomienda, a primera vista, resultaba ser sencilla: documentar la experiencia boricua en Orlando desde una óptica espacial. El equipo de arquitectos y planificadores, compuesto por profesores y estudiantes, reconocía que éste no sería el típico peregrinaje a las ciudades majestuosas del mundo desarrollado en busca de glamour y vanguardia. En más de una ocasión, mientras analizábamos datos del Censo y mapas del territorio, nos cuestionamos la pertinencia del proyecto para luego reafirmar lo evidente: existe un Puerto Rico en Orlando y viceversa. Siguiendo la tesis del geógrafo alemán, Karl Schlögel, en el espacio podemos leer nuestro avance por el tiempo. La travesía arrojaría pistas sobre los patrones de asentamiento que anhelamos y los que hemos manufacturado, las nuevas experiencias culturales que hemos consumido

y, por consiguiente, lo que está por venir. Así las cosas, atravesamos los condados de Orange, Seminole, Volusia y otros más en *minivans* por las largas autopistas y avenidas. Visitamos numerosos suburbios, entre ellos Buenaventura Lakes --la urbanización emblemática de la experiencia puertorriqueña de cuello azul en Orlando, también conocida como BVL o Boricuas Viviendo Libre-- buscando entender, a través de sus casas y vecindarios, cómo se derrama la mancha de plátano y dónde se cuajan los sueños de una mejor vida y *upward mobility*. Nos topamos con casas adornadas con la monoestrellada, estatuas de la Virgen de Fátima y el Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, carros trepados en cuatro bloques encajados en el patio frontal y varios canastitos de básquet incrustados en las aceras públicas, entre otros detalles estilo *kitsch* que le daban color a lo que, de otra manera, pudiese haber sido un cementerio crudo y anónimo.

Si bien la estética de algunos hogares alimentaba nuestra idea de los clichés del boricuismo en el exilio, los conversatorios con la comunidad nos revelaron otros lados de la historia. En más de una ocasión, nos hablaron de los cambios en sus lifestyles y las ventajas de vivir en un lugar donde las reglas del juego no ceden ante la jaibería. El acceso a buenas escuelas públicas, viviendas a precios razonables y centros comerciales y de entretenimiento de todo tipo se mencionaba como razones de peso para montar una nueva vida fuera de la isleta.

Sin embargo, a medida que soltaban la lengua, nos contaban sus peripecias. Algunos nunca se imaginaron que la búsqueda de un empleo duraría más de seis meses, a pesar de su preparación académica, y que tendrían que empatar la pelea lavando carros, cuartos u oficinas y chiripiando. Para muchos, la casita, el carro, las visitas al mall y las necesidades de la familia se pagan con el sudor de más de un trabajo a tiempo parcial y completo. Orlando posee una economía de servicios, cuenta con la mayor cantidad de habitaciones de hotel luego de Las Vegas y recibe sobre 52 millones de turistas al año. Aunque hay camas para tanta gente, la industria del turismo necesita muchos obreros de servicio para sustentarse. Ése es precisamente uno de los oficios que muchos de los recién llegados tienen que asumir, con poca seguridad de empleo y menguados beneficios marginales.

Claro está, también se fugan los cerebros que caen con paracaídas, los que viven en Baldwin Park o Celebration y disfrutan de una vida en el *small town*. Protegidos por *restrictive covenants*, estos residentes de los barrios saneados del Nuevo Urbanismo se defienden de la improvisación arquitectónica y se aíslan de la cotidianidad bulliciosa en espacios meticulosamente higienizados que se nutren del orden estatutario para aislar a la chusma. Ahí residen los que pueden financiar el sueño americano agrandado.

## COME WORK FOR DISNEY AND DISCOVER A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES.



Disney is hiring now! Which means you have the opportunity to celebrate the New Year with a new career and new opportunities to live and work in Central Florida, one of the fastest growing areas in the United States.

We have immediate openings for full-time and part-time positions such as Lifeguards, Custodial, Housekeeping, Merchandise and more, with great pay starting at \$9.25 and higher.

We also have exciting full-time selected positions available in Hospitality Management and Food & Beverage Management including Culinary, with excellent salary and benefits packages.

Central Florida offers an excellent quality of life, moderately priced homes and apartments, exceptional public schools, and beautiful weather.

We will be in San Juan, Puerto Rico December 3 - December 5, 1998. So you may call immediately to begin the interview process. Just call 407-828-1000 and press one to be considered for the magical opportunity.



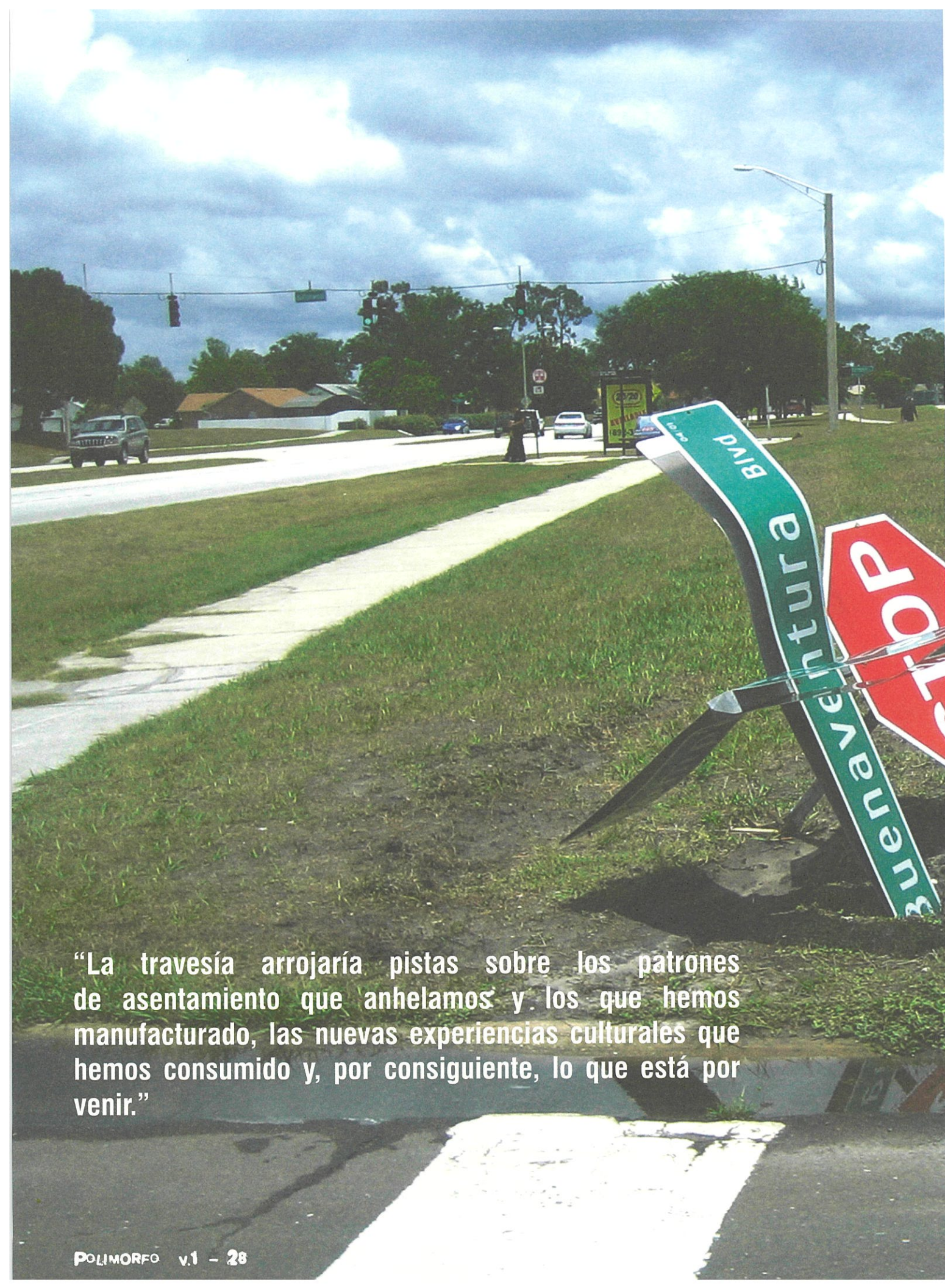
Discover a World of Opportunities at Disney.

This search is available to all who wish to live and work in Central Florida. Jobs are available in San Juan, San Francisco, San Diego, San Jose, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and San Jose, California. For more information, call 407-828-1000.

IV. Hoy se está redactando un relato distinto. El mercado hipotecario estadounidense, que facilitó la compra de miles de hogares relajando sus criterios de evaluación y abriéndoles las puertas a clientes con historiales crediticios dudosos, ha explotado en pedazos. Durante el 2007, la avalancha de préstamos morosos desencadenó una crisis profunda que impactó severamente al mercado de propiedades, a numerosas instituciones bancarias y, por consiguiente, a la economía de los Estados Unidos.

El estado de la Florida, junto con California, Michigan y Nevada, es uno de los más afectados. El año pasado, sobre 160,000 propiedades estaban en la mirilla de la ejecución hipotecaria. Más preocupante aún resulta ser el impacto negativo que la crisis ha tenido en el fondo de inversión del gobierno estatal, que ha sido capitalizado con inversiones millonarias de los pensionados, distritos escolares y numerosos contribuyentes. En otras palabras, el Sunshine State no brilla como antes.

Aunque no sabemos cuántos compatriotas en la diáspora sufren de los subprime blues, las víctimas de la debacle incluyen a muchos hispanos que por vez primera pudieron comprar un hogar. ¿Volverán a sus orígenes aquellos que vencieron a la geopolítica, pero fueron derrotados por el mercado? Seguramente, el vaivén continuará. Por ahora, Orlando tiene su lugar asegurado entre los destinos principales para el exilio voluntario. Sin embargo, es muy probable que en el futuro surjan nuevas coordenadas con otras condiciones espaciales y experiencias socioeconómicas donde se entrecruzarán las comunidades transnacionales de Puerto Ricans, Nuyoricans y Floriricans. ■■■■■■



“La travesía arrojaría pistas sobre los patrones de asentamiento que anhelamos y los que hemos manufacturado, las nuevas experiencias culturales que hemos consumido y, por consiguiente, lo que está por venir.”



## A Summer in Orlando: Reflections on a Voyage

I. To travel around Orlando means facing harsh experiences that can evoke contradictory, bittersweet feelings. For those of us who went searching for ethnographic data that could be used as academic material, the new Mecca of the Island's diaspora – which in the eighties started losing its reference as a magic kingdom to turn into the mandatory stop of the airbus – it was a thorny destination where the aura of fantasy vanished instantly to reveal rough practices of transnational survival.

Just like the mythical expedition of Juan Ponce de Leon looking for the Fountain of Youth, there are many who go to Florida in search of a better life, full of opportunities and far from provincial decay. Nevertheless, to some, the experience is very far from being completely pleasant and turns into an endless struggle managed with a discourse that lies between negation and justification such as “*a lo ñeño, pecho*”. Others get settled without complaints and find their place in the world, near Mickey Mouse and Carlos Arroyo, enjoying the supposed advantages of the first world they have fabricated, without having to “*masticar el difícil*”.

II. The practice of coming and going –also known as *el vaivén*– is very common for the boricuas, as explained by anthropologist Jorge Duany in his book *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move*. In this constant movement, principally between the United States and Puerto Rico, new identities are configured through a cultural cross pattern that erases the traditional frontiers and redefines spatial context. In other words, the circular migration has turned into an important phenomenon that changes the hard and ossified definitions of the nationalist discourse on Puerto Ricanism and presents opportunities to redefine the geography of the fatherland through the transnational subject.

Nevertheless, the migration to Central Florida in our times is not the same as the movements to Manhattan or Hartford in the middle of the 20th Century. In the times of the “*Manos a la Obra*” government program, the migration to the north served as a tool for economic growth. Overpopulation, lack of jobs and shortage of earnings threatened the transition from agriculture to industrialization. The exceeding laborers were exported to feed the

assembly lines and the agricultural brigades in several North American enclaves while monetary remittances were collected to alleviate poverty in a country that tried to modernize its economic institutions and redefine the political relationship with its colonist. At that time, the act of crossing the ocean was encased in and promoted by a development program; it was necessary to open the escape valve in order to implement the modernizing project.

Even though the first *boricuas* that arrived in Florida did it as part of the programs sponsored by the Island's government for agricultural workers in the fifties, it was not until the sixties or seventies, thanks to real estate speculation propitiated by Disney World's opening, that the Puerto Rican presence started to be felt in the area. While the economic project of the Commonwealth started to show signs of wear, opportunities for employment and investment opened in the nearest state. Some say that in the eighties, real state agents offering houses at liquidation prices in Central Florida invaded the aisles of Plaza Las Americas. The infomercials in local channels glorified the ways of life in these resort-type developments with access to the amusement parks and a peaceful atmosphere that contrasted with life in Puerto Nuevo, Bayview, and Levittown. It was possible to escape the economic recession, the high rates of unemployment and the crime wave that beset the expectations of a middle class that was washing its hands of the rickety *muñocista* project. While the generation of tomato workers left the island led by the government's hand, the new expatriates abandoned their land fleeing the ungovernability and economic imbalance of a badly managed post industrialization.

III. Our commission, at first glance, seemed simple: to document the *boricua* experience in Orlando from a spatial view. The team of architects and planners, composed by professors and students, recognized that this would not be the typical pilgrimage to the majestic cities of the developed world in search of glamour and vanguardism. In more than one occasion, while we analyzed the Census data and maps of the territory, we questioned the relevance of the project to later reaffirm the evident: there is a Puerto Rico in Orlando and vice versa. Following the thesis of German geographer, Karl Schlägel, the spatial realm would provide hints about our transformations through

time. The journey would give us clues about the settling patterns of what we yearned for and what we manufactured, the new cultural experiences we have consumed and, consequently, what is yet to come.

Thus, we crossed the Orange, Seminole, Volusia and other counties in minivans through long expressways and avenues. We visited numerous suburbs, among them Buenaventura Lakes – the emblematic urbanization of the blue collar Puerto Rican experience in Orlando, also known as BVL, or “Boricuas Viviendo Libre”—looking to understand, through their houses and neighborhoods, how they spread the *mancha de plátano* and where they congeal the dreams of a better life and upward mobility. We ran into houses adorned with the Puerto Rican flag, the *monoestrellada*, statues of the Virgin of Fátima and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, cars lifted on four cement blocks and placed in



the front yard, and several basketball hoops installed on the street walk, among other kitsch style details that gave color to what otherwise would have been a crude and anonymous cemetery.

If we can well say that the aesthetics of some houses fed our idea of the clichés of Puerto Ricans in the exile, the conversations with the community revealed another side to the story. In more than one occasion, they talked about the changes in their lifestyles and the advantages of living in a place where the rules of the game do not cede for the cleverest one. The access to good public schools, housing at reasonable prices, shopping and entertainment centers of all kinds were mentioned as powerful reasons to make a new life outside the Island.

However, when they started to loosen up, they told us about their vicissitudes. Some never imagined that

looking for employment would last more than six months, in spite of their academic credentials, and that they would make ends meet washing cars, rooms or offices and whatever menial jobs they could find. To many, the house, the car, the visits to the mall and the family's needs are paid for with the sweat of more than one part time or full time job. Orlando has a service economy; it has the largest amount of hotel rooms other than Las Vegas and receives over 52 million tourists every year. Even though there are beds for everyone, the tourism industry needs many service workers to support it. It is precisely those service jobs that many of the newly arrived have to take, with little job security and diminished employment benefits.

Of course, there is also a flight of brains that enjoy a soft landing, the ones who live in Baldwin Park or Celebration and enjoy life in the small town where, literally,

*The Truman Show* was filmed. Protected by restrictive covenants, these residents of the clean communities of the New Urbanism protect themselves against architectonic improvisation and isolate themselves from the noisy normalcy in spaces meticulously sanitized that feed from the rule of law to isolate the riffraff. There live those who can finance the supersized American Dream.

IV Today a different tale is being told. The American mortgage market, that facilitated the purchase of thousands of homes slackening their evaluation criteria and opening the doors to customers with dubious credit histories, has burst in pieces. During 2007, the avalanche of delinquent loans unleashed a profound crisis that impacted severely the property market, numerous banking institutions and, consequently, the United States economy.

The state of Florida, together with California, Michigan and Nevada is one of the most affected. Last year, over 160,000 properties were targeted for mortgage execution. Even more worrisome is the negative impact the crisis has had in the investment fund of the state government, which has been capitalized with millionaire investments from the pensions, the school districts and numerous contributors. In other words, the Sunshine State does not glow as well as before.

Even though we do not know how many of our fellow countrymen in the diaspora suffer the sub-prime blues, the victims of the debacle include many Hispanics who could afford to buy a house for the first time. Will those who conquered geopolitics but were defeated by the market return to their origins? Surely, *el vaivén* will continue.

For now, Orlando has its place assured as one of the principal destinies for voluntary exile. However, it is very probable that in the future new coordinates will emerge, with other spatial conditions and socioeconomic experiences, where crisscross encounters between the transnational Puerto Ricans, Nuyoricans and Floriricans will take place.



Casa en la comunidad Nuevo Urbanista Celebration en Orlando, Florida  
House in Celebration, a New Urbanist Town in Orlando, Florida

# Un breve escape al urbanismo del súper-pretexto

por Oscar Oliver Didier

**E**n el mismo momento en que la joven holandesa me pide el pasaje de abordar, me pregunta: “¿viaja a su destino por negocio, o por ocio?”. Le contesto que por ninguna, que voy a investigar, con un grupo de estudiantes, el urbanismo de la ciudad en discusión. Por consecuencia, cambia su tono agradable, pero artificial, por uno inquisidor y directo: “No entiendo, si fuera así, estaría yendo a París o a Roma. Por favor, pase a la derecha para inspeccionar su maleta.”

Es que iba en dirección para los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, específicamente a la ciudad de Dubai. El incomodo de la señorita, además de ser producto de la reciente controversia de la compra de puertos americanos por inversionistas provenientes de esta ciudad-emirato, es fruto de la dislocación del arquitecto y el urbanista con el discurso de estos nuevos territorios expansivos y altamente capitalizados.

Un año más tarde, estoy preparándome para llevar a cabo otro viaje con la Universidad. Esta vez no tan lejos, pero tal vez igual de controversial. Me detiene un estudiante y con escrúpulo me pregunta: “¿Para qué ustedes van allá? No sé, suena aburrido. Imagínate, ¡si hasta mi tía está por allá! ¿Por qué no van, en vez, a Barcelona?”

En esta ocasión partíamos a Orlando. De repente nos sentimos como Robert Venturi hace más de treinta años cuando, para sorpresa de todos sus colegas, insistió, en que había algo que aprender de Las Vegas. La historia se repite, y tan inmersos nos encontramos en nuestros propios credos auto-impuestos que descartamos cualquier tema que suene a cotidiano. Para el arquitecto, cualquier condición común es un ente foráneo para su cuerpo de valores estéticos y esterilizados.

Constantemente queremos evitar lo cotidiano y por eso vivimos en un continuo estado de escape. Nuestras vidas son interrumpidas con frecuencia por traslados temporeros de lo habitual, ya sean físicos, o imaginados. Escapamos al campo, a la ciudad, al centro comercial o a la playa. Sin embargo, la mayoría de las veces lo hacemos por medio del deseo. Siempre estamos imaginando lo que no somos o tenemos. Deseamos escapar de la realidad (lo familiar), nos beneficiamos o no. En palabras del geógrafo Yi-Fu Tuan: “El ser humano es un animal con una indisposición congénita a aceptar la realidad como es. Tanto es así que, incluso antes de transformar, hacen algo extraordinario: ver lo que no hay.”

Sin embargo, cuando queremos escapar en grande abordamos un avión. La insularidad es cuestión para que nos diagnostiquen cotidianeidad aguda. Por eso es que el avión es más que un aparato mecánico para volar; en su interior higienizado y *dull* es donde nos resguardamos y nos condicionamos para la diáspora temporera (en ocasiones permanente) que envuelve el escape hacia otro destino. Limitan nuestro espacio personal, absorbemos la presión de volar a 30,000 pies en el aire y, en épocas recientes, nos coartan de ingerir alimentos (aunque este último posiblemente sea una bendición y no, una desdicha). Todo con el no intencionado propósito de preparar mente y cuerpo para el escape del territorio físico e imaginado de la habitualidad. De más está decir que, si ese traslado fuera instantáneo, tal vez no lo desearíamos tanto por ser tan común.

Como mencionaba, hay dos tipos de diásporas, la temporera y la permanente. Aunque muy distintas en sus implicaciones a largo plazo, trabajan, especialmente en el caso de Orlando, muy de la mano. El escape, al irse de viaje, envuelve el traerse como recuerdo el deseo de perpetuar la vacación y de idealizar lo foráneo, lo que resiste lo usual. Tal condición nos cala hondo. En ocasiones, nos hace insistir en que lo nuestro tiene que parecerse más a lo otro. En la mayoría de los casos, sin una razón contundente o específica. Queremos trasladar el escape a nuestra realidad común, sin darnos cuenta de que lo cancelamos al momento en que insistimos en insertarlo en la habitualidad. Orlando no es la excepción, lo anhelamos constantemente.

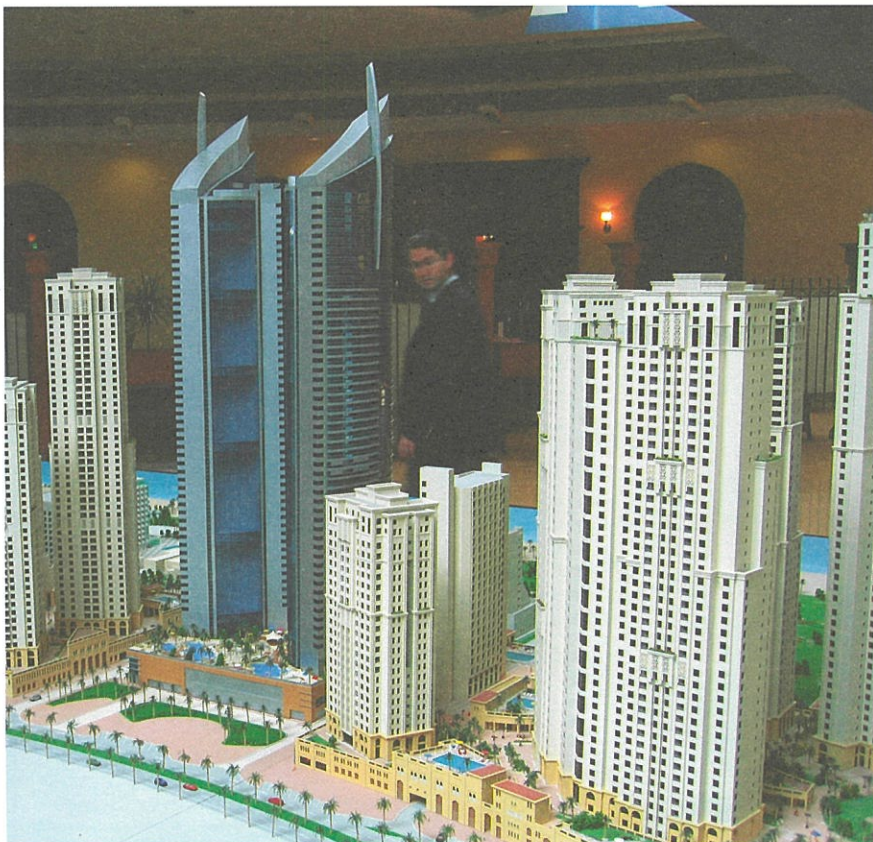
Si la primera ciudad en época moderna en basar intencionalmente su crecimiento en la fantasía y el deseo fue Las Vegas, la sigue, después Orlando. Esta última se distingue de la primera en que ya existía un poblado preestablecido. No obstante, no es hasta que llega Walt Disney a comprar terrenos a precio de hojalata, que se empieza a formular el territorio como lo conocemos hoy día. En época reciente, la ciudad que completa la trilogía de ciudades-fantasia lo es Dubai.

Dubai, al igual que Orlando, utiliza la tabula rasa como ideología para urbanizar. La anterior lo hace al retar el desierto, y la última, al condicionar los pantanos. Ambos emplean una infraestructura complejísima para contener y ocultar el estado natural y original del territorio. Orlando utiliza las charcas de retención para contener el agua y en sus parques temáticos emplea sistemas de bombeo para no delatar su fantasía anti-pantanosa.





Proyecto de Dubai Marina  
(siendo construido y en  
maqueta en un centro  
comercial) en Dubai, E.A.U.  
Dubai Marina Project (being  
constructed and in a model  
in a shopping mall) in Dubai,  
U.A.E.



En Dubai, por otro lado, la infraestructura de irrigación, para poder mantener los oasis de grama impecable en medio del desierto, es la que fomenta que la ciudad sea de las mayores derrochadoras de agua en el mundo. La tabula rasa para estos destinos no ocurre solo al momento de comenzar a edificar, sino que constantemente se perpetúa al emplear los sistemas para su preservación. Puerto Rico no es la excepción; vivimos en un constante estado de tabula rasa. Sin embargo, los andamiajes de apoyo para su operación y sustento son difundidos, en vez, por la retórica. Esto se evidencia en los “¡que mala está la cosa aquí!” y en “¡si esto fuera en Estados Unidos, no sería así!”. Cancelamos al momento que tenemos la expectativa de lo otro.

Volviendo a las ciudades en discusión, en Orlando y Dubai se engendra lo que planteo como el urbanismo del pretexto; la creación de una infraestructura urbana que profesa su razón de ser, precisamente, con la misma estética de su aparente funcionalidad. Se justifica porque sirve un propósito y lo representa sin alusiones más allá de su propio modelo; un real sin un origen (muy a lo Baudrillard), pero a su vez, la representación de ese supuesto origen (el arquetipo). En el caso de estas ciudades se dispersa el pretexto a través del territorio, pero se concentra la máxima expresión fantasiosa en puntos específicos; Orlando con Disney World, Dubai con los mega-proyectos residenciales y cívicos, lleno de malabarismos arquitectónicos. El pretexto queda instituido, en vez, como corolario en las autopistas, en los anuncios publicitarios que ostentan los edificios antes de que se construyan, en el mar de proyectos residenciales de acceso controlado y en el empleo lujurioso del verde como elemento mediador entre los instantes de supuesta urbanidad. En fin, el pretexto, por su naturaleza lingüística y, a su vez, como condición urbana, no puede operar solo. El pretexto es todo lo que le brinda un prólogo y el apoyo al intervalo fantasioso; al referente de la quimera.

No obstante, hay que recordar que el que escapa no anda en búsqueda ni de lo estrictamente análogo, ni de lo que lo diferencia. Aunque no se de cuenta, anda en búsqueda de lo que le rodea y con lo que se familiariza pero, de algún modo, lo siente distinto, mejorado; un superlativo. Sin embargo, la reacción no es inmediata. Cuando escapamos, nos diluimos en el pretexto, lo damos como un hecho. A primera instancia, insistimos en el superlativo pero, cuando regresamos del escape temporero, nos traemos e imaginamos solo el pretexto. Cuando alguien dice que le gusta Orlando, recalca que las autopistas son limpias y que las casas son grandes y bonitas. Sin embargo, nadie insiste en querer el Castillo de Cenicienta en medio de Hato Rey (o por lo menos, eso espero).

Paralelamente, es importante aclarar que al no existir los metarelatos tradicionales a los que respondía típicamente la ciudad, ella misma crea los superlativos para sustituir su ausencia. Los





“A primera instancia, insistimos en el superlativo, pero cuando regresamos del escape temporero nos traemos e imaginamos sólo el pretexto.”

superlativos se adjudican precisamente al contrastarlos con la cotidianidad del pretexto (lo habitual los resalta). El superlativo, además de imaginarse, es el aparato de venta dentro de la economía globalizada. Es el único mecanismo diferenciador que nos queda ante tanta competencia de escape. En Dubai es con la torre más alta y el *mall* más grande del mundo y con la ciudad hecha palma y, aunque el superlativo más importante de Orlando sería Disney, prefiero recalcar, sin aspiración preteriosa, que lo gestamos nosotros. Formulamos el superlativo de Orlando cuando lo deseamos y lo planteamos como alternativa para Puerto Rico; un simulacro del simulacro. Cuando regresamos de viaje, lo traemos para intentar continuar en estado de escape. Lo ideal para nosotros es inmortalizarlo y perpetuarlo en el territorio, no tan solo en nuestra mente. En ese sentido, todo el mundo es un diseñador de nuestra urbe.

Para entender tal condición, es importante recalcar que el pretexto es un espacio de una urbanidad supuestamente compleja, aunque siempre predeterminada. La infraestructura de apoyo, o sea el pretexto, se nutre de lo genérico para operar y subsistir. Se estandarizan los sistemas para su implementación, ya sea por pericia, o por reglamentación, y nuestro territorio termina siendo un producto de las regulaciones estatales y federales que lo codifican. Es por esto que en Puerto Rico, verdaderamente, el superlativo es el pretexto; un súper-pretexto. El "Supertubo" (el súper-pretexto potable), el Tren Urbano (el súper-pretexto en rieles) y el Puente Teodoro Moscoso y los puentes de autopista pintados (los súper-pretextos de alta velocidad) son todas las infraestructuras de soporte que se elevan a tal estado.

El hecho se exagera porque, en la actualidad, el diseño urbano descarta las posibilidades de emplear el deseo, lo cognitivo y la memoria (tal y como lo hace el ciudadano común) como posibles herramientas, al querer dogmatizar la práctica. Se pregona el uso mixto, la densificación y el rescate del centro y "la calle" como sinónimo de crear ciudad. El urbanismo no se hace con un manual de instrucciones. A cuenta de esto ya hace tiempo que la urbe nos dejó de hacer caso. Tal vez tenemos que revisar a Kevin Lynch, Aldo Rossi y a Robert Venturi, y dejar a un lado por un momento a Jane Jacobs. La mala interpretación y el uso de la planificación participativa de Jacobs debilitó la ciudad, dejándonos con un modelo que resulta y no que gesta, que suaviza y llega a compromisos pero que no imagina. El urbanismo de Jacobs no es un estilo "tradicional" ni un código fundamentalista de valores que se impone para que algo aparente ser "urbano"; es un modelo reaccionario que reevalúa los escenarios hegemónicos de la urbe.

A carencia de, la ciudad se gira y se torna hacia el que la visita, al que invierte en ella o, peor aún, al país del que proviene; una economía del deseo. Al igual, la experiencia del viajante se replica al momento que urbanizamos. Extrapolamos el

pretexto y no engendramos nuestra propia narrativa. Es entonces cuando nos vestimos de Miami, con los proyectos residenciales de lujo; de Nueva York, con nuestra insistencia de aparentar ser "metropolitanos"; de Madrid y Barcelona, con las plazas duras y de Orlando y Dubai, con el infinito apetito de escapar. Ahí es cuando deseamos la casa de urbanización con *chandelier* y embelequitos 4 de julio, el *look lounge* en la barra de la esquina, los *skylines*, los acuarios, los centros de convenciones, los *waterfronts*, y los coliseos.

Ciertamente, nos gusta ver el Otro en nosotros. ||||

Carretera pintada en Guaynabo, Puerto Rico  
Painted highway in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico



**“El hecho se exagera porque, en la actualidad, el diseño urbano descarta las posibilidades de emplear el deseo, lo cognitivo y la memoria (tal y como lo hace el ciudadano común) como posibles herramientas, al querer dogmatizar la práctica.”**



## A Brief Escape to the Urbanism of the Super-Pretext

At the same time that the young Dutch woman asked me for the boarding pass she asked me: "are you traveling for business or pleasure?" I replied that neither, that I was going with a group of students to investigate the urbanism of the city in question. Consequently, her nice but artificial tone changed to an inquisitive and direct one: "I don't understand, if that is so, wouldn't you be going to Paris, or Rome? Please, step to the right to inspect your suitcase."

This happened because I was going to the United Arab Emirates, specifically to the city of Dubai. The young woman's discomfort, besides being the product of the recent controversy about the purchase of the American ports by investors coming from this city-emirate, was produced by the dislocation of the architect and the urbanist with the discourse of these new expansive and highly capitalized territories.

A year later I am preparing to carry on another trip with the University. This time not as far, but just as controversial. A student stops me and with some scruples asks me: "Why are you going there? I don't know, it sounds boring. Imagine, even my aunt lives there! Why don't you go to Barcelona instead?"

This time we were going to Orlando. Suddenly we felt like Robert Venturi more than thirty years ago when, surprising his colleagues he insisted there was something to learn from Las Vegas. History repeats itself, and we are so immersed in our self-imposed creeds that we disregard any subject that seems too common. To the architect, any routine condition is a foreign thing to his aesthetic and esterized values.

We constantly want to avoid cotidianity and that is why we live in a constant escape. Our lives are frequently interrupted by temporary transfers of the usual be it physical or imagined. We escape to the country, to the city, to the mall or to the beach; nevertheless, we usually do it through wishful thinking. We are usually imagining what we are not and what we do not have. We wish to escape reality (familiarity), whether it benefits us or not. In the words of the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan; "The human being is an animal with the inborn indisposition to accept reality as is. This is so much so, that even before transforming it, he does something extraordinary: see what is not there".



However, when we want to really escape we board a plane. Insularity is reason enough to diagnose us with acute cotidianity. That is why the plane is more than a mechanic contraption to fly, in its hygienic and dull interior is where we take cover and condition ourselves for the temporary (sometimes permanent) diaspora that is part of the escape to another destination. It limits our personal space, we absorb the pressure of flying over 30,000 feet in the air and in recent times, we are restricted from consuming food (even though this might be a blessing, not a misfortune.) All this with the non intended purpose of preparing mind and body to escape from the physical and imagined territory of what is usual. We do not need to say that if this transfer was instantaneous we would not desire it so much, for being so common.

As I mentioned before, there are two kinds of diasporas, the temporary and the permanent. Even though they are very different in its implications in the long run, they work, especially in Orlando's case, hand in hand. The escape when traveling involves bringing back the memory of the wish to perpetuate the vacation and idealize what is foreign, that which resists the usual. That condition affects us deeply, in many occasions it makes us insist that what we have has to resemble the other more. In most cases, without a definite or convincing reason. We want to transfer the escape to our common reality, without realizing that we cancel it the moment we insist in inserting the experience into the

usual. Orlando is not the exception, we yearn for it constantly.

If the first city in these modern times to intentionally base its growth on fantasy and desire was Las Vegas, the next one was Orlando. This last one differentiates from the first one in that there already was an established town; however, it is not until Walt Disney starts purchasing lots at bargain prices that the territory we know today gets formulated. Most recently, the city that completes the trilogy of fantasy cities is Dubai.

Dubai, as well as Orlando, uses the 'clean slate' as its urbanizing ideology. The former did it by defying the desert, and the last one by conditioning the swamps. Both employ a very complex infrastructure to contain and hide the natural and original state of the territory. Orlando utilizes the retention ponds to contain the water and in its theme parks uses pumping systems to assure its anti-swamp fantasy will not be exposed. In Dubai, on the other hand, the irrigation infrastructure, in order to maintain impeccable the grass oasis in the middle of the desert, is what makes the city one of the biggest water squanderers in the world. The clean slate for these destinies does not occur only at the moment when they begin building, but is constantly perpetuated while employing its preservation systems. Puerto Rico is not the exception; we live in a constant clean slate state. Nevertheless, the supportive scaffoldings for its operation and sustainability are disseminated instead by rhetoric. We can evidence it in the "look how bad things are here!" and in "if we

were in the United States it would not be like this!" We cancel the moment we have the expectations of the other.

Going back to the cities in discussion, Orlando and Dubai generate what I present as the urbanism of the pretext; the creation of an urban infrastructure that professes its reason for being precisely in the aesthetics itself of its apparent functionality. It is justified because it serves a purpose and represents it with no further allusion than its own model; a reality without an origin (so like Baudrillard), but at the same time, the representation of that supposed origin (the archetype). In the case of these cities the pretext disperses through the territory but concentrates its utmost fantastic expression in specific points, Orlando with Disney World, Dubai with the mega-residential and civil projects full of architectonic juggling. The pretext is instituted, instead, as an addition to the highways, in the advertising boasted by the buildings before being constructed, in the ocean of residential projects with controlled access and in the luxurious use of green spaces as a mediating element in the instants of supposed urbanity. In short, the pretext for its linguistic nature and, at the same time, its urban condition, can not operate alone. The pretext is everything a prologue does and the support for the fantastic interval; referring to the illusion.

Nevertheless, we need to remember that he who escapes is not searching for neither the strictly analogous, or for what is different. Even though he does not realize it, he is searching for what surrounds him and what he is familiar with but that in some way feels different, better, in a superlative way. However, the reaction is not immediate. When we escape we do not dilute the pretext, we take it for granted. At first, we insist on the superlative, but when we return from the temporary escape we bring with us or imagine only the pretext. When someone says that they like Orlando they point out that the expressways are clean and that the houses are big and beautiful, however, nobody insists on wanting Cinderella's castle in the middle of Hato Rey (or so I hope).

In parallel, it is important to clarify that when the traditional meta-  
tales the city typically responds to do not exist, the city itself creates the superlatives to substitute its absence. The superlatives are adjudicated precisely when you

contrast them with the cotidianity of the pretext (the usual makes it stand out). The superlative, besides being imagined, is the sales device within a globalized economy. It is the only differentiating mechanism we have left in the presence of so much escape competition. In Dubai it is the highest tower and the world's largest mall and the palm city, and even though the most important superlative in Orlando would be Disney, I prefer to point out, without aspiration to being pretentious, that we develop it ourselves. We formulate the superlative of Orlando when we wish it and we set it as the alternative for Puerto Rico, a simulation of the simulation. When we return from traveling we bring it with us to try to continue our state of escape. The ideal would be to immortalize it and perpetuate it in the territory, not only in our minds. In this sense, everyone is a designer of the city.

To understand this condition it is important to point out that the pretext is a space in a supposedly complex, though well determined, urbanity. The supporting infrastructure, meaning, the pretext, is nourished by the generic to operate and to subsist. Systems are standardized for implementation, be it by expertise or regulation, and our territory ends up being the product of the state and federal regulations that codify it. It is for this reason that in Puerto Rico, truly, the superlative is the pretext; a super-pretext. The "Superaqueduct" (the drinkable super-pretext), the "Tren Urbano" (the super-pretext on rails) and the Teodoro Moscoso Bridge and the painted bridges on the expressway (the high speed super-pretexts) are all the support infrastructures that are elevated to that state.

The fact is exacerbated because at this moment urban design discards the possibility of employing the desired, the cognitive and the memory (as done by the common citizen) as possible tools when trying to dogmatize practice. A mixed use is proclaimed, the densification and the rescue of the center and "the street" as synonymous to creating a city. Urbanism is not made with an instructions manual, the city stopped minding us a long time ago. Maybe we have to reexamine Kevin Lynch, Aldo Rossi and Robert Venturi, and leave aside Jane Jacobs for the moment. A bad interpretation and use of Jacobs' participative planification weakened the city, leaving us with a model that results and does not beget, that softens and comes

to term but does not imagine. Jacobs' urbanism is not a "traditional" style nor a fundamentalist code of values that imposes itself so something seems to be "urban"; it is a reactionary model that reevaluates the hegemonic sceneries of the city.

For lack of, the city is twisted and turned towards the visitor, the investor, or worse yet, the country he comes from; an economy of desire. The same way, the experience of the traveler is replicated the moment we urbanize. We extrapolate the pretext and do not generate our own narrative. It is then that we dress like Miami with the luxurious residential projects, like New York with our insistence of seeming "metropolitan", like Madrid and Barcelona with their squares and like Orlando and Dubai with the infinite appetite for escaping. It is then that we wish for a house in a suburb with a chandelier and 4th of July embellishments, the lounge look at the corner's bar, the skylines, the aquariums, convention centers, waterfronts and coliseums.

Certainly, we like to see the Other in us.!!!

# Suburbios soberbios:

## Apuntes sobre la condición contemporánea de emigración puertorriqueña a Orlando

por Luis A. Flores Dumont

La emigración de puertorriqueños a la Florida es alarmante. Diversos estudios señalan la búsqueda de una mejor calidad de vida como uno de los puntales de dicha emigración; y la culminación del *American Dream* de poseer una casa en un suburbio que ofrezca dicha calidad de vida, fomenta el éxodo de puertorriqueños a Orlando. Entender el perfil de dichos suburbios permitirá enriquecer tanto los asentamientos existentes, como los nuevos desarrollos para contrarrestar este éxodo.

El Fondo Puertorriqueño para la Defensa Legal y Educación, y la Administración de Asuntos Federales de Puerto Rico en Washington, estimaron que más de 650,000 puertorriqueños viven en Florida con la mayor concentración de ellos en Florida central, a saber, Orlando. Esta cantidad de puertorriqueños sobrepasa la población combinada de Bayamón (224,044), Canóvanas (43,335), Carolina (186,076), y Ponce (186,475) para un total de 639,930 puertorriqueños. Por lo tanto, estos datos equivalen, según el censo de 2000, a haber mudado todos estos municipios a la Florida. Son comparables con el fenómeno migratorio de Hugo Chávez en Venezuela, recogido en el artículo de Elizabeth Hostos, del 6 de noviembre del 2007, en El Nuevo Día, titulado, "Miles huyen de Venezuela", donde hasta el 2005 se reportaba que más de medio millón de venezolanos habían emigrado.

Reforzando estos datos, en el 2003, el periódico *St. Petersburg Times* designó el área metropolitana de Orlando como la quinta área más grande de hispanos en los Estados Unidos con el 17 % de la población hispana de la cual entre el 52% y el 56% es puertorriqueña.

Durante la década del 90 Florida desplazó a Nueva Jersey como la segunda con la concentración más alta de puertorriqueños en los Estados Unidos, después de Nueva York. Más increíble aún, se señala que desde el año 2000 al 2003, la población de puertorriqueños en Florida incrementó de 482,027 a 571,755, lo que equivale a un aumento anual de unos 30,000 habitantes. Esta emigración representa anualmente la pérdida equivalente de cualquiera de los municipios de 30,000 habitantes o menos de la Isla como lo son Adjuntas (19,143), Aguas Buenas (29,032), Aibonito (26,493), Añasco (28,348), Arroyo (19,117), Barceloneta (22,322), Barranquitas (28,909), Ceiba (18,004), Ciales (19,811), Comerío (20,002), Culebra (1,868), Florida (12,367), Guánica (21,888), Guayanilla (23,072), Hormigueros (16,614), Jayuya (17,318), Lajas (26,261), Luquillo (19,817), Maricao (6,449),

Maunabo (12,741), Naguabo (23,753), Orocovis (23,844), Patillas (20,152), Peñuelas (26,719), Quebradillas (25,450), Rincón (14,767), Sabana Grande (25,935), Santa Isabel (21,665), o Vieques (9,106). La población total de estos municipios es de 583,967, a saber, menos de los sobre 650,000 puertorriqueños que residen en Florida. Por lo tanto, esto es igual a haber relocalizado todos estos municipios a la Florida. Estos datos equivalentes son tan dramáticos como los indicadores de la Liga de Ciudadanos Latinoamericanos Unidos (LULAC) al establecer que esta población hispana ha incrementado en un 859% desde el 1980.

Este estudio del C.U.N.Y. plantea la "búsqueda de una mejor calidad de vida que incluye vivienda, educación, salud, tranquilidad y seguridad" como una de las cuatro razones más importantes para decidir emigrar. Al igual, estudios de la Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico coinciden en que muchos de los puertorriqueños no sólo emigran por razones económicas, y que cuando la prioridad es el beneficio económico, éste va más allá de la búsqueda de un trabajo. Es interesante apuntar que el perfil socioeconómico de esta emigración refleja que más de una tercera parte de los puertorriqueños en Florida tienen ingresos que sobrepasan los \$50,000.00 y que más de la mitad de ellos fluctúa entre los 18 y 34 años de edad, mientras que sólo el 11.3 % de los puertorriqueños residentes en la isla cuenta con este ingreso.

La emigración de puertorriqueños a Orlando según, el censo del 2000, fue instrumental en designar a Orlando como la ciudad de más rápido crecimiento en todos los Estados Unidos, con una proyección de crecimiento poblacional insólita, de un 103% para el 2008.

Estos miles y miles de puertorriqueños en busca de la culminación de su *American Dream*, con su correspondiente calidad de vida, están reaccionando a la pobre calidad de vida de sus entornos en Puerto Rico y al fracaso de la realización de este sueño en la suburbia en Puerto Rico, donde vive la gran mayoría de la población puertorriqueña. Para alcanzar el *American Dream* es indispensable un entorno que lo facilite. La suburbia puertorriqueña ciertamente no ha sido ese lugar. Desde los años 60, se ha utilizado como un lugar de dormitorio, exclusivamente, según se percibe en las fotos de la suburbia de Bayamón en el 1964, y en Arecibo, en 1965. Y, desde entonces, pasados ya unos cincuenta años, poco ha





Bayamón 1964. "Vista aérea de la urbanización Bayamón Gardens mostrando sus calles curvas y su falta de vegetación"

Arecibo 1965. "Vista de una de las calles de la Urbanización Pública de Casas de Bajo Costo que es la primera construida bajo la FHA puertorriqueña"

Fuente: Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña de la Universidad de Puerto Rico Bayamón 1964. "Aerial view of Bayamón Gardens Suburb showing curvilinear streets and its lack of vegetation"

Arecibo 1965. "Street view of a Low Cost Public Housing Suburb, the first made with the Puerto Rican FHA"

Source: Puerto Rican Digital Library of the University of Puerto Rico

cambiado.

El entorno, o medio ambiente físico, en la mayor concentración habitacional de Puerto Rico, la suburbia, no es un entorno dirigido a facilitar el *American Dream*. La suburbia puertorriqueña, que sólo se ha enfocado en proveer vivienda, no ha provisto a la misma de los correspondientes componentes arriba mencionados de educación, salud, tranquilidad y seguridad que los puertorriqueños, en Florida, han manifestado indispensables para tener una buena calidad de vida. Si a estos requisitos de un suburbio funcional añadimos el componente vial fundamental de la accesibilidad a los desarrollos suburbanos, la mayor parte de los emplazamientos suburbanos puertorriqueños resultan disfuncionales. El desparramamiento descontrolado de desarrollos suburbanos, a través de caminos rurales casi inaccesibles, en malas condiciones, es de una magnitud tan dramática como las estadísticas mismas de emigración en busca de una mejor calidad de vida.

Para confirmar este desparramamiento suburbano sólo hay que ver las casas esparcidas a través de toda la ruralía, como en los viejos campos de Camuy, donde una nueva urbanización llamada Alturas de Quebrada hace ver el resultado suburbano de lotificaciones simples a su alrededor inverosímil. Aún más desconcertante resulta actualizar estos asentamientos aislados a la par con el precio de la gasolina que está requiriendo el empobrecimiento progresivo de sus residentes.

Aún cuando se ven desarrollos suburbanos en algo más densos que aparentes lotificaciones simples, en el caso de la urbanización tradicional puertorriqueña sólo se perciben aglomeraciones de casas anónimas debido a su repetición. Esta realidad puertorriqueña confronta los esfuerzos que persiguen los asentamientos suburbanos de Florida central y, más específicamente, de Orlando. Los desarrollos suburbanos puertorriqueños lucen inconclusos o deficientes al constatarse contra la búsqueda de una suburbia ideal que fomente el *American Dream*.

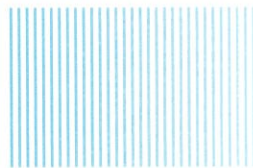
Cuando ubicamos los desarrollos suburbanos ideales, según se desprenden de Ebenezer Howard en la década de 1890 y su programa de diseño para nuevas comunidades satélites conducentes a una calidad de vida idónea, y luego, a través de los parámetros de la ciudad industrial suburbana de Tony Garnier del 1918, los desarrollos suburbanos de



Puerto Rico resultan, en general, bochornosos.

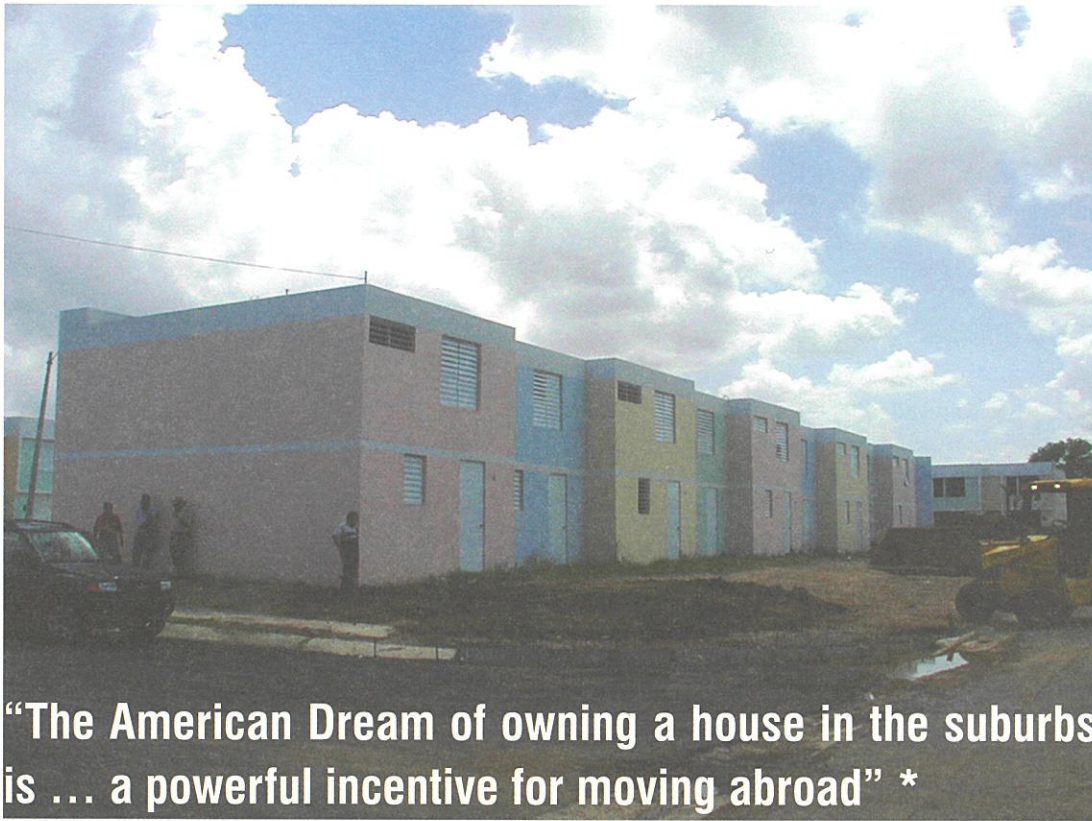
Estos asentamientos en los Estados Unidos no se gestaron sin errores, deficiencias y conflictos. La larga trayectoria de la suburbia norteamericana que recoge Jonathan Barnett en sus libros *The Elusive City: Five Centuries of Design, Ambition and Miscalculation* y *Fractured Metropolis: Improving the New City, Restoring the Old City, Reshaping the Region*, sobre la evolución de la suburbia norteamericana fustigan los desarrollos suburbanos a través de los Estados Unidos.

En la evolución de la tipología de asentamientos suburbanos es justamente en Florida, con el asentamiento suburbano de *Seaside* del año 1984, que hace ya más de 20 años el binomio de los arquitectos Andrés Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, en conjunto con Leon Krier, con su autodeterminado "Nuevo Urbanismo", fraguan una tipología suburbana más compleja, que luego se recoge como la sede del "*American Dream*" en la película *The Truman Show*. *Seaside* tuvo una gran acogida entre los desarrolladores de los Estados Unidos y su modelo se propagó a nuevos asentamientos como el de Kentland, en Gaithersburg, Maryland (suburbia de Washington, D.C.), entre otros. No obstante, *Seaside*



Letrero publicitario del proyecto Alturas de Quebrada en Camuy, Puerto Rico Advertisement for the Alturas de Quebrada project in Camuy, Puerto Rico





**“The American Dream of owning a house in the suburbs is ... a powerful incentive for moving abroad” \***

resultó insuficiente, quizás por su velada monotonía, cuando se descarna su comercialismo inescapable.

No conforme con la novedad en la aportación sub-urbana de *Seaside*, una década más tarde, la corporación de Walt Disney opta por una evolución de *Seaside*, precisamente en Orlando, en su desarrollo de *Celebration* en el año 1996. Ya en *Celebration* el programa de diseño intenta la mimetización del entorno urbano. Así, la suburbia de *Celebration* se convierte en la caricatura suburbana de un perfil urbano antiséptico y descontaminado de toda riqueza urbana. Con la fantasía suburbana de *Celebration*, los nuevos desarrolladores han pautado el norte de nuevos desarrollos que puedan albergar el *American Dream*. Con la nueva morfología neo-urbana de *Celebration*, el *American Dream* se monta y mercadea sobre un artificio, pura imagen, que promulga las percepciones de los atractivos cualificadores del entorno. No importa que la caricatura urbana carezca de la densidad, la morfología y la diversidad de usos requeridos para un perfil urbano, al igual que toca la riqueza que provee la multiplicidad de actores y errores que se encuentran en toda ciudad. No importa el perfil de exclusividad que es indispensable a este enfoque suburbano, si el mismo ofrece algo más que aglomeraciones solo de viviendas; sólo importa que la fantasía lograda en *Celebration* y sus clones luzca compatible con la realización del *American Dream*. Y, ciertamente, este escenario utópico de *Celebration* va de la mano con la utopía del *American Dream*. *Celebration* ha engendrado unas caricaturas aún más risibles como lo es la comunidad Ave María, por supuesto, también en Florida central, destinada a albergar exclusivamente

feligreses católicos. Este desarrollo exurbano, a tono con los criterios del ‘nuevo urbanismo’ sigue buscando un perfil urbano con una plaza donde se ubica su correspondiente catedral en el centro del poblado. Resultará intrigante conocer cuántos católicos de la emigración puertorriqueña cautivarán.

Cuando se interpola cuán hambriento está el residente de la suburbia puertorriqueña por la disfuncionalidad de la misma después de unos cincuenta años de insatisfacción, y se le ofrece una suburbia glamorizada con todos los aparentes beneficios urbanos, y ninguno de sus aparentes defectos, se encuentra una clientela entusiasta de culminar sus sueños no logrados en la suburbia puertorriqueña. En fin, que la suburbia puertorriqueña ha engendrado un residente rebelde con las deficiencias de su entorno que lo buscará ávidamente hasta encontrarlo en Orlando, no cabe duda. El matrimonio de esta oferta y demanda fulmina la emigración de los 30,000 puertorriqueños al año que se desplazan a Orlando a recibir la calidad de vida que los *Celebrations* de Orlando prometen. Este proceso solo se acelera cuando vemos que ya en Puerto Rico han comenzado a mercadearse, con oficinas de ventas en San Juan, desarrolladores de la Florida central y Orlando con sus urbanizaciones de *Meadow Woods* en Orange y *Buenaventura Lakes* en Osceola. A esto le añadimos unos costos por unidad residencial más costo efectivos que en Puerto Rico; permitiendo vaticinar que la emigración a Orlando seguirá desbandada, a menos que no se le ponga cortapisa con ofertas puertorriqueñas locales que resulten competitivas y cónsonas con el *American Dream* y se desenmascare este sueño propiamente.

\* Centro de Estudios  
Puertorriqueños de Hunter  
College (CUNY) 2006  
\* Hunter College Center for  
Puerto Rican Studies (CUNY)  
2006

Afortunadamente, ya en Puerto Rico se ha comenzado una tendencia que atenta con revertir el gran éxodo de puertorriqueños. La nueva tipología suburbana de proyectos en Cidra, Dorado y Gurabo ha complementado su oferta residencial con ofertas comunitarias y recreativas más enriquecidas. Por ejemplo, en el proyecto de Dorado hay una escuela. En estos proyectos, igualmente, se aspira a distinguir los mismos con unos accesos y portales de entrada que identifican su naturaleza suburbana.

A juzgar por su aceptación en el mercado de vivienda, es evidente que la tipología suburbana utilizada en Cidra, Dorado y Gurabo ha resultado tan efectiva en Puerto Rico como Celebration en Orlando, pues las amenidades que trascienden la mera construcción de unidades de vivienda cautivan la demanda residencial del País en una suburbia que aspira a su culminación urbana. El refuerzo del mercado local es de suma importancia, pues, si bien es cierto, como lo plantea el informe de CUNY, que hay una serie de empresas como el BPPR, R&G Crown, Empresas Fonalledas, la Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples, la Puerto Rican American Insurance Company (PRAICO), El Nuevo Día, Goya Foods, Plaza Gigante, la Fundación Ana G. Méndez, la Universidad Interamericana y la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico, que han expandido sus operaciones en Florida, y esto representa la apertura de nuevos mercados, ello, igualmente, representa el cierre de mercados en Puerto Rico, a tono con el mencionado equivalente del cierre anual de un municipio de 30,000 habitantes en Puerto Rico.

Por lo tanto, en la medida que se puntualice el fracaso de la suburbia puertorriqueña *vis-a-vis* la calidad de vida en la persecución del *American Dream* se capacitará el rediseño de la suburbia existente y la construcción de nuevos desarrollos cónsonos con las utopías que requieren la realización del sueño. Esperemos que esto sea así hasta que se reconsidere la vigencia, eficiencia, habitabilidad y sustentabilidad de la ciudad. No hay duda de que todo apunta a que estamos aceleradamente a la ruta de la revalorización de la ciudad, a juzgar por la cantidad de desarrollos que se están persiguiendo para densificar la misma. Bien sea por lo costoso de habitar en la suburbia, de sobra es conocido que ésta se dirige a los sectores más afluentes de la sociedad, o porque los patrones de consumo, especialmente del consumo energético, requieren de una reconceptualización del espacio urbanizable.

En la revista *New Scientist*, el climatólogo de la NASA, James Hansen, describió cómo el Planeta, pero más en nuestro caso, Florida central y Orlando, luciría después del colapso del *West Antarctic ice sheet* y la subida de los niveles del mar. Afortunadamente, hay esperanza. Todo apunta a que las caricaturas de consumo que nos hemos construido en Orlando y Florida central serán tan transitorias y risibles como lo es el gran Mickey Mouse en Disney.

Main Street in Celebration,  
Orlando, Florida  
Main Street in Celebration,  
Orlando, Florida



## Superb Suburbs: Notes on the Contemporary Condition of the Puerto Rican Emigration to Orlando

The emigration of Puerto Ricans to Florida is alarming. Several studies point out the search for a better quality of life as one of the foundations for this emigration; as the culmination of the American Dream of owning a house in the suburbs that offers the desired quality of life encourages the exodus of Puerto Ricans to Orlando. To understand the profile of those suburbs would allow enriching the existing projects as well as new developments to offset this exodus.

The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and The Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration in Washington estimated that more than 650,000 Puerto Ricans live in Florida, with the highest concentration in Central Florida, or as is well known, in Orlando. This amount of Puerto Ricans surpasses the combined population of Bayamón (224,044), Canóvanas (43,335), Carolina (186,076) and Ponce (186,475) for a total of 639,930 Puerto Ricans. Therefore, this data equals, according to the Census 2000, to having moved all these municipalities to Florida. It is comparable to the migratory phenomenon of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela covered in Elizabeth Hostos' article November 6, 2007 at *El Nuevo Día* titled, "Miles huyen de Venezuela" (Thousands flee Venezuela). It was reported that up to 2005 more than half a million Venezuelans had emigrated.

Supporting this data, the St. Petersburg Times newspaper designated Orlando's metropolitan area in 2003 as the fifth largest area of Hispanics in the United States, or 17% of the Hispanic population, of which 52% to 56% is Puerto Rican.

During the 90's Florida took the place of New Jersey as the second place with the highest concentration of Puerto Ricans in the United States, after New York. Even more incredible, it has been pointed out that from the year 2000 to the year 2003, the Puerto Rican population in Florida increased from 482,027 to 571,755 which is equal to an annual increase of 30,000 residents. This emigration represents an annual loss equivalent to any of the municipalities of the island with 30,000 inhabitants or less as are Adjuntas (19,143), Aguas Buenas (29,032), Aibonito (26,493), Añasco (28,348), Arroyo (19,117), Barceloneta (22,322), Barranquitas (28,909), Ceiba (18,004),

Ciales (19,811), Comerío (20,002), Culebra (1,868), Florida (12,367), Guánica (21,888), Guayanilla (23,072), Hormigueros (16,614), Jayuya (17,318), Lajas (26,261), Luquillo (19,817), Maricao (6,449), Maunabo (12,741), Naguabo (23,753), Orocovis (23,844), Patillas (20,152), Peñuelas (26,719), Quebradillas (25,450), Rincón (14,767), Sabana Grande (25,935), Santa Isabel (21,665), or Vieques (9,106). The total population of these municipalities is 580,967, or less than the 650,000 Puerto Ricans living in Florida. Therefore, this is equal to having relocated all these municipalities to Florida. These equivalent facts are as dramatic as the indicators of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) that established that this Hispanic population had increased by 859% since 1980.

This C.U.N.Y. study states that the "search for a better quality of life that includes housing, education, health, peace and safety" is one of the four most important reasons to decide to emigrate. In the same manner, studies by the Puerto Rico Planning Board agree that many Puerto Ricans emigrate not only for economic reasons, and even if the priority is an economic benefit, it goes further than the search for a job. It is interesting to point out that the socioeconomic profile of this emigration reflects that more than one third of the Puerto Ricans in Florida have earnings over \$50,000.00 and more than half of them fluctuate between the ages of 18 and 34, while only 11.3 % of the Puerto Ricans who reside in the island have this kind of income.

The emigration of Puerto Ricans to Orlando, as indicated by the 2000 Census, was instrumental to the designation of Orlando as the city with the fastest growth in the United States with an unusual population growth projection, at the rate of 103% for 2008.

These thousands and thousands of Puerto Ricans in search of the culmination of their American Dream and its corresponding quality of life are reacting to the poor quality of life in their environment in Puerto Rico and to the failure of the Puerto Rican suburbs to materialize this dream, and that is where most of the Puerto Rican population lives. It is indispensable for the realization of the American Dream that your surroundings allow it. The Puerto Rican suburbia has not been the place for it. Since the '60s it has been used as a place almost exclusively for sleeping, as is

perceived by the photos of Bayamón in 1964 and in Arecibo in 1965. And since then, even though fifty years have gone by, little has changed.

The grounds or physical environment in the suburbs, where the highest concentration of the population of Puerto Rico resides, is not an environment directed to facilitating the American Dream. The suburbs in Puerto Rico have only focused on providing housing and have not provided the corresponding components mentioned above like education, health, tranquility and safety that the Puerto Ricans in Florida have manifested as indispensable for a good quality of life. If to these requirements we add the fundamental road component of the accessibility to the suburban developments, most of the Puerto Rican suburban emplacements would be dysfunctional. The uncontrolled spreading of suburban developments through rural roads, almost inaccessible, in bad condition, is of such a dramatic magnitude as are the statistics of emigration in search of a better quality of life.

To confirm this suburban spreading you only have to see the houses scattered through all the rural areas, as in the country in Camuy where a new urban development called *Alturas de Quebrada* makes the suburban result of simple lots around the country seem incredible. Even more disconcerting would be to actualize these isolated settlements with the rise in the price of gasoline which is causing the progressive impoverishment of its residents.

Even when you see suburban developments that are somewhat denser than simple lots, in the case of the traditional Puerto Rican urbanization you can only perceive agglomerations of anonymous houses due to its repetition. This Puerto Rican reality comes face to face with the efforts pursued by the suburban settlements in Central Florida and more specifically in Orlando. The Puerto Rican suburban developments look inconclusive or deficient when contrasted to the search for the ideal suburbia that fosters the American Dream.

When we place the ideal suburban development as taken from Ebenezer Howard in the 1890s and his design program of new satellite communities conducive to an idealistic quality of life, and then through the parameters of the suburban industrial city by Tony Garnier in 1918, the suburban developments in Puerto Rico end up looking, in general, shameful.

These developments in the United

States were not made without errors, deficiencies or conflict. The long path of North American suburbia that Jonathan Barnett gathers in his books *The Elusive City: Five Centuries of Design, Ambition and Miscalculation* and *Fractured Metropolis: Improving the New City, Restoring the Old City, Reshaping the Region*, about the evolution of North American suburbia lash out at these suburban developments throughout the United States.

In the evolution of the typology of the suburban settlement, it is specifically in Florida, with the Seaside development in 1984, that more than 20 years ago the duo of architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zybek together with Leon Krier forged a more complex suburban typology which they named New Urbanism, and that is later picked up as the venue of the "American Dream" in the movie *The Truman Show*. Seaside had a great reception among the developers in the United States and its model spread to new developments like Kentland, in Gaithersburg, Maryland (Washington, DC suburbs), among others. Nevertheless, Seaside turned out to be insufficient perhaps for its veiled monotony when its inescapable commercialism is uncovered.

Not agreeing with the novelty in the suburban contribution of Seaside, Walt Disney Corporation opted, a decade later, for an evolution of Seaside, precisely in Orlando, in a development called Celebration in the year 1996. In Celebration the design program already tries the mimetization of the urban surroundings. Thus the suburban Celebration turns into the suburban caricature of an antiseptic urban profile decontaminated of all urban wealth. With the suburban fantasy of Celebration the new developers have set the guidelines for new developments that can lodge the American Dream. With the new neo-urban morphology of Celebration the American Dream is mounted and marketed on a contrived, pure image that proclaims the perceptions of the qualifying appeals of its environment. It does not matter if the urban caricature lacks the density, the morphology, and the diversity of uses required for an urban profile, as well as all the wealth provided by the multiplicity of actors and errors found in every city. It does not matter the exclusivity profile that is indispensable for this urban approach, if it offers more than just an agglomeration of houses; it only matters that the fantasy found in Celebration and its clones look compatible

with the realization of the American Dream. And, certainly the utopian setting of Celebration goes hand in hand with the American Dream utopia. Celebration has begotten some even more laughable caricatures as is the Ave María community, also in Central Florida, of course, destined to house only Catholic parishioners. This ex urban development according to the criteria of the New Urbanism pursues an urban profile with a town square where its corresponding cathedral is located in the center of the settlement. It would be intriguing to see how many Catholics of the Puerto Rican emigration it will capture.

If you interpolate how hungry the resident of the Puerto Rican suburbs is due to its dysfunctionality after fifty years of dissatisfaction, and a glamorized suburb is offered with all the apparent urban benefits and none of its apparent defects, you find customers enthusiastic with the idea of culminating their dreams not attained in the Puerto Rican suburbs. In short, that the Puerto Rican suburb has begotten a resident rebellious of the deficiencies found in his surroundings that will look for it avidly until finding it in Orlando, no doubt. The marriage of this offer and demand detonates the migration of 30,000 Puerto Ricans per year that move to Orlando to receive the quality of life that the Celebrations of Orlando promise. This process is accelerated with the sales offices that have been opened in Puerto Rico by developers of Central Florida and Orlando to market in San Juan their new urban developments Meadow Woods in Orange and Buenaventura Lakes in Osceola. To this we add that the cost of their residential units that are more cost effective than in Puerto Rico; which allows us to predict that the emigration to Orlando will go on disbanded unless we interrupt it with local Puerto Rican offers that are competitive and consonant with the American Dream and that this dream is properly unmasked.

Fortunately, we see in Puerto Rico a tendency that has started to reverse the large exodus of Puerto Ricans. The new type of suburban projects in Cidra, Dorado and Gurabo has complemented its residential offer with more enriched community and recreational areas. For example, the Dorado project has included a school. These projects equally aspire to distinguish themselves with an access and entrance area that identifies its suburban nature.

Judging by its acceptance in the housing market, it is evident that the

suburban typology used in Cidra, Dorado and Gurabo has resulted as effective in Puerto Rico as Celebration in Orlando, since the amenities that transcend the mere construction of housing units captivate the residential demands of a country in which suburbia aspires to be the urban culmination. The strengthening of the local market is of absolute importance, but it is also true, as the CUNY report states, that several enterprises like BPPR, R&G Crown, Empresas Fonalledas, the Cooperativa de Seguros Múltiples, the Puerto Rican American Insurance Company (PRAICO), El Nuevo Día, Goya Foods, Plaza Gigante, the Ana G. Méndez Foundation, Interamerican University and the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, have expanded their operations to Florida, and even though this represents the opening of new markets, it equally represents the closing of markets in Puerto Rico like the aforementioned equivalency to the closing of a municipality of 30,000 inhabitants annually in Puerto Rico.

Therefore, in the way we clarify the failure of Puerto Rican suburbia *vis-à-vis* the quality of life in the persecution of the American Dream, we will capacitate the redesign of the existing suburbs and the construction of new developments in harmony with the utopias that require the realization of the ideal dream. We hope this is so until its relevance, efficiency habitability, and sustainability in the city is reconsidered. No doubt all points out that we move speedily in the route of the revalorization of the city judging by the amount of developments that are looking to densify it. It might be for how expensive it is to live in the suburbs, since it is directed to the most affluent sectors of society, or that the consumer patterns, especially the energetic consumption, require the reconceptualization of the space to be urbanized.

In New Scientist magazine, NASA climatologist James Hansen described how the planet, but closer to us, Central Florida and Orlando, would look after the collapse of the West Antarctic ice sheet and the rise of the sea levels. Fortunately, there is hope. Everything indicates that the caricatures of consumption we have built in Orlando and Central Florida will be as transitory and laughable as the grand Mickey Mouse in Disney.

# ARTICULOS

# ARTICLES

# La estética de esfumarse: lo efímero y la búsqueda de la permanencia

por María T. Martínez Díez

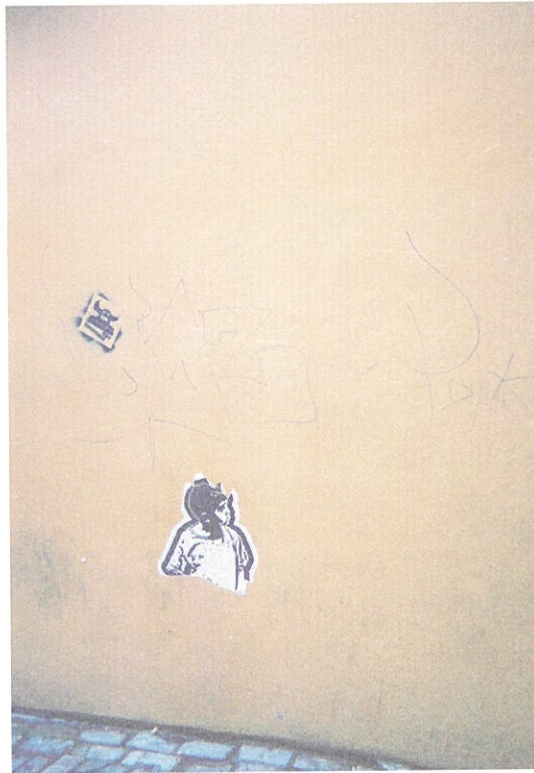
“Lo que queda inscrito e imprime marcas, prosigue, ‘no es el recuerdo, sino la huella, signo de la ausencia.’ Esas huellas están en cierto modo desconectadas de todo relato posible o creíble; se han desligado del recuerdo”.

Augé (1998; 30 citando a Pontalis)

## Recordar para olvidar

La búsqueda de la permanencia parece paradójica en una expresión como el graffiti, que se coloca en los lugares más precarios y queda expuesta a la mutilación, la erosión o la erradicación. La marca se maneja, pues, dentro de su condición efímera, como una huella, como la presencia de una ausencia. O, si se quiere, como una lucha contra el olvido. Augé (1998), plantea tres figuras del olvido: la memoria del pasado, la espera del futuro y la atención al presente. A primera la define como el retorno; es la búsqueda y la recuperación del pasado perdido, olvidando, o dejando de lado, cualquier consideración al presente. De esta suerte, la lucha del graffiti contra el olvido, y la contradicción de la permanencia de la pintada efímera en esta primera figura, se plantean como la necesidad de instaurarse en el presente sin recurrir al pasado. Para que se logre el olvido, tiene que reconocerse la pared como antes de que fuese marcada. De ahí que se produzca la urgencia de borrar la marca, de restaurar la superficie a su condición prístina. Sin embargo, esto resulta una imposibilidad. No es posible regresar al pasado si no es a través del olvido. Entonces, la reiteración o la repetición de la marca es, al mismo tiempo, una lucha contra el olvido y un reclamo del presente.

Este reclamo del presente nos coloca en el segundo aspecto del olvido que discute Augé: el suspenso. En él se separa el presente del pasado y del futuro. “El suspenso equivale a una estatización del instante presente” (1998, 65). En ese sentido, el suspenso es un detente, como en algunos filmes, donde aguantamos la respiración, porque el instante del presente nos captura del todo y no permite que haya movimiento. En ese instante presente no vale lo sucedido ni lo que está por suceder. De tal manera, la posibilidad de la inmovilidad se organiza en dos rumbos: por un lado, se plantea una parálisis y prohibición del cambio; por otro, el incansable movimiento de asir el momento que continuamente



se escapa. Si en la primera figura (la memoria del pasado) el graffiti imprime la huella del aquí-y-ahora e intenta cancelar el olvido, en la segunda figura (el suspenso como espera del futuro), la pintada cancela el futuro llamando la atención a un presente siempre cambiante.

Por último, la tercera figura es el comienzo, o re-comienzo, sin implicar repetición. Una “inauguración radical”, recuperar el futuro, olvidando el pasado en un puro presente continuo. Es el lanzamiento sin frenos a un espacio sin definiciones impuestas por el pasado. En palabras de López “[s]e abandona el proyecto de futuro por la conquista del presente, lo efímero, lo banal” (1994; 129). En este caso, el graffiti, al ser una conversa entre distintos instantes e instancias, no puede ignorar un tiempo pasado, sino que elabora sobre y desde él.





### Manías de asepsia

“...nuevas, brillantes y oxigenadas, desprovistas de cualquier pátina o resquebrajadura, lustradas artificialmente... Allí también se limpia, se eliminan las basuras y resquebrajaduras, se devuelven las cosas a su estado de limpieza original, se restaura.”

Baudrillard (1998; 50-51)

Cuanto más se detiene la mira sobre la pared marcada, mayor es la posibilidad de incluir en esta discusión el acto de la erradicación de cualquier expresión de graffiti como una forma de compulsión por la limpieza y como modo de erradicación del Otro. La anulación del Otro implica necesariamente una operación doble: su reconocimiento y desautorización simultánea.

Al identificar una marca en la pared como digna de ser erradicada, se le imbuye de valor. Esta valía puede ser múltiple: por su arenga política, por su condición de mácula, por su planteamiento como reto u osadía, o por su invitación a la imaginación. Este valor que se le adjudica a la pintada es contradictorio, puesto que el reconocimiento mueve directamente a la descalificación. Por lo tanto, en un mismo brochazo se valida e invalida la pintada. Se le atribuye suficiente valor como para fijarse en ella y, paralelamente, se articula el modo de hacerla desaparecer. Erradicar su presencia sin que quede huella de la misma.

Consiguientemente, aun cuando el graffiti se plantea como mancha, es mucho más que eso. Es, además, una señal, y la huella de una presencia

indeseable. De tal manera, apremia la eliminación de la huella del Otro. Esta es la segunda parte de esta operación: la desautorización, la descalificación y la censura. La huella del Otro es identificada como suciedad y, por lo tanto, se espera que, en la búsqueda de la limpieza, se le borre. Y en línea con lo que elabora en sus trabajos Mary Douglas, es también la búsqueda de la pureza. El Otro es, entonces, construido y definido como contaminado y corrupto. Entendido de esta manera, el espacio contaminado, séptico, puede ser contagioso. De ahí la urgencia por recuperar la condición original previa a la mácula: immaculada.

La eliminación del graffiti como erradicación del Otro responde a su definición como práctica liminal. Es decir, como práctica impura y como huella sobre superficies que son siempre límites (sino antes de ser marcadas, en el momento de serlo). Por otra parte, el Otro también se define como el límite de lo propio. Es lo ajeno, lo distinto, lo que define lo propio, haciéndolo inconfundible. Es, de esta manera, que el graffiti se considera una práctica liminal, una práctica impura, pues es una expresión que se articula sobre las superficies limítrofes.

A pesar de que algunos graffiti pueden tener una vida más larga de lo sospechado, todos terminan esfumándose, aun cuando sea por pura exposición a los elementos climáticos. Sin embargo, la mayor parte de las veces, el graffiti se anula intencionalmente. Dicho de otra manera, en tanto acto de subversión, el destino de la pintada es ser suprimida.

De tal manera, podemos combinar la manía de asepsia y el análisis de Augé sobre el olvido. Por un lado, la erradicación del graffiti se plantea como la búsqueda de una tábula rasa similar a la lógica de una memoria siempre en presente, sin ataduras al pasado, y sin proyección al futuro. Este “presentismo absoluto” privilegia el contrasentido aparente de la búsqueda de permanencia del graffiti. Como en el film *Memento* (1995), cuyo protagonista sufre una condición en la que no puede formar nuevos recuerdos, si nuestra memoria es absolutamente presentista, más acá del corto plazo, la única manera de establecer la conexión en el hilo temporal es a través de una marca, una huella o un tatuaje, que continuamente nos coloque en él. Los tatuajes en la piel de Leonard, el protagonista de *Memento*, le permiten conquistar ese presente precisamente arrojándole al pasado y al futuro. Así, sus tatuajes le cuentan su pasado (*John G. raped and murdered my wife*—tatuado a la inversa sobre su pecho para que pueda leerlo en su reflejo en el espejo), le orientan sobre sus acciones en el futuro (*Find him and kill him*) y le instruyen cómo actuar en el presente (*Never talk on the phone*). De la misma manera, el graffiti, nuestro tatuaje colectivo sobre la piel de la ciudad, no permite que se instale el olvido: nos recuerda elementos de nuestro pasado, perpetúa el presente con su carga y nos sugiere un futuro incierto, a través de la redundancia del acto de marcar la superficie que otros intentarán borrar. |||||



## The Aesthetics of Vanishing: The Ephemeral and the Search for Permanence

To Remember to Forget  
"I can't remember to forget"  
Leonard, *Memento* (1995)

The search for permanence seems paradoxical in an expression like graffiti which is placed in the most precarious sites and remains exposed to mutilation, erosion or eradication. The mark is managed then within its ephemeral condition as an impression, like the presence of an absence. Or, should you prefer, a fight against forgetting. Augé (1998) suggests three figures of forgetting: the memory of the past, the wait for the future and the attention to the present. He defines the first one as a return; as the search and recuperation of a lost past, forgetting or leaving aside any consideration to the present. This way, the battle of graffiti against forgetfulness and the contradiction of the permanence of the ephemeral painting are presented in this first figure as the need to place oneself in the present without resorting to the past. In order for forgetfulness to happen, you have to acknowledge the wall as it was before it was marked. Thus the urgency to erase the mark is produced, to restore the surface to its pristine condition. Nevertheless, this is impossible. We can only return to the past through forgetfulness. The reiteration or repetition of the mark is then, at the same time, a struggle against forgetfulness and a call for the present.

This call for the present brings us to the second aspect of forgetfulness that Augé discusses: suspense. Here the present is separated from the past and from the future. "Suspense is equivalent to a statization of the present instant" (1998, 65). In this sense, suspense is a *détente*, as in some films, when we hold our breath because the instant present captures our whole being and does not allow us to move. At that instant what is important is not what has happened, but what is about to happen. Thus, the possibility of immobility is organized in two directions: on one side the paralysis and prohibition of movement is established; on the other, the tireless movement of seizing a moment that is constantly escaping. If in the first image (the memory of the past) graffiti prints its mark of the here and now and tries to cancel forgetfulness, in the second image (suspense awaiting the future) the painting cancels the future calling the attention to an always

changing present.

Finally, the third image is the start or restart, without implying repetition. It is a "radical inauguration", to recover the future forgetting the past in a pure continuous present. It is the jumping without restrictions into a space without definitions imposed by the past. In the words of López "the Project of the future is abandoned for the conquest of the present, the ephemeral, the banal" (1994; 129). In this case, graffiti becomes a conversion between different instants and instances, it cannot ignore times past, and it elaborates on and from it.

### Asepsis Mania

"...new, shiny and bleached, devoid of any patina or crack, artificially polished... There you also clean, eliminate trash and cracks and return things to their original state of cleanliness, you restore".

Baudrillard (1998; 50-51)

The more you watch the marked wall the higher the possibility of including in this discussion the act of eradication of any graffiti expression as a form of cleaning compulsion and as a way of eradicating the Other. The annulment of the Other necessarily implies a double operation: its acknowledgement and simultaneous ban.

When a mark on a wall is identified as worthy of being eradicated, it is infused with value. Its worth can be multiple: for its political harangue, for its condition of blemish, for its statement as a challenge or dare or for its invitation to the imagination. This value awarded to the painting is contradictory since its recognition moves directly to its disqualification. Therefore, in the same brush-stroke you validate and invalidate the painting. It is given enough value for it to be noticed, and at the same time, articulates the way to make it disappear. To eradicate its presence without leaving any trace.

Consequently, even when graffiti is presented as a stain, it is much more than that. It is also a sign and a mark of something undesirable. Therefore, it urges the elimination of the Other's mark. That is the second part of the operation: to unauthorize, discredit and censure. The Other's mark is identified as dirt and, therefore, is expected to be erased in the search for cleanliness. And in line with Mary Douglas' work, it is also the search for purity. The Other is then constructed as contaminated and corrupt. If we understand it this way, the contaminated space, could be

contagious. Therefore the urgency to recover its original condition previous to the stain: immaculate.

The elimination of graffiti as eradication of the Other responds to its definition as a liminal practice. Or better to say, as an impure practice and as a mark on surfaces that are always limits (if not before being marked, at the moment of being marked.) On the other hand, the Other is also defined as the limit of one's own. It is the foreignness, the distinct, what defines one's own, making it unmistakable. It is in this manner that graffiti is considered a liminal practice, an impure practice, since it is an expression articulated on bordering surfaces.

Even though some graffiti might have a longer life than expected, all end up vanishing even though it might be by pure exposure to the elements. However, most of the time, graffiti is intentionally annulled. After so much subversive action, the fate of the painting is to be suppressed.

We can combine this way the aseptic mania and Augé's analysis on forgetfulness. On one hand, the eradication of graffiti is presented as the search for a clean slate similar to the logic of a memory always in the present, without any ties to the past, and with no projection towards the future. This "absolute presentness" privileges the apparent contradiction of graffiti's search for permanence. As in the film *Memento* (1995), where the main character suffers a condition where he cannot hold new memories, if our memory is absolutely present, closer than short term, the only way to establish the connection in the time thread is through a mark, an imprint or a tattoo that continuously places us there. The tattoos in Leonard's skin, *Memento's* protagonist, allow him to conquer that present by precisely tying him to the past and the future. Thus, the tattoos tell him about his past (*John G. raped and murdered my wife*—tattooed backwards on his chest so he can read it reflected on a mirror), and guide him to actions in the future (*Find him and kill him*) and instruct him how to act in the present (*Never talk on the phone*). In the same way graffiti, our collective tattoo on the city's skin, does not allow forgetfulness to settle, it reminds us elements from our past, perpetuates the present with its burden and suggests an uncertain future through the redundancy of the act of marking the surface that others will try to erase. ■■■■■■

# Rock, consumo, identidad, domesticidad

por Javier Santiago-Lucerna, MA

**E**stas son las palabras con las que Anita se despide de su hermano menor camino a San Francisco, lejos de la mirada inquisidora de la madre y la monotonía suburbana, en el film autobiográfico *Almost Famous*, de Cameron Crowe (2000). La próxima escena nos muestra a William en su habitación, donde descubre, debajo de la cama, un maletín repleto de discos de rock que su hermana probablemente le dejó de recuerdo. Al repasarlos, encuentra una nota dentro del álbum *Tommy* del grupo inglés *The Who*: "Listen to Tommy with a candle burning and you will see your entire future." Al son de los acordes del tema "It's a boy", William enciende la vela y queda transportado a su futuro.

En este artículo, nos interesa abordar lo que algunos han llamado la cultura del *makeover*, que bien se ejemplifica en programas televisivos como *Extreme Makeover*, o la popularidad actual de comercios como *Home Depot*. Mi tesis es que en la medida que aparece el sujeto de consumo en el capitalismo tardío, la subjetividad que le ampara ha contribuido a un entendimiento muy particular del espacio doméstico. Al experimentarse éste, inicialmente en la adolescencia, el posicionamiento en cuanto al mundo adulto que de aquí surge se entiende el espacio como un objeto presto a ser manipulado.

Vale aclarar varios puntos antes de proseguir. Primero: por capitalismo tardío, entendemos la transformación del modo de regulación fordista a la acumulación flexible que experimentara el capital a finales del siglo pasado (Harvey, 1990). Segundo: este evento desató una crisis de legitimidad del Estado que socavó la subjetividad productivista dominante hasta ese momento (Habermas, 1975). Esto, unido a la intensificación en la libre circulación de objetos/mercancías, produjo una subjetividad muy particular que hemos querido llamar el sujeto de consumo. Tercero: partimos de una definición un tanto estrecha de lo doméstico equiparándolo al hogar. Esta enunciación tiene un propósito: ilustrar la forma en que las prácticas de estos sujetos del consumo también transformaron ese ámbito.

Quisiera ir nuevamente a las imágenes que dieron pie a esta reflexión. Si fijamos nuestra mirada atentamente en la habitación donde William tiene su primer encuentro con los seductores sonidos del rock, podremos distinguir sus paredes cubiertas con artefactos que, de una manera u otra, niegan su naturaleza enclaustrada. Junto al mapa mundi,



“Look under your bed; it’ll set you free.”



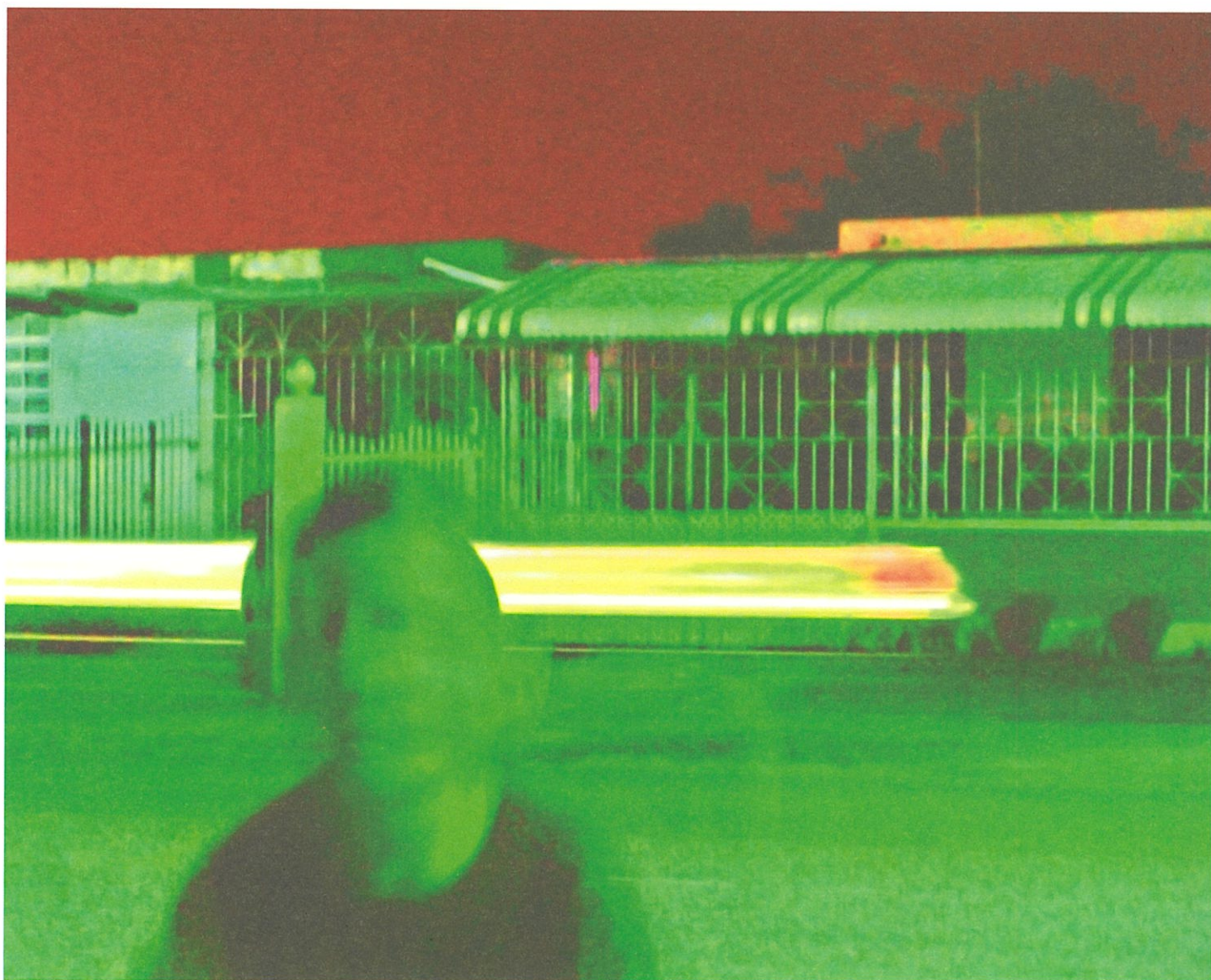
que puede apreciarse sobre la cabecera de su cama, se advierte una foto de Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins y Buzz Aldrin, los astronautas que participaron en la misión *Apollo 11* (la primera en descender en la Luna). Ambos afiches comunican exploración de amplios espacios, abiertos, que se oponen al aislamiento de la habitación suburbana. En este contexto, las carátulas de su recién descubierto tesoro funcionan como ventanas a un mundo desconocido, pero que promete libertad. Esta imagen es reforzada en el momento en que Tommy toca y prende la vela frente a una ventana.

Esta representación del espacio proviene de un entendimiento del rock como una forma de lidiar con la monotonía suburbana estadounidense y el mundo adulto que le acompaña (Grossberg, 1992). El género, al ser expresamente juvenil, funcionó como banda sonora en el rito de pasada entre el niño y el adulto. Lo hizo, operando, primordialmente como una máquina presta a construir y reproducir diferencias por doquier (Grossberg, 1994). En la escena discutida, se registra ese rito de pasada en William en la medida en que la música abre la ventana

y deja atrás el encierro.

Pero el rock es más que música. Desde sus inicios implicó a la imagen, ya sea en la puesta en escena, o en la experiencia particular de aquellos que le vivieron (Goodwin, 1992). Las carátulas y los afiches cumplieron una importante función al permitir abolir, precisamente, el encierro suburbano. Si bien el rock inicial cobró vida en el no-lugar entre la escuela y el hogar (por ejemplo, la fuente de soda), ya en su etapa corporativa (1969-78) este logró infiltrarse en las entrañas del espacio suburbano y subvertir la habitación del adolescente. Entendida así, la habitación se convirtió en el microcosmos de ese sujeto en ciernes. Un sujeto entendedor de que, a modo de construir su identidad, fue necesario consumir el imaginario del rock, a través de imágenes que autenticaran su rebeldía al mundo adulto.

Pero no se trata sólo de risueñas prácticas culturales de los vástagos de la generación posguerra. Esta forma de articular la identidad también respondió a la quiebra del trabajo como ente estructurador de lo que Sennet (2000) llama "el carácter." Impulsado por el taylorismo de principios del siglo pasado, y su



culto al reloj en la ejecución de tareas, el fordismo estructuró la experiencia de la vida del trabajador de manera lineal-vertical, confinándolo a una tarea específica a lo largo de su vida. Así, la cotidianidad del espacio concreto de la fábrica se traspuso al doméstico, siendo este último regido por las mismas dinámicas temporales del trabajo. La morada del trabajador fordistista apenas cambió y, cuando lo hizo, la estructura evidenció la transformación como un crecimiento lineal; en la adición de habitaciones, el “porch,” una cochera más amplia. De este modo, su identidad se tornó imperecedera, fluctuando apenas de acuerdo a los vaivenes económicos.

El régimen de acumulación flexible dio al traste con esto e inauguró otra forma de experimentar el trabajo, el espacio y, por añadidura, la identidad. La producción fue seccionada, e importada a otros países y continentes, rompiendo así con la materialidad tanto del trabajo, como de la fábrica. La cotidianidad de los sujetos se afectó. El nuevo régimen de acumulación contribuyó también a la caducidad de la ciudad industrial, disponiendo un arreglo desparramado tanto de la producción, como de la experiencia del trabajo (y por ende, de la vida). Para Sennet, la línea ya no representa esa experiencia; ahora es la red y la horizontalidad. La identidad bajo este régimen, entonces, dejó de ser estructurada en el trabajo, y se desplazó a otros “lugares” (por eso el argumento de Sennet sobre la “corrosión” del carácter).

Ante tal panorama, la identidad comenzó a producirse en el cuerpo (señalando así una nueva domesticidad) y desde la vorágine de signos producida por el consumo, como demostró treinta años atrás la revolución punk. Johnny Rotten no fue mucho más que sus lentes amarillos, camisas cosidas con imperdibles, pelo rojo, guantes de vagabundos;

todos adquiridos en la *boutique* del *Salvation Army*. Es eso precisamente lo que se expresa en el cuarto de William en el citado *film*: la posibilidad de definir lo doméstico y la identidad, obviando el espacio y el objeto concreto. Allí el Tommy de *The Who* funciona como ventana en la medida en que traslada estos ámbitos a un plano virtual (igual que la producción durante la acumulación flexible).

¿Cómo no incorporar esas prácticas discursivas en la cotidianidad una vez se ingresa al mundo adulto? Quizá esa no sea la pregunta pues, al presente, se experimenta una intensificación virulenta de la acumulación flexible y su voluntad virtual. El paso a este régimen de acumulación sucedió hace ya mucho tiempo como para poder recordar con precisión cuándo ocurrió. En cambio, esa forma de constituir la identidad y reordenar lo doméstico, sublimada en la habitación juvenil, trasciende ya los afiches en la pared y se reproduce en el culto (o la adicción) al *makeover*. El reciente comercial de *First Bank*, donde una pareja imagina los colores de las paredes interiores de la casa por comprar y/o las lámparas que le adornarán, reproduce ese ethos doméstico característico del sujeto del consumo.

Antes de terminar quisiera abordar brevemente las consecuencias de todo este proceso a nivel de domesticidad. Si para el sujeto de consumo lo doméstico reside en el cuerpo, pudiera hablarse, entonces, de una relación paralela con el hogar. Su domesticidad no necesariamente radicará en la estructura (el objeto), sino en el proceso de reproducir la identidad manifiesta de su cuerpo. En esta medida, “domesticidad” se referirá a la relación del sujeto con los objetos (matizado, quizá, por la intimidad o por la cercanía). Pero esta relación se reproducirá sólo a un nivel discursivo, alejado de lo concreto, de lo palpable.

## Rock, Consumption, Identity, Domesticity

These are the words with which Annie says farewell to his younger brother on her way to San Francisco, away from their mother's inquisitive stare and suburban monotony, in Cameron Crowe's autobiographical film, *Almost Famous* (2000). In the next scene we see William in his room, where he finds beneath his bed a suitcase full of rock records that his sister left him as souvenir. When he looks through them, he finds a note inside the album Tommy of the English group The Who: “Listen to Tommy with a candle burning and you will see your entire future.” To the sound of the accords of the song “It's a boy,” William lights the candle and is transported to his future.

In this essay, we intend to look into what some have called the culture of the makeover, which is very well exemplified in TV shows like *Extreme Makeover* or the popularity of commercials like the ones from Home Depot. Our thesis is that in the measure in which the subject of consumption appears in late capitalism, the subjectivity that shelters

### Referencias / References

- Crowe, C. (productor y director). (2000). *Almost Famous* [Motion Picture]. USA: Dreamworks and Columbia Pictures.
- Goodwin, A. (1992). *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Grossberg, L. (1992). *We Gotta Get Out of this Place. Popular Conservatism and Postmodern culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Grossberg, L. (1994). *Is Anybody Listening? Does Anybody Care? On Talking About “The State of Rock.”* En Rose, T. y Ross, A. (Eds.) *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music and Youth Culture* (pp. 41-58). New York: Routledge.
- Habermas, J. (1975). *Problemas de legitimación en el capitalismo tardío*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu.
- Harvey, D. (1990). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Sennet, R. (2000). *La corrosión del carácter*. Barcelona: Anagrama.

it has contributed to a very particular understanding of domestic space. When it is initially experimented in adolescence, the positioning regarding the adult world that emerges would be to understand space as an object ready to be manipulated.

It is worth clarifying several points before continuing. First: by late capitalism I mean the transformation of the fordist mode of regulation to the flexible accumulation experimented towards the end of the last century (Harvey, 1990). Second: this event unleashed a legitimacy crisis of the state that undermined the productivist subjectivity dominant till that moment (Habermas, 1975). This, united to the intensification in the free circulation of objects/merchandise, produced a very particular subjectivity that I want to call the subject of consumption. Third: I part from a rather tight definition of the domestic equalizing it to the home. This statement has a purpose: to illustrate the way in which the practices of these subjects of consumption also transformed that confine.

I would like to go back to the images that started this reflection. If we look closely at the room where William had his first encounter with the seductive sound of rock, we will distinguish its walls covered with artifacts which, one way or another, deny its clustered nature. Next to the world map that can be appreciated over the bed's headboard, we see a picture of Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin, the astronauts that participated in the Apollo 11 mission (the first one to land on the Moon); both posters communicate an exploration of wide, open spaces, that contradict the isolation of the suburban bedroom. In this context, the covers of his recently discovered treasure serve as windows to an unknown world that promises freedom. This image is reinforced at the moment he plays Tommy and lights the candle in front of a window.

This representation of space comes from an understanding of rock as a way to deal with the suburban monotony in the United States and the adult world that accompanies it (Grossberg, 1992). The gender, being expressly youthful, acted as sound track of the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. It was done mainly by operating as a machine ready to build and reproduce differences everywhere (Grossberg, 1994). In the discussed scene this rite of passage is registered in William at the rate in which the music opens

the window and leaves the confinement behind.

But rock is more than music. Even from its beginnings image was implicated, either by the staging, or in the particular experiences of those who lived it (Goodwin, 1992). The record covers and the posters fulfilled an important function by allowing the abolishment of the suburban confinement. If rock at its beginnings was brought to life in the non-place between the school and the house (the soda fountain, for example), in its corporate stage (1969-1978) it infiltrated the entrails of suburban space and subverted the teenager's bedroom. Thus understood, the bedroom turned into the microcosm of that budding fellow. An understanding fellow that, as a way of building his identity, had to consume rock's imagery, through images that authenticated his rebelliousness to the adult world.

But it is not only about smiling cultural practices of the postwar generation's offspring. This form of articulating identity also responded to the failure of work as a structuring entity of what Sennett (2000) called "character". Impelled by the Taylorism of the beginning of last century and his cult to the clock in the execution of tasks, Fordism structured the experience of the worker's life in a lineal-vertical manner, by confining him to a specific task along his life. Thus, the cotidianity of concrete space in the factory surpassed the domestic, being this last one ruled by the temporal dynamics of the workplace. The dwelling of the Fordist worker hardly ever changed, and when it did, it was the structure that evidenced the transformation as a lineal change; in the addition of rooms, the porch, a larger garage. This way, his identity turned imperishable, hardly fluctuating in accord to economic oscillations.

The regime of flexible accumulation threw all this out and inaugurated another way of experimenting work, space, and in addition, identity. Production was divided, and imported to other countries and continents, breaking with the materiality not only of work, but also of the factory. The subjects' cotidianity was affected. The new regime of accumulation also contributed to the obsolescence of the industrial city, disposing a spread out arrangement of production and the working experience (and consequently, of life.) To Sennett, the line no longer represents that experience: it

is now the network and the horizontality. Identity under this regime, stopped being structured at work and shifted to other "places" (Sennett's argument on the "corrosion" of character.)

In view of this new landscape, identity started to be produced in the body (pointing thus to a new domesticity) and from the whirlpool of the signs produced by consumption, as demonstrated thirty years ago by the punk revolution. Johnny Rotten wasn't much more than his yellow lenses, shirts sewn with safety pins, red hair, vagabond's gloves, all procured in the Salvation Army's "boutique". This is expressed in William's room in the quoted film: the possibility of defining what is domestic and identity ignoring space and the concrete object. In that place Tommy of The Who functions as a window as it transfers these confines to a virtual plane (same as production during the flexible accumulation.)

How is it possible not to incorporate these discursive practices in everyday life once you join the adult world? Maybe that is not the question, since nowadays we are experimenting a virulent intensification of the flexible accumulation and its virtual will. The step to this accumulation regime happened too long ago to remember precisely when it happened. On the other hand, this way of building identity and reordering domesticity sublimated in the young bedroom transcends even the posters on the wall and is reproduced in the cult (or addiction) to the "makeover". The recent First Bank ad, where a couple imagines the colors of the interior walls of the house they are about to buy and the lamps that will adorn them, reproduces this domestic ethos characteristic of the subject of consumption.

Before finishing, I would like to discuss briefly the consequences of all this process in the domestic level. If for the subject of consumption the domestic resides in his body, we could talk then about a parallel relationship with the home. His domesticity will not necessarily reside in the structure (the object), but in the process of reproducing the identity manifested in his body. In this measure "domesticity" will refer to the relationship of the subject with the objects (tinged perhaps by the intimacy or proximity.) But this relationship will be reproduced only at a discursive level, apart from the discreet, the palpable. ■■■■■■■■



**KENNETH FRAMPTON**

JUEVES, 13 DE MARZO 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO POLITÉCNICA



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**MARIO GANDELSONI**

MIÉRCOLES, 30 DE ENERO 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO POLITÉCNICA



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**MARC TSURUMAKI**

JUEVES, 8 DE MARZO 2008 7:30 PM

ANFITRATRO POLITÉCNICA

ETL ARCHITECTS



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**FELICITY SCOTT**

MARTES, 26 DE AGOSTO 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO POLITÉCNICA

CONFERENCIA "CONTROL AND APPROPRIETY"



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**LARRY BUSBEA**

MIÉRCOLES, 5 DE SEPTIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO TIGER PRO ARQPOLI

CONFERENCIA "THE ARCH-CONTEXT" ENVIRONMENT



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**REINHOLD MARTIN**

MARTES, 18 DE NOVIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO TIGER PRO ARQPOLI

CONFERENCIA "URBAN FORM: RECONSTRUCTION REVISITED"



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**DAVID GRAHANE SHANE**

JUEVES, 18 DE SEPTIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO TIGER PRO ARQPOLI

CONFERENCIA "REFLECTION ON THE CITY: ABBASBAHO, BSA ARCHITECTS, DAVID JACKES AND THE BURNETT"



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**BIG**

MIÉRCOLES, 24 DE NOVIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO POLITÉCNICA




**JOAN OCKMAN**

MIÉRCOLES, 3 DE DICIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO TIGER PRO ARQPOLI

CONFERENCIA "THE ARCH-CLASS: DOESN'T GIVE UP"



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

**MARY MCLEOD**

MARTES, 9 DE DICIEMBRE 2008 7:00 PM

ANFITRATRO TIGER PRO ARQPOLI

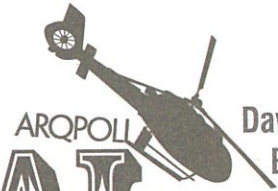
CONFERENCIA "WHY CONTEMPORARY IN THE ARCHITECTURE?"



REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

## 2008 ARQPOLI LECTURE SERIES

- Kenneth Frampton
- Mario Gandelsonas
- Marc Tsurumaki
- Felicity D. Scott
- Larry Busbea
- Reinhold Martin
- David Grahane Shane
- Bjarke Ingels - BIG
- Joan Ockman
- Mary McLeod



# REVISTING THE **RHETORICAL MASTERS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL** NEO AVANT GARDE

# Ocio y negocio: las nuevas geografías del espacio público\*

por Nadya K. Nenadich

Dentro del cambiante marco que traza las diversas geografías de lo público, el espacio ha sido uno de los elementos clave en la recomposición del contexto histórico contemporáneo. La localización de las personas, la manera de producir, las formas de comunicar y comunicarse, apuntan a cambios importantes en la dinámica cotidiana y en los modos de habitar, pero también en los modos de producir y consumir. Las separaciones que han delimitado y definido las correspondencias con los objetos se han difuminado, asumen otra naturaleza y se modifican. Por tanto, lo primero que debemos abordar es si aun se puede hablar de las categorías *público* y *privado* -cuando hablamos del espacio- como categorías separadas, o si en nuestro tiempo estamos siendo testigos de la ruptura de estas polaridades; que se debe, en gran parte, al desarrollo tecnológico y al efecto de los fenómenos de globalización.

Igualmente, hay que asumir que en las coordenadas contemporáneas la noción de espacio también se ha transformado. El espacio -como categoría abstracta- se materializó al explicarlo a través de contenidos como la tierra, el agua, las estructuras y, a su vez, mantuvo su noción de abstracción en el contexto del tiempo. Sin embargo, hoy día, con el desarrollo de tecnologías que nos permiten viajar aceleradamente mucho más que en cualquier otro momento, las viejas nociones de linealidad -movimiento organizado hacia la progresión- colapsan en un mundo donde lo real es, tal vez, el elemento central de cuestionamiento. Por tanto, las categorías que tuvieron una definición singularizada implodían en multiplicidad: lo real e hiper-real, lo público y lo privado, el tiempo y el espacio, entre otras. Realmente, asistimos hoy día a la comprensión de fenómenos que, de igual forma, nos permiten desplazarnos sin desplazarnos, es decir, ampliar el sentido del viaje a la vez que comprimen sus significados porque se tornan prácticamente indistinguibles como unicidad. Así, hablar de espacio público supone localizar esta categoría dentro de las actuales transformaciones en la comprensión de espacio-tiempo en la contemporaneidad. Entonces, ¿de qué hablamos, de lo público o de lo privado? ¿Existen aún estas categorías? ¿Puede hablarse de la división entre tiempo de trabajo y tiempo de ocio? ¿Podemos establecer que ocio y negocio son elementos claramente distinguibles?

Lo antes señalado impacta directamente las relaciones que se producen en el tejido social cuando hablamos de ocio y espacio colectivo. Tradicionalmente se ha pensado, y así se constituyeron

los espacios públicos, que los mismos habrían de ser para el disfrute de la población en general, y que eran propiedad de ésta y responsabilidad administrativa y planificadora del Estado. En ese sentido, la idea de pertenencia debía corresponder a las personas y el elemento de cuidado y gestión de los espacios públicos debía promover este sentimiento de orgullo y protección. Esta fue una de las premisas en la organización del Estado Benefactor.

En las actuales coordenadas, donde se marca progresivamente la desaparición del Estado Benefactor y la constitución de un modo globalizado de producción en intercambio de mercancías, las formas en que se concibe el trabajo, el ocio, las relaciones sociales y la vivienda se tornan en elementos complejos, que no obedecen a las tradicionales reglas del progreso y la estabilidad modernas. Asistimos a una creciente privatización de la vida, tanto en los ámbitos económicos, arquitectónicos y científicos, en general, como cotidianos, en particular. Si planteamos al inicio las rupturas de las polaridades, no se trata por ello de encaminar el trabajo para dirimir lo positivo o lo negativo de esta nueva fase del desarrollo capitalista actual. De lo que tendría que hablarse es de los modos en que estas nuevas formas construyen elementos diferentes de representación de lo que seguimos llamando espacio público.

Las nuevas tecnologías y, muy especialmente, su conformación del espacio cibernético, han abierto una grieta en la noción de identidad tanto personal como social. Estas nuevas tecnologías nos permiten asumir múltiples identidades, por ejemplo, el avatar, y así señalarnos de manera permanente la pregunta sobre las identidades, pero, también, sobre la localización. Por tanto, permiten una diversificación de la experimentación sensorial que no está atada a la experiencia física inmediata o a la posesión de algo. De esta forma, se plantea para los científicos, para los artistas y, en nuestro caso, para los arquitectos, la interrogante sobre cómo establecer relaciones entre diseño, uso, disfrute, mantenimiento y conservación de espacios a los que no les asisten características bivalentes. ¿Dónde localizamos, entonces, la singularidad del objeto? ¿En su diseño, en su uso, en su dueño, en sus usuarios, en su localización? Sin duda, habría que reflexionar sobre esta interrogante desde la negativa a la sumatoria y el acercamiento hacia la multiplicidad de elementos signícos y simbólicos que se articulan de manera compleja en la dimensión visual del espacio.

Es por esto que ya no hablamos más solo de lo real y lo irreal, hablamos hoy, también, de aquello

\* Disertación presentada durante la *Serie de Mesas Redondas* en ArqPoli, 2007  
Paper presented during the *Roundtable Series* at ArqPoli, 2007

que es “más real que lo real” o, en este caso, de la privatización de lo público y de la privatización de lo privado. Aparentes contradicciones que ya no son tales.

Esta reflexión toma un giro interesante cuando examinamos la repetición diferenciada privado-privado, pero podría, además, situarse en la dicotomía público-privado, en el referente específico de la vivienda. El espacio público de la modernidad vino de la mano del espacio privado. Sin embargo, actualmente ambas lógicas se han visto desdibujadas y asistimos a una nueva creación que se compone, más que de esos ambiciosos planes unitarios, de pequeños fragmentos. Si el final del siglo XX se ha caracterizado por preferir el simulacro a la realidad, entonces basta con unir pedazos de algo para dar la apariencia de lo que se desea. Pero más importante aún es que, en nuestros tiempos, la simulación destila a la realidad de todo lo indeseado presentándola así como una realidad alternativa límpida y pura. Como muestra de ello, encontramos las comunidades planificadas de fin del siglo pasado que ejemplifican este fenómeno cuando se entienden como una simulación de lo ‘social’.

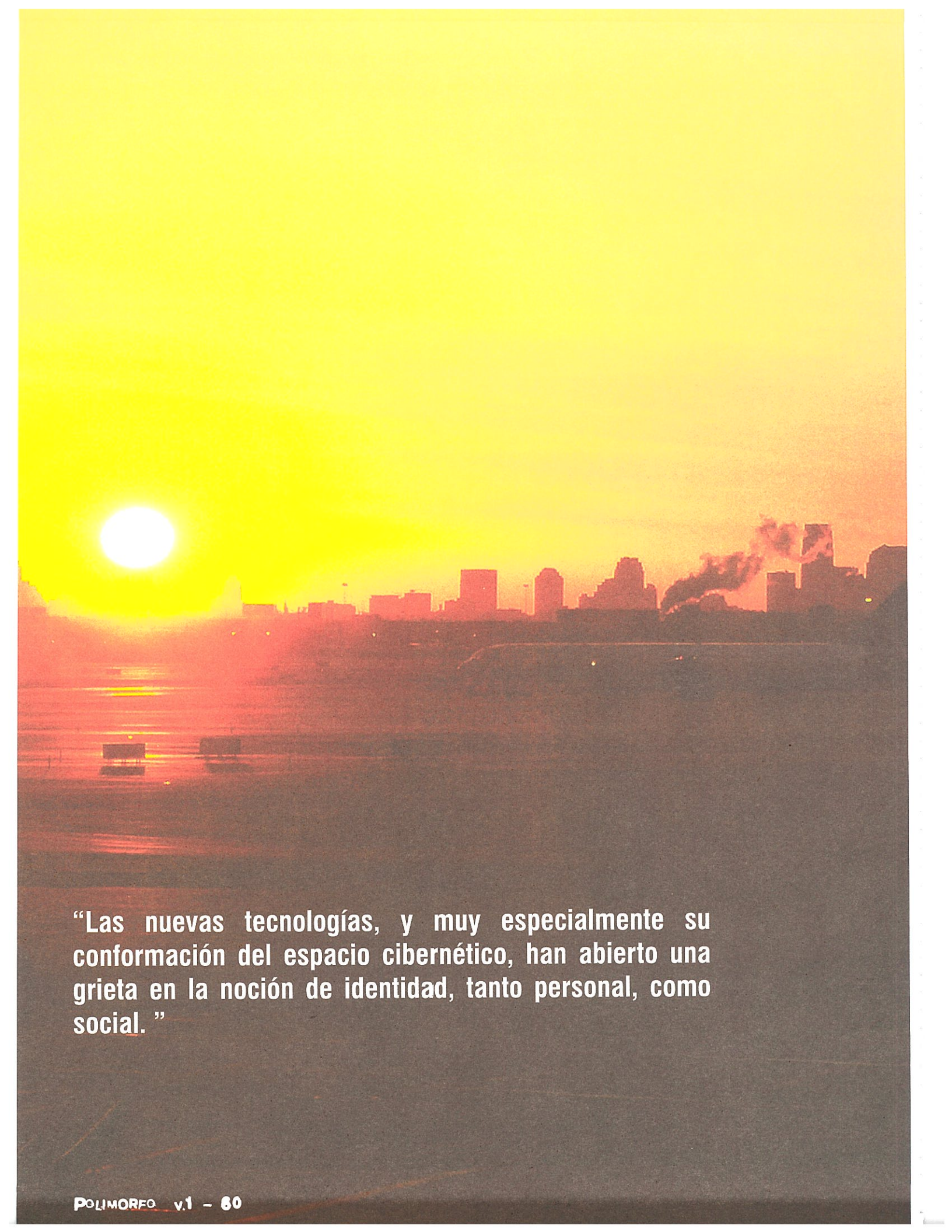
Imaginemos un lugar en el que nada es público, casi todo ha sido privatizado. Es el Estado, reconociendo sus limitaciones y evidenciando su crisis, el que ha accedido y contribuido a ser suplantado por la gestión privada. Algo así como ese mundo que se representaba en *Demolition Man*. Un lugar aséptico en el que la diversidad, considerada como innecesaria, es desterrada con el propósito de construir un paraíso ideal. *Taco Bell* ha ganado la “Guerra de las franquicias” por lo que todos los

restaurantes son iguales. El lenguaje ha sido alterado y las palabras no significan lo que hasta entonces. El alcohol, el cigarrillo, la cafeína, la carne y hasta las palabras imprudentes han sido prohibidos. Así también, se controlan el sexo y los besos, el aborto o el embarazo, sin permiso del Estado. No hay espacio público, porque no hay intercambio que lo sustente. Imaginemos un lugar, público en apariencia, en el que los derechos y las libertades se ceden voluntariamente, a cambio de una supuesta protección contra lo indeseado y en que ya no se pueden llevar a cabo muchas de las acciones asociadas al espacio público. Algo así como la comunidad presentada en *The Truman Show*. Protegido de las contrariedades del espacio real, Truman Burbank vive en un mundo igual al real, pero en el, que según Christo, su creador, no hay nada que temer. Espacio público y espacio privado se entretujan de tal forma que se tornan indistinguibles hasta que el primero desaparece. Por tanto, lo público se privatiza mientras que lo privado aparenta hacerse público.

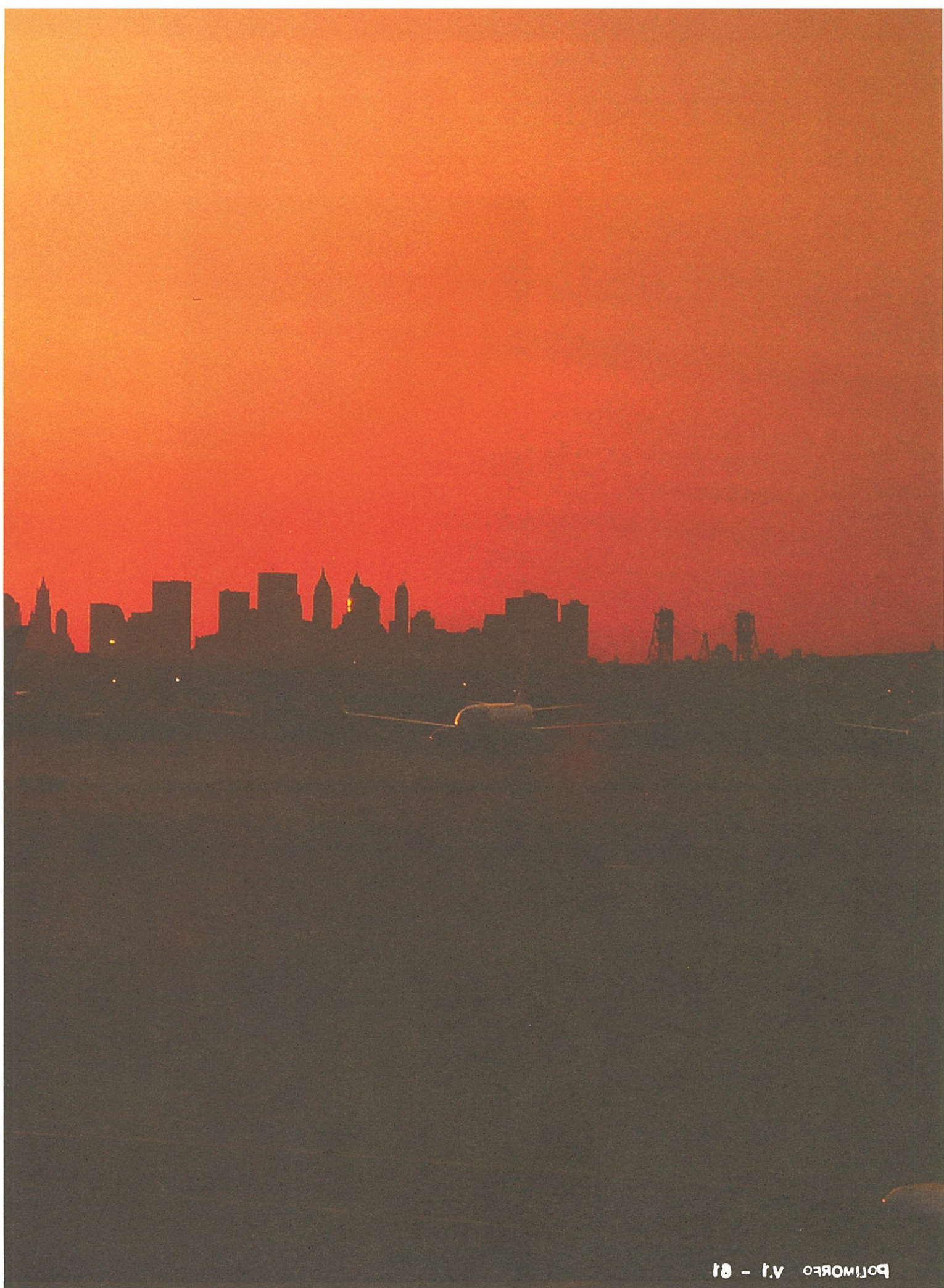
Ficción y realidad que otra vez se unen, puesto que 1/10 parte de la población estadounidense, 40 millones de personas o el equivalente a toda la población de España, han escogido vivir en estos lugares en los que la norma se rige a través de la privatización del espacio y la organización no solo del lugar, sino de la vida misma, de la cotidianidad. Desde luego que hay una relación entre los modos de configurar el habitar y las formas de organización de la conciencia. Vivir en este espacio también supone interiorizar la idea de lo privado y dismantelar, progresivamente, el espacio de intercambio social. Imaginemos ahora qué va a pasar si este modelo,

Parque en Baldwin Park,  
Orlando, Florida  
Park in Baldwin Park,  
Orlando, Florida





**“Las nuevas tecnologías, y muy especialmente su conformación del espacio cibernético, han abierto una grieta en la noción de identidad, tanto personal, como social.”**

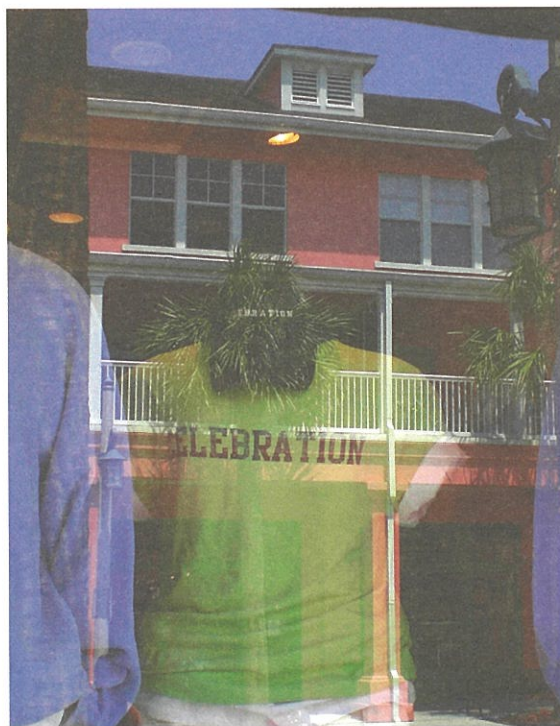


convertido en mercancía, se puede comprar y vender. Poco hay que imaginar puesto que 10 millones de europeos se han suscrito a este modelo. Para que lo privado-privado pueda sostenerse como un opuesto binario, es necesario crear un estilo de vida hiper-real que lo apoye. Entonces, esta forma de planificar el espacio asume la segmentación de lo que, en otro momento, supuso el encuentro multigrupal de los actores sociales. El espacio colectivo se trastoca, a la vez que se altera la noción de lo colectivo.

Hoy día, el espacio, aún no siendo el de la comunidad planificada, se segmenta progresivamente en la medida en que se diferencian los accesos al mismo. Si bien es cierto que las nuevas tecnologías y la necesidad de amplia circulación de mercancías han liberalizado el consumo y el ocio, siendo este un proceso que tiende a la homogeneización, los datos apuntan a que tanto en el uso de la tecnología, como en los espacios que habitan los usuarios de ésta, la llamada brecha digital es también una brecha vivencial y social. El espacio se recluye en sí mismo, se abre pero también se cierra.

En esta reflexión, la intención es más que nada presentartendencias. Aunque dentro de éstas se reconoce que existe una gran diversidad de acercamientos como, por ejemplo, los esfuerzos dirigidos a la conservación y reapropiación del espacio público. Pero, a su vez, se hace necesario reconocer que lo público está atravesado por lo privado en parte porque lo posee, lo alquila, y hasta lo cede para uso público. O bien, porque lo administra,

lo evalúa o participa en su gestión económica. Este es, pues, un debate complejo y se hace necesario, siguiendo las nuevas circunstancias de los tiempos, negociar -reconfigurar- una nueva manera de construir, de experimentar, de vivir el espacio que ya es público-privado. |||||



Vitrina en Celebration,  
Orlando, Florida  
Storefront in Celebration,  
Orlando, Florida

## Leisure and Business: The New Geographies of Public Space

Within the shifting frame that outlines the different geographies of what is public, space has been a key element in the restructuring of historical contemporary context. The localization of people, the ways of producing, the forms of communication and communicating, denote important changes not only in everyday dynamics and modes of inhabiting, but also in the ways of producing and consuming. The divisions that have delimited and defined the correspondence with objects have vanished; they assume another nature and modify. Therefore, the first thing we must confront is whether we can still talk about the public and the private – when considering space – as separate categories, or if we are witnessing in our time the rupture of these polarities; that are caused mainly by technological development and the effect of the globalization phenomena.

In the same manner, we have to assume that in our contemporary coordinates the notion of space has also been transformed. Space – as an abstract

category – materialized when it was explained through context like earth, water, structures, while at the same time keeping its notion of abstraction in the context of time. Yet, at this moment, with the development of a technology that allows us to travel more speedily than in any other time, the old notions of linearity – organized movement towards progression – collapse in a world where what is real is probably the core element in question. Therefore, the categories that had a singular definition implode in multiplicity: what is real and what is hyper-real, the public and the private, time and space, among others. We really are witnessing today the compression of phenomena that lets us move without moving simultaneously, widening the sense of traveling as its meanings are comprised because they turn practically indistinguishable as a unity. So, to talk about public space supposes locating this category within the actual transformation in the compression of space-time in its contemporaneity. Then, what do we speak of, the public or the private? Do these categories still exist? Could we talk about the division between time to work and time for leisure? Could we establish that leisure

and business are clearly distinguishable elements?

What has been pointed out before directly impacts the relationships produced in the social web when we talk about leisure and collective space. It has been traditionally thought, and thus public spaces were constituted, that they would be for the enjoyment of the population in general, being owned by them, with the administrative and planning responsibility falling on the State. In this sense, the idea of belonging should correspond to the people and the element of caring for and using them should promote a feeling of pride and protection. This was one of the premises in the organization of the Benefactor State.

In the actual coordinates where the disappearance of the Benefactor State and the establishment of a globalized mode of production in the exchange of commodities are progressively marked, the ways in which work, leisure, social relationships and housing are conceived turn into complex elements that do not obey the traditional rules of modern progress and stability. We are witnessing a growing privatization of life in the economic, architectonic and scientific confines in



# Apuntes polimorfos sobre China

por Juan C. Rivera

Estas notas surgen luego de participar en el viaje del curso "Apuntes de Planificación en China" - dirigido por la Profesora Norma I. Peña, de la Escuela Graduada de Planificación, de la Universidad de Puerto Rico - al gran territorio asiático, con la intención de ser testigos y comenzar a explorar la transformación urbana más profunda de nuestros tiempos. Pretender conocer al país más poblado del mundo en una vida es osado; en poco menos de un mes, una burla. Es por eso que los comentarios que siguen son eso y nada más, parpadeos, bocetos de ideas e imágenes que invitan a mirar desde distintos ángulos.

**R**espírar junto a cientos de millones de seres humanos en un mismo territorio conmueve. La multitud, tan temida por tantos, no es mera pesadilla Maltusiana sino una proeza cotidiana e imposible de descifrar. Por más estudios demográficos y sociológicos que se hagan para explicar el complejo universo chino, habrá dinámicas que se escabullirán entre medio de las sombras, huellas y murallas que se desvanecen en el aire.

## Colosos urbanos

A los que pregonan que vivimos en la era "postindustrial" se los tragará el silencio cuando pisen la China neoliberal. La revolución industrial más grande de la historia se materializa hoy en la casa de la pólvora y el siquitruque. Así de explosivo es el ritmo en las ciudades del territorio más poblado del mundo. La rapidez de la transformación temporal-espacial de China es violenta. Millones de campesinos son desplazados del campo a la ciudad, siendo parte de un mismo proceso de urbanización y proletarianización de escalas monumentales. Así, los protagonistas de la historiográfica marxista se reproducen en las fábricas-ciudades de la China contemporánea, y no en las fincas colectivizadas del campesinado maoísta de ayer. La urbanización del mundo, tal como la predijo Henri Lefebvre, pasa por la revolución urbano-industrial China.

Luego de ver los impresionantes montajes de películas como *Hero*, obra maestra del nuevo cine imperial, ver la versión futurista en el firmamento de Shanghai y Beijing sobrecoge. La monumentalidad del teatro del poder urge a un respiro silencioso con los ojos cerrados. Respiro profundo. Una imagen viene a la mente: el horizonte urbano, un mar de sombras en forma de mantis religiosas comiéndose a su pareja, la mitad de las grúas de construcción del mundo en pleno éxtasis de destrucción creativa devorando a los "hutons," barrios en donde vivieron y caminaron contemporáneos de Matusalén. Proyectos como *Paseo Caribe* son "tigres de papel" comparados con las mega-regiones construidas sobre las ruinas de bosques y montañas, y los escombros frescos de miles de barrios y edificios históricos.

Sombras grises cosquillean los edificios

de Shanghai. La contaminación es aroma y miopía constante, tan presente que, en momentos, se olvida. Es como si fuera parte de su espacio construido. En China se construyen las ciudades visibles que arquitectos, ingenieros y urbanistas europeos y estadounidenses imaginan, no a semejanza de la memoria del Kublai Kahn y Marco Polo - según Italo Calvino- sino del mercado bajo la tutela del Partido Comunista Chino, y viceversa. Los edificios en construcción están arropados de andamios de bambú, de donde cuelgan miles de trabajadores, ex-campesinos metamorfoseados en proletarios chinos, sin librito rojo.

Si ayer los profetas del librito rojo en los campos y capitales del mundo eran símbolos del revolucionario indómito, hoy los empresarios encarranan el paradigma del hombre nuevo. La ideología del hombre "exitoso" - y su contraparte, el "loser" - llegó para quedarse y hacer estragos. La nueva propaganda se llama publicidad, igual que en Occidente. Y en vez de estar poblada de jóvenes en fatigas mirando al sol con la estrella roja en la frente, las figuras visten de corbata y cargan con maletines ejecutivos. Se ha dicho que los empresarios son la nueva fuerza de producción, la "vanguardia gloriosa" del futuro, que está aquí y es ahora. El mantra: "ser rico es glorioso", acuñado por el sucesor de Mao, y verdugo de la Plaza Tiananmen, Deng Xiaoping, se asume como oráculo infalible.

## Noche, cuerpos y lo público

Nuevas leyes se implantan para maquillar la imagen de China (y los chinos) frente al mundo de cara a las Olimpiadas en Beijing: no se permite escupir en la calle, tampoco salir en pijamas, se multará a los que no hagan fila y fumar en muchos lugares estará prohibido. Una nueva experiencia del espacio público y los hábitos de los cuerpos ciudadanos para la insipiente esfera pública china siguiendo los cánones metro-burgueses de la elite transnacional.

*Construyo memoria: antes de entrar en la calle que daba al hotel decidí mirar a la 'barbería'. Tres jóvenes chinas vestidas como bailarinas en un video de reggaetón me pedían que entrara. Cuando notaron que no iba, perdieron todo interés y volvieron*





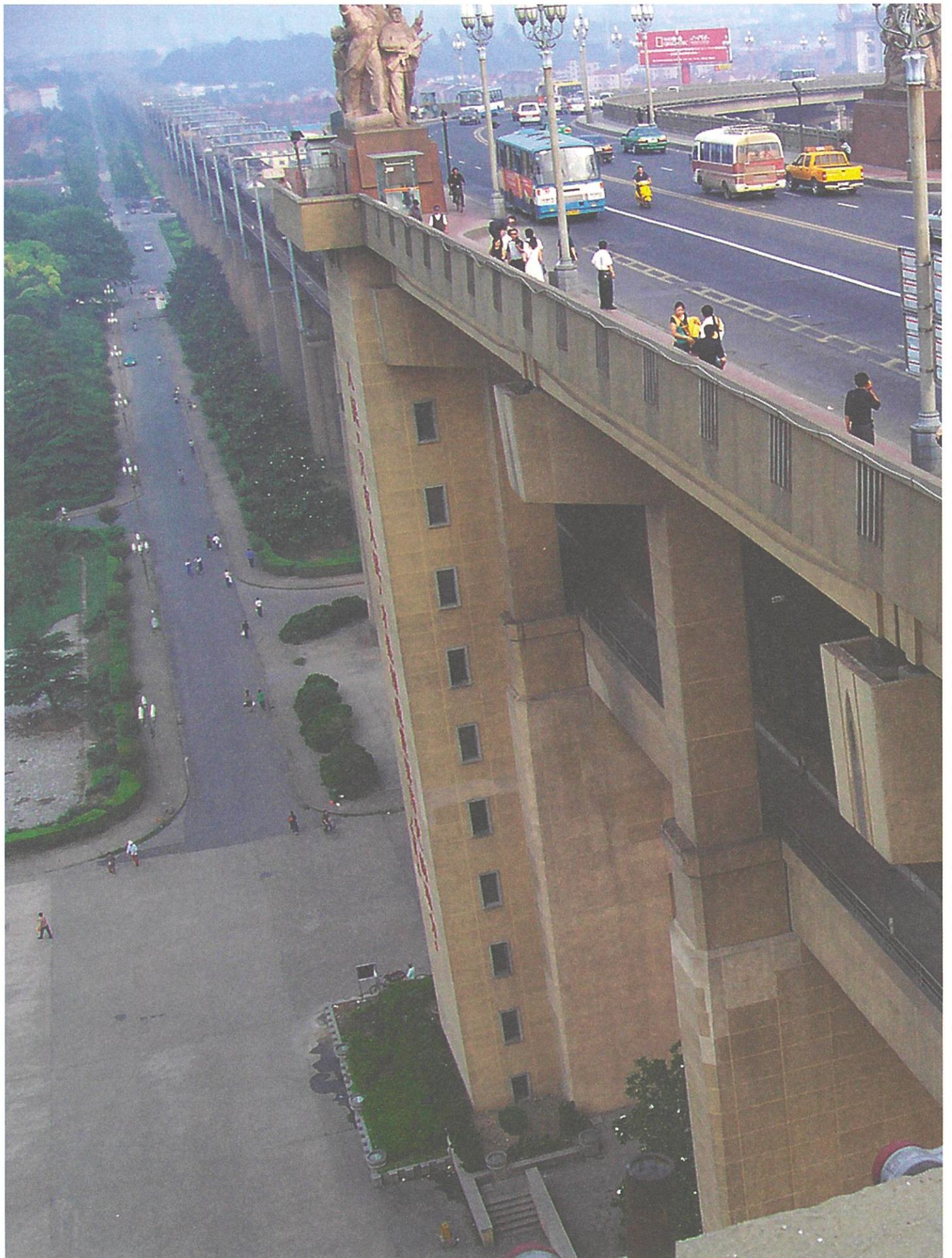
a sentarse frente al televisor. Volvía a mirar cada vez que llegaba. Allí estaban, día y noche. El tradicional espacio masculino en los barrios urbanos de Occidente como prostíbulo. Así vi varias barberías: televisor prendido hipnotizando a las jóvenes mientras esperan la entrada de los clientes del sexo. Cuando llegué a Puerto Rico y me enteré de que la nueva Viagra en la calle se llama Shanghai, la imagen de las peculiares barberías irrumpió en mi mente como un relámpago.

Para un visitante neófito la libertad que se percibe en las calles no evoca al espectro de la Plaza Tiananmen. De noche, miles de personas, muchas de ellas ancianas, se tiran a las anchas aceras a bailar ritmos tradicionales, modernos e internacionales, solos y en pareja. Temprano en la mañana, los parques se llenan de practicantes de Tai Chi, mientras cientos de vendedores ambulantes anuncian imitaciones de las marcas más caras del mundo.

La economía simbólica devora cada sombra de la noche en las calles-paseos principales de Shanghai. Cuando caminábamos por Nanjing Road, donde el neón predica a gritos la victoria del consumo voraz, lo hacíamos junto a miles de compradores, curiosos, turistas, visitantes y vendedores callejeros, en su mayoría chinos y asiáticos. Una imagen gigante de la botella de Coca Cola prendiendo y apagando suavemente ocupaba el espacio de una de las intersecciones principales en esta avenida mucho más grande que el famoso Times Square de Nueva York.

Nos llamó la atención ver en los restaurantes y otros espacios 'formales' cómo los niños corrían, reían, jugaban, gritaban con una impunidad que daba gusto y preocupaba a la misma vez. Dueños y señores de la familia, los unigénitos crecen en la era del capitalismo voraz.







*La guerra es eterna. Así pareciera si nos dejamos llevar por la historia de la humanidad y por la televisión China. Todas las veces que prendíamos el televisor en el cuarto del hotel en, por lo menos, dos canales, daban telenovelas sobre la guerra del ejército rojo contra los nacionalistas de Chiang Kai Check. En otros canales podían verse las famosas óperas chinas con sus maquillajes y las voces chillonas de sus grandes intérpretes. Pero de todos los programas, el que más nos divirtió fue el de un buda flaco y borrachón que se vacilaba la vida haciendo travesura: mientras daba lecciones de humanidad a los que se lo merecían.*

### La autopista del este, luces y sombras

Mientras más nos adentrábamos en el campo, más eran las imágenes de Mao y la parafernalia roja en los mercados. El kitsch revolucionario es manjar para los consumidores occidentales. En las mesas de muchos mercados ambulantes, las figuras de Mao acompañan a Buda, junto a dragones y otros personajes de la mitología-historia asiática.

*Miles de camiones en fila india sin moverse. Allí, en medio de ellos, nosotros, un grupo de dieciséis boricuas y dos chinos, el chofer y nuestra acompañante/ intérprete. El tapón era una estática caravana de hormigas vista desde un árbol. ¿Qué mejor momento para conocer en carne propia una parte de las dinámicas del transporte y la economía en la China contemporánea? Todos los camiones llevaban carbón, excepto uno. Nos llamó la atención. Se movía entre los grandes. Uno de los profesores fue el primero en verlo. Un mini-camión donde había enanos y niños, carpas enrolladas en los costados, además de otras curiosidades que no recuerdo. El ambiente gris de los camiones de carbón en una carretera rural rodeada de montañas de piedra y un cielo nublado, tiraba una guiñada con la presencia de este circo rodante. El buda borrachón y vacilador entre medio de programas de guerra en la televisión me vino a la mente. Una grieta de risa en el muro del tedio. Bien lo dice Leonard Cohen, es en las grietas por donde entra la luz.*

En China se (des)dibuja el futuro. Aprender de sus increíbles logros y dificultades, de su historia, de sus errores y horrores y de su sabiduría, exige salir del ombliguismo ensordecedor que nos hace mirar lo distinto por encima del hombro. Si, según Levinas, el primer mandato ético se lee en el rostro del otro, la sociedad con más rostros en el mundo exige atención. La competencia por la mercantilización de todo pasa por la fábrica del mundo. Reflexionar sobre ello no es opción. |||||







## Polymorph Notes on China

These notes were written after participating in a trip for the class "Planning Issues in China" – conducted by Professor Norma I. Peña of the Graduate School of Planning at the University of Puerto Rico - to this great Asian country with the intention of being witnesses and start exploring the most profound urban transformation of our times. To try to get to know the most populated country in the world is a daring act, in less than a month, it's a joke. For this reason, the comments that follow are only that and nothing else, winks, drafts of ideas and images that invite to look from different angles.

To breathe in unison with one hundred million human beings in the same territory is moving. The crowd, so feared by so many, is not a simple Malthusian nightmare, but a daily heroic deed impossible to figure out. No matter how many demographic and sociological studies are made to explain the complex Chinese universe, there will always be dynamics that will slip away among the shadows, marks and walls that vanish in the air.

### Urban Colossus

Those who proclaim that we live in "postindustrial" times get swallowed by silence when they set a foot on neoliberal China. The largest industrial revolution in history is materialized today in the land of gunpowder and firecrackers. That's how explosive is the rhythm of the cities in the most populated territory in the world. The speed of China's temporal-spatial transformation is violent. Millions of farmers are displaced from the country to the city, as part of a process of urbanization and proletarianization of a monumental scale. Thus, the protagonists of Marxist historiography reproduce in the factory-cities of contemporary China and not in the collective farms of the Maoist farming population of yesteryear. The urbanization of the world as predicted by Henri Lefebvre passes through the Chinese urban-industrial revolution.

After watching the impressive montage of movie like *Hero*, the masterpiece of the new imperial cinema, seeing the futuristic version in the firmament of Shanghai and Beijing is overpowering. The monumentality of the theater of power forces one to breathe



silently with eyes closed. A deep breath. An image comes to mind: The urban horizon, a sea of shadows in the form of praying mantises eating their partners, half the construction cranes of the world in pure ecstasy of creative destruction devouring the "hutons", the quarters where Mathusalem's contemporaries lived and walked. Projects like *Paseo Caribe* are "paper tigers" compared to the mega-regions constructed on the ruins of forests and mountains and on the fresh debris of thousands of historical quarters and buildings.

Gray shadows tickle Shanghai's buildings. Contamination is a fragrance and constant myopia so present that, at moments, it is forgotten. It seems part of a built space. In China the visible cities that European and American architects, engineers and developers imagine get built, not to the image of the memory of Kublai Kahn and Marco Polo – according to Italo Calvino – but of the market under the tutelage of the Chinese Communist Party and viceversa. The buildings in construction are wrapped in bamboo scaffolds, of which thousands of workers hang, ex-farmers metamorphed into Chinese proletarians, without the red book.

If yesterday the prophets of the red book were symbols of the indomitable revolutionary in the fields and capitals of the world, today the businessmen embody the paradigm of the new man. The ideology of the "successful" man - and its counterpart the "loser" - came to stay, and cause havoc. The new propaganda is called publicity, as in the West. And instead of being populated by youths in military uniform looking at the sun with a red star on the forehead, its figures wear ties and carry executive briefcases. It has been said that businessmen and the new production force, are the "glorious vanguard" of the future, which is here and now. The mantra: "to be rich is glorious", coined by Mao's successor, and executioner of Tiananmen Square, Den Xiaoping, is assumed as an infallible oracle.

### Night, bodies and what is public

New laws have been introduced to make over China's image (and of the Chinese) to the world in face of the Olympic Games in Beijing: it is not allowed to spit on the street, nor go out wearing pajamas, those who do not stand in line will be fined and smoking will be banned in many places.

It is a new experience of public space and the habits of citizen bodies for the insipient Chinese public sphere following the metro bourgeoisie canons of the transnational elite.

*Constructing a memory: On my way to the street facing the hotel I decided to look inside the "barber shop." Three young women dressed like dancers in a reggaeton video asked me to come in. When they noticed I would not go in, they lost all interest and went back to sitting in front of the television. I would look inside whenever I went by. There they were, day and night. The traditional masculine space in the occidental urban quarters transformed into whorehouses. Thus I saw many barber shops: television turned on hypnotizing the young women that waited for the sex clients to enter. When I returned to Puerto Rico and found out that the new Viagra in the street was called Shangai, the image of those peculiar barbershops erupted like lightning on my mind.*

To a neophyte visitor the liberty perceived in the streets does not evoke the specter of Tiananmen Square. At night, thousands of people, many of them old, swoop unto the wide sidewalks to dance traditional, modern and international rhythms, alone or with a partner. Early in the morning the parks fill with Tai Chi practitioners, while hundreds of street vendors announce imitations of the most expensive brands in the world.

The symbolic economy devours each shadow of the night on the main street-boardwalks of Shanghai. When we walked on Nanjing Road, where neon preaches the victory of voracious consumerism loudly, we did it next to thousands of buyers, voyeurs, tourists, visitors, and street vendors, mostly Chinese and Asian. A giant image of a Coke bottle turning on and off softly occupied the space of one of the main intersections in this avenue larger than the famous Times Square in New York.

It called our attention to see in restaurants and other "formal" spaces how the children ran around, laughed, played and screamed with an impurity that pleased and worried at the same time. Owners and family lords, like an only child, grow in the era of voracious consumption.

*War is forever. So it seems if we follow the history of humanity and Chinese television. Each time we turned on the television in the hotel rooms, at least two channels would show soap operas about the red army's war with Chang Kai Check's*

*nationalists. In other channels we could see the famous Chinese operas with the make up and squeaky voices of its great interpreters. But of all the shows, the one we enjoyed the most was about a skinny and drunken Buddha that would make fun of life playing tricks and giving humanity lessons to those who deserved it.*

### The Eastern Highway, Lights and Shadows

The more we went into the country, the more images of Mao and red paraphernalia we saw in the markets. The revolutionary kitsch is a delicacy to occidental consumers. In many street markets Mao figures accompany Buddha, next to dragons and other characters of Asian mythological history.

*Thousands of trucks in line without moving. There, in the middle, were we, a group of sixteen boricuas and two Chinese, the driver and our interpreter/companion. The traffic jam was a static caravan of ants seen from a tree. What better moment to get to know in our own flesh part of the transportation dynamics and contemporary Chinese economy? All the trucks carried coal, except one. This called our attention. It moved among the bigger ones. One of the professors was the first one to see it. A mini truck with midgets and children, tarps rolled on the sides, and other curiosities I can't remember. The gray atmosphere of coal in a rural road surrounded by stone mountains and a clouded sky winked at us with the presence of this traveling circus. The drunken and prankster Buddha between the war shows on television came to mind. A laughing crack in the wall of boredom. As Leonard Cohen said wisely, it is through the cracks that light comes in.*

In China the future is (un)sketched. To learn the incredible achievements and difficulties of its history, its errors and horrors and its wisdom, demands that we come out of our deafening navel fixation that makes us look at anyone who is different over our shoulders. If, according to Levinas, the first ethical commandment is written on the other's face, the society with most faces in the world demands attention. The competition for the co-modification of everything passes through the world's factory. To reflect on this is not an option.

# QUEUE 02: ¡ULTRA-THICK! . . . Super Sweet

por Fabián Silvano Morales

**A**l sonido de la espada sucedía el gesto / ¡Sucio! ¡Molesto! ¡Funesto!  
/ Combatían 2 arquetipos / Ignoraban tiempo y espacios / Uno caballero medieval, otro samurai

Con agresividad y coraje parecían, cualquiera diría, decidir el destino y la humanidad / ¡Pero no! / Simples caprichos de forma / Y habian desembocado en luchas / ¡a punto de ebullición! / No hay pólvora o computadora ¡el cuerpo está presente! / Efervescente ¡a quemarropa!

¡Entonces aceleraron! / Carnívoro y Herbívoro / Y pasos antes del encuentro ¡alzaron vuelo!  
El tiempo se hizo paralítico / suspendidos / Las energías se agotaban / se acercaron...

- ¡AAAAHHHHHHH! -  
- ¡EEEEHhhhhiiiiiii! -

Vibraron los aceros / Sucedió el gesto / ¡Sucio!  
¡Grotesco! ¡Funesto! / Y el occidental contestó al debate / Citaba las sagradas escrituras

- Y ME MOSTRÓ LA GRAN CIUDAD SANTA DE JERUSALÉN,  
QUE DESCENDÍA DEL CIELO, DE DIOS, TENIENDO LA GLORIA DE DIOS.  
Y SU FULGOR ERA SEMEJANTE AL DE UNA PIEDRA PRECIOSÍSIMA,  
COMO PIEDRA DE JASPE, DIÁFANA COMO EL CRISTAL -

- ¡FALSAS MITOLOGÍAS BÍBLICAS! -  
respondió el oriental, usó voz lenta y violenta... suspendida en el espacio

El pequeño guerrero confundía las palabras / Saliva ultra-salada / Rojas turbujas escapan entre premolares / Tiñen la máscara de tela que su rostro cubría / Una desenfadada voluntad y decadencia moral le mantendrían ávido / Al contacto del suelo, el señor inglés culminó el pasaje

- LA CIUDAD SE HALLA ESTABLECIDA EN CUADRO,  
Y SU LONGITUD ES IGUAL A SU ANCHURA;  
LA LONGITUD , LA ALTURA Y LA ANCHURA DE ELLA SON IGUALES -

-HJUM . . . TU INTERPRETACIÓN DEL TEXTO Y agitación de ESPADA SON , PARA MÍ: ¡enredado COLLAGE! – el samurai ya hartado / Embrocado, emborrachado / Parece aturrido / ¿El panorama? Se ve abovedado...¡no, no, no! / ¡Ahuevado!

A saltos malabarezcos casi tocan cielo y universo / Una vez en tierra firme, confirmaban sus respectivas posturas / No era momento pa' reincorporarse...¡no hay tiempo para ello!

- ¡¡¡SSCHIIIIIIINNNN!!! – ¡sable japonés!  
- ¡¡¡SSSSCHIIIIIIINNNNNNNN!!! – espada occidental

Esta vez dialogan las espadas / Ambos en tensión / contemplan la piel del otro... / segunda piel / La lucha se enciende / Media un suculento mundo Bisolar Bi-sexual Bi-polar / La carne es Fina y Dura... / ¡Dura Húmeda y Madura! / Recordaban una erótica receta que el amante aplicaba semanas atrás... antes del combate

*{Es conveniente , si se usa una loción aromática, sustituir parte de ésta por aceite, que es lo que da a la piel su sabor característico. Si el día es caluroso, pues la piel humedece más ligero; si el día es frío y se desea que la piel humedezca ligero, se coloca la escudilla con la loción sobre una vasija con agua caliente . No obstante, la piel tarda casi 24 horas en su preparación}*

- TU CIUDAD...– susurró el oriental...  
- ¿NO EXISTE? -  
- ...¡NO ES REAL! -...al oído del occidental

Barajan vocablo precario / Gestos refinados / sonidos afilados / El cuerpo tensado / 'tensionado'

- JA, JA...¿ES QUE NO RECONOCES? ¿'COLEGA'? EL CUADRADO NOS ACOMPAÑA DESDE HACE MUCHO TIEMPO...DESDE EL RENACIMIENTO – replicó el caballero, en inglés

- NO 'NOS' ACOMPAÑA ¡ES TU FALSO SUBCONSCIENTE COLECTIVO! – se impone el samurai

- UNIDAD BÁSICA Y CÉLULA POR EXCELENCIA...NÚCLEO DE PERSPECTIVA VIRTUAL ... ¡UN CUBO PERFECTO! -





Michael Glowacki. (Estados Unidos, 1983).  
*Does God Wear Camouflage?*, 2006.  
 Material encontrado, impresión de tinta de archivo, barniz de polímero, acrílico, óleo. 40x28 pulgadas  
 Michael Glowacki.  
 (American, born 1983).  
*Does God Wear Camouflage?*, 2006.  
 Appropriated material, archival inkjet print, polymer varnish, acrylic, oil paint. 40x28in.

El valle en suspenso / Mudo y tenso / Poco a poco han cambiado los colores / Desde rosados *FINK* primales, hacia infernales rojos / Fogosos amores de otoño

- ¡ADEMÁS! adviene ¡CAMPO MINADO! - advertía en guerrero en lenguaje japonés

- ¿TE REFIERES AL SUBCONSCIENTE, O AL SUELO QUE NOS SOSTIENE? - el Caballero no ha comprendido / Anda perdido entre traducciones / ABC1, ABC2 - ¡MALDICIÓN!

¿Campo minado? / No, no hay explosivos / Sólo pequeñas 'fosas nasales' cubiertas por terreno movedizo / Es que es muy denso y escurridizo / Escenario 'cartunezco' en la fantasía del samurai, pues...

- SON DIMINUTOS HOYOS NEGROS (BLACK HOLES) QUE SUMERGEN HONDO ¡HACIA TU MALDITO ESTRUCTURALISMO OCCIDENTAL! - continuaba vociferándole a la careta del inglés

- ¡AHH! ¡NOG! - el caballero resbaló

Al sonido de la espada ha sucedido el gesto / Sucio ¡Funesto! ¡Monumental! / ¿El señor inglés? / Ha

caído en una de las 'fosas nasales' / ¡*Body Transfer!* / El cuerpo se desliza hacia el orificio... bien pa' dentro

El japonés aprovechó y subrayó - ¡TU POSICIONES SÍNTOMA! ¡ALGUNAS COSAS OLVIDAS! -

El nivel acarició músculos, muslos y caderas / Los hoyos no eran comunes / son acentuados bordes, acantilados filosos (filosóficos) sin margen para advertir

- ¿CÓMO, ENTONCES, EXPLICAR LA ESTÉTICA TOPOLOGICA? ¿AÚN CUANDO GERMINA DEL ESPACIO VIRTUAL DE LA PERSPECTIVA Y SU NÚCLEO EL CUBO? - continúa el oriental, loco de placer

El guerrero occidental contemplaba crisis / Sus colmillos delineados por un rojo ladrillo / ¡Que sabe a sangre! / No fue golpe mortal / La espada se deslizó suavemente por entre dedos y pulgar, falanges y carpianos / Tal cual vaina 'genuine leather' / copularon con el acero / Pero aprietan y se aferran a la salvación

No hay titubeos en un caballero - ¡No es necesario Explicar! Es cuestión de aplicar: ¿entre auto y espacio? Sucede una transferencia formal...

Pero su extraño paralelo (entre cubo-núcleo de espacio

cartesiano, y ciudad virtual tras cuentos bíblicos) se debilitaba / Prueba contundente se desmenuzaba

- es que IGNORAS: EL CUBO, TAL CUAL CÉLULA, connota NEGACIÓN Y AUTODESTRUCCIÓN...APOPTÓSIS -

- ¿APOPTÓSIS? -

- ¡APOPTÓSIS! - es el turno del samurai - PERMÍTEME EXPLICAR... -

- ¡AHHG! ¡MIS DEDOS! -

- PACIENCIA COLEGA...escucha mi voz - Samurai hablaba Sonido-Ultrasonico

- SI...YA LE PERCIBO...ENSORDECEDOR... ¡MALDITO! -

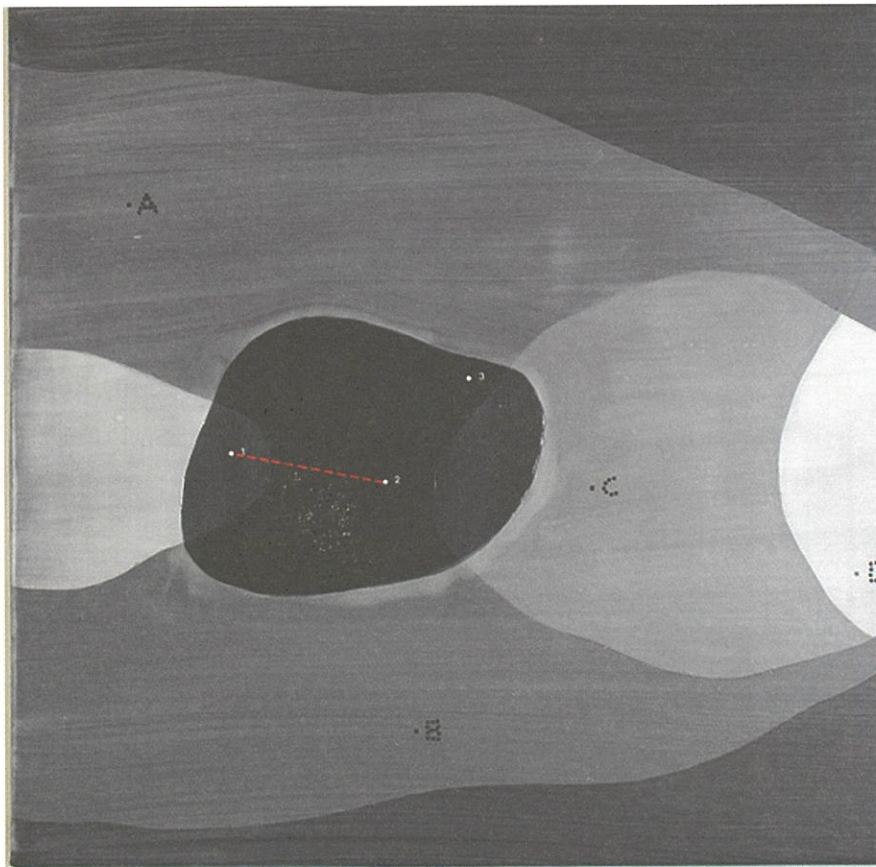
Conciertos de ópera / se congelaban las notas más altas... las más agudas / Ruido obstinado / ¡Super chillón! / Grueso y super Grueso / ¡Fck! / ¡Ultra-Thick!

- APOPTÓSIS ES MUERTE CELULAR PROGRAMADA...ello EXPLICA POR QUÉ TUS DEDOS NO CRECEN CONECTADOS... SIENTEN DOLOR POR SEPARADO... -

- “¡MIS DEDOS! ¡MIS DEDOS! ¡PIERDO MIS ¡DEDOS!” - el pensamiento ha corroído el cerebro del caballero y los sonidos

Lentamente el oriental le trae de vuelta / sobre el suelo...¡al fin! ¡fuera del hoyo negro! / Dolor latente... ojos lagrimosos... cristalinos / Se descubre la estructura ósea de su maro

Pisa terreno aperfumado, paradisíaco / Bizcocho esponjoso bajo crema blanca, helada / Su mano muy ensangrentada / Reacciones retardadas / El metal

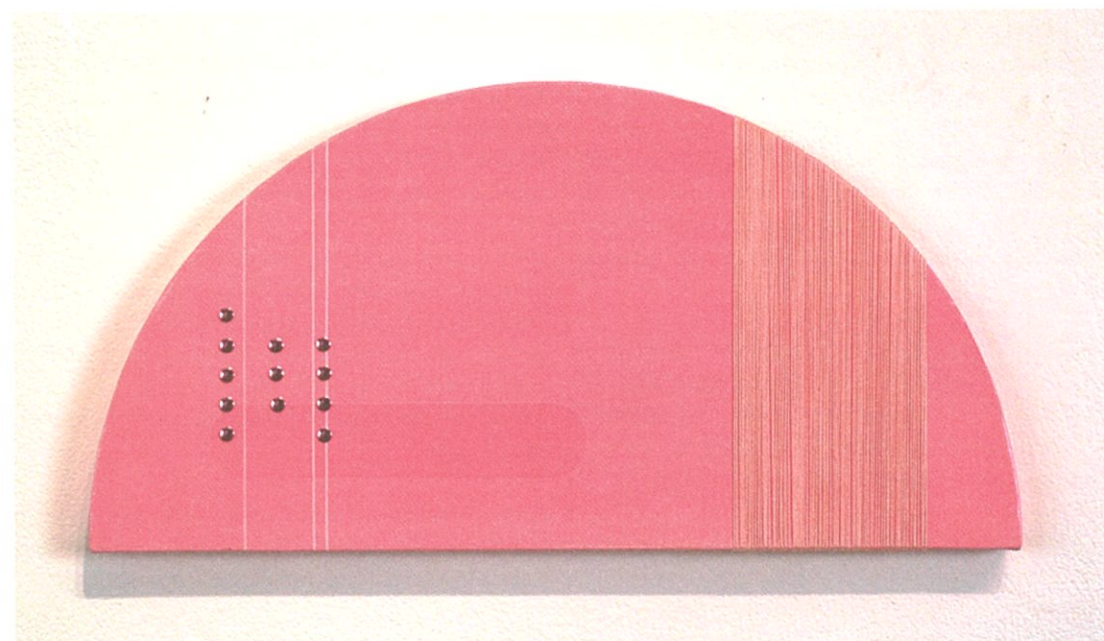


corté los nervios / Ya no siente nada

- APOPTÓSIS, además, EXPLICA por qué no tienes cola ¡PEQUEÑO LAGARTO INGLÉS! -

Un vago balbuceo delata el asombro del occidental - *Dces God Wear Camouflage* (?) - el sable filoso, oponente hambriento...había degustado arterias y nervios digitales de su mano / sintió millones de punzadas

Anna So Young Han.  
(Korea, 1982). ABC 2, 2007.  
Acrílico sobre canvas. 20x16  
pulgadas  
Anna So Young Han. (Korean,  
born 1982). ABC 2, 2007.  
Acrylic Paint on Canvas.  
20x16in.

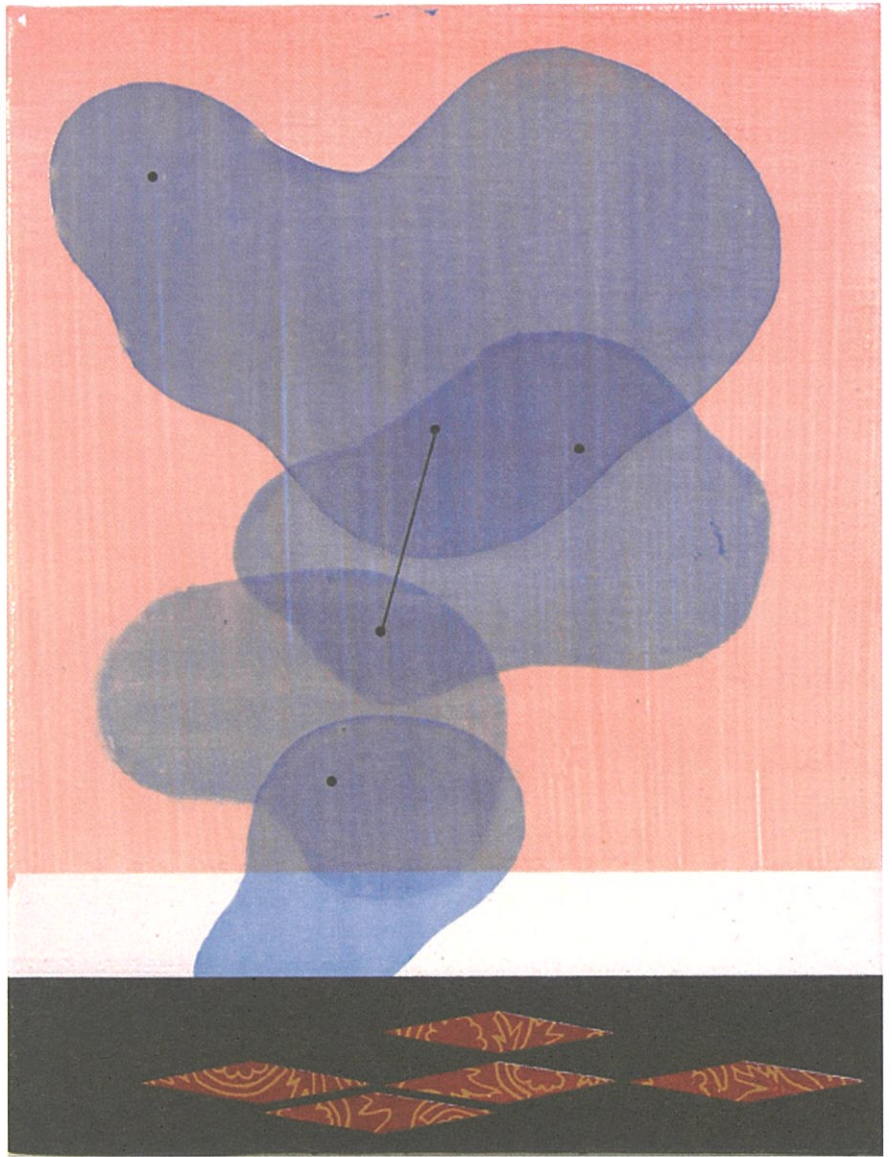


Anna So Young Han. (Korea,  
1982). *Pink*, 2007. Acrílico  
sobre canvas. 16x8 pulgadas  
Anna So Young Han. (Korean,  
born 1982). *Pink*, 2007.  
Acrylic Paint on Canvas.  
16x8in.



Anna So Young Han. (Korea, 1982). Sin título, 2007. Acrílico sobre canvas. 12x9 pulgadas  
 Anna So Young Han. (Korean, born 1982). Untitled, 2007. Acrylic Paint on Canvas. 12x9in.

Próxima página  
 Heryk Tomassini. (Puerto Rico, 1974). Sin título, 2007. Lápiz sobre papel. 8.5x11 pulgadas  
 Next page  
 Heryk Tomassini. (Puerto Rican, born 1974). Untitled, 2007. Graphite on paper. 8.5x11 in.t



- a veces sí ¿ACASO TE ASOMBRA? QUE EL MISMO DEMONIO QUE ATACA Y TE SEDUCE HACIA EL INFIERNO , ¿PROCURÉ TAMBIÉN TU SALVACIÓN? – he aquí daba respuesta el samurai

Caballero(samente)... se ha reincorporado / ¡El inglés no consumirá engaños! / Ahora peleará su mano contraria / La otra siempre fue inútil

Samurai busca posición de combate / ¡vuelve y pregunta! / ¡Ataca!

- TU PERÍODO ES CONFUSO...¡OBTUSO! ¿CÓMO HABLAR DE UN PARADIGMA EN DIMENSIÓN CÚBICA (ciudad JERUSALÉN)? si LA FASCINACIÓN POR TOPOLÓGICAS SILUETAS presuponen (EN LA UNIDAD ARITMÉTICA) ¡SU DESINTEGRACIÓN! -

- ¿POR QUÉ NO LE LLAMAS ... TRANSFIGURACIÓN? – sonrisa al estilo inglés

- MALDITO LENGUAJE SORPRESA . . .

JUEGO EN PALABRAS...PROMISCUIDAD DE LETRAS...¡ESTO NOS LLEVA A NADA!

– con ojos alargados descubrió emboscada...trampa agria y amarga

- JA JA .. NO, NO ES TRANSFIGURACIÓN...¡LLAMÉMOSE POST-COLLAGE!

Entonces ¡Aceleraron! / En direcciones opuestas / y a pasos del encuentro ¡alzaron vuelo!

- ¡HUELE A TEORÍA DE CONSPIRACIÓN! – el oriental no se ha convencido

El tiempo se hizo paralítico / suspendidos / Las energías agotándose / se acercaron...

- ¡AAAAHHHHHHH!-

- ¡EEEEHhhhhiiiiiii! -

... |||||

**QUEUE 02: iULTRA-THICK! . . . Super Sweet**

...The sound of the sword was followed by the gesture / Filthy! Upset! Wretched! / Two archetypes fought / They ignored space and time / One a medieval knight, the other a samurai

With aggressiveness and anger they were going to, anyone would say, decide destiny and humanity / But no! / Simple whims of form / And it ended in fights, to the boiling point! / There's no gunpowder or computer - the body is present! / Effervescent, at pointblank!

Then they sped! / Carnivorous and Herbivorous / And steps away from the encounter, they took off in flight! Time paralyzed / suspended / They got near...

- AAAAHHHHHH!  
- EEEEEhhhhhiiiiii!

The steel vibrated / The gesture followed / Dirty! Grotesque! Ill-fated / And the occidental answered the debate / He quoted the Holy Scriptures

- AND HE SHOWED ME THE GREAT HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM, THAT DESCENDED FROM THE SKY, FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD. AND HER SPLENDOR WAS SIMILAR TO A GEMSTONE, LIKE A JASPER STONE, TRANSPARENT LIKE CRYSTAL -

- FALSE BIBLICAL MYTHOLOGY! - the oriental responded, he used a slow and violent voice... suspended in space

The small warrior confounded the words / Ultra-salty saliva / Red bubbles escaping through the premolars / They paint the cloth mask covering his face / An unbridled will and moral decadence would keep him avid / At the contact with the ground, the English man finished his passage

- THE CITY IS ESTABLISHED IN A SQUARE, ITS LENGTH IS EQUAL TO ITS WIDTH; THE LENGTH, THE HEIGHT, AND THE WIDTH ARE EQUAL -

- When you recite your text and wave your sword you produce, in me, a tangled up collage! - The samurai already fed up / Intoxicated, drunk / Looks stunned / The sight? He looks vaulted... no no no! / Arched!

With juggler's jumps they almost touch the sky and the universe / Once on firm ground, they confirmed their respective postures / It was not the moment to reincorporate... there's no time for that!

- SSCHIIIIIIINNNN!!! - Japanese saber!  
- SSSSCHIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNN!!! - Occidental sword

This time the swords conversed / Both tense / contemplating each other's skin... / the second skin / The battle ignites / Mediated by a succulent Bi-solar Bi-sexual Bi-polar world / The flesh is Thin / Wet, Ripe! / They remembered an erotic recipe the lover applied weeks ago... before the combat

{It is convenient, if you use an aromatic lotion, to substitute part of it with oil, which is what gives skin its characteristic flavor. If it is a hot day, since skin gets humid faster; if the day is cold and you wish the skin get slightly wet, place a bowl with the lotion over a pot with hot water. Nevertheless, the skin takes almost 24 hours to be prepared}

- false text . . . unreal! You are not a good hermenaut . . . - whispered the easterner...  
- JERUSALEM IT WILL BE! ... AND YOU WILL LIVE IN A PERFECT CUBE -

- . . . IT DOES NOT EXIST! - the samurai insisted  
- IT HAS BEEN LIVING FOR A LONG TIME IN THE IMAGINARY... DO NOT MAKE PRETEXTS! -

They shuffle precarious vocabulary / Refined gestures / sharp sounds / The body tense / 'tensed'

- Do you persist?! -  
- HA HA... DON'T YOU REMEMBER, 'COLLEAGUE'? THAT THE SQUARE IS WITH US SINCE THE RENAISSANCE - replied the knight, in English

- it is not with 'us'! it is your false collective subconscious! - the samurai imposed

- THE NUCLEUS OF VIRTUAL PERSPECTIVE... THE BASIC UNIT AND CELL BY EXCELLENCE -

The valley in suspense / Mute and tense / Little by little the colors have changed / From primal 'PINK', to infernal reds / fiery autumn loves

- besides! There is a mined field! - warned the warrior in Japanese  
- ARE YOU REFERRING TO THE SUBCONSCIOUS? TO THE NEW CITY? OR TO THE GROUND THAT HOLDS US? - the Knight has not understood / He is lost in the translations / ABC1, ABC2 - DAMN!

Mined field? / No, there are no explosives / Only little 'nostrils' covered by shifting ground / It is very dense and slippery / A 'cartoonish' scenery in the samurai's fantasy, then...

- They are tiny black holes that submerge deep towards your damn western structuralism! - he continued screaming to the Englishman's mask

- ¡AHH! ¡NOG! - the knight slipped

The sound of the sword was followed by the gesture / Filthy! Wretched! Monumental! / The English man? / He has fallen into one of the 'nostrils' / Body Transfer! / The body slides into the hole. . very deep

The Japanese took the chance and stressed - your position is a symptom! You forget some things! -

The level surface stroked muscles, thighs and hips / The holes were not common / they are accentuated borders, sharp-edged cliffs (philosophic) without a warning edge

- How do you explain then the aesthetic topology? Even when it germinates from the virtual space of the perspective and its nucleus is the cube? - the Oriental man continued, mad with pleasure

The Western warrior observed crisis / His canine teeth delineated by a red brick / It tastes like blood! / It was not a mortal blow / The sword slid softly between his fingers and thumb, phalanges and carpals / Just like a genuine leather sheath / copulating with the steel / But they squeeze and hold



on to salvation

DEAFENING... DAMN! -

There is no hesitation in a knight - IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN! IT IS A QUESTION OF APPLICATION: BETWEEN SELF AND SPACE? A FORMAL TRANSFERENCE HAPPENS...

But its strange parallel (between cube-nucleus of Cartesian space, and virtual city of the biblical tales) was weakening / The conclusive proof was crumbling

-it is just that you ignore: the cube, like a cell, connotes negation and self destruction ... APOPTOSIS -

- APOPTOSIS? -

- APOPTOSIS! - it is the samurai's turn - let me explain ... -

- AHHG! MY FINGERS! -

- Patience, colleague ... listen to my voice - the samurai talked Ultrasonic-Sound - YES... I ALREADY PERCEIVED IT...

Opera concerts / the highest notes froze... the highest pitched ones / Stubborn noise / Super shrill! / Thick and super Thick! / jFck! / Ultra-Thick!

- APOPTOSIS is a programmed cellular death. . . it explains why your fingers do not grow connected. . . they feel pain separately. . . -

- "MY FINGERS! MY FINGERS! I LOSE MY FINGERS!" - the thought has corroded the knight's brain and the sounds

Slowly the oriental man brings him back / on the ground... at last! Out of the black hole! / Latent pain... teary eyes... glassy / He discovers the bone structure of his hand

He steps on perfumed ground, paradisiacal / Sponge cake beneath white cream, frozen / His hand full of blood / Delayed reactions

/ The metal cut the nerves / He does not feel anything

- the apoptosis, besides, explains why you do not have a tail, small English lizard! -

A vague mumbling betrayed the Westerner's astonishment - Does God Wear Camouflage (?) - the sharp-edged saber, hungry opponent... would have savored the arteries and digital nerves in his hand / he felt a million stabs

- Sometimes he does. Does it amaze you? That the same demon that attacks you and seduces you to hell, also wants your salvation? - thus answered the samurai

Knight(iy)... he has reincorporated / The Englishman will not take deceit! / Now he will fight with his other hand / The first hand was always useless

The Samurai takes a combat position / come here and ask! / Attack!

- Your period is confusing . . . obtuse! How do you talk about a paradigm in cubic dimension (Jerusalem city)? If the fascination for topological skylines presupposes (in the arithmetic unit) its disintegration! -

- WHY DON'T YOU CALL IT... TRANSMUTATION? - English style smile

- DAMNED SURPRISE LANGUAGE. . . GAME OF WORDS. . . LETTER PROMISCUITY...IT TAKES US NOWHERE! - with elongated eyes he discovered the ambush... bitter and sour trap

-HAHA...NO, IT IS NOT TRANSMUTATION... LET'S CALL IT POST-COLLAGE!

Then they sped! / In opposing directions / and steps away from the encounter, they took flight!

- It smells like a conspiracy theory! - the oriental man was not convinced

Time paralyzed / suspended / Energy languishing / they got near...

- AAAAHHHHHHH! -  
- EEEEEhhhhhhiiiiii! - ...

# LOS MEDIOS DIGITALES Y LA HIPERNARRATIVA: RE-IMAGINANDO EL SITIO

por Stephen Sears

## Creando imágenes

**E**l propósito de este ensayo es despertar la curiosidad de esos diseñadores urbanos diestros en la representación gráfica y filosóficamente tímidos al abordar la ilustración de un proyecto. Su intención es recordar que filósofos y teóricos como Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Paul Virilio y Sanford Kwinter han iluminado, para el diseñador, el camino hacia un cambio en el paradigma de la representación gráfica. De hecho, al lidiar con las fases temporales y la simultaneidad implícita del territorio urbano, el diseñador puede utilizar con acierto, como metáforas de creación, algunas de sus construcciones teóricas mejor conocidas. Es posible

que en el ámbito digital se refleje dicha complejidad tan sugestivamente como los patrones de bloques o las paletas vegetales.

Una larga y concienzuda tradición dispone que arquitectos y arquitectos paisajistas produzcan exquisitas representaciones gráficas de entornos no construidos. El detalle y la pericia en el dibujo han sido símbolos indispensables de excelencia y virtuosismo, indicando, a menudo, la amplitud de la visión del diseñador. Independientemente de la maestría que puedan demostrar estos elaborados dibujos, el trabajo ilustrativo tradicional trunca realidades auténticas, de tiempo real, presentando simples caricaturas de

01



## 01 Multiplicidad

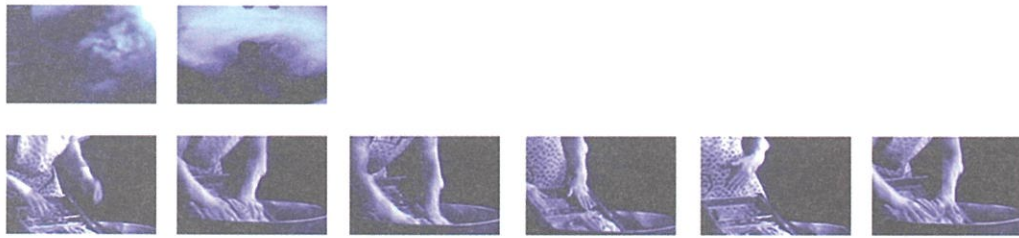
*Una perspectiva que ilustra fases progresivas y simultáneas de un paisaje. Esta imagen se puede percibir como un escenario completo y exhaustivo, o bien de múltiples realidades. La piscina de sedimentación se transforma en pantano, prado o corredor ribereño pero no en el espacio, sino en el tiempo. Al igual que el paisaje cambia a lo largo de los años, quienes lo ocupan también lo harán. Las figuras periféricas, por ejemplo, son ciudadanos españoles involucrados en el uso industrial histórico del sitio, mientras que la figura central – la reconocible protagonista de Run Lola Run – alude al complejo futuro propuesto para el lugar. La escena también muestra obreros construyendo una versión del lugar sobre la otra, mientras que otro grupo aparece manteniendo una tercera versión.*

instantes inertes en futuros territorios urbanos. Desgraciadamente, el desarrollo de las herramientas digitales ha hecho muy poco por ampliar el limitado enfoque de la ilustración arquitectónica, definiendo el dinamismo mediante recorridos preprogramados u objetos animados en infinitas secuencias de rotación. La ventaja que realmente ofrecen los métodos de producción digital no se obtiene fetichizando introspectivamente un diseño con precisión cada vez más oscura y hermética, sino conciliando el diseño con una manifestación menos precisa y más parecida al mundo que conocemos, donde la superposición de capas de historia, cultura, fenomenología, temporalidad, geometría, ecología o climatología se perciban simultáneamente.

Los marcos teóricos desarrollados por numerosos antecesores, aliados en la contemplación de realidades o narrativas polifacéticas, proveen claves para comprender el paisaje virtual. El entorno digital nos permite hacer uso de un lente perceptivo casi infinito, donde la tensión entre duración y



WASH



MACHINE



BIRD



WALK



RIVER





multiplicidad, y la complejidad de lo real (todos términos de Henri Bergson), puede aportar una mayor comprensión a los proyectos. Mientras tanto, las hipótesis más recientes de Kwinter al explorar las propiedades del tiempo acercan la filosofía a la búsqueda consciente de estrategias de representación emblemáticas por parte del diseñador.

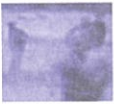
### Imaginando

En la práctica contemporánea, se espera que la generación de los artefactos digitales de un proyecto en el hiperespacio pandimensional ofrezca ventajas reveladoras capaces de expresar mejor las realidades polivalentes. Las simples versiones digitales de los métodos tradicionales no son tan convincentes como los efectos cuánticos obtenidos mediante la impecable superposición de capas de condiciones/tiempos múltiples en escenarios gráficos.

El hiperespacio del ambiente digital creativo es un espacio ficticio que reside 'dentro' de la mente y de la máquina. Reconocer el potencial de esta propiedad fundamental debería ser suficiente para determinar un cambio metodológico en la conceptualización, o expresión, del espacio propuesto. La reorientación hacia dicho espacio ficticio provee los medios para representar de forma única la fluidez dinámica, y la simultaneidad dramática, inherentes a las complejas condiciones temporales y espaciales del diseño urbano evolutivo a largo plazo.

Los trabajos de Deleuze sobre las implicaciones teóricas de la imagen cinematográfica, detallan el efecto transformador de crear mundos imaginados y las relaciones entre estos mundos y el espectador. Sus tratados filosóficos también definen interpretaciones innovadoras de la narrativa cinematográfica, que provee un acercamiento a la transmisión secuencial de información visual. La base de estas posiciones se acerca a los intereses del diseñador. Y, mientras somos capaces de evocar futuros elaborados, el conjunto visual que utilizamos para describir dichos futuros está limitado por nuestros métodos ilustrativos. Desgraciadamente, este argumento nos lleva a un problema más crítico: en el pasado, sólo nos permitimos imaginar aquellos conceptos que éramos capaces de delinear. En otras palabras, el estado de nuestro actual entorno construido fue determinado, en cierta medida, por los tradicionales métodos sobre papel utilizados para concebir lo que una vez fue nuestro futuro. Pero, el hiperespacio digital provee un espacio infinito que puede ser explotado por el espacio infinito de la mente, prometiendo así futuros ilimitados.

El diseño contemporáneo parece estar a punto de adoptar los resultados comparativamente esquivos inherentes al enfoque en los catalizadores de la transformación, en lugar de piedras y ladrillos. Los diseñadores de espacios a gran escala deben comunicar los infinitos efectos en cascada de la biorremediación por fases, la sucesión vegetal, las reacciones ecológicas en cadena, o la dinámica del



#### 02 Duración

*Máquina | Lavado | Pájaro | Caminata | Río, Una colección de fotogramas de un video de tres minutos que describe la dinámica de los cuerpos en un paisaje cambiante.*

*El ritmo de ocupación disminuye gradualmente a lo largo de cincuenta años, a medida que el paradigma del paisaje cambia de industrial a natural.*

espacio negativo, para describir, adecuadamente, un territorio urbano propuesto para habitantes futuros. Estas dinámicas siguen siendo parte literal de un lugar virtual hasta evolucionar por completo años después. Las representaciones gráficas de estos procesos deberían incorporar dicho potencial, así como la respuesta a los estímulos que tendrá lugar tan inevitablemente como los gestos tangibles que quedarán grabados en el suelo. Es para los diseñadores considerar una realidad futura cuántica. Sin embargo, no es necesario imaginar cada futuro mientras la propuesta define los elementos y luego, sugiera un camino un tanto intuitivo para su convergencia. Las propiedades de las construcciones digitales tienen la capacidad de arreglar momentáneamente estos resultados aparentemente imposibles de conocer, por medio de la delineación de un *continuum* donde se imaginan posibilidades y relaciones críticas.

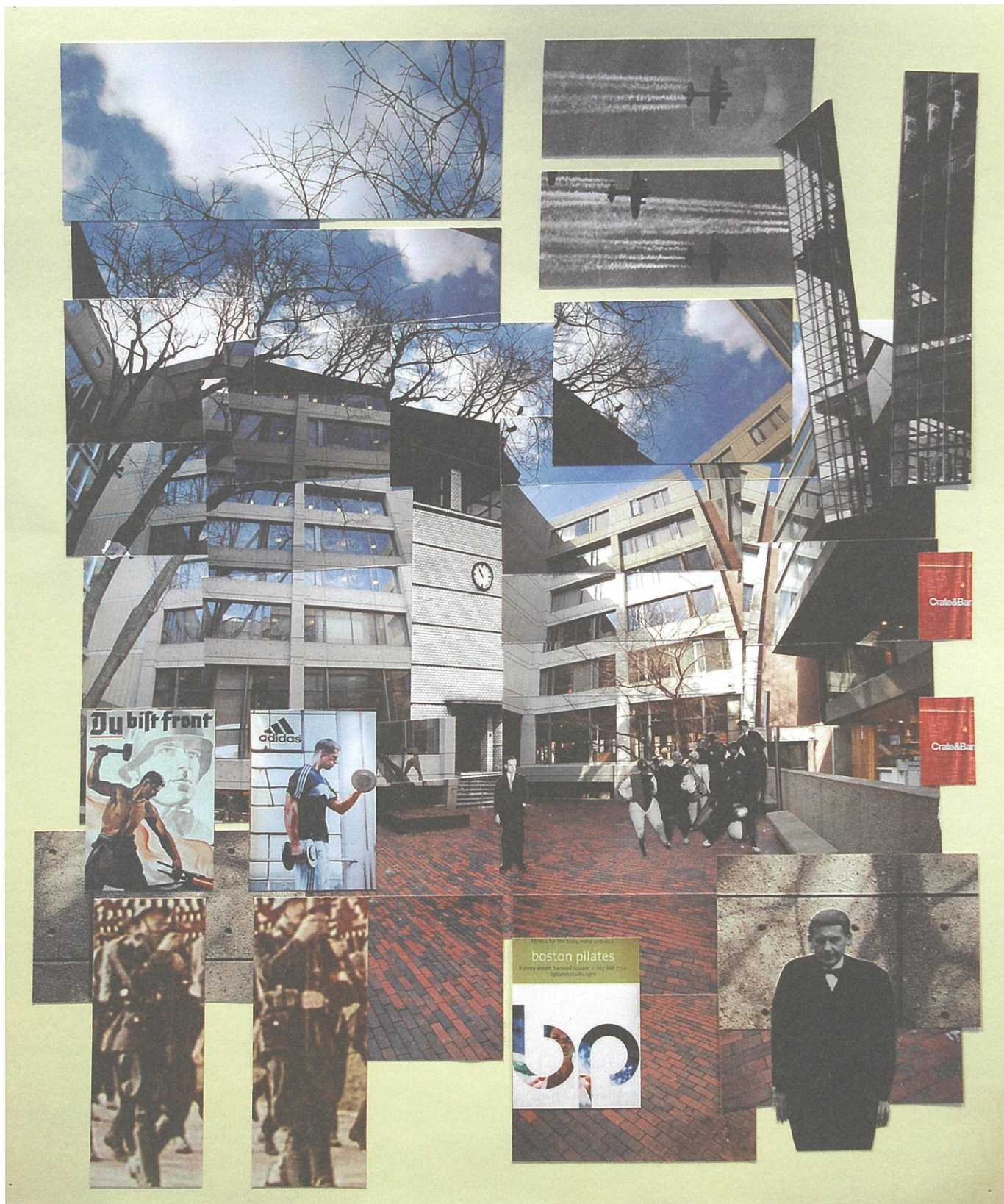
### Integrando

En términos de perspectiva, crear imágenes e imaginar fueron alguna vez casi sinónimos. Ahora que los medios de comunicación y otras tecnologías han achicado el mundo, los proveedores de imágenes acumulamos una conciencia cada vez más amplia de taxonomías de diseño más abarcadoras. Esto corresponde, a su vez, a adoptar una posibilidad, o bien a imaginar. De esta manera, parece que nuestra imaginación se ha adelantado a las técnicas aplicadas al ensamblaje gráfico de información. Casi por definición, el diseñador está acostumbrado a vivir en más de un lugar y un tiempo. El trabajo en el papel o la pantalla no está sincronizado con el entorno inmediato del diseñador. Es fácil para nosotros oscilar entre las dos 'realidades' y, al dar por sentadas dichas abstracciones, nuestro trabajo se vuelve cada vez más incomprensible para los no iniciados. Por lo tanto, las ventajas de evocar precedentes de conceptos espaciales complejos, introducidos por medio de otros canales mediáticos, pueden ser sumamente importantes. Para que una ilustración sea efectiva, se requiere tanto la destreza de quien la construye, como la percepción de quien la ve. Mientras la sociedad pierde progresivamente su cultura visual general, como la habilidad de distinguir entre los colores azul verdoso y verde azulado, se vuelve cada vez más perceptiva en cuanto a lo específico. La cantidad de información se valora más que la calidad de la información y esto resulta evidente en los medios gráficos a través de ediciones de cámara y motores de búsqueda más rápidos.

Los diseñadores han hecho poco por responder a este efecto acumulativo; por eso, el conjunto de técnicas gráficas carece de la consolidación y sofisticación que caracterizan otras industrias del campo. Las tecnologías que utilizamos y los gestos que producimos con fines ilustrativos están mucho menos pulidos que, digamos, los de Lucasfilms' Industrial Light and Magic, principalmente porque nuestro valor profesional y nuestra pericia radican

en otros sectores. Aunque no estamos exentos de participar de un mismo paradigma mediático, esta relación permite que el diseñador utilice precedentes culturales populares del cine, o bien de la red cibernética, como una historia mediática compartida. La trilogía de *Matrix*, por ejemplo, ha ofrecido a una amplia gama de individuos la experiencia necesaria para comprender intelectualmente el concepto de simultaneidad, elemento indispensable para representar la dinámica de un espacio urbano emergente. Debemos reconocer que ésta es una conciencia contemporánea, construida a lo largo de casi cien años de industria cinematográfica. A medida que nos volvimos más mediatizados, o sofisticados en los medios, los ilustradores de la cultura popular comenzaron a construir sobre los precedentes visuales de trabajos anteriores para comunicarse con un público cada vez más informado. Cuando Sergei Eisenstein estrenó *Battleship Potemkin* en 1925, tenía que garantizar que los espectadores, noveles del cine, pudiesen aprender a percibir lo que se desplegaba visualmente en la pantalla, ya que la audiencia nunca había experimentado el punto de vista de una cámara y, mucho menos, el ver realidades simultáneas.

La amplitud y sofisticación de la conciencia mediática actual de una persona promedio se puede utilizar como una poderosa e importante herramienta para transmitir características escurridizas del paisaje urbano, como la irresolubilidad o la duración. Estas ideas, según fueron definidas por Bergson y luego, por Deleuze, pueden considerarse dinámicas representativas del mundo real. Cualidades intangibles, como los modos en que un proyecto cataliza la floreciente ocupación del espacio, o hace que el fenómeno de las sombras se deslice sugestivamente por una ladera, constituyen cualquier territorio urbano y son, por tanto, parte integrante de la percepción. Los diseñadores disfrutaban de una posición privilegiada para visualizar la sociedad a través de métodos de ilustración sumamente evocadores. Integrar la perspectiva filosófica para negociar el hiperespacio digital solo incrementaría nuestra visión y percepción del entorno construido.



03

### 03 Transformación

TAC-less, un fotomontaje analítico que ilustra la yuxtaposición de pasado y presente. El continuum de Walter Gropius y su trabajo existiendo en un hiperespacio. El patio ubicado en 1 Story Street, Cambridge, Massachussets, se utiliza para contener dos narrativas paralelas extraídas del espacio literal: la Bauhaus influenciada por el Fascismo y The Architect's Collaborative influenciado por Adidas.

## Digital Media and the Hypernarrative: Re-Imagining Site

### Imaging

The intention of this essay is to spark the curiosity of those urban designers who are graphically adept and philosophically bashful in their approach to project illustration. It is a reminder that philosophers and theorists like Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Paul Virilio, and Sanford Kwinter have cumulatively illuminated a path for shifting the designer's representational graphic paradigm. Indeed, some of their more well-known theoretical constructs may be aptly used by designers as metaphors for making when grappling with an urban field's temporal phasing or implied simultaneity. It is possible that this complexity can be captured in digital scenario-making as suggestively as block patterns or planting palettes.

There is long, conscientious tradition prescribed for architects and landscape architects to produce exquisite graphic portrayals of unbuilt environments. Meticulous and highly accomplished draftsmanship has been a requisite mark of excellence and virtuosity, often considered to show the extent of the designer's vision. Regardless of the demonstrable mastery found in those finely-worked drawings, traditional illustrative works truncate authentic, real-time realities – rendering mere caricatures of singular, inert moments of future urban fields. Tragically, the development of digital tools has done little to advance this narrow focus in architectural illustration – defining dynamism with pre-programmed fly-throughs or rotating objects animated on endless loops. The real advantage offered by digital production methods is not gained through introspectively fetishizing a design with increasingly arcane and hermetic precision, but rather in attuning design to a more blurry manifestation akin to the world we know: where assembled layers of history, culture, phenomenology, temporality, geometry, ecology or climatology are perceived all at once.

Clues for grasping the virtual landscape may be clearly seen in the theoretical frameworks devised by any of an array of allied predecessors who have contemplated multi-faceted realities or narratives. The digital environment enables us to make use of a nearly infinite perceptual lens – one where the tension between duration and multiplicity, and

the complexity of the real (all terms from Henri Bergson) can be rendered to imbue projects with deeper comprehensiveness. While the later suppositions of Kwinter in his explorations of the properties of time, coax the philosophies nearer the conscientious designer's quest for emblematic representational strategies.

### Imagining

In contemporary practice we have come to expect that when a project's digital artifacts are generated in pan-dimensional hyper-space it will offer revelatory advantages that better express multivalent realities. Merely digitized versions of traditional methods are not nearly as convincing as the quantum effects achieved by seamlessly superimposing layers of multiple time/conditions into graphic scenarios.

The hyper-space of the creative digital environment is fictional space – residing both 'inside' the mind and 'inside' the machine. Recognizing the potential of this one fundamental property should be enough to cause a methodological shift in conceptualizing or expressing proposed space. Re-orientation towards this fictional space offers the means for uniquely representing the dynamic fluidity and dramatic simultaneity inherent in the complex spatial and temporal conditions of long-term, evolutionary urban design.

Deleuze's works on the theoretical implications of the cinematographic image detail the transformative effect of creating imagined worlds and the relationship between those worlds and the viewer. His philosophical treatises also outline innovative understandings of cinematic narrative, which provides an approach to a sequential transmission of visual information. The basis of these positions closely parallels the interests of the designer. And while we are able to conjure elaborate futures; the visual array that we use to describe those futures is limited by our illustrative methods. Unfortunately this argument leads to a more critical problem: we have in the past allowed ourselves to imagine only those concepts that we were able to delineate. Put another way, the state of our existing built environment was in some measure determined by traditional paper-based methodologies used to delineate what was once our future. But digital hyper-space provides an infinite space that can be tapped by the infinite space of the mind, providing the promise

of unlimited futures.

Contemporary design seems on the verge of embracing the comparatively elusive results inherent in focusing on the catalysts for transformation than on brick and stone. Designers of large scale sites must convey the endlessly cascading effects of phased bioremediation, plant succession, ecological chain reactions or the dynamics of negative space to adequately describe an urban field proposed for future inhabitants. These dynamics remain literally part of a virtual site until when that evolution is completed years in the future. Graphic portrayals of these processes should incorporate that potentiality as well as the response to stimuli that will occur just as assuredly as the tangible gestures to be inscribed on and in the ground. It is daunting for designers to contemplate a quantum future reality. However, imagining every future is not necessary as long as the proposal defines the elements and then suggests a somewhat intuitive path for convergence of the elements. The properties of digital constructions have the potential to momentarily fix such seemingly unknowable outcomes through the delineation of a continuum where compelling possibilities and relationships are imagined.

### Tapping in

In perspectival terms, imaging and imagining were once nearly synonymous. Now that media and other technologies have made the world smaller we purveyors of images compile expanding consciousness of broader design taxonomies. This in turn corresponds to engaging possibility – or imagining. In this way it seems as if our imaginations have raced ahead of the techniques we have applied to graphic assemblages of information. Almost by definition the designer is accustomed to living in more than one place and time. The work on the boards or on the screen is out of phase with the designer's immediate environment. It is easy for us to toggle between the two 'realities', and as we take such abstractions for granted our work becomes increasingly incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Therefore the advantages of evoking precedents of complex spatial concepts introduced through other media streams can be profound. For an illustration to be effective it requires both the skills of the maker and the perception of the viewer. While society incrementally



U

U

U

U

U

U

U

U

U

一

二

三

四

五

六

七

八

# LTL Architects: Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis

## Experimentación, representación y material

Observar y estudiar detenidamente los dibujos (hechos a mano) de la firma Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis es enfrentarse a un modelo representacional que a conciencia se separa de la rutina arquitectónica actual y en vez, producir sistemas propios de pensamiento, representación y producción. Como si esto fuera poco, en sus proyectos uno se topa con un cuerpo de trabajo diverso, que incluye desde proyectos culturales y académicos a escala urbana a interiores minuciosamente elaborados y altamente experimentales. LTL utiliza soluciones innovadoras en sus interiores empleando materiales cotidianos que, aunque económicos, no carecen de la exuberancia que uno ve empleada (y en ocasiones malgastada) en proyectos con presupuestos mucho más amplios. Para LTL las limitaciones de un proyecto tienden de modo ingenioso a convertirse en el hilo conductor de sus diseños, explorando los solapes entre espacio, programa, forma, presupuesto y materiales.

When carefully observing and studying the drawings (hand drawn) of the firm Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis is to confront oneself with a representational model with a conscious to separate itself from contemporary architectural routine and instead, produce its own systems of thought, representation and production. Like this wasn't enough, one finds in their projects a diverse body of work, that range from cultural and academic projects at an urban scale to meticulously elaborate and highly experimental interiors. LTL uses innovative solutions in their interiors employing common materials that even though are cheap, they do not lack the same exuberance that one sees utilized (and on occasions wastefully employed) in projects with much larger budgets. For LTL, a project's limitations are converted in the driving force for their designs, exploring the overlaps between space, program, form, budget and materials in an ingenious way.

## Concurso, *Hudson Square*, Nueva York, E.U.



El Plan del Comisionado del 1811 estableció la retícula como el mecanismo organizador principal para Manhattan. La regularidad de sus 2,028 bloques funcionaron como aparato de limitación que ha prevenido, en gran medida, la imposición de un sistema más grande que evadiera sus coacciones-asegurando facilitar los flujos vehiculares y peatonales que airean la porosidad densa de la ciudad.

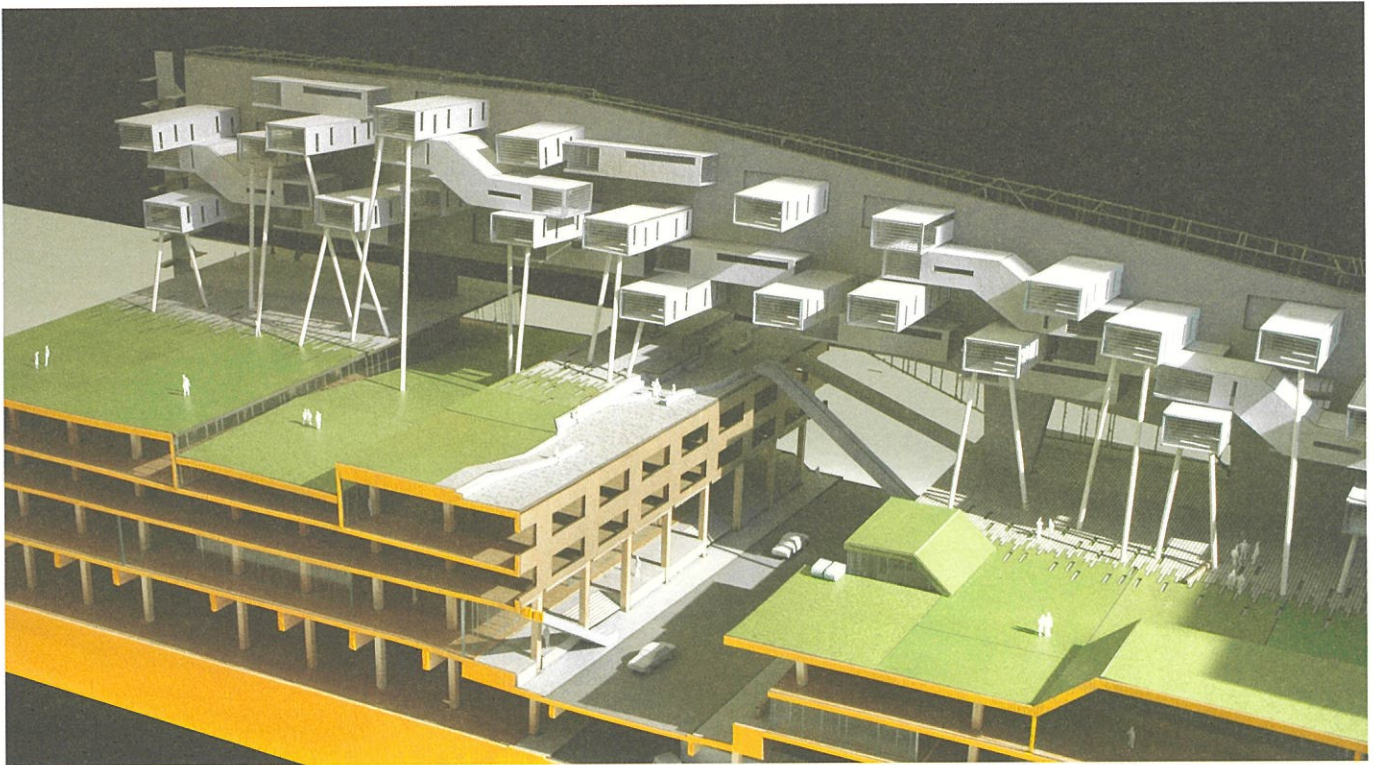
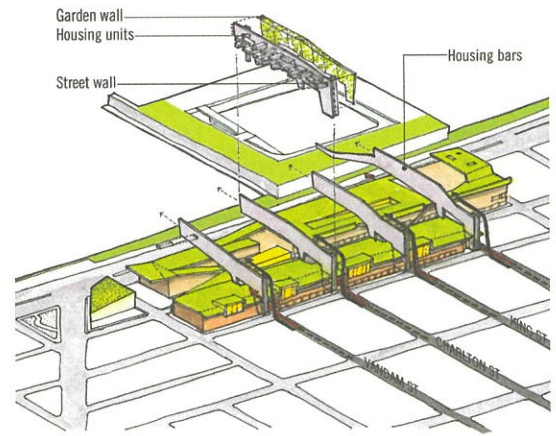
Hudson Square existe en la periferia de tres de los barrios más históricos y en desarrollo de la ciudad: el West Village, Soho y Tribeca. Al oeste, se encuentra, el Río Hudson y el Muelle 40. La retícula de Manhattan es interrumpida en Hudson Square por dos estructuras masivas - las instalaciones de UPS y el St. John's Center, que en cúmulo producen una barricada hacia el movimiento este/oeste y quiebran la conexión entre el río y el parque.

Mientras se reconoce que estos monolíticos probablemente se mantengan por razones económicas y de logística, la propuesta para el *charrette* se enfoca en cómo estos impedimentos a la vitalidad urbana de este vecindario se pueden re-imaginar y explotar para producir una nueva forma de densidad seccionada metropolitana que combine vivienda, parque, actividad comercial y de ventas. La propuesta pregunta: en vez de retornar a una visión nostálgica de Manhattan, ¿podrán las mismas idiosincrasias de estas estructuras anómalas auspiciar un urbanismo sin precedente que reconcilie las lógicas de la retícula con el territorio expansivo de la súper cuadra?

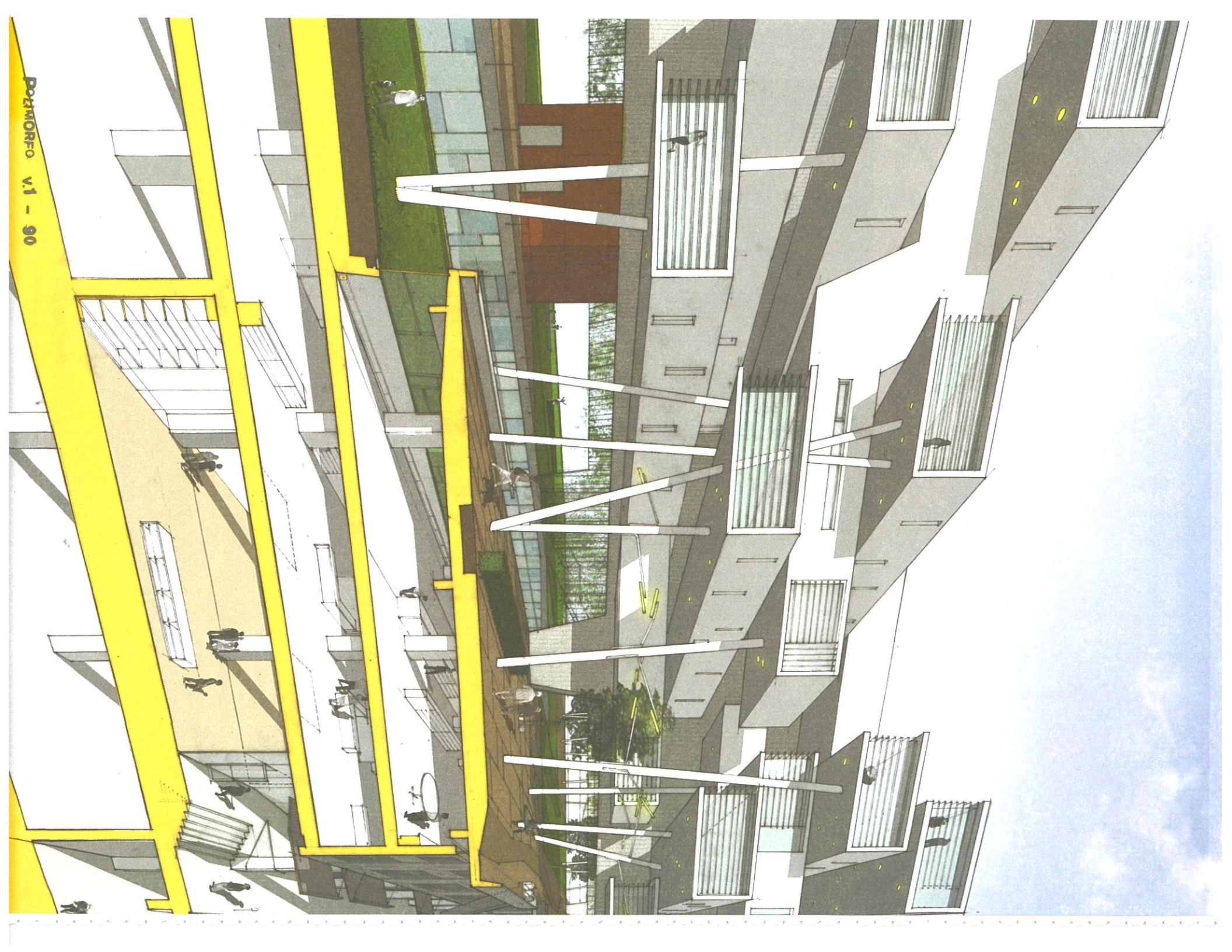


Reconociendo que el primer nivel de la Calle Washington es dominada por las actividades operacionales de UPS, nuestra propuesta eleva la Calle Washington un nivel. Esto reinstala el pasaje automotriz norte/sur y produce una avenida activa de ventas liberada del tráfico industrial de abajo. La nueva Calle Washington es alineada con espacio comercial que puede acomodar amenidades residenciales de las que carece esta sección de la ciudad. Las actividades de carga y descarga de UPS y el nuevo garaje del DSNY, de un solo distrito, son contenidos debajo de este nuevo nivel.

Las superficies del techo de las súper cuadras son re-imaginadas como espacios verdes habitables,



PORTMORFO v1 - 90



...son, además, para...  
...sistema de...  
...de cinco pisos...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...

...sistema de...  
...de cinco pisos...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...  
...de los edificios...



The Commissioner's Plan of 1811 established the grid as the principal ordering mechanism for Manhattan. The regularity of its 2,028 blocks functioned as a limiting device that has largely prevented the imposition of larger systems that would evade its constraints—ensuring an ease of vehicular and pedestrian flow that aerates the dense porosity of the city. Where this system is interrupted, pathologies can develop in the local urban tissue and the social vibrancy that typifies street life in New York is subject to retardation and stagnancy.

Hudson Square exists at the periphery of three of the city's most vibrant historic and developing neighborhoods: the West Village, Soho and Tribeca. To the West is Hudson River Park and Pier 40. The Manhattan grid is interrupted in Hudson Square by two massive structures – the UPS facility and the St. John's Center, which cumulatively produce a barricade to east/west movement and sever connection to the river and park.

While recognizing that these monoliths are likely to remain for economic and logistical reasons, LTL's fall 2007 design charrette proposal focuses on how these impediments to the urban vitality of this neighborhood might be re-imagined and exploited to produce a new form of metropolitan sectional density combining

housing, park space, commercial and retail activity. The proposal asks: rather than recourse to a nostalgic vision of Manhattan, can the very idiosyncrasies of these anomalous structures sponsor an unprecedented urbanism that reconciles the logic of the grid with the expansive territory of the superblock?

Recognizing that Washington Street at ground level is dominated by the activities of UPS operations, our proposal elevates Washington Street a full story. This both reinstates north/south automotive passage and produces an active retail avenue freed from industrial traffic below. The new Washington Street is lined by commercial space that can accommodate residential amenities missing from this quarter of the city. Unloading and loading activities for UPS and the new single-district DSNY garage are contained below this new level.

The roof surfaces of the superblocks are re-imagined as inhabitable green space, accommodating both linear activity – swimming pools, running tracks, and pedestrian walks, as well as registering the patchwork geometry of the grid through a series of differentiated planting zones. Voids and cuts within this new landscape allow for the penetration of daylight into the deep floorplates of the superblocks while rises register the sectional intrusion of the programmatic space contained

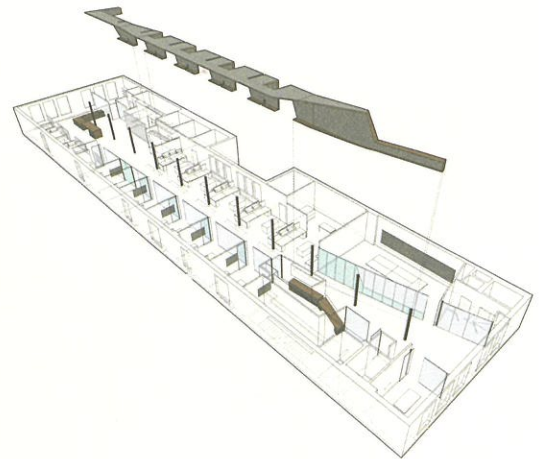
just below this artificial 'ground.' These planted surfaces absorb runoff, provide insulation and help mitigate the area's poor air quality. Extending to the south of St. John's, this synthetic terrain forms the roof of a new single-district DSNY garage.

The four-block UPS facility is strategically opened up at the terminus of the east/west street grid, pulling King, Charlton, and Vandam Streets through the building to the elevated Washington Street. The sidewalk spans above Washington St. to St John's and providing access to a system of housing units. A series of five story walls provide both structural and infrastructural support to the cantilevered housing. The ramping corridors for the housing are partially enclosed by a screen of vertical steel strands that allow the growth of the park to climb upwards. The height of these bars mirrors the scale of the surrounding buildings. The northern-most of these linear housing bars slices through St. John's Center at Houston Street – visually opening this major axis through to the West Side Highway and the Hudson River Park and bridging over the West Side Highway to link the rooftop fields of Pier 40. A 12-story hotel rises vertically on the site's north end.



## Office of Strategic Assessment, Planning and Design, Universidad de Nueva York, E.U.

La Universidad de Nueva York (NYU) formó recientemente la Oficina de Evaluación Estratégica, Planificación y Diseño (SAPD) con el propósito de poder prepararse para el bicentenario de la universidad. LTL Arquitectos fueron contratados por NYU para diseñar las oficinas de 10,000 p/c de SAPD, un trabajo que requirió una sensibilidad hacia los espacios públicos y privados, la combinación de múltiples departamentos, al igual que el diseño para representar este nuevo departamento con mentalidad de futuro, orientado al diseño, y que pudiera realizarse por menos de \$155 el pie cuadrado. SAPD supervisa los proyectos de edificio de la universidad y desearon desistir de diseñar unas oficinas centrales sobre elaboradas. Por ende, LTL enfocó su esfuerzo de diseño en un solo elemento - una superficie continua de alfombra, acero negro y madera de nogal, que incorpora múltiples funciones como elementos de iluminación, superficies de presentación, aislación acústica y división de espacios. Esta envoltura define las áreas públicas a la vez que provee conexión a través del espacio. Este proyecto se completó en agosto de 2007.

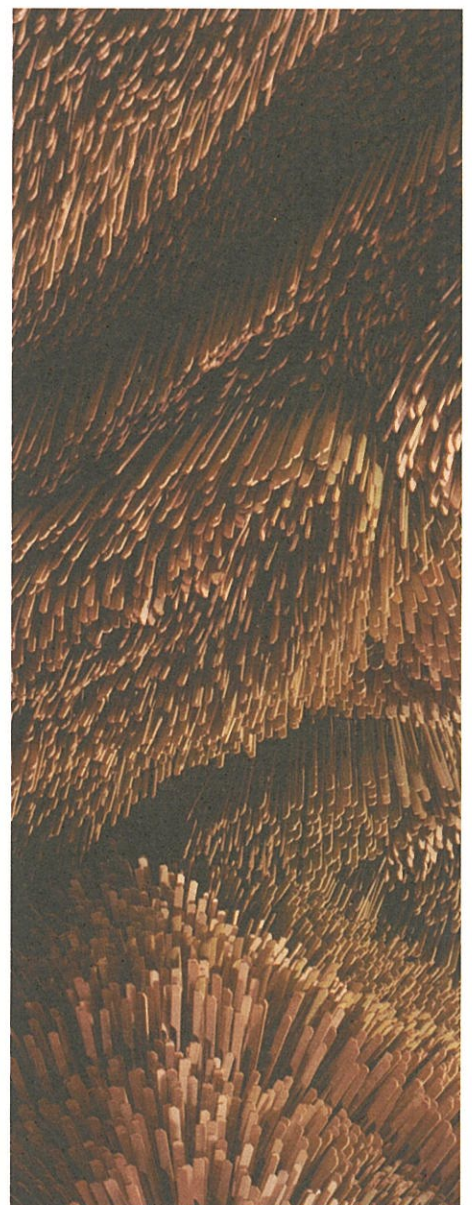


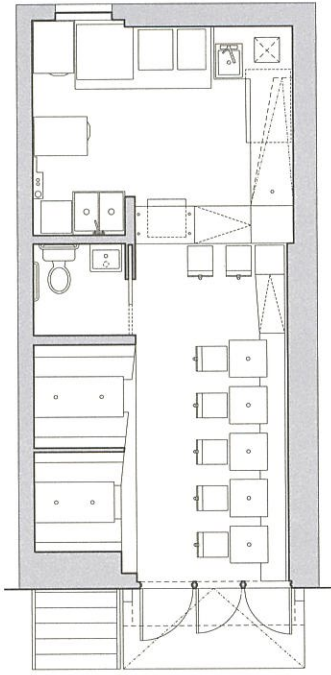
New York University recently formed the Office of Strategic Assessment, Planning and Design (SAPD) in order to prepare for the university's bicentennial year. LTL Architects was hired by NYU to design the 10,000 square foot SAPD offices, a job that required a sensitivity to public and private spaces, the merging of multiple departments, as well as a design to represent this new forward-thinking, design-oriented department which could be realized for under \$155 per square foot. SAPD oversees the University's building projects and wished to refrain from designing lavish headquarters, LTL therefore focused design energy on a single element - a continuous surface in felt, walnut and blackened steel that incorporates multiple functions such as lighting elements, display surface, acoustical liner, and spatial divider. This wrapper defines the public areas while providing connection throughout the space. This project was completed in August 2007.

## Restaurante *Tides*, Nueva York, E.U.

Ubicado en el Lower East Side de Nueva York y terminado en 2005, este proyecto presenta un reto inusual de diseñar un restaurante de 22 asientos en un pequeño cuarto de 420 pies cuadrados donde el techo es más alto que el ancho del espacio. Para poder contrarrestar las posibles dimensiones claustrofóbicas de este espacio, LTL decidió convertir el techo en una amenidad dominante del proyecto. Jugando con el nombre de "Tides", el techo de diseño para crear un efecto topográfico que evoca un campo invertido de hierba de mar.

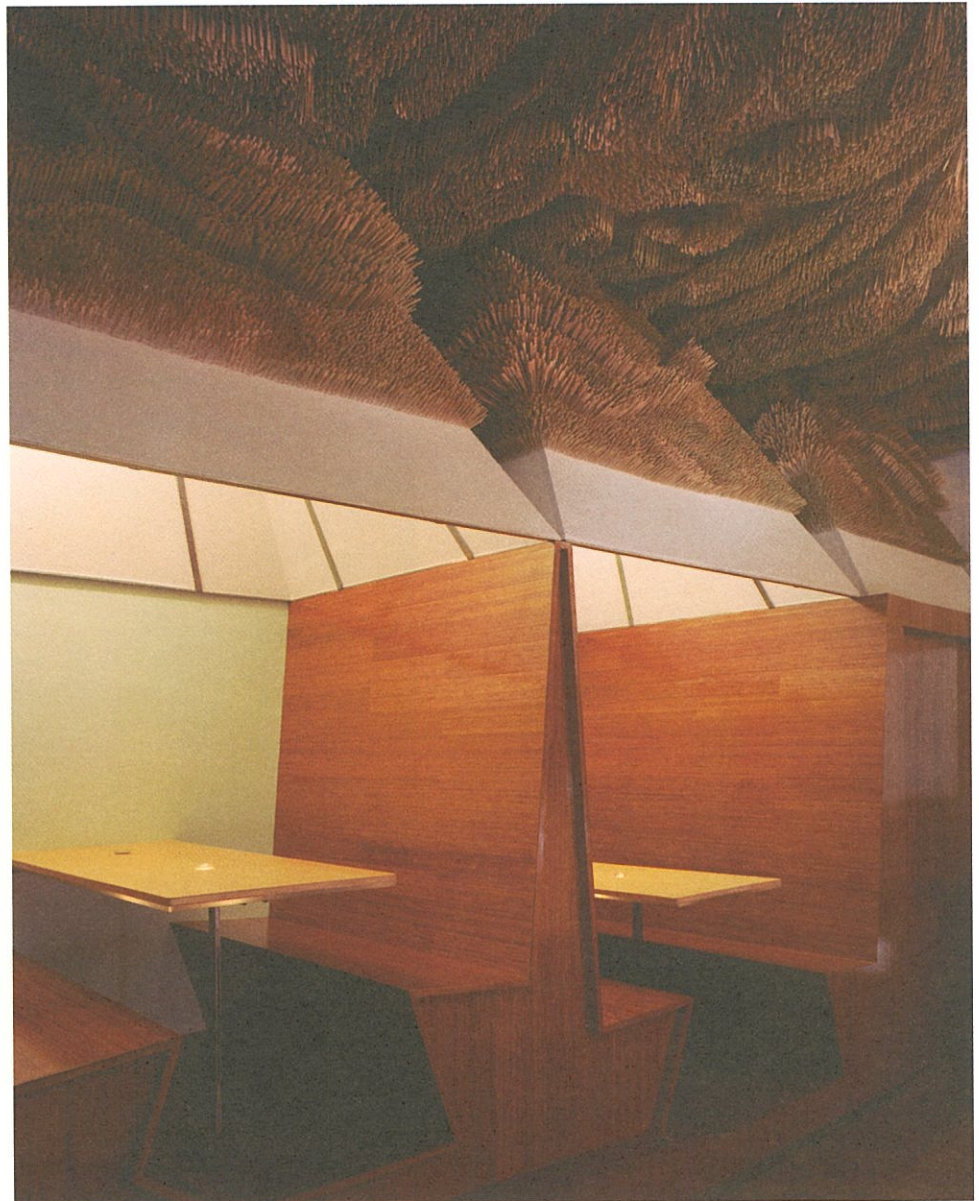
Este efecto se logró al agregar pinchos de bambú en patrones cuidadosamente calculados para formar un intrincado y denso paisaje marino en el techo. Otros tipos de bambúes se utilizaron a través del espacio: o un suelo de bambú caramelizado se desdobra hacia arriba para convertirse en los asientos de la cabina y los espaldares de los bancos, y un tono más claro de suelo de bambú cubre la mitad superior de la pared del banco. Planchas individuales se separan de la pared, para revelar las luces. La mitad de abajo de cada mesa es de acrílico traslúcido, que entuba la luz de una vela que queda revestida en el tope de contrachapado de bambú al borde de la mesa. La mesa amplía la luz de la vela, intensificando la iluminación más complementaria de restaurante.





Located in New York's Lower East Side and completed in 2005, this project presented the unusual challenge of designing a 22-seat restaurant in a tiny 420-square-foot room where the ceiling is higher than the space is wide. In order to counter the potentially claustrophobic dimensions of this space, LTL decided to make the ceiling the dominant feature of the project. Playing off the name "Tides," the ceiling was designed to create a topographical effect that evokes an inverted field of sea grass.

This effect was achieved by aggregating bamboo skewers in carefully calculated patterns to form a dense intricate ceiling seascape. Various other types of bamboo are used throughout the space; caramelized bamboo flooring folds up to become the booth seats and banquette backs, and a lighter shade of bamboo flooring covers the upper half of the banquette wall. Individual planks pull away from the wall, revealing lights. The bottom half of each table is translucent acrylic, which pipes the light of a candle encased in the bamboo plywood top to the edge of the table. The table magnifies the candle light, intensifying the most flattering form of restaurant lighting.



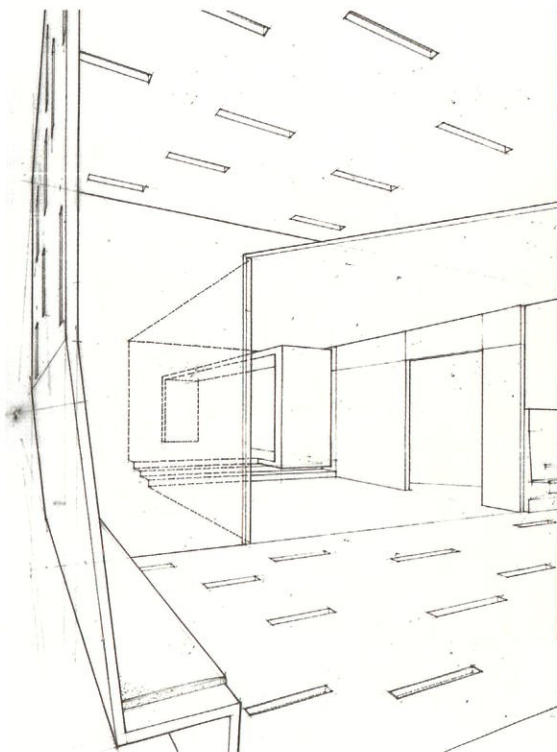
## Restaurante Xing, Nueva York, E.U.

Completado en el 2004, este restaurante chino de 2,000-pies-cuadrados ocupa una planta de piso típica de un edificio residencial de Nueva York; fosas de luz ubicadas en cada extremo del edificio le dan una forma parecida a la de un hueso. En vez de esconder esta distintiva sección estrecha entre la parte frontal y la posterior, LTL acentuó la naturaleza única de cada uno de los espacios. Empleando una lógica derivada del juego surrealista -el cadáver exquisito- LTL configuró los cuatro espacios en áreas distintivas pero entrelazadas.

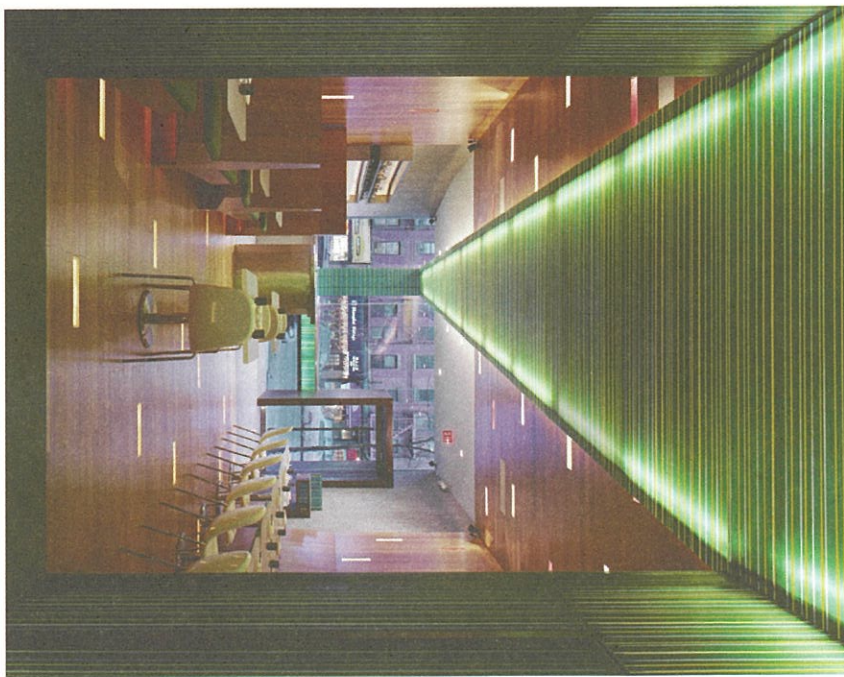
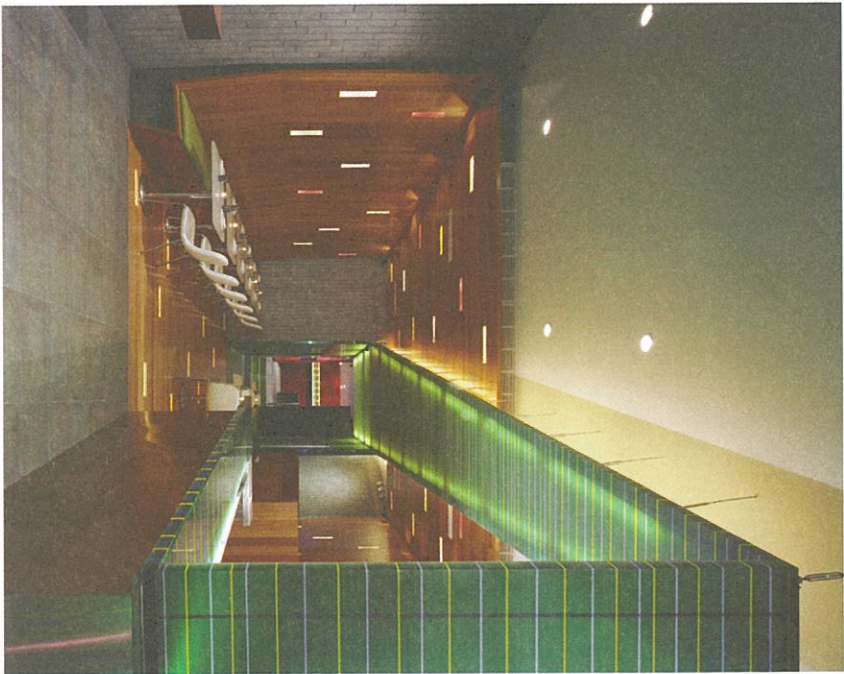
Cada una de estas áreas ha sido definida y envuelta por materiales en contraste que cambian de duros, en la parte más pública de la entrada desde la calle, a suaves, en el espacio de atrás, más privado. La piedra marca el área de la barra de frente, al lado de la entrada pública. El tope de la barra está hecho de tiras individuales de acrílico translúcido y coloreado. Este material se extiende hacia arriba para servir como cubierta de luz que continúa a través del área de cena al frente; un salón compuesto enteramente de planchas de bambú. Las paredes, escalones, y el techo de la próxima zona, un pasillo estrecho que contiene los baños y una estación de espera, están cubiertos con las mismas tiras de acrílico coloreado. El salón privado está envuelto por paneles de terciopelo rojo que convierten este espacio trasero en una cabina acolchada habitable, difuminando, intencionalmente, la distinción entre el espacio y las sillas. En los umbrales entre cada una de las cuatro áreas, los bordes del material se expresan, llamando la atención al rol del material como piel engrosada o cáscara.

Completed in 2004, this 2,000-square-foot Chinese restaurant occupies a floor plan typical of New York City residential buildings; light wells located on each side of the tenement building give it a dog-bone-like shape. Rather than hiding this distinctive narrowed section between the front and the back, LTL accentuated the unique nature of each of the spaces. Employing a logic derived from the Surrealist game—the Exquisite Corpse—LTL configured the four spaces into distinct yet interlocked areas.

Each of these areas is defined and wrapped by contrasting materials that shift from hard at the most public street entry to soft at the most private room in the back of the space. Stone marks the front bar area adjacent to the public entry. The bar counter is made from individual strips of translucent colored acrylic stacked on edge. This material extends up to serve as a light canopy that spans the front dining area; a room composed entirely of bamboo planks. The walls, steps, and ceiling of the next zone, a narrow corridor containing the bathrooms and a wait station, are lined with the same stacked colored acrylic strips. The private dining room is enveloped by red velvet panels that turn this back room into an inhabitable padded booth, intentionally blurring the distinction between the space and the seats. At the thresholds between each of the four distinct areas, the materials' edges are expressed, calling attention to the role of the material as a thickened skin or shell.







# BIG: Bjarke Ingels Group

## Evolución mediática y diagramación interdisciplinaria

Cuando uno se enfrenta por primera vez con la obra de Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) uno puede pensar que es otra de las muchas firmas hijas de OMA, (Bjarke Ingels, el socio principal, trabajó en la firma por varios años) pero al mirar con más detenimiento, uno se da cuenta de que son más que esto. La obra de BIG, que utiliza como punto de partida un manifiesto escrito cuando la firma inició en el 2007, plantea como catalizador, la evolución de la arquitectura por medio de la interconexión entre distintas disciplinas y, a sorpresa de muchos, la utilización de las referencias simbólicas, contextuales e históricas de un lugar.

Realmente no se puede entender BIG sin antes conocer a Bjarke Ingels. Este arquitecto joven es la cabeza teórica de la firma y no tiene ningún reparo en dejarle saber a su audiencia que es una figura espontánea e informal. Recientemente se presentó un video cuando vino a hablar en nuestra escuela en noviembre del 2008, que enseñaba a Ingels distorsionando con las manos una maqueta (que en realidad era una representación digital) para explicar la evolución formal de uno de sus proyectos. Luego, un acercamiento a la maqueta muestra a una de las escalas humanas despertar con vida y la cámara procede a seguir su trayectoria mientras ella recorre los espacios. Ésta informalidad es sintomática del producto arquitectónico de BIG, que mezcla referencias simbólicas con los procesos e innovaciones que se formalizan en sus espacios y superficies. Aquí es que Ingels se distancia de OMA, al momento que deja de tomarse tan en serio como figura (aunque todavía con mucha conciencia mediática) y deja que la arquitectura sea la que rija el proceso y producto formal de BIG.

When first confronted with the work of Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) one can at first think that this is just another of the many offspring OMA firms, (Bjarke Ingels, its principal partner, worked in their firm for a few years) but after looking at their work more thoroughly one quickly realizes that they are much more than this. BIG's work, that utilizes as its starting point a manifesto written when the firm got initiated in 2007, utilizes as a catalyst architecture's evolution via the interconnection between diverse disciplines and, to the surprise of many, the utilization of symbolic, contextual and historic references of a site.

In reality, one cannot understand BIG without first knowing Bjarke Ingels. This young architect is the theoretical mastermind of the firm and he has no objection in letting his audience know that he is an informal and spontaneous person. A video was recently presented when he came to lecture at our school in November 2008, that showed Ingels distorting with his hands a building model (which in reality was a digital representation) to explain the formal evolution of one of his projects. Later, when approaching the model, it shows one of the human scales awakening with life and then the camera proceeds to follow its trajectory while it crisscrosses the project's spaces. This informality is symptomatic of BIG's architectural product, that mixes symbolic references with the processes and innovations that are formalized in its spaces and surfaces. This is when Ingels distances himself from OMA, in the moment when he stops taking himself so seriously as a star (even though he has a lot of mediatic consciousness) and lets architecture drive BIG's processes and formal byproduct.

## Torre Scala, Copenhague, Dinamarca

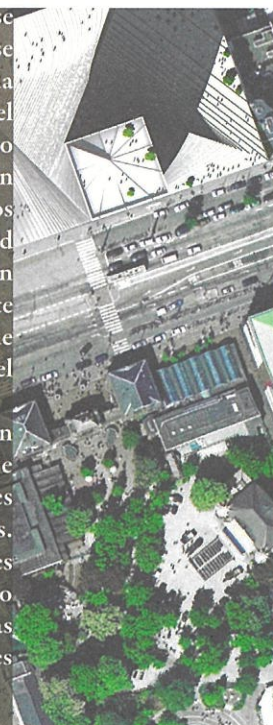
Visible desde la estación central, la Plaza del Ayuntamiento, los Jardines de Tivoli y Scala, en la Plaza Axel, está ubicada en un predio central de tráfico, cultura y comercio en Copenhague. Actuando como tarjeta de presentación de Copenhague al mundo, en el corazón de un predio con una mezcla potente de cultura elite y popular, deseamos continuar con la función de Scala como un lugar para conciertos, cines, tiendas y restaurantes.

La municipalidad ha expresado el deseo de dejar que Scala albergue la nueva biblioteca principal. En adición, la cercanía a la Estación Central y su ubicación céntrica hacen que el edificio sea adecuado para conferencias, habitaciones de hotel y oficinas, que en fin significa la aglomeración de muchas actividades en un solo lugar. En vez de escoger solo uno de los programas sugeridos, proponemos realizar todos los deseos y posibilidades a la vez: una casa densa y viva para la ciudad que combina los espacios públicos y los privados en una escala deslizante de la calle a la azotea, en un movimiento continuo.

Proponemos un edificio con un punto de inicio en la torre histórica de Copenhague que está

compuesta por dos principios básicos: una base que se relaciona al espacio urbano y la vida que se desarrolla cerca del edificio y, una aguja delgada que intenta llegar al cielo y se convierte en parte del horizonte de Copenhague. De este modo, nuestro diseño de la Torre Scala crece del contexto con un punto de inicio en las alturas y las cornisas de los edificios vecinos. Desde el espacio de la ciudad adyacente, la casa sube hacia el cielo. En el tope, un principio claro para una torre esbelta, en la parte baja, un volumen modelado maravillosamente que se entremezcla con la ciudad alrededor desde el edificio hasta el espacio urbano.

Al nivel de la calle, las personas tienen acceso a la biblioteca principal, que es un paisaje en terrazas de salas de lectura, colecciones grandiosas, así como un centro de conferencias. Continuando hacia arriba en la torre, los visitantes se encontrarán cómodos en el hotel, del mismo modo que las tenencias comerciales y las terrazas públicas en la azotea ofrecen vistas espectaculares de la ciudad.



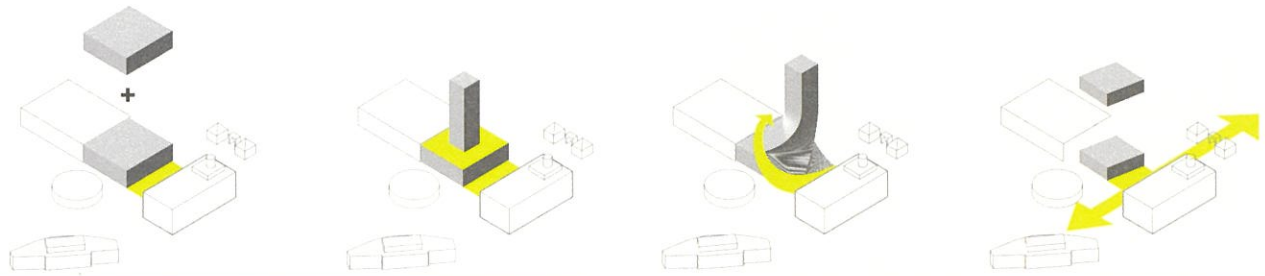
Visible from the Central Station, the Town Hall Square and the Tivoli Gardens, Scala on the Axel Square is located on a central traffic, cultural and commercial site in Copenhagen. Acting as the visiting card of Copenhagen to the surrounding world in the heart of a potent mix of elite and popular culture, we wish to continue Scala's function as a place for concerts, cinemas, shops and restaurants.

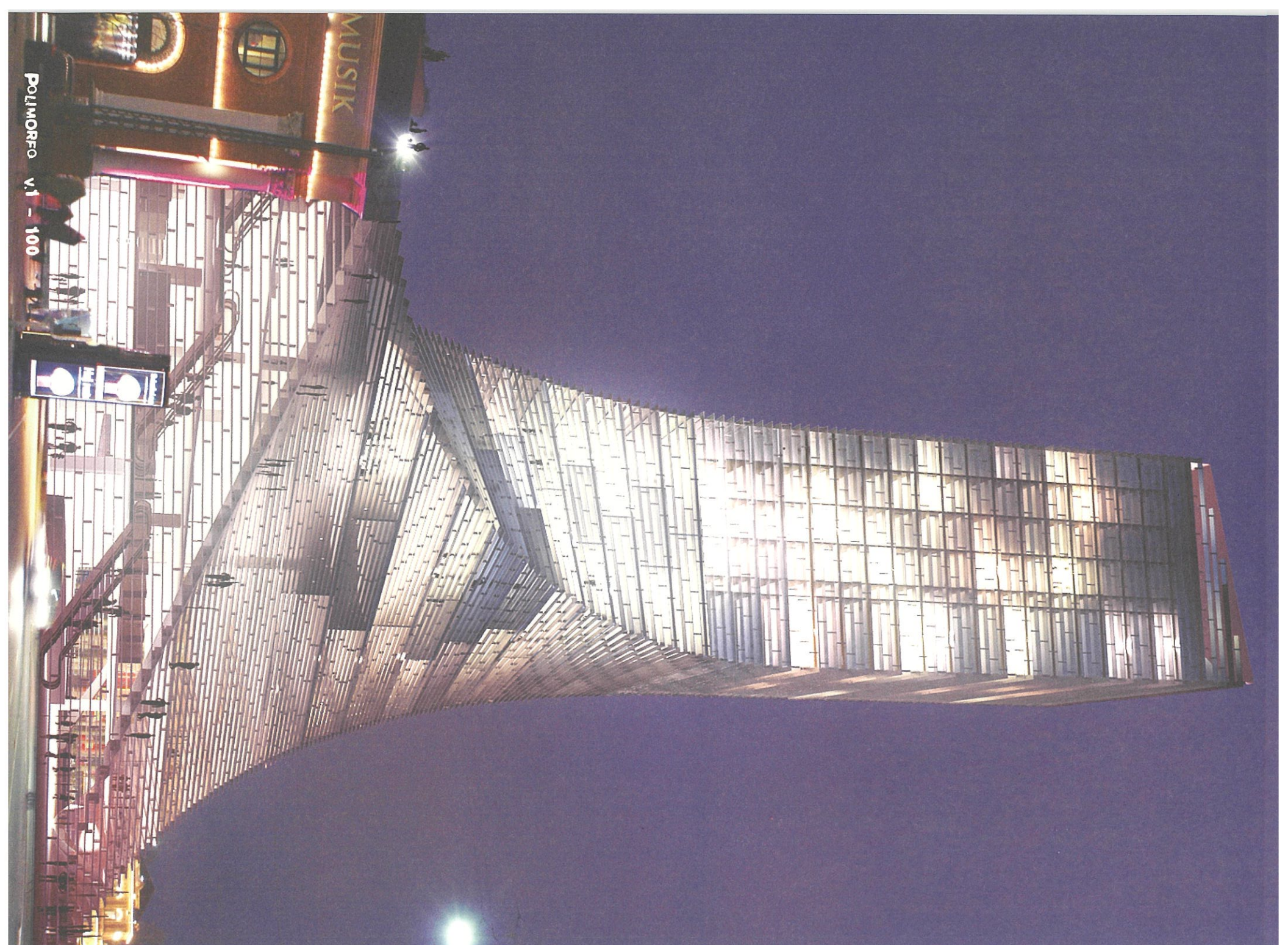
The municipality has expressed a wish to let Scala house the new main library. Additionally, the proximity to the Central Station and the central location make the building suitable for conferences, hotel rooms and offices, which all in all means many activities in one place. Rather than choosing just one of the suggested programmes, we propose to realize all wishes and possibilities all at once: A dense and lively house for the city that combines both private and public space in a sliding scale from the street to the rooftop in one continuous movement.

We propose a building with a starting point in the

historical Copenhagen tower which is made up of two basic principles: a base that relates to the urban space and life unfolding near the building, and a slim steeple that reaches towards the sky and becomes part of the Copenhagen Skyline. As such, our design of the Scala Tower grows out of the context with a starting point in the volumes and cornice heights of the neighbouring buildings. From the surrounding city space, the house rises towards the sky. At the top, a clear principle for a tall and slim tower, at the bottom, a beautifully modelled volume that merges with the surrounding city from building to city space.

At street level, people have access to the main library that is a terraced landscape of reading rooms, great collections as well as a conference centre. Continuing up the tower, visitors will find themselves comfortable in the hotel, just as commercial tenures and a public roof terrace offer spectacular views of the city.





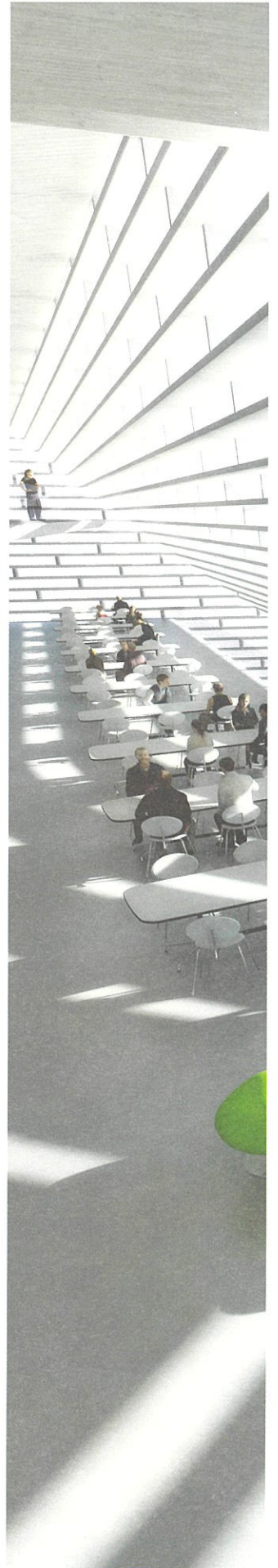
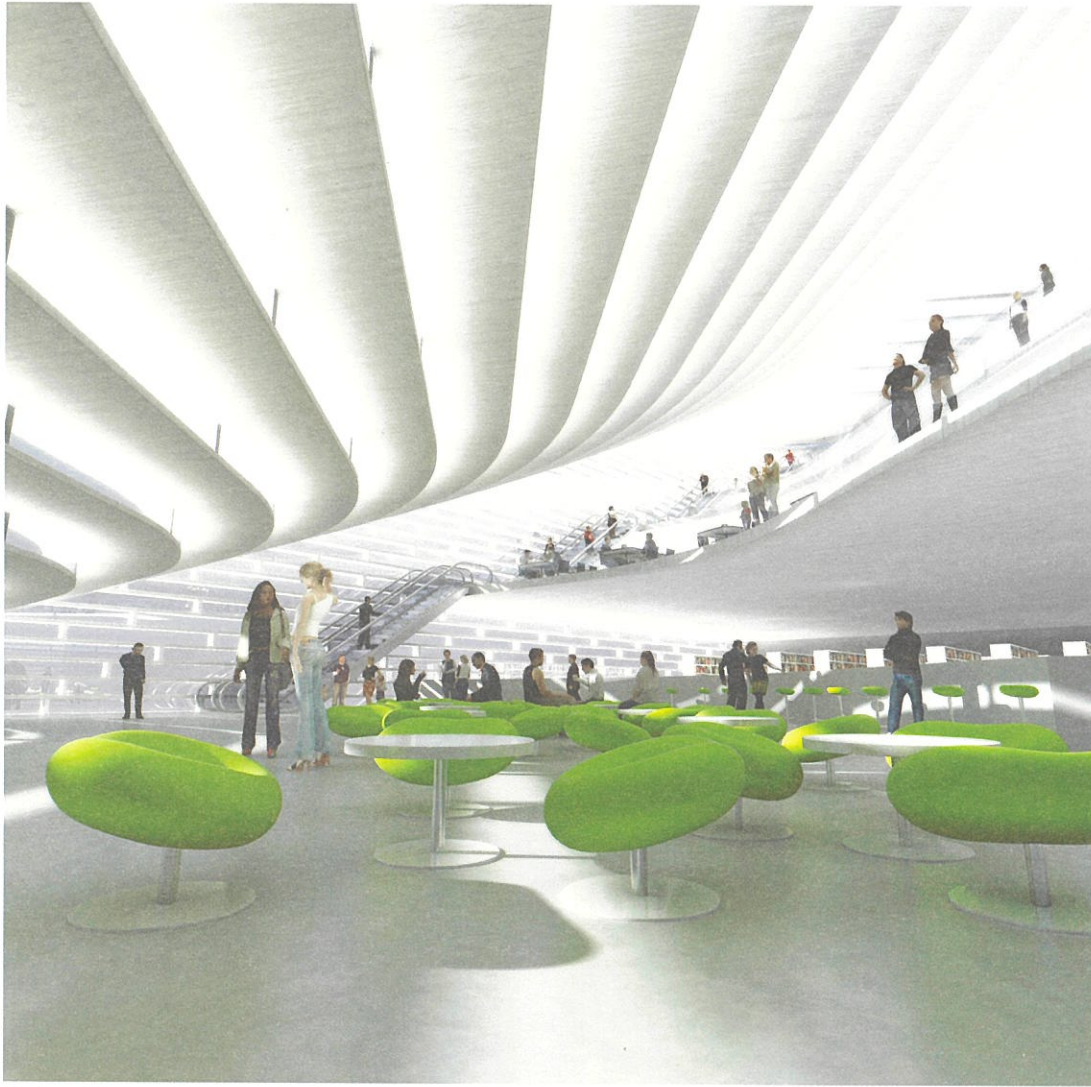
POLIMORFO V.1 - 100

MUSIK

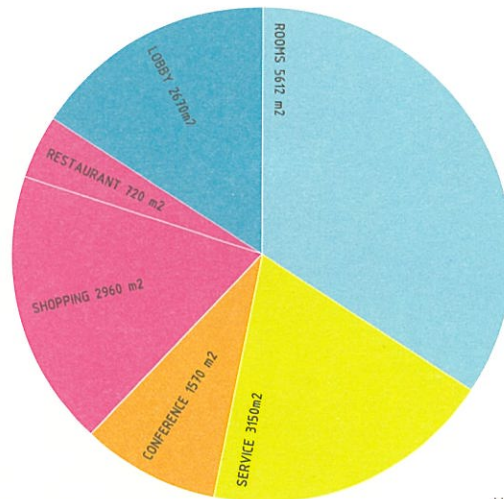




POTIMORFO VI - 10



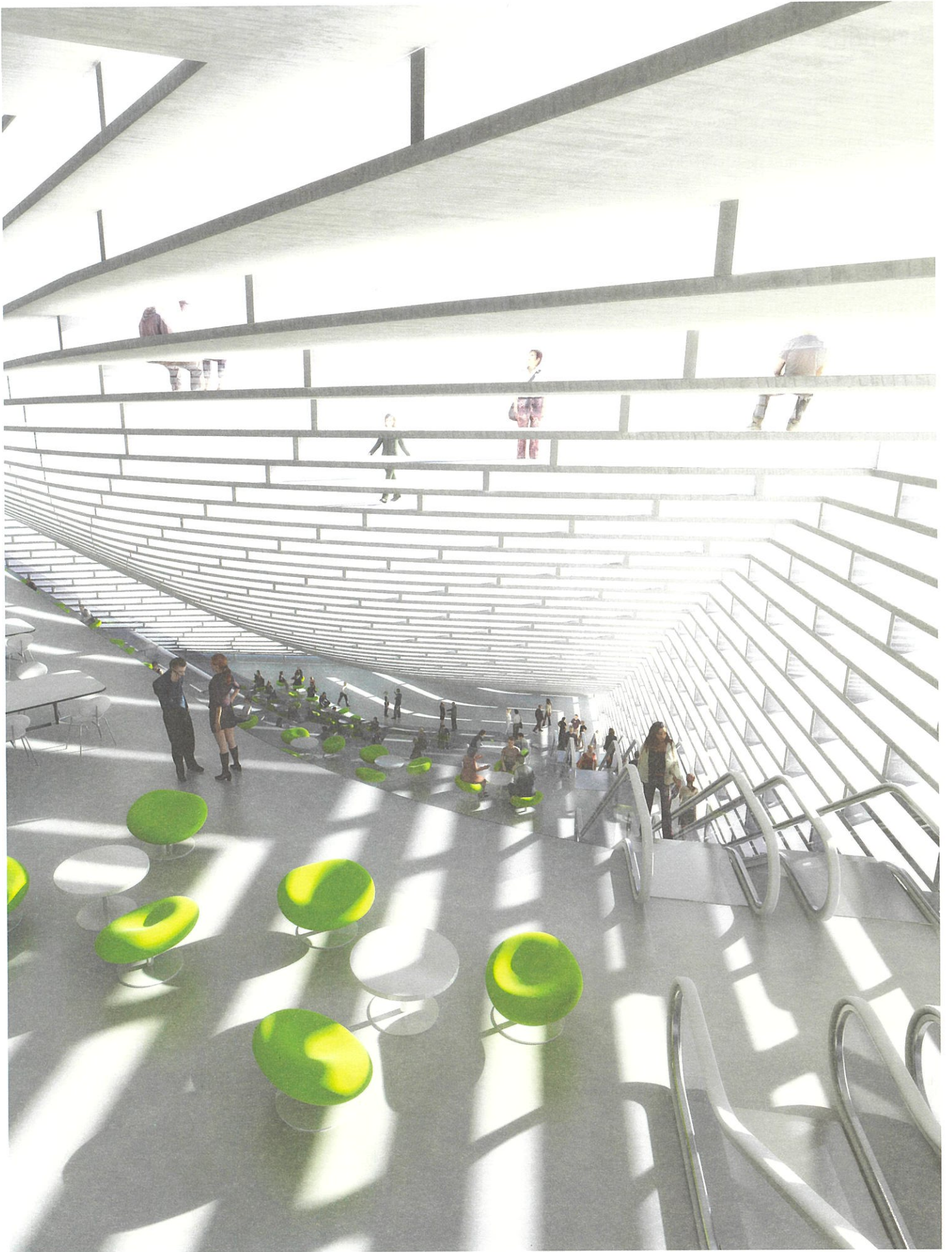
HOTEL + SHOPPING + CONFERENCE



++PARKING 10300 m<sup>2</sup>

**Créditos:**

Socio a cargo: Bjarke Ingels  
 Líder de proyecto: Andreas Pedersen  
 Colaboradores: Camilla Hoel Eduardsen, Christian Bratz, Karsten Hammer Hansen, Simon Lyager Poulsen, Ville Haimala  
 Área: 45,000 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Etapa: En curso



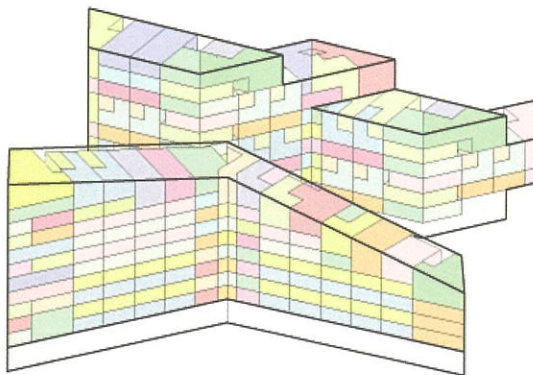
## Viviendas VM, Copenhague, Dinamarca

Los VM Houses, vistos desde arriba, forman una V y una M, y constituyen el primer proyecto residencial construido en el nuevo distrito de Copenhague conocido como Ørestaden. El creciente vecindario está conectado al centro de la ciudad por el nuevo sistema del metro.

La cuadra del perímetro manipulado del edificio V se define claramente en sus cuatro esquinas, pero abre internamente y a sus lados. Se elimina el vis-à-vis del edificio V con la vecina, la casa M, al empujarlo en su centro, lo que asegura contar con vistas diagonales al vasto y abierto campo alrededor de ambos. El volumen del edificio provee ventilación óptima, luz solar y vistas a todos los apartamentos, cuyos balcones en forma de triángulo caracterizan la fachada que mira hacia el sur. Todos los apartamentos tienen un espacio de doble altura, hacia el norte, y amplias vistas panorámicas hacia el sur.

Las personas pueden acceder los apartamentos desde un pasillo central que atraviesa el volumen del edificio y abre hacia la luz del día y a vistas a ambos lados. Los pasillos crean conexiones a elevadores y escaleras, y funcionan como comunidades locales donde las personas pueden encontrarse espontáneamente, y los niños pueden jugar. El pasillo central funciona como un espacio público, e imita agujeros de bala que penetran el edificio arbitrariamente.

Una lógica similar a la de la losa en diagonal es empleada en el edificio M, aunque, en este caso, se divide en porciones más pequeñas. Aquí, la tipología de la *Unité d'habitation* de Le Corbusier se reinterpreta y muta: los pasillos centrales son cortos y reciben luz de ambos lados. Todas las terrazas individuales están ubicadas en el lado del edificio que mira hacia el sur, y desde los pasillos centrales se llega a la terraza de la azotea.



The VM Houses, shaped like a V and an M when seen from above, is the first residential project to be built in the new district of Copenhagen known as Ørestaden. The upcoming neighbourhood is connected to the center of the city by the new metro system.

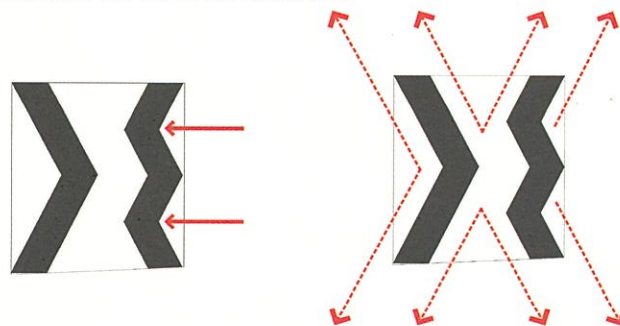
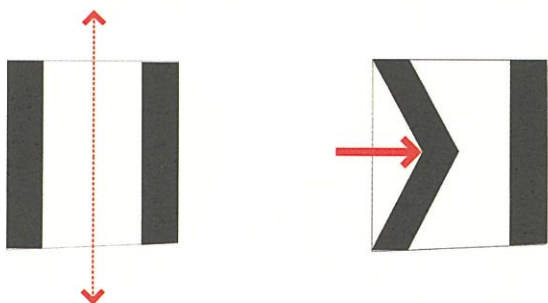
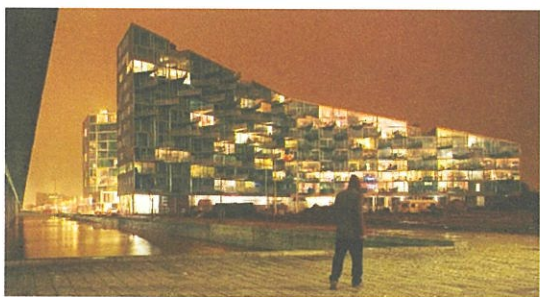
The manipulated perimeter block of the V building is clearly defined in its four corners, but opened internally and along the sides. The vis-à-vis with the neighbouring M house is eliminated by pushing the slab in its centre, ensuring diagonal views to the vast, open fields around. The building volume provides optimal air, daylight and views to all apartments with triangular-shaped balconies characterising the south facing facade. All apartments have a double-height space to the north and wide panoramic views to the south.

People can access the apartments from a central corridor that cuts through the building volume and opens up towards daylight and views at each end. The corridors create connections to elevators and staircases and function as a local community where people can meet spontaneously and children can play. The central hallway function as a public space, imitating random bullet holes penetrating the building.

A similar logic of the diagonal slab is used in the M building, although in this case it is broken down into smaller portions. Here, the typology of Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation* is reinterpreted and mutated: the central corridors are short and receive light from both ends. Individual terraces are all on the south facing side of the building, and the roof terrace can be reached from the central corridors.

Foto / Photo: Jimmy  
Cohrsen

Página / Page 105  
Foto / Photo: Nicholai  
Müller









**Creditos:**

**Arquitectos:** PLOT = BIG + JDS

**Socio a cargo:** Blarke Ingels

**Colaborador:** Julien De Smedt

**Líder de proyecto:** Finn Nørkjær

**Arquitecto a Cargo:** Thomas Christoffersen

**Gerente del proyecto:** Henrik Poulsen

**Colaboradores:** Alistair Williams, Anna

Anne Louise Breiner, Annette Jensen, Bent

Christian Finderup, Claus Tversted, David Zanic

Dhairya Sheel Ramesh, Dorte Børresen, Henning

Stüben, Ingrid Sørritslev, Jakob Christensen,

Jakob Lange, Jakob Møller, Jakob Wodschou,

Jørn Jensen, Karsten Hammer Hansen, Mads H.

Lund, Marc Jay, Maria Yedby Ljungberg, Nadja

Cederberg, Nanna Gyldholm Møller, Narisara

Ladawal, Ole Elkjær-Larsen, Ole Nannberg, Oliver

Grundahl, Sandra Knöbel, Simon Irgens-Møller,

Sophus Søbye, Søren Stærmos, Xavier Pavia

Pages

**Área:** 25,000 m<sup>2</sup>

**Costo:** 22 millones

**Etapas:** Construido 2005



**A FONDO**



# Soldiers and Tourists:

## The Subjective Selves of Puerto Rico's Modern Architecture

by Miguel Rodríguez Casellas

Jardín Alado, Charles Juhasz in Guayama,  
Puerto Rico, Photo: Kenneth Rexach

Page 119

Exhibition: Henry Klumb and  
Poetic Exuberance in Architecture.  
Photo: Puerto Rico Museum of Art

### I. History as void

History is a commodity in Puerto Rican culture. It dictates social hierarchies as it exercises its hegemonic power to produce value. To claim one's own history as a possession is not only a triumph in itself—that of being able to trace one's life back to an advantageous point of origin—but also an authorization to distribute it as a brand. To survive the historical enquiry without having to acknowledge shameful events or dirty family secrets is a privilege. Those who manage to connect their past to a deified historical account showcase their history as a precious commodity, a convenient escape from the Island's vulgarity, and a priceless identity passport that could lead to first-world alliances in spite of the prevailing third world conditions.

Still, most personal histories come in less than perfect packages, and in that sense it is often preferable to forget and redo the past, surveying for new facts that may be stacked over each other in strategic ways. In these historical makeovers the selection of the right mnemonic devices is as important as the connections between them, as is the case with any good piece of narrative. The facts, isolated from a consensual historic context, are accumulated like hardware store inventory, a kit of parts ready for artifactual assemblage.

Modern Architecture in Puerto Rico has functioned as a pseudo-mnemonic machine since its very first insertions into the Island's imagination. A tainted past provided the raw material for a new manufactured memory. To begin again, to forget what was left from previous colonial enterprises, to reconfigure the immediate past as a sign of the future, to overcome tropical disease for tropical pleasure, all these defined the agenda of Puerto Rican Modern Architecture.

Although many connections could be drawn to the European models that claimed a similar emancipation from the past, or to the Brazilian chapter of Modern Architecture that sought to build the promise of a future that was yet to occur, there is something rather



unique about the Puerto Rican Modernist tradition. To begin with, the players were quite different. On that aspect, I would argue that the local Government was not the intellectual author of the modern agenda, a role that is so often hyperbolized in many historical accounts. I would argue, instead, that it was the conspicuous alliance of the military and hotel industry that best approximated the role of author. I would even say that their actions transcended the actual implantation of the modernist tabula rasa, but that they erased memory as much as they produced it, and that it was in these exchanges and negotiations of fact and fantasy that the Modern Movement took place in the island.

After all the discussions on the spatial qualities of the Puerto Rican Modern tradition, I prefer to look at the "imagination" as the targeted space of this architectural body. Architectural forms are no more than props for a super production of fictions and dreams.

Today, I will argue that modern architecture played a major role in reconfiguring a collective memory of sorts, and that its interest was equally divided between an ideological break with the past and the manufacturing of a "new past": a brand new history.

Back in 1955, when the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture was created as part of a state initiative to decriminalize Puerto Rican symbols that were strictly forbidden before the creation of the Estado Libre Asociado — roughly translated as "Commonwealth" — a sanitizing operation that folklorized the remains of a very selective memory was set in motion. A sentimental storytelling approach took over what should have been a rigorous

historical account, and myths such as the organic fusion of races leading to "puertorriqueñidad" became part of both the state's official discourse and the self-identity of every man and woman. Left behind were the nasty episodes of slavery and domination, as has been the norm in other Caribbean countries and in the American South, places that have been periodically reinvented with a rather flexible imagination. To mitigate with myth what is too painful to acknowledge as history grew to be the standard approach among the cultural technocrats that took the mission of rewriting the past for a furiously modern and contemporary Puerto Rican audience in the second half of the 20th century.

Almost everybody agreed with the appearance of this brand new version of history. And in time, few remembered the rumors and marginal accounts from which it was constructed. Modern architecture helped us forget.

As one becomes familiarized with the falsification and lies that pollute the popular imagination, one becomes aware that in essence, there is no history in Puerto Rico, but a monumental void. An amnesic realm of faux memories and mystification lies at the place where a contradictory, yet dynamic historical account should have been. This void space is so charged with ideology and repression that one could experience regular attacks of paranoid fear while engaging in the tremendously criminal act of articulating a new interpretation of the abject historical body.

Ignited by this problematic void, a fetishistic compulsion toward collecting historical facts deters serious analysis. Information is taxonomized before it is scrutinized. The modern masters are created before one gets the opportunity to cross-examine them with their flaws and shortcomings. It is a "don't touch the relic" policy that has ended up dominating the tone of discussion of Modern Architecture in Puerto Rico. If Manfredo Tafuri notoriously claimed the absence of history in the era of criticism, I would have to say

that in Puerto Rican architectural discourse there is neither history nor criticism when addressing Modern Architecture.

Nevertheless, there is a positive side to this monumental void, namely the fertile ground it provides for speculative and counterfactual thought. This mental positioning could foster a more prolific narrative vehicle for criticism than the patrimonial celebration of the architectural past that has been the norm when addressing both colonial and modern architecture in Puerto Rico.

Modern Architecture in Puerto Rico is a fascinating case study of myth-making and ideological co-opting. The rights over its narrative have become a battleground for generational misunderstandings and gremial conflict. On one side we find the late modernists that never recovered from the religious proclivities of the Modern Movement's discourse, meaning the mixture of philanthropy and science as positive instruments of social reform. Those who were part of the Modern Movement's last chapters are now revered as "paternal figures" in the typical fashion of the modernist master. Criticism is seen as an act of treason against their canonic body of work and against their very noble goals, and it could also be taken as an offensive attack on the Puerto Rican identity itself. This is because in recent years Modern Architecture has been galvanized to Puerto Rican identity, with its so-called adaptations to the tropical weather praised as the foundational signs of the Puerto Rican self. I will address that concept later on today.

In another corner one finds the baby boomers, the ones who once embraced postmodernism and its commodification of history as a valid form-making approach. For those who had seen their stylistic choices ridiculed by an ever-changing architectural value media machine, acknowledging the qualities of modern architecture in the island became an acto de contrición, a mea culpa of sorts that provided them with the opportunity to refresh their presence and relevance as contemporary architects with a language of readily enforceable compositional strategies and ready-to-wear modern garments.

A third group is morally divided between their vintage appreciation of the modern architectural syntax and their urgency to position themselves apart

from the reigning baby boomers. The members of this group claim to be the real "contemporaries," and to prove so, they systematically erase every trace of modern architecture from the descriptions of their work, because they consider it too historical, although the formal debts remain more than obvious. A co-opted language of neurosciences and pulp science fiction dominates their rhetoric, while their designs embrace a wide range of modern formal antics. All this sounds like a collection of carry rivalries and inconsequential gossip, but it is at the core of the prevailing confusions and fantasyland storytelling that color the discussion of Puerto Rico's modern legacy.

I will not try to fill the historical void with yet another spanking new narrative nor align myself with any of the protagonists of the local architects' family feud. Instead, I want to take this opportunity to share an alternative reading of what seems to be the most important architectural body of work in 20th century Puerto Rico. In essence, I am fascinated by the complex ideological strategies that such simple architecture has been able to carry on.

## II. Tropical disease + Tropical ecstasy = Sick Building Syndrome

A common misconception in most historical accounts of Puerto Rican Modern Architecture is the so-called adaptation of previous models to the tropical weather. In addition to keeping in line with the prevailing evolutionary approach that is often used when periodizing the origin of Caribbean cultures, the narrative of "transforming" European and American precedents enforces a rhetoric of "identity search in architecture" that adds a metaphysical dimension to the practical adjustments that were implemented. While this interpretation benefits the local neo-national urges to add new entries to the "identity catalogue of signs," it is unsustainable when measured against the



larger picture of modernist discourse.

The practical reconfigurations of the modern syntax, in their transit from the North to the Tropic of Cancer, should not be called "adaptations" but "dis-adaptations." The stripping down of glass and the removal of superfluous insulating layers was very easily executed when transferring the European/American model to Puerto Rico.

In Europe and in the United States, modern architecture did not come about with such ease. There, the European/American architect had to work arduously to adapt the modern open boxes to harsh weather and conditions that resist the very notion of integrating inside and outside. They are the ones who were out of place when attempting to produce the modern edifice.

The conceptual presence of a benign weather in modern ideology is older than modern architecture itself, because it is a fact that a modern man was walking on Earth long before he was able to live in a modern house.

The origin of a modern subjectivity, commonly associated with the machine operator, the engineer, or even the enlightened scientist who symbolized "action," could also be related to the naked classical body, and I mean literally naked here. It was Quatremère de Quincy who fantasized about a naked Greco-Roman body whose privileged exposure to a warmer weather led to a closer contact with nature, the source of all truth. It is an Enlightenment idea to connect the classical body, which is a pleasure to watch, to the scientist that designs the watching devices. Modern subjectivity is at the intersection of both figures, the naked guy and the well-dressed scientist, but it was the house of the former — not the laboratory of the latter — that stole the imagination of modern architects.

The modern house is an open house, transparent and defiant of a natural world in which the weather forecast is eternally optimistic, allowing for the agile movements of the nude Greco-Roman body. Glass became a necessity in northern climates, a means to achieve a symbolic transparency when a literal one was impossible. For those architects who brought to the Island the formal dialogues of Modernity, the tropical weather opened up the opportunity to strip down the building of unnecessary clothing, therefore restoring the presence of the original

naked body for a brand new Classical Era of technological progress and scientific knowledge.

Modern Architecture felt at home in Puerto Rico, and that was not a historical coincidence. Notions of a rational architecture, so deeply rooted in modern ideology, were often defended by deploying “primitive huts” in French Caribbean settings as evidence. Here again, the scientist mated with what he considered to be a native body, and it should be pointed out that this body was as mystified during the Enlightenment as was the other naked body, the classical one. Increasingly, both creatures became indistinguishable from each other while the European gaze gained a distinct recognizability with respect to any previous form of looking. A rational architecture was developed upon the honesty and ingenuity of the naked builder who was closely watched by his European molester.

To bring back the European man to the Caribbean, (or the American-trained architect that gained in school the gravitas of the colonial ruler), is to bring back the notion of the Caribbean as a Laboratory of Modernity, a la Frezier, but it is also the consummation of a hidden desire to escape from the very rigidities of rational thought into the playful and informal vastness of modern space. A Garden of Eden in the Caribbean, so to speak, is as much an attack to western culture and civilization, by repositioning the classical model in an older, primordial setting, as it is a confirmation of the positivistic notion that science can release us from time and space constraints.

In the long run, the consequences of such openness proved to be disastrous in most modern buildings in the Tropics. The impetus to erase the marks of a previously pathologized jungle, full of sickening air and tropical disease, led to an over-romantization of the weather in spite of form, and even more traumatically, in spite of function, the ultimate modern sin. One of the biggest challenges of restoring modern architecture in Puerto Rico is the legacy of sick building syndrome, courtesy of the air conditioning devices brought in once the idealized wind and humidity interfered with the buildings' operations.

When restoring those structures, one cannot go back to the previous openness. In dis-adapting the building to the benign tropical weather, the modern architects brought trouble to paradise. By



celebrating modern architecture as cure, they underestimated nature. But even today, those shortcomings are often overlooked, as it is preferred to emphasize the integration of traditional environmental control techniques with the foreign language of modernity. Once again, the idea of reconciling past and present as a fortunate marriage that procreated national identity is impeding a critical examination of the facts.

To look at Puerto Rican Modern Architecture as the maternity warden of an infantile national identity, removing any references to the theoretical frameworks of western architecture, for the purpose of overemphasizing the unique as “vernacular,” has led us to ignore the complex ideological operations that have handled the national unconscious as a design project. Perhaps a more violent account needs to be brought forward, to prove that what once looked like paradise was in fact an open battleground of selves.

### III. The war machine

There is no need to escape the fact that the Caribbean has been a militarized region since Europe directed its gaze towards it, and even before then. The name itself carries the memories of those violent Caribs whose love of war is well documented. The architecture of science, the rubric that would lead to Modern Architecture, was already in place in the careful diagramming of colonial towns and in the monumental architecture of fortresses and fortifications implanted by the Spaniards. Science and war were mutually indispensable even before science was acknowledged as a meaningful word. Since colonial times, the systematization of war into building construction and city planning has been as much an instrument of domination as a sign of the instrument itself. It was an ancient roman strategy of control that the Renaissance's subjectivity reenacted in the New World. The Caribbean would be the perfect barbaric landscape for the proliferation of discipline and order, war

and science.

It is not surprising then, to see how much the concept of war is symbolically embedded in the tissues of Caribbean culture. Puerto Rico is no exception to the rule. From Benítez Rojo's archipelagic defensive machine to Felix Jiménez's theory of the American soldier as a model of masculinity for the squalid, colonized, emasculated Puerto Rican man, both land and body have been cast in this region for and by war.

Desire provided the threshold, the vulnerable entry for the invasion and propagation of the war machine. History here takes the form of an erotic tale of force and submission, played by the military superpower and the curious victim, because it has to be acknowledged for good that the Puerto Rican victim of imperialism and military coercion has been, and still is, a very curious victim. The desire to be taken by the powerful other coexists with the fear of rejection and an increasing sense of guilt. It is not always possible to accept at a conscious level the amount of pleasure that is derived from the titanic intervention of American military power on the island. The unconscious is something else.

Modern Architecture allowed for an unconscious pleasure to be openly acknowledged and enjoyed. It helped demilitarize the military by aestheticizing every territorial decision and every reconfiguration in space. Space renders desire, a desire to be touched by the powerful one, a desire to be organized under his will.

In modern ideology the ultimate ruler is Science, and the power it unleashes is called modernization. In Puerto Rico this process was further gentilized with the term Americanization, and this brought a level of role-playing to space transformation that led directly to the concept of war.

Military bases became the showcase of modernity long before the Modern Movement was consolidated as such at the dawn of the historical Avant-Gardes. For a hungry population denied of the large scales and grandeur of 19th





century architecture, military bases conjured the aesthetic of modernity as large-size beautification. Military bases became in Puerto Rico the equivalent to the 19th century's City Beautiful Movement.

The aesthetic qualities and configurations of military bases were put in place as a scale model for what the island should become under American Rule. If the advertised presence of the athletic body and well-fed soldier, using Félix Jiménez's remark, was a way of relabeling our national masculinity as weak and hypertrophic, military bases performed an analogous function with respect to the territory. They not only forced the unreasonable comparison that led to self-hate and an inferiority complex, but also carried the cure, the redemptive power to help us overcome our national failures.

The popularization of the military base's form and way of life is still a driving force in the Puerto Rican imaginary self. One could claim that over the course of a century the island has been reconfigured with the military base as a model. The idea of the enclave, with fences and surveilled access that guarantee security; with pure, hurricane-resistant, concrete structures; with clear-cut separations of functions and specialized typologies that cater to both essential needs and entertainment; with ideal pastures that erased the memory of the sugar cane field of exploitation with green grasses of contemplation, all within the best medical care and education available, became the model of what the country wanted to become. It is my belief that in spite of the geopolitical logic that brought the military bases to the island, it was their local role as advertisers of Modernization/Americanization what kept them in place.

The increasingly complex highway system facilitated the dissemination of the military ideal across the territory, a system that was built with federal funds as part of a strategy for connecting each of the military enclaves into a war system. The old train infrastructure that served the sugar cane industry was methodically substituted by the automobile speedways that would add personal mobility to the wish list of modern desires. If looking at the military bases was an opportunity to dream oneself in them, and if looking at the soldier was a way of wanting to become him, then looking at space from the car's perspective turned the entire island into a visual field of desire.

An undeclared desire to escape from oneself into the domain of the

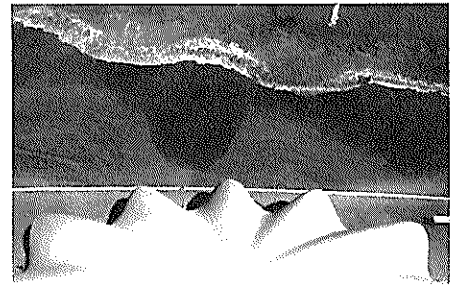
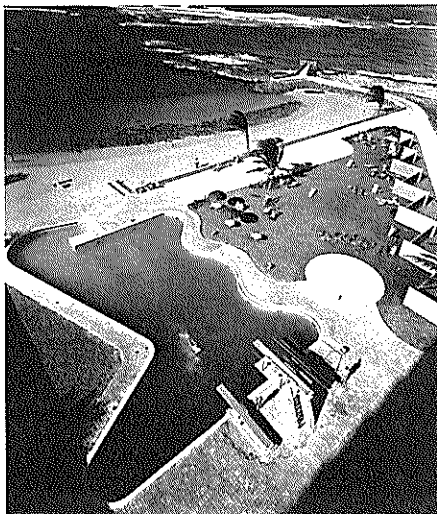
"powerful one" turned out to be a strong cultural force in Puerto Rico from the early decades of the 20th century. Modern Architecture was the way to conceptually achieve the physical displacement that was not available to everybody. If one could not always escape the island, the island could be made so foreign from itself that it would stand in for the desired other. In that sense, the modernist *tabula rasa* became a self-inflicted act of mutilation.

To recognize oneself in the unrecognizable landscape of the future articulated the ultimate escape from an aborted history.

#### IV. Landscapes of leisure

In the last-minute consolidation of Puerto Rican identity there were moments of intensity as well as were weak ones. If food, dance and music are regarded as providers of short cut routes to a sense of national realization and belonging, design is often perceived as a rather underdeveloped area in providing the props and backgrounds to the local identity spectacle. Colonial and 19th century architecture are so well-rooted in the national imagination that their status as design artifacts is not even necessary for bringing out their symbolic capabilities. Modern design, on the contrary, is so connected to the idea of a designer's will that its eventual validation as a carrier of national identity struggles with the very idea of the narcissistic modern architect. It is no coincidence that the little historiography that has been done on this type of architecture almost always relates the designers to a larger, collective, national project. One could reconstruct the logic behind this pervasive narrative format.

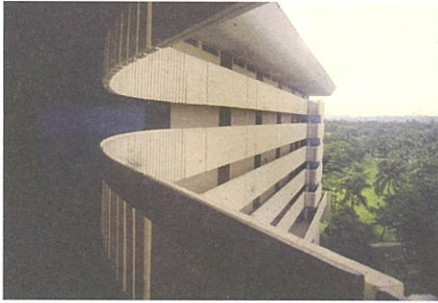
The status of the designer as author, if exaggerated, could undermine



the collectivization of the work as part of a national product or legacy. On the other hand, by praising the author's genius, the road suddenly becomes free of obstacle for conferring patrimonial status to his architecture, a mystified sphere that benefits from any acknowledgement of patriarchal enhancements. This tension between the celebration of modern architecture as a collective, national achievement, and the modern architect as an autonomous, individual genius, is a very recent phenomenon in local debates. With the creation of a local chapter of DOCOMOMO in Puerto Rico, a louder, vibrant conversation about these conflicts is starting to emerge. At this point, one could only hope for the best.

However, there is not much hope left in Puerto Rico these days, in general. The current economic slowdown and the unanimous sense of anticlimactic momentum, of Puerto Rico as a "has-been country," of the incomplete national project that did not grow up to its expectation, is forcing oblique views of the legacies of the 20th century. Most of the time, these visual confrontations with the past are about the "what went wrong" and the "when was the last time that hope was a collective, shared sentiment?" As a result of this introspective mood, Modern Architecture is gaining a sudden visibility, that of the coherent sign of a golden era. Here again, romance is in the air, and its distorting effects have to be expected.

This sudden interest in Modern Architecture in Puerto Rico is a result of an overflow of national anxiety. The specificities of the modern project in the island, as a place controlled by mental constructions, are now more important to look at than its formal qualities, as I have stated previously. And a very first observation that arises from the realm of the imagination is that modern architectural projects were not uniformly absorbed into the national consciousness. While government buildings that serve the population have tended to share a history of distopic decline, there is an architectural



type that has retained its symbolic power—and the utopic clairvoyance of the original photographs—over any other architectural type, and I am referring here to the hotel, both the building and its image.

The mid-century hotel extended the modern artifactuality to the landscape in ways that are not entirely foreign to the early military bases. In a way, they are the result of the ongoing military operation that reconfigured the island toward American interests. Once the soldier cleaned up the jungle, a landscaped facsimile was scheduled to occur.

But going back to the previous comment on the weak spots of identity, one should mention here the chronic absence of an acknowledged landscape tradition in Puerto Rico. There are many possible explanations for this omission. The general sense toward the land is very much the result of previous agricultural latifundia and its collateral perception of land as being a feudal commodity that is foreign to those who live and work on it. There is a subjacent demonization of nature in Puerto Rican culture that portrays it as a source of either disease or exploitation; both associations are rooted in history and they have evolved into a national aesthetic that celebrates what is obviously artificial and therefore safer.

When the massive suburbanization of the territory left patches of land under the titularity of the new middle-class home owner, it was surprising to see their consistent disdain of the garden as an integral part of the house. Here and there, a little mnemonic garden, with its disorganized array of fruit trees and medicinal plants, might bring back the memory of a romantized, lost original farm. But even in those particular moments, the garden is no more than a place of neglect, the haven of provisional decisions that ended up rooting themselves in the ground without a designer's will. To act on the territory is, once again, the realm

of the colonial ruler, whose violent force is both feared as it is perversely desired.

Modern hotels are places where a symbolic communion between the subordinator and the subordinated is depicted as natural, free from the obscene undertones of a repressive self. Its referential value was immensely needed in the second half of the 20th century, when the brutal effect of living a late industrialization—and the abrupt social reorganization it required—coincided with the experience of a postindustrial pathos and the social crisis that is typical of a consumers' culture. The democratization of pleasure, which lies at the core of the Modern Movement's promise, was already put in question in the dysfunctional public housing projects that tried to discipline the population and in the anxieties that the modern city was cultivating throughout the island. The tourist, then, became a sublimized role for Puerto Ricans to escape from the old and now chronically exacerbated sense of displacement, into the secure, though provisional status of the amused observer. Natural beauty, free from diseases or forced labor associations, would be enjoyed from the "watching devices," strategic standpoints and perspectival frames implemented by Modern Architecture. To look at nature, finally being able to enjoy its presence without having to renounce to the comforts of modern architecture, is part of the experience Puerto Ricans allow themselves to have while playing tourist at the resort hotel.

In the new mid-century hotels, the original lawns that once were an integral part of the military base's aesthetic were eventually transformed into jungle-like Eden. Instant gardening brought a natural, pseudo-historic setting to the standardized modern container. The aging effect achieved by the use of landscape design dignified the modern hotel building, giving it an essential, transcendental quality through the combined ages of plants and trees that conveyed a sense of history with their size and mature development.

While the rest of the island seemed to be transforming itself using the military base as a model and formal synthesis of collective aspirations, hotels often attained the status of sanctuaries of timeless, yet predictable, perfection. In spite of class differences, hotels systematized for everybody the act of escaping from the island. With every new visit, a renewed faith in the promises of modern architecture was

secured, even as modern architecture in the rest of the island faced decay and neglect.

The hotels' large maintenance budget allowed them to survive wear and abuse with grace. As places for forgetting and reinventing memories, hotels were extremely successful because of their utopic superiority. It is not surprising to corroborate in official statistical reports that the most important segment of the tourist industry in Puerto Rico are Puerto Ricans themselves, both the ones who live on the island and those who fled decades ago.

Hotel lingering is a national pastime; a new country is recreated with each visit through a memory exchange operation. Modern Architecture in Puerto Rico found in hotels a niche to preserve its best features, like an exposed counterpart to the hidden Dorian Grey picture.

It is not an exaggeration to say that modern hotels are the most symbolically loaded architecture of the island and that their role was to ease down the collateral dissatisfaction left by the Modern Movement.

In an era where local encoded messages are overpowered by unscripted global rubrics, the symbolic status of architecture is put in question. For a contemporary architect, as I would like to consider myself to be, the unfolding of historical subjectivities that previously remained undocumented and tacit is no amusing archeological game or fetishistic obsession, but a way to confront the centuries-old Caribbean dependency on the epistemologies and formal models of the powerful. To accept the present without asking questions has often been a safe political move in this part of the world. This positioning is no longer advantageous, because today's subjectivities, more than ever before, seem haunted by histories whose authenticity is no longer a relevant issue, as long as their effects are real, here and now.

**Page 120**

Historical Images taken from,  
*Fotografías para la Historia de Puerto Rico*  
1844-1952, Ediciones Huracán

**Page 121**

**top:** *Hotel La Concha* in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Photo: Ivonne M. Marcial

**bottom:** *Hotel Caribe Hilton* in San Juan, Puerto Rico

Photo: Ezra Stoller / Private Collection José J. Toro

*Hotel Cerromar* in Dorado, Puerto Rico

Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Casellas

## 2007-2008 Roundtable Series

# SERIE DE MESAS REDONDAS

Método, concepto y materia: La [re] educación de la arquitectura  
Method, Concept and Material: The [re] education of Architecture

ARQPOLI



Ocio y negocio: las nuevas geografías del espacio público  
Leisure and Business: The New Geographies of Public Space

El paisaje neo-liberal: la economía del territorio  
The Neoliberal Landscape: The Territory's Economy

Cuerpo y domesticidad: la nueva cultura del "makeover"  
Body and Domesticity: The New Culture of the "Makeover"

Inercia radical: profesionalismo, gremio y academia  
Radical Inertia: Professional Practice, Guild and Academy

The State of Architecture Today: by Kenneth Frampton

## 2008 Research Topic

CIDADADLAB  
UTOPIA  
EN  
MOSCU

WWW.CIDADADLAB.COM

# Carefully Reading the Generic City and Junkspace:

From an affirmative description of urbanity  
to an experiential pessimism of our built environment.

by Oscar Oliver Didier

## Introduction

Rem Koolhaas' intention has commonly been to analyze the present situation of urbanity; be that through retroactive manifestoes, elaborate metaphors or descriptive narratives. We could also say that Koolhaas tends to change tone quite easily (be that throughout his career, from essay to essay or within a single article). From a passive describer to a blatant pessimist, Koolhaas has undeniably utilized this and other mood-tone shifts throughout his writing career. In the end, this has probably occurred in order for this theorist to renew himself intellectually in the public's eye and to break with the accepted architectural status-quo (almost forcefully and sometimes for the sake of it). Yet nowhere is this more present in Koolhaas work than in two essays that he wrote seven years apart; *The Generic City* (1994) and *Junkspace* (2001). Both these works attempt to describe the contemporary city, yet even though they share a common object of study one can notice a clear change in the tone and in the descriptive method utilized. In the first, a descriptive almost affirmative approach to the contemporary city, and in the latter, a pessimistic and experiential appreciation. One cannot help but think of the reason a shift like this might occur, be that to change gears for the sake of changing or because of an actual re-understanding of the city he attempts to analyze. By comparing points of convergence and of clear contradiction this paper will attempt to highlight and understand Koolhaas approach to the contemporary city in both of these essays.

Byproduct  
To give a basic overview of both these written works we must first begin by understanding the scope of its analysis. In *The Generic City* it is quite clear that the examination into the contemporary metropolis is on an urban scale. Its observations are more in a broader macro-regional sense. While on the other hand, *Junkspace* mostly articulates on a much local, even interior level. If the GC insists on the importance of infrastructure as a

facilitator for growth and as a means for the creation of multiple city centers, JS is described as being a residue or a byproduct of the modernity which in turn produces the GC.

*As the sphere of influence expands, the area characterized by the center becomes larger and larger, hopelessly diluting both the strength and the authority of the core; inevitably the distance between center and circumference increases to the breaking point.* (*Generic City*)

*The built product of modernization is not modern architecture but Junkspace. Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout.* (*Junkspace*)

Along these lines we could say that out of the progressive growth of the GC, as a byproduct, JS is produced. Even though this is a simplistic outlook on both terms it helps us to understand the intercrossing and the apparent dependence with each other that these two stipulations share.

## Identity

Another important point to be discussed in both these essays is the use of the term identity. In the GC identity is seen as the complete opposite of what the contemporary city produces in actuality. It is seen as retrograde and counterproductive, a forced action which goes against the nature of the new city and the elements which produce it. Koolhaas even compares identity to a straitjacket which imprisons and resists expansion.

*Identity is like a mousetrap in which more and more mice have to share the original bait, and which, on closer inspection, may have been empty for centuries. The stronger identity, the more it imprisons, the more it resists expansion, interpretation, renewal, contradiction. Identity becomes like a lighthouse – fixed, overdetermined: it can change its position or the pattern it emits only at the cost of destabilizing navigation.*

## (*Generic City*)

*However in JS identity is used in a different fashion. For Koolhaas the contemporary city thrives on identity, it claims to be authentic and depends on history as yet another tool for its growth.*

*“Identity” is the new junk food for the dispossessed, globalization’s fodder for the disenfranchised [...] (*Junkspace*)*

In the end, it is clear that Koolhaas shifts and redefines his understanding of the term identity. From a retrospective resuscitation of the traditional city in the GC (which in turns restrains and destroys the metropolis), to a tool for generating and at the same time validating the production of urbanity and its architecture in JS.

## The Subject

The presence of the subject is also a very important element in JS. The essay's tone and approach is very experiential, it thrives on the relationship of the subject to JS. Whereas in the GC the argumentation is more detached from the subject and relies more heavily on the elaboration of how the city operates and the forces that help push and shape it. This understanding could maybe explain partially why Koolhaas is more pessimistic in JS; potentially by adding the subject and his experience into the spaces of the city he discovered its failure or its weakness.

*The subject is stripped of privacy in return for access to credit nirvana. You are complicit in the tracing of the fingerprints each of your transactions leaves; they know everything about you, except who you are. Emissaries of Junkspace pursue you in the formerly impervious privacy of the bedroom: the minibar, private fax machines, pay TV offering compromised pornography, fresh plastic veils wrapping toilet seats, courtesy condoms: miniature profit centers coexist with your bedside bible... Junkspace pretends to unite, but it actually splinters.* (*Junkspace*)

While on the other hand, the GC opts to present the city's users as massing or as

demographics. Koolhaas dedicates a whole section of this essay to Statistics and to discussing the exponential growth of the city's residents through several decades. He then writes a section on Population and highlights its multiculturalism and racial configuration with numbers and percentages. It is quite clear that his outlook on the subject in the GC is more about large groups or sectors; homogeneous communities and users of the metropolis.

*The Generic City is seriously multiracial, on average 8% black, 12% white, 27% Hispanic, 37% Chinese/Asian, 6% indeterminate, 10% other. Not only multiracial, also multicultural. That's why it comes as no surprise to see temples between the slabs, dragons on the main boulevards, Buddhas in the CBD (central business district). (Generic City)*

This in turn produces a dry and objective view on the subject of the contemporary city, a clear opposite to the more experiential and subjective outlook on JS.

### Public Space

Public space is treated in both essays as something that is rethought in the contemporary metropolis. In the GC the public realm has disappeared, instead an apparent calmness is preferred. Circulation and movement is limited to what is necessary.

*The Generic City addresses the "evils" that were ascribed to the traditional city before our love for it became unconditional. The serenity of the Generic City is achieved by the evacuation of the public realm, as in an emergency fire drill. The urban plane now only accommodates necessary movement, fundamentally the car; highways are a superior version of boulevards and plazas, taking more and more space; their design, seemingly aiming for automotive efficiency, is in fact surprisingly sensual, a utilitarian pretense entering the domain of smooth space. (Generic City)*

Whereas in JS Koolhaas rethinks the term and understands that the contemporary city rescues from the traditional one certain modes of urbanity. Public life is reduced to public space, a notion that mimics a certain type of urbanism, yet still rejects its chaotic nature for a more predictable communality.

*The more indeterminate the city, the*

*more specific its Junkspace; all Junkspace's prototypes are urban - the Roman Forum, the Metropolis; it is only their reverse synergy that makes them suburban, simultaneously swollen and shrunken. Junkspace reduces what is urban to urbanity... Instead of public life, Public Space: what remains of the city once the unpredictable has been removed [...] (Junkspace)*

So even though both essays share a common root, that of the smoothing down of public life, JS understands that public space is not being rejected, it is instead being reutilized in a very controlled and sterile manner. Needless to say, it is also quite obvious that in the GC Koolhaas is discussing this topic in a much more broader and from an infrastructural viewpoint of circulating through the urban realm, while in JS it is clear that he is highlighting the city's reinterpretation of public space in a much more local and architectural scale. Koolhaas even emphasizes the fact that public space, as understood in JS, intended for the interior of buildings is now spreading to the outside; the World as public space, with pedestrianized paved walks and exclusive sectors with vigilance.

### History

History is seen in the GC as a drawback for the growth and existence of the new metropolis. Closely related to the way Koolhaas defines the term identity; history is seen in urban terms, as a search for a center or a core and as a limit to the natural processes that feed into the massive growth of the city.

*Regret about history's absence is a tiresome reflex. It exposes an unspoken consensus that history's presence is desirable. But who says that is the case? A city is a plane inhabited in the most efficient way by people and processes, and in most cases the presence of history only drags down its performance [...] (Generic City)*

Even though he recognizes in the GC that history as a false thematization is present in the city's architecture and even helps fuel its creation process, (like postmodernism does for the GC) in JS he adds the notion of historical restoration as a producer of Junkspace; hence illustrating the idea that Koolhaas understands Junkspace as something negative, something to be avoided.

*There is zero loyalty - and zero tolerance*

*- toward configuration, no "original" condition; architecture has turned into a time lapse sequence to reveal a "permanent evolution"... The only certainty is conversion - continuous- followed, in rare cases, by "restoration," the process that claims ever new sections of history as extensions of Junkspace. History corrupts, absolute history corrupts absolutely. (Junkspace)*

While in the case of the GC, history is seen as something that drives down the city's ever-expansive growth, JS is described as something that can absorb history and by doing so exacerbate its presence in the built landscape.

### Airport

The airport for Rem Koolhaas has become an important element in the understanding of the contemporary city. In the GC he emphasizes on the programmatic offerings and the architectural and spatial characteristics the airport provides. Duty-free shopping and an ever-expansive system provide with just a few of the tools for creating what Koolhaas calls the most singular elements of the city, which at times even becomes autonomous and unrelated to it and with the strength to even replace it.

*Once manifestations of ultimate neutrality, airports now are among the most singular, characteristic elements of the Generic City, its strongest vehicle of differentiation. [...] Thus conceptually charged, airports become emblematic signs imprinted on the global collective unconscious in savage manipulations of their non-aviatic attractors - tax-free shopping, spectacular spatial qualities, the frequency and reliability of their connections to other airports. (Generic City)*

In JS he shares these same thoughts, yet elaborates on the notion that airports are becoming more complicated in terms of circulation and building techniques. An endless construction site where corridors have become destinations instead of connectors and where transparency has disappeared in favor of the cluttered and the provisional.

*Say an airport needs more space. In the past new terminals were added, each more or less characteristic of its own age, leaving the old ones as a readable record, evidence*





*of progress. Since passengers have definitely demonstrated their infinite malleability, the idea of rebuilding on the spot has gained currency. Travelators are thrown in reverse, signs taped, potted palms (or very large corpses) covered in body bags. (Junkspace)*

Koolhaas emphasizes on what the subject has to encounter throughout his movement through the airport. These dense and complicated circulations now require the expertise of graphic designers with their easily reproduced signage instead of architects with strict floor plans. If in the GC Koolhaas admires and avails the socio-programmatic possibilities that are packed into the airport, in JS he does just that but adds to the discussion the turmoil and chaos that arises from the constant reconfiguration and expansion (a thing admired in the GC) that occurs in these structures and the loss of a clear sequence and the submersion instead into the grotesque.

## Landscape

Landscape is yet another category which Koolhaas describes in his written work. Seen as a residue of the mega-growth patterns of the new metropolis, these spaces are also charged with strong connotations of nature, of the virginal untouched. In the end, a powerful tool for validating and justifying the expansive repetition of clusters throughout the built environment. By providing with this formal logic a merging of city and country, wilderness and order occurs in a single marketable package.

*The Generic City is held together, not by an over-demanding public realm [...] but by the residual. In the original model of the moderns, the residual was merely green, its controlled neatness a moralistic assertion of good intentions, discouraging association, use. In the Generic City, because the crust of its civilization is so thin, and through its immanent tropicality, the vegetal is transformed into Edenic residue, the main carrier of its identity: a hybrid of politics and landscape. At the same time refuge of the illegal, the uncontrollable, and subject of endless manipulation, it represents a simultaneous triumph of the manicured and the primeval. Its immoral lushness compensates for the Generic City's other poverities. Supremely inorganic, the organic is the Generic City's strongest myth. (Generic City)*

In JS Koolhaas reemphasizes and expands on the logic of landscape as a commodity. He categorizes this characteristic as ecolomy; the merging of economy with ecology, underdevelopment that in the end produces hyper-development. This in turn justifies the apparition of huge circulatory infrastructures and also produces the most significant ecological Junkspace; the golf course, a landscaped tabula rasa that perpetuates the desire for the leisured Faustian.

*Air, water, wood: all are enhanced to produce Hyperecology, a parallel Walden, a new rainforest. Landscape has become Junkspace, foliage as spoilage: trees are tortured, lawns cover human manipulations like thick pelts even toupees, sprinklers water according to mathematical timetables...Seemingly at the opposite end of Junkspace, the golf course is in fact its conceptual double; empty, serene, free of commercial debris. (Junkspace)*

## Architecture

In Rem Koolhaas understanding of architecture he has always talked about the use of the postmodernist language as a method, not a historical language, for creating the architecture of the contemporary city at the rate of growth in which this new urbanity operates. In the GC he describes this importance of employing an architectural style that does not need a strong theoretical framework and which at the same time pleases the GC's dwellers.

*The style of choice is postmodern, and will always remain so. Postmodernism is the only movement that has succeeded in connecting the practice of architecture with the practice of panic. Postmodernism is not a practice based on a highly civilized reading of architectural history but a method, a mutation in professional architecture that produces results fast enough to keep pace with the Generic City's development. (Generic City)*

In JS he also describes the presence of this architectural style as an agent of the new metropolis, yet he grows a bit weary about the use of this model and separates himself from his former compliance. Instead he warns about the loss of a strong architectural discourse that occurs by

succumbing blindly into market forces that are driven by inculcated tastes and needs.

*We do not leave pyramids. According to a new gospel of ugliness, there is already more Junkspace under construction in the 21st century than survived from the 20th [...] Architecture disappeared in the 20th century; we have been reading a footnote under a microscope hoping it would turn into a novel; our concern for the masses has blinded us to People's Architecture. (Junkspace)*

Koolhaas also emphasizes on the new construction techniques that are employed in contemporary buildings. In his quasi-passive tone, present throughout most of the GC, he describes these new building techniques as a natural outcome of the speed in which most of these structures are erected and from a general loss of the core design values that have instead been substituted by external market forces and heterogeneous thematizations;

*The use of silicone – “we are stretching the façade as far as it will go” – has flattened all facades, glued glass to stone to steel to concrete in a space-age impurity. These connections give the appearance of intellectual rigor through the liberal application of a transparent spermy compound that keeps everything together by intention rather than design – a triumph of glue over the integrity of materials. (Generic City)*

In JS he also describes this characteristic of these new construction methods, yet he adds that most of these building techniques are employed in this way because of the temporary and evolutionary nature of current architectural spaces. Most of these buildings are thought out initially with a pre-destined notion of change in mind, where the building's interior is seen as an application of an iconography, a thematization, a branding or a historical faux;

*The joint is no longer a problem, an intellectual issue: transitional moments are defined by stapling and taping, wrinkly brown bands barely maintain the illusion of an unbroken surface; verbs unknown and unthinkable in architectural history – clamp, stick, fold, dump, glue, shoot, double, fuse – have become indispensable. Each element performs its task in negotiated isolation. Where once detailing suggested the coming together, possibly forever, of*



*disparate materials, it is now a transient coupling, waiting to be undone, unscrewed, a temporary embrace with a high probability of separation [...] (Junkspace)*

Another important aspect present in the propagation of contemporary building practice is the use of the air conditioner. Koolhaas has always expressed the importance that mechanical innovation has played in the shaping of architecture during the 20th century. Inventions such as the escalator and the elevator propitiated new building typologies such as the department store, the shopping mall and the skyscraper. The air conditioner, on the other hand, while still helping to shape most of these innovative structures, also mimicked and controlled the climate of the new urbanity of the interior;

*Because the Generic City is largely Asian, its architecture is generally air-conditioned; this is where the paradox of the recent paradigm shift – the city no longer represents maximum development but borderline underdevelopment – becomes acute: the brutal means by which universal conditioning is achieved mimic inside the building the climatic conditions that once “happened” outside [...] (Generic City)*

In JS, in addition, Koolhaas brings into awareness the organizational capacity that the air conditioner brought to the building, generating huge mega structures with little need for design, light or natural air. In the end, the A.C. substituted the architect as a space provider and instead made the subject the sole decider of his un-meditated journey

*Gravity has remained constant, resisted by the same arsenal since the beginning of time; but air conditioning – invisible medium, therefore unnoticed – has truly revolutionized architecture. Air conditioning has launched the endless building. If architecture separates buildings, air conditioning unites them. Air conditioning has dictated mutant regimes of organization and coexistence that leave architecture behind. (Junkspace)*

End

In the end, it is quite clear that throughout these accounts we can witness the paradigm-tone shift that Koolhaas experiences in both these essays. On the one hand, The Generic City is a descriptive testament to the way the city operates and

is being shaped. A sort of warning sign to architects, to get with the times and to abandon the past and the grip it has on the deadening of the contemporary urban realm. On the other hand, Junkspace is a reaction to this city, emphasizing the role of the subject throughout this process and throughout his encounter and movement in these places. With more of an experiential, rather than strictly descriptive tone, we get to understand these Junkspaces; a clear outcome and byproduct of the Generic City and the modernity that produces it. One of the best ways to grasp this change in tenor is by reading carefully the way Koolhaas concludes both essays. On one side, the GC is finished off with a sort of explanatory mock up of a potential Hollywood movie. In it a sort of chaos and havoc occurs, but then suddenly it is muted, and a sheer calm and tranquility appears. This emptiness provided by this silence serves Koolhaas with a metaphor for explaining the new built environment; where the isolated, the predictable, the necessary and the serene are preferred over the city.

*Priests pray for calm. Children run amok in an undergrowth of legs and robes. Animals bark. Statues topple. Women shriek – threatened? Ecstatic? The churning mass becomes oceanic. Waves break. Now switch off the sound – silence, a welcome relief – and reverse the film [...] Silence is now reinforced by emptiness: the image shows empty stalls, some debris that was trampled underfoot. Relief...it's over. That is the story of the city. The city is no longer. We can leave the theater now... (Generic City)*

On the other side, JS ends with a series of unanswered questions which position the role of the subject in the center of the argumentation. It reacts by recognizing the human body as yet another example of Junkspace, an invaded species altered by cosmetics, surgery and advertisements.

*Mankind is always going on about architecture. What if space is looking at mankind? Will Junkspace invade the body? Through the vibes of the cell phone? Has it already? Botox injections? Collagen? Silicone implants? Liposuction? Penis enlargements? Does gene therapy announce a total reengineering according to Junkspace? In each of us a mini construction site? Mankind the sum of 3 to 5 billion individual upgrades? Is it a repertoire reconfiguration that facilitates*

*the intromission of a new species into its self-made Junksphere? The cosmetic is the new cosmic... (Junkspace)*

Is this shifting from passive describer, and even potential optimist, to an experiential pessimist just another manipulation tool by Koolhaas to bombard us with blatant contradictions and altered viewpoints? Or are Koolhaas written works just a work in progress which can be forever revisited and altered, renegotiated and kept up to date, just as the ever changing city and the architecture which he exposes with great detail and wit? We may just have to wait seven more years to find out...

# Pulsating Architecture:: Spheres of Possession :: 8 Fragments

by Félix Jiménez

The concept of Chinese writing thus functioned as a sort of European hallucination... And the hallucination translated less an ignorance than a misunderstanding. It was not disturbed by the knowledge of Chinese script, limited but real, which was then available. At the same time as the 'Chinese prejudice,' a 'hieroglyphist prejudice' had produced the same effect of interested blindness. The occultation, far from proceeding, as it would seem, from ethnocentric scorn, takes the form of an hyperbolic admiration. We have not finished verifying the necessity of this pattern. Our century is not free from it; each time that ethnocentrism is precipitately and ostentatiously reversed, some effort silently hides behind all the spectacular effects to consolidate an inside and to draw from it some domestic benefit. - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*

Alpha 60: Once we know the number one, we believe that we know the number two, because one plus one equals two. We forget that first we must know the meaning of plus. -Alphaville

There is a need in all of us to have a place to hide or store certain memories, thoughts, impulses, hopes and dreams. These are the parts of our lives that we can't resolve or act upon, but at the time, we are afraid to jettison them. For some, this is a physical place; for others, it is a mental space, and for a few it is neither. - Wong Kar-wai

## I Virtual Speed to a Concrete Nowhere

Architecture deflates: Its goal is to foreclose any other possibilities for a site. That's why it must be doubted. It is the neither. It is the meaning of plus. It is the consolidation of an inside. Thus, it lies.

Any sensate/sensorial history of architecture should - must, rather - submit itself to the intricate fallacy that underlies it: the oversimplification of the visual as hierarchical king of the hill. That the wonders, the textures, the smells and the creases of a constructed place may be obscured in favor of a packaged deal should, no doubt, be taken as another reason to doubt the hierarchical predominance of the visual that stands in front of our eyes. Tasting architecture should be a public art, an art of the sensate, an unyielding appetite: Pulsating architecture to the beat of a street party, outside.

Yet it is not. The "visible but unverifiable" Bentham/Foucauldian recipe of power strives to consolidate a theoretical inside. The concept serves us well when approaching a city, any city, a microcity, an inside-job city dreamt and materialized by sequestial "visions" - a city by and for architects that joyously (and perversely) negates the whims and appetites of the other who contemplates from outside the bubble; of the other who does not participate in its visual and sensory alterations. Who speaks for the ones who see?

Those who see are in need of a new foray into the theoretical city. We must take architecture outside: outside of itself and perhaps against its creators, who have strived to forego the pulsating mechanisms that make architecture a habit of the other senses, perhaps forgetting the meaning of plus. The concept of Puerto Rican architecture functions as a sort of Caribbean hallucination. The ghosts of decades past (Kumb et al, well, not even et al) hover as a regurgitating dysfunctional retro machine, so settled, so organic, so in its place. The real spatial urges are mostly found elsewhere. In literature, film and music, space is an unsettled issue that engages military bases, call girl houses, carnival sites, the Internet, and in which the the so-called Caribbean body is a body-at-large, unconfined, a Body Against its Organs in all its intercultural, surface-only transit.

## 2 Queer, as in Queer

The production of Caribbean queer spaces has been historically contained, socially curtailed and politically marginalized. The concreteness of buildings, structures and sites primarily designated as queer oftentimes is erased by the historical oscillations and omissions that have rendered them as mere footnotes in medical, clinical, nationalist or antinationalist discourses. Their emotional debris scatters

endlessly, for they are structures that, because of their (open or silenced) queer identifications, have been reduced or limited to markers of hygiene, pleasure or abjection, or lost in the recycling of their architecture for other socially or politically consensual purposes.

As Judith Butler reminds us, "the persistence of certain unavailability... haunts the present." Tracing Walter Benjamin, Butler suggests that the loss of materiality generates a constant gendered presence: "places are lost - destroyed, vacated, buried - but then there is some new place, and it is not the first, never can be the first. And so there is an impossibility housed at the site of the new place. What is new, newness itself, is founded upon the loss of the original place, and so it is a newness that has within it a sense of belatedness, of coming after, and of being thus fundamentally determined by a past that continues to inform it."

## 3 The Speed of Possession

Where - or in what form - is the past domiciled? Where are the senses domiciled? The past that continues to inform the present is not senseless; it has a certain deformative quality. It is at once the fiction and the friction that stults identities and nationalities and gender. How are these characteristics - and hence how are appetites - architecturally withheld? How

fast did they travel out of sight, or out of frame, in the quest for the perfect building that could make an architect a star?

The monochrome, monotone of the architects' self-consideration and self-aggrandizement most always secures the "consolidation of an inside circle" in architecture that deflates desire. The painful reality is that this is done so with certain ceremoniousness and aplomb. We need to be unsettled, to be offered doses of disquietude that may begin to awaken new ways of screening our peripheries.

In the Caribbean, the speed of possession (of structures, systems, bodies, theory) has not overtaken the speed of loss. The purely visual examines the notion of Caribbean space as vicissitude, and the deployment of that notion in recent literature, film and music. For example, the concept of the "urban" is a misnomer in the Caribbean, for the urban is not naturally laced with race or class considerations. The Caribbean's gridless cities, its hybrid urban spaces provoke what Silvio Torres Saillant terms "artificial citizenship" - the knowledge that an ejection from an island - any island - is always forthcoming, that an ejection unknowingly is in place. How to build and regard theoretical and actual space in the face of such fate? How is space a function of desire when there's the unsettlement of pre-ordained loss and mourning?

#### 4 Unsettlements

The pulse, in its pulsating, affects its bodily architecture. Consider Antonio Benítez-Rojo's notion of the "originating" (rather than the "original") structures of the Caribbean, spaces that are always in contention precisely because they are located in what he termed the "decentered center of the paradoxical" and possess "a certain way" of ordering and reordering that permeates their existence.

Thus the cycles of their evanescent immateriality and the frailty and fracture of their "unsettlements", of a certain way of italicizing spatial experiences.

#### 5 Italicized Space: Elsewhere

Unsettlement occurs in italicized space: the body and its sequential constructions collide in a composite that has been structured as a communal illusion - an elsewhere built in literature and music that negotiates and transforms architecture's

eyes and music's flesh-and-bone.

At the Tulán Motel, in Mayra Santos Febres' *Cualquier miércoles soy tuya*, pious churchgoers get nightshift jobs at the motel, so they stop worshipping, or rather, trade the architecture of compassion for the pulse of passion, and thus are able to take "a close look at the internal mechanism that keeps the city moving." The shift is italicized.

The Royal Palace in Pedro Antonio Valdez's *Carnaval de Sodoma* is a warehouse that stands tall, right in front of the Cathedral: a tender spatial duplicity that connects and opposes the umbilical twins of God and Mammon. Friction is italicized

El Cementerio, the prostitution house, located one block from Santo Domingo's real cemetery in Rey Andujar's *El hombre triángulo*. One can find Rotunda there, a woman who looks like a man. The spaces of queerness are italicized

In Rita Indiana Hernández's *Papi*, the space is domestic, but also a post-procreational space of infamy. It is the one of the most desirous Caribbean novels, and its relational space is the outside of the body. The daughter pines for her missing Papi, who is outside her per-view but within her as he is nowhere near. She dreams of seducing her father's lovers while imagining she is showered by toys, gifts, clothes and bibelots by her father. The domestic desire of household and its accoutrements pervade the things that fill up space so as to be able to identify it as place. A TV set in the middle of the living room - the site for her mother and mom's boyfriend to unwind at night - provides justification for the denial of her dreams, for her father's unsolicitousness. Through the spatial relations of that living room life's lessons seep in: Technology in color as domestic revenge. The living room as italicized emotional battlefield.

She has turn to the outside, The street is the frame and she is alone. She is alone in a house that was built for many. The street twists and turns, italicized.

#### 6 Reggaeton's Street

Cities are made by an extraordinary mixture of do-gooders and bloody-minded obsessives, of cynical political operators and speculators. They are shaped by the unintended consequences of the greedy and the self-interested, the dedicated and the occasional visionary. The cities that work best are those that keep their options open,

that allow the possibility of change... The ones that are stuck, overwhelmed by rigid, state-owned social housing, or by economic systems that offer the poor no way out of the slums are in trouble. A successful city is one that makes room for surprises. A city that has been trapped by too much gentrification, or too many shopping malls, will have trouble generating the spark that is essential to making a city that works.

- Deyan Sudjic, director of the Design Museum

We reach the space in which the streets have a name: Calle 13's pavement reverberates to the sound of Virilio's speed. Space as vicissitude once again. The speed of possession, and the speed in which we (are) possess(ed) overlap in street-smart space. Space in music is a sign of property value. It generates spark - and revenue. Unsettlement lives in that spaced-out street.

Consider how many of the wildly successful, platinum-record winning reggaetoneros would have self-destructed without an initial barrio-bound, non-blanquito description that was concocted to give them an early sympathy factor at the start of their careers. The fact that their streets' property values (and other financial and educational opportunities that might have been offered by their parents) are concealed from the equation reggaetonero = del pueblo = genuino = real = de la calle is a function of the everpresent "reggaetonero template" which eases the way for many a genuine hopeful to enter the musical world. As Cuba Gooding's character in *Jerry McGuire*, the template shouts "Show me the money!"

The myth of the street is a vital factor in reggaeton's "identity litmus test." It is an item on the essential check-list. How real and genuine can you be - in reggaeton's "identity litmus test" - if you have lived in a five-bathroom, gold-fixture house in a gated community? The conflation of "genuine" and "real" with perceived barrio roots (and, thus, non-blanquito origins) is the ideal PR/PR (Puerto Rican/Public Relations) ploy for nascent musical careers. With it they avoid questions and ceaseless interrogations about "Why not rock?" or "Why not ballads, or salsa?" or "What made you choose reggaeton?" Public relation machines here dictate that reggaeton is not a choice, or should not be perceived as one - it must be a natural outgrowth of a performer's "background." So performers act accordingly, even if reggaeton is a choice for them over other musical rhythms. As

longas reggaeton seems to be an inevitability (meaning said reggaetonero had to go that route because it fits with his socioeconomic and cultural non-blancito, barrio-caserío background) less questions are asked, and the reggaetonero acquires a more natural stance, a patina of "inevitability," of being "the real thing," "the genuine item."

Daddy Yankee's Villa Kennedy-to-riches story, for example, includes the tid-bit that he did finish his associate degree. But his geographical milieu to a certain extent dictated his natural selection of reggaeton. It was not choice. This "white", handsome poor boy has said so himself: *Era la música que oía en mi calle. Yo adoraba a Vico C.* Ivy Queen recounts how she had to ask for money in stop lights to help feed her family when she was living in Anasco. Her story gives texture to her present. How many reggaetoneros (and there are many) have been barbers or stylists? That does not necessarily correlate with the educational/financial opportunities they might have had (and discarded or missed or blatantly ignored) when they were growing up. It means that - again, in the realm of the "perceived" - that they are somewhat wayward. Thuggish. Not conventional. The "thugginess" factor - cosmetic as it might be in some cases - pays off.

By the same token, Residente Calle 13's perceived intelligence is a function of his cashing in on the educational/financial opportunities that his lawyer father and actress mother lavished on him. Not that he was silver-spooned, but he acted upon the possibilities that were there, afforded by whatever metal the spoon was made of. He is and was intelligent. Not thuggish enough. That is why people have such a difficult time pinning him down on his kind of music. And he hasn't labeled himself a full-blown reggaetonero either. From the outside perspective, and also from Calle 13's perspective, that would be an impossibility. He is cashing in on that impossibility. He knows the rules.

The discarded opportunities that Tego, Voltio, Mexicano, and the like had are part of what they sell. Example: the public discussion about Puerto Rico Gov. Anibal Acevedo Vilá's invitation to Don Omar to serve as a spokesperson for the Department of Education's stay in school program. At the end of the big brouhaha, when he was "disinvited," the question was, "So who can inspire the kids to stay in school, the one who did stay and graduated or the drop-out who feels he made the wrong decision and

wants to warn would-be drop-outs"? The answer seemed obvious to 12 reggaetoneros who discussed the topic in a TV program: Drop-outs do it better because - all of them said - they have the experience of having dropped out to back them up.

The entitlement of the street trumps the entitlement of education. Choosing to be *de la calle* classifies you as non-blancito. The real blancitos will never stand up, space-wise.

## 7 Choreographed Sites

What if the street is not real at all? And how can "the street" be more real or genuine than, say, Main Street, Wall Street, Bleecker Street or any of the two streets in Pleasantville? Actually, it can be posited that La Calle is the only street in a mythical Reggaetonville. A one-way-street. The street is a myth that dies hard because its market-niche (which now has nothing to do with anything urban but with everything global) falls outside the purview of those in the (governmental/financial/educational) know. "The street" is exotic because, as *bon sauvage* territory, it can be mined to produce rawness and passion at the market's needed speed - supersonic speed. The street is the speed of reggaeton's sounds. It is bought, staged, lighted and choreographed with record company money. Thus, it is a site of fantasy. It is the perfect mirage. Where else can the Horatio Alger rags-to-riches story be staged and consumed in loop fashion? Reggaeton videos mostly are staged with a "street" in mind that could be the same backdrop for all. What makes that street and its (artificial) traits more genuine and real than, say, any Silicon Valley alleyway? For the sake of comparison, let's examine the dot-com companies and their rise and fall. The characteristics and attendant mystique of the people that lived that short-and-profitable era (from executives to employees) were engulfed by a public perception that made the imagined the perceptual norm. Was it real? Sure it was! Was it a controlled fantasy? Sure it was. But the latter trumped the former. When it became uncontrollable it lost its fantasy and its reality. Reggaeton as a controlled fantasy needs, as was discussed before, a template. The street is an acquired set of traits, a reggaeton finishing school, so to speak - a theoretical fantasy.

Reggaeton is an imagined community, a la Benedict Anderson. No more, no less. Its claims to possessing the

essence of lo genuino and lo real are negated by reggaetoneros' constant need to reiterate that they want to *mantenerse genuinos, mantenerlo real* - keep it genuine, keep it real. No such need would exist if Reggaeton Street had been built on solid ground. Blancitos learn the ropes and are able to perform as well as non-blancitos because non-blancitos have to learn the ropes too. As in Pleasantville, they leave their black-and-white existence and learn to exist in living color. The notion of color is learned; so is the notion of the theoretical construct of *la calle*. A convenient grid is fabricated. Music's geography is an architectural imperative.

## 8 Regimes of Turbulence

What about the space in front of our faces, the grid of all grids, the grid that broadcasts hallucinations? Derrida again: "the hallucination translated less an ignorance than a misunderstanding." The unfolding of a TV news broadcast is structured around iconology and its attendant narrative iterations, but it is still more storyboard than storytelling. It elicits a different kind of critical response, not to the acts (news are mostly silent acts) but to the worded images that are supposed to enhance them (the noise journalists and producers are supposed to build around the acts.). In journalism, the frames hide the acts. So journalism, especially broadcast news, desperately needs academic silence, and should be constructed from that silence, not with the noise of a presumably newsworthy, voice-overed Big Bang. In Subtitles, Atom Egoyan says that "Every film is a foreign film," so every newscast should be considered a foreign newscast, subtitled, to feature the constant oscillation between the lure of that constructed not-yet-known and the emotional attachment to the known. In that oscillation, many spaces are created and shattered.

Every building is a foreign building. Thus, there: a theoretical space. ■■■■■■■■■■

# Urban

20/05/08

**La medición del desarrollo urbano 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Dr. Mario Marazzi Santiago Lillian Torres Aguirre Prof. José M. Auger Marchand  
Prof. Carlos J. Guilbe

12/06/08

**Legislación y desarrollo urbano 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Hon. Kenneth McClintock Hernández Hon. Antonio J. Fas Alzamora  
Lcda. Margarita E. García Cárdenas Arq. Rafael Pumarada Sánchez  
Lcdo. Alberto O. Jiménez Santiago

19/06/08

**Experiencias y Retos de la Ordenación Territorial 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Arq. Juan C. Santiago Plan. Leslie Rosado Plan. Sandra Velázquez Plan. Eileen Poueymirou  
Plan. Luis García Petetti

17/07/08

**La burbuja del mercado de vivienda 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Ing. Rafael Rojo Steven Véliz Marisol Aja Hon. Jorge Rivera Jiménez Lcdo. Carlos Rivas Quiñones  
Jose J. Villamil

13/08/08

**Desarrollo Urbano e Infraestructura: Plataforma del Partido Puertorriqueños por Puerto Rico 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Ing. Rogelio Figueroa

27/08/08

**Desarrollo Urbano e Infraestructura: Plataforma del Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Prof. Edwin Irizarry Mora

10/09/08

**Desarrollo Urbano e Infraestructura: Plataforma del Partido Nuevo Progresista 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Hon. Luis A. Fortuna (sujeto a confirmación)

24/09/08

**Desarrollo Urbano e Infraestructura: Plataforma del Partido Popular Democrático 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Hon. Anibal Acevedo Vila (sujeto a confirmación)

08/10/08

**Los recintos del ocio urbano 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Alfredo Torres Lisa Vigoreaux Héctor Marciano Dr. José Luis Vega  
Arq. Miguel Rodríguez Casellas

20/11/08

**"De la casa al Parking" 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Dr. Juan G. Galpi Dr. Dorlan Lugo Dra. Lilliana Ramos Collado  
Dr. Rubén Ríos Avila

04/12/08

**Ciudad y Prensa 6:30<sub>pm</sub>**  
Héscar Robles Larissa Vázquez Zacata Omaya Sosa Pascual  
Félix Jiménez



# ENTREVISTA



ENTREVISTA A LA PRESIDENTA DE LA COMISIÓN NACIONAL DE LOS RIOS, ANA MARÍA GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ



# A Discussion About Rhetoric, the “Learning from...” and the Virtues of the Generic:

A Talk with Denise Scott Brown & Robert Venturi

por / by: Oscar Oliver y / and Marcelo López Dinardi

Page 137

Sainsbury Wing

Photo: Tim Soar

Page 138

Houston Children's

Museum

Photo: Matt Wargo

Page 140

Lelong, Shanghai

Photo: VSBA

OO - Can the Neo-Avant-Garde project of the late 1960s and '70s, with its rescuing attempt to turn architecture into a communication science, with its use of linguistic and symbolic systems, be rescued for current architectural practice? Do we need its models or its spirit of experimentation?

RV - To frame the discussion, let me review quickly the content of our written work since 1966. *Complexity and Contradiction* (1) reacted to the purity and minimalism of Modern architecture of the time. I tried to bring back reference to history in architectural theory and used comparative analysis to show parallels between historical and contemporary architecture. *Learning from Las Vegas* (2) documented our discovery of the vernacular commercial landscape and the significance of signage. Denise and I realized, “Oh my God! We have had signage all along; the Modernists were the only architects who threw it out, or thought they did.” Here, and in my second book, *Iconography and Electronics* (3), symbolism rather than space was investigated. Placing ourselves in the information age, we recommended employing symbolic allusion rather than abstract expression to communicate and make reference. We pointed toward iconographic media beyond architecture -- electrographics and electronics -- and suggested that architects find new sources of inspiration, based on the world around them, to replace the Nineteenth century, industry-derived sources they had depended on since the start of Modernism. In our latest book, *Architecture as Signs and Systems* (4), we define and discuss these two facets of architecture and urbanism, but we emphasize mannerism and mannerist breaking of the system when necessary to satisfy the requirements of our complex era.

DSB - We continue to make the case for symbolism in this book, but we go on to describe other, urban-derived ways of conceiving architecture, and to show how

they help us in design. It's strange to hear our work called Neo-Avant-Garde. To us, it doesn't need rescuing because we've employed it all along, using and developing our theoretical research of the 1950s, '60s and '70s in our practice from then till now. So in our office the old NAG is alive and well. However some architects seem to believe that Bob Venturi and I went down in a shipwreck called “Pomo,” during the commercial crassness of the 1980s. Yet 40 years of our work show how NAG has thrived, and we've lived to see a new generation of architects forget their parents' argument with us and look at what we actually do. This is wonderful, and it's why we deeply appreciate your rescue effort. So you've asked an excellent question, and our answer is yes, indeed we need this approach today. We, like you, see ourselves as rescuers. We feel we're saving the spirit and principles of early Modernism. Take Functionalism, for example. Although Neo-modernists say it's not important, its philosophy is, for us, one of the glories of Modern architecture. But it's defined inappropriately for our time. So we've tried to translate it to suit evolving world conditions since the 1960s, particularly the emerging age of information. In the process, we've recommended a new, but really old, function for architecture -- communication (5).

You should now take this project into the future. Hold to its guiding principles but study communication modes beyond the electric and electronic, and try to foresee the new patterns of association that they could engender. They will change everything and nothing, and in ways that are not wholly predictable, but they will underline, as well, the idea of change itself. Flexibility was hardly mentioned by the early Moderns until after World War II, when the task of rebuilding European cities turned 1950s architects toward both history and change. In those cities they found buildings that had survived over centuries. Some had existed in use as housing since the twelfth century (though

certainly their plumbing was different). Others, especially palazzos, had acquired a range of different uses. And today, in most buildings over ten years old, the first program of activities, the client's brief, is not the last. Indeed, the requirements change while we are designing and yet again before construction ends. This suggests we reassess our notions of Functionalism in the light of a theory of change. Those medieval houses put you in awe of the possibilities of functional change over time. How did activities and lifestyles succeed each other, again and again, and what in the house designs enabled them to do so? How does that work today? The invention of the PC and its liberation in the iPod does not mean that all buildings must be rebuilt, but many will be adapted. Learning from history, we should ask, how do buildings accept change? Which building types have multiple functional possibilities, and why? These are, to me, some questions a new generation should ask.

RV - This relates to the idea of the generic building that can accommodate different activities at different times. We use the analogy of a glove and a mitten. The generic building is not designed to cover individual fingers but, like a mitten, to allow wiggle room and take hands of different sizes. Industrial loft buildings have a long tradition of doing this -- that's why our office is in one. And the Italian palazzo was first a residence for a noble family and later a museum, library or embassy. So form can accommodate as well as follow function.

OO - So there is a value in this generic sort of condition?

DSB - Absolutely, the loft is a prototype today for offices and other building types where change must be allowed for. Early Modern architects designed most buildings as gloves. Le Corbusier told students to analyze the workings of a train kitchen. This provides a space for a certain size of fork and another for a second size. Corb saw functionalism in the context of the



industrial revolution, where machines had unique shapes because one was a pump, one a container and another a chimney. But automobile parts were eventually set under a streamlined body, and electronics brought miniaturization and melding that makes the functional expression of separate elements inapplicable.

RV - There are two aspects here, one is the loft building. It figures strongly in the libraries, classrooms and laboratories we design. Laboratories in particular are constantly changing, not only functionally and spatially but in their mechanical systems. The other aspect is the iconography on the surface of buildings, especially the electronic appliqué that we have written about. Sadly, we haven't been able to use this technique much in our work because most of our buildings, being academic, must sit recessively in their context. They shouldn't impose. We wish we had designed that building in New York whose exterior facade is essentially one big billboard covered with changing electronic iconography. But we haven't been employed by clients who need that form of communication. There is an irony that in architecture your followers get to do it before you do (laughs).

OO - But with this use of electronics, are we truly making today architecture for an information age or just referencing and simulating it?

RV - The electronics may incidentally

express their time, but they're there to communicate. The ancient Egyptians covered their buildings with hieroglyphics. The statue-laden fronts of cathedrals of the middle ages were essentially billboards designed to inform and persuade people about Christianity. The mosaics that blanketed the interiors of Byzantine churches certainly made their spaces more wonderful but their primary function was to give information. For a century, we architects talked only of space, now we should focus as well on symbolism. Communication should be one of the functions of architecture. And it should contribute to another of architecture's functions, which is to help enhance community.

MLD - Which do you think are the new symbols and signs of our time? If the role of architectural history is no longer what it used to be, can it still serve as a reference or an allusion?

RV - Yes, but it's important to mention that this can have a negative side. Fascist architecture had strong symbolic references and graphics that were dreadful in content. Much content today is commercial and American. Wherever you are today, someone is selling you Coca-Cola or enticing you into a McDonald's.

DSB - I'd rather they tried to sell me Coke than religion.

RV - Exactly, exactly. That's not so bad, though lots of people are snobbish about it. But decoration can also have a role in accommodating the diversity and multiculturalism of our time. Today, most of the world's urban societies use more or less the same technologies of building, the same structural and mechanical systems, mainly for economic reasons. Therefore the universal aspect of recent global architecture is technical. But another aspect, the expressive, can and should be different. If firmness, commodity and delight are the three elements of architecture, then the delight part, which can vary, should enable architecture to acknowledge that there are many different cultures, not one universal culture, in the world.

OO - So really architectural history should be utilized or studied in terms of its communicational aspects. But aren't we now in the information age, where maybe historical reference isn't that precise? And which is more relevant today, multiculturalism or the many fields that tie to or evolve from the information age?

DSB - These are fascinating questions. Let me answer the last one first. Both multiculturalism and IT-engendered social change are important, but they tend today toward opposite poles, multiculturalism toward diversity and IT, I would claim, toward universality. I was amazed in China to see a rural person squatting on his haunches on an urban sidewalk in a pose used universally in rural societies for everything from meeting to toileting. He was speaking on a cell phone. Such technology-induced changes in living activities at building and city scale are the main reason for our suggestion that young architects now take up the reassessment of Functionalism that was started in Europe in the 1950s and continued in our research and practice. But these technologies tend to promote universality. They make activities in the cities of the world more similar, more "American." However, I can foresee a time when the new appliances become internalized to local cultures and are considered no more American than the telephone. So the iPhone will figure as much in a traditional Korean wedding ceremony as in a western one. It probably already does. Today Japanese families may sit on chairs and eat hamburgers for supper when they are home, even if they prefer to dine ceremonially and traditionally when



they go out (and so do we, and we eat sushi). And although the developing sciences of sustainability may help building to respond more than now to local conditions, this will probably be achieved through coopting natural and craft methods and materials into the universal systems. This reply argues that the Vitruvian element delight, more than firmness, more than commodity, will be the conduit for the expression of diversity and locality in world architecture. But, to answer your first question: who said architectural communication had to involve only history? Not us. Let me give you an example. The façade of our extension to the British National Gallery on Trafalgar Square is in Portland stone like that of the existing building, and it uses columns reproduced from the earlier building as part of its vocabulary of communication. But we use them differently. Bob Venturi can describe in detail how they are different -- because, inter alia, their rhythms are those of jazz -- but that's not the issue here. The point is that our use of history was an allusion, intended to tie the new wing into the Trafalgar Square complex. The columns were a formal device to give unity, but more than that, they communicated a continuity between new and old and, even more, between successive building cultures in London, where the meaning of classical architecture and Portland stone would take some pages to dissect. But, being a modern building, our Portland stone is a relatively thin facing. So, in fact, is the whole main façade. Like that of an Italian palazzo, it

looks heavy and decorative but it doesn't go back more than a couple of meters, and it makes no pretence to do so, as you can see when you turn the corner. Our stone front is, in fact, a screen, a decorative billboard, alluding to a culture. Beyond and behind it, winding though it, you will see a modern, steel, glass and brick building. And between the two, at the main entrance, is a place for sheltering from the rain

RV - Behind that billboard façade, the glass window-walls have black frames -- a juxtaposition of Modernist Mies van der Rohe and Neoclassical London.

OO - In this mixing of Mies, the palazzo, and your own extensive processes of experimentation, to what extent have you, over the years, become your own reference? Can you reference yourselves?

DSB - Other people reference us. We see Bob's mother's house on top of high buildings worldwide. But we don't do it ourselves. And we don't like to cannibalize ourselves. We're frustrated when people ask, "Why can't you do what you did in that other building?" or say, "Any of those three buildings would be acceptable, but not this new thing you are showing us." This is because each design evolved from the specifics of its program. To do it now because we did it before would in many cases be to betray the program.

RV - And our buildings have to fit different

contexts. Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright were philosophical enemies but they both believed in design from the inside out. We say you should also design from the outside in, taking account of the needs of context. This gives dynamic tension. Our buildings are different from each other because, as Denise said, they serve different functions, but also because their contexts are different. But this doesn't require a building to be analogous to its context. Depending on circumstance, it can be in contrast -- or a mixture of both (6).

DSB - Someone said, recently, "Robert Venturi" (such people leave me out) "has had only one idea in his career, and he built a little house for his mother." I would say we've been lucky in life to have had an idea, a few ideas, and to have built on them a broad and complex structure of thought. Focus on these ideas over the length of our careers has given our work continuity. And yes, in Bob's mother's house, in embryo, are (almost) all the ideas we've worked with since.

RV - That house doesn't represent our whole ideology.

OO - But could it be that because of the complexity of the things that were managed at that house at the same time, could that, by consequence, have sprung a whole bunch of other ideas?

DSB - Certainly, take for example the relation between public and private. That's an idea we've developed since the 1950s, through research and in our urbanism and architecture. And it's in the Vanna Venturi House. You can see it in the plan. The public part has a marble tile floor. And the notion of the street through the building is also there in miniature. It starts in the driveway, passes through the entry porch and hallway, becomes a stair/bleacher in the living room, winds behind the fireplace, and ends in the "nowhere stair" at the top of the house.

RV - In discussing complexity, we must mention how much we love Shanghai. I knew I would love the diversity that derives from its great history, the complexities and contradictions embodied in its more than a century of mingling of world cultures. But when we got there we found so much more than we had expected. And we saw



how once-western sections had merged and melded with amazing Chinese commercial areas where signage dominates.

DSB - The latest is the electronics-covered Pudong. During the day, on the street amidst its skyscrapers, it's a nightmare; but at night, from across the river, it's a fairy land.

RV - It almost makes Times Square look historical (laughs).

MLD - How do you position yourselves with a place when you try to study or understand it? Do you apply to it a former research archetype or do you just let it speak to you?

DSB - We do a "learning from" study. At the outset, while we're fresh, we try to get down our impressions and save them for a time when we're deep in the project and may miss the wood for the trees. So we record what we first notice. Then, in all research but especially in ours, there's the question of how much the project speaks to you directly and how much you are guided by your matrix, your system. You have the reality before you and you have the budget limits of your project. If you don't use some kind of template the data will be more than you can handle. One of my professors used to talk about the whale theory of research. The whale opens its mouth and swims, eating whatever enters. If you use that method you will miss items off your path or over spend. So in the learning-from phase you have to develop a sense of what's going to be important. You need experience to guess where the project is likely to go and what you will need to study.

RV - When you look at context or quality of environment, it's vitally important to consider the vernacular as well as the high culture.

OO - And what are the most relevant destinations to study for current discourse? Are they cities or are they small local shops or chain stores? Are they a mix of both?

RV - In the 1960s, architects did not emphasize the automobile or the American everyday landscape. That's why we went to Los Angeles and Las Vegas and later to Levittown, to see if we could learn something.

DSB - As a practitioner, your study destinations depend on the subject matter of your project and on what specific sites offer. But for academics the question can

be answered by asking what should be interesting to people now? Historians need a certain skill - though it shouldn't be their only skill - in comprehending present issues well enough to lead architects to aspects of history that could be relevant for them today. In this sense, history comes and goes for us. And so does context. We feel it's important for us now to see the Tokyo Ginza and the new urbanism of China, of the Far East in general, but if we're designing a college lab building in New England we might look at Massachusetts industrial lofts. (We might look at them for lessons in flexibility wherever we are.)

RV - Do you know our article on Tokyo?

DSB - It's called "Two Naïfs in Japan."

RV - That's right, but you could call it, Tokyo as vital mess (laughs) (7).

OO - No, I don't know this essay.

DSB - In Shanghai there were fascinating vernacular buildings that derived from global borrowing. "Le long" housing is set in the middle of a dense commercial block and reached via a narrow archway off the main street. Go through, and you find a maze of small alleys, wide enough to take one car; along them are two or three-story single family houses, right there at the center of the commercial activity. Li long have a late 19th century origin and came from the mews streets and cottages of London. It's amazing and moving that a London prototype became part of the Chinese vernacular. When I referred to them in print, a Chinese professor in America wrote saying he'd never found an equivalent social environment anywhere and, having tried many American housing types, he'd not yet discovered one where he could live as happily as in the li long.

OO - Inspired greatly by your work with the ordinary and the every-day, we embarked on a study of the mass migrations of Puerto Ricans to Orlando, Florida. This exodus of sorts has been a recurring condition of the Puerto Rican population. Historically, it has included cities like New York and Chicago, yet quite differently, today's migration has been fueled by desire and

apparent cultural continuity. One of our main hypotheses was that we were going to Orlando to understand our local condition, and specifically how we imagine the way we urbanize, migration becoming a cultural extension of our will to escape and start over. Unlike the cities mentioned earlier, the territory where we found ourselves contained no distinct population sectors that could be easily pinpointed, owing in part to an ever expanding privatized territory. What research tools, new or old, are needed to understand such socially complex yet diluted cityscapes?

DSB - Are you looking at cityscapes in Puerto Rico that have been brought about by people whose mental images of the ideal home rely on migration and borrowing of elements from elsewhere?

OO - Of course, it's a simultaneous condition. People who migrate are looking for Puerto Rico wherever they go, but in addition such people try to export their new context back to Puerto Rico. Added to that, people who are still on the island take into account family or friends who migrated and try to import that migrant context into Puerto Rico, in a sort of endless cycle of desire.

DSB - All over the world that's called "Americanization" and it's scorned. In France they see borrowing from American language as ruining the purity of French. In England they don't say "dessert" they say "pudding" because "dessert" is American, and they resent Starbucks and MacDonald's restaurants as American cultural hegemony. Are Puerto Rican immigrants and the locals who learn from them surrendering to cultural hegemony?

OO - I think all these types of borrowing share the same roots. It's a borrowing and interchange similar to that which induces rhetoric in your French and English examples, but it goes into the exportation of urban conditions or a desire for a particular urban condition.

DSB - It happens in Japan too. When I was first there, I felt I could relax because there was no way I could understand the language. In Europe I can make a brave effort to understand German or Spanish but in Japan, forget it. Then, as I grew used to the country, I began to spot borrowings -- from Times Square for the Ginza, but

also technical terms. Eventually I could recognize some English words with a Japanese flavor and, in a deep substratum, German words from an earlier domination. To me this can be a sign of cultural vitality.

OO - Going back to the question of the research tools necessary for these territories: in our case, we found ourselves scratching the surface of such diverse fields as ethnography, anthropology and, less so, architecture. Can a truly autonomous project of architecture ever be assembled, or do we need to immerse ourselves into interdisciplinary fields, as it is currently advocated in architecture?

DSB - In short, yes and no. But again this is a question with a long answer. Architects who feel their work should be autonomous and should concern only form-making have put themselves in a profession where, if you don't meet the functional needs of your client, you will be fired. We are mandated to make buildings do things for the people who pay for them and live in them. Louis Kahn used to say that a sculptor can sculpt a car with square wheels to make a statement about something, but an engineer has to design one with wheels that will roll. And we architects cannot be autonomous from such requirements. But as you fulfill them many questions arise. Some architects approach the questions with a narrow palette of thought and others with a broad one. When the thought is too narrow you can't fulfill the requirements and you lose the job. If the palette is very broad you face questions on how to make the thought relevant. I have been involved in interdisciplinary education since the 1960s. I saw this project fail because architects didn't know how to do it. They bored their students by not convincing them of the relevance of the connections they were trying to make, or by making wrong or irrelevant connections or ones that were too literal. Or by approaching the borrowed discipline, say physics, as if they were physicists rather than architects. My interdisciplinary areas are primarily (but not only) urban sociology and urban and regional economics. These have been fruitful for me as an architect, in design. They've helped to add urban and contextual dimensions to the methods we use for going from program to form. And they've taught us to take functionalism outside the building and urbanism into

it (8). But I'm careful to warn architects against using economic and social material as a social scientist would. And the social scientists can't help us translate it either. That's a job we have to do. We must know our own topic, architecture, and know how to ask questions that will enable us to learn from other fields. If we can't do that, the interdisciplinary project becomes irrelevant or obstructive for architecture. A few further thoughts on your Puerto Rican study: it sounds a bit like our "Learning from Levittown" project, whose context was also, for the most part, undefined suburbia. The research topics for that study are published in *On Houses and Housing* (9). And you might consider widening your span to encompass Hispanic residential

and working districts in Los Angeles, where Catholic mass is said in 48 different languages.

OO - When we recently talked you mentioned you were utilizing and researching a term coined by Peter and Alison Smithson, "socioplastics." Does this have to do with what you are talking about now and could you tell us a little bit about this term and its usefulness?

DSB - The Smithson called it "active socioplastics." They thought about it after World War II, when new towns were being built in England to house bombed populations, and an unintended result was the hardship suffered by low-income



people from London's East End. They had depended on the social support of neighborhood networks around them -- on "street life" -- which they lost when they were moved into the middle class new towns. This fact caused English architects of the early 1950s to try to understand and design for the life of the street. To do this, the Smithsons attempted to collaborate with urban sociologists. But something happened. I don't know what; I would imagine there was inability to communicate and arrogance on both sides. And when built, the streets in the sky did not work. Peter Smithson wrote that the sociologists would have to extend their discipline before he could learn from them, but I felt that would never happen; that the bridge would have to be formed by the architects.

MLD - How did you position yourselves with your Bank of Celebration project where you already had an existing, historically charged and simulated condition in a New Urbanist community scenario? Was there room for trial and experimentation?

DSB - New Urbanism has its own historical view.

RV - We were not happy with the New Urbanist ideas. There was some historical reference in our design but I don't consider it one of our more significant buildings.

DSB - Our design refers more to everyday commercial architecture than to history. I feel our building is true to itself and to its archetype -- the small town commercial bank. Think of a town that's part of a toy train set. What would the school house in that town be like? That's the archetype. While designing a school, we wouldn't necessarily imitate the archetype but we would have it in mind, as a datum.

RV - We also designed a fire station in Orlando. It's one of the few buildings we've done in Florida. Do you remember it?

OO - Yes we do.

RV - Because it's near Disney World, our approach was to refer symbolically to a child's image of a fire station. We did that, too, in an exaggerated way for the Children's Museum in Houston, Texas. The front made decorative reference to the classical façade of the grown up museum nearby,

and at the side were caryatids -- caryakids. I like it. It's teeming with symbolism.

OO - What do you think are the main differences between Neo-modernist reference to Modern architecture and the multiple references you have talked here about?

RV - Our references connect with the particular needs of the building and its context, broadly defined. Therefore they are eclectic and involve many symbols. And they are clearly reference not reproduction, we're not trying to fool anyone. And our symbolism is not sculptural, we're not making the whole building a dynamic sculptural statement, we're making a loft, a loft building with signage on it. We're utterly bored with the current Neo-modernism.

OO - Because they are probably just referencing the aesthetics of a modernist building?

DSB - Neo-modernism is a Postmodern style like the other postmodernisms, except that it makes historical reference to early Modernism not the Renaissance. When we refer we don't try to take anyone in, but we do comment and our comment may be wry.

RV - Our historical allusions aren't literal. They're flat not three-dimensional, representations not replications.

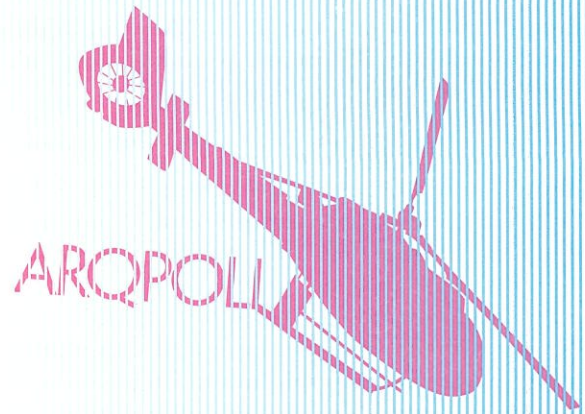
OO - How does your thesis, developed in *Architecture as Signs and Systems*, with its reassessment of mannerism apply to city theory and research?

DSB - There's a chapter in the book on mannerism in urbanism (10). Mannerism was once seen as neurosis or the bored dallying of dilettante architects, but we define it for cities today as the bending and breaking of rules, when complex overlapping systems prevent all rules from being met at once because many are in conflict. You don't break them because you're bored, you bend them so they can meld with others, so all can hang together. But in some parts of the city the rules clash so much that nothing really works -- at least, as we architects might consider working. Sometimes these are the most exciting places.

RV - That's sort of the essence of Tokyo.

DSB - Yes. They may be found where urban infrastructure and building systems collide and the slivers of space that lie between can't be used for much. I call these places the playgrounds of the gods. They're Mount Olympus on a Saturday night. They're formally exciting and aesthetically challenging and Mannerists like Rem Koolhaas love to swing over them on a flying trapeze. His IIT student center adapts just that kind of space. He even creatively uses the noise of the trains as they pass over the building. These collisions and Rem's response to them, our research on rule-breaking American and world cities, and the ideas it generated in our work, all give evidence of the continuing viability of the frisky NAG. Thank you for continuing the project. ■■■■■■

1. Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966; second edition 1977.
2. Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1972; revised edition 1977.
3. Robert Venturi, *Iconography and Electronics Upon a Generic Architecture, A View from the Drafting Room*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1996.
4. Robert Venturi, and Denise Scott Brown, *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*, Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.
5. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, "Functionalism, Yes, But..." *Architecture and Urbanism (A+U)*, November 1974, pp. 33-34. Denise Scott Brown, "The Redefinition of Functionalism," *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*, op. cit. pp. 142-174. Denise Scott Brown, "Functionalism, Yes Yes," *SPACE*, 487, August 2008, pp. 22-23.
6. Denise Scott Brown, "Context in Context" and "Essays in Context," *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*, op. cit. pp. 175-211.
7. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *Architecture and Decorative Arts, Two Naifs in Japan*, Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates and Kajima Institute Publishing Co., Ltd.
8. Denise Scott Brown, "Activities as Patterns," *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*, op.cit. pp. 120-141.
9. Denise Scott Brown, "Remedial Housing for Architects Studio," (research topic programs for Learning from Levittown Studio, Yale University, 1970) in Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates *On Houses and Housing*, Architectural Monographs 21, London: Academy Editions, 1992, pp. 51-57.
10. Denise Scott Brown, "Mannerism, Because You Can't Follow All the Rules of All the Systems All the Time," *Architecture as Signs and Systems for a Mannerist Time*, op. cit. pp. 212-217.v



## POLIMORFO v. 2

### Próxima edición / Forthcoming issue

Polimorfo los invita a someter artículos, ensayos o proyectos para su próxima edición. Todo el material que sea sometido para publicación será evaluado por el equipo editorial de la revista así como por sus invitados. Los interesados deben comunicarse, vía correo electrónico, a: [info@revistapolimorfo.com](mailto:info@revistapolimorfo.com), para coordinar la entrega del material.

Polimorfo welcomes the submission of articles, essays and projects for its forthcoming issue. All submitted material for publication will be reviewed by the journal and/or invited editors. Interested collaborators shall send email to [info@revistapolimorfo.com](mailto:info@revistapolimorfo.com) to coordinate delivery.

Hemos hecho el intento de reconocer y acreditar todas las fuentes para las imágenes. De haber alguna omisión o error favor de contactar al equipo editorial de Polimorfo.

All attempts have been made to acknowledge and credit the source of images. If any omissions or errors would happen to arise please contact Polimorfo editors.

Las opiniones presentadas son exclusivas de sus autores y no representan las de Polimorfo, ArqPoli, ni de la Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico.

Ninguna parte de Polimorfo puede ser reproducida, ni distribuida, sin autorización escrita.

Opinions are exclusive to their authors only and do not represent those of Polimorfo, ArqPoli, nor the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico.

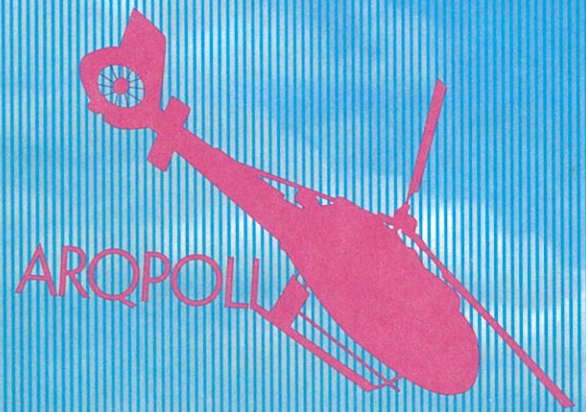
No part of Polimorfo may be copied or distributed without written authorization.



**SEGUROS MULTIPLES**  
COOPERATIVA DE SEGUROS MULTIPLES DE PUERTO RICO

*Graphic  
printing*

T. 787.782.6340 | F. 787.783.5135 | [graphicp@onelinkpr.net](mailto:graphicp@onelinkpr.net)



BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group  
Ana Rebecca Campos  
Yeidee De la Torre  
Dolly Arquitectos  
Luis A. Flores Dumont  
Edgar García  
T. Sebastián Grøgard  
Melanie Gutiérrez  
Félix Jiménez

Deepak Lamba Nieves  
Marcelo López Dinardi  
LTL Architects-Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis  
María T. Martínez Díez  
Fabián Silvano Morales  
Nadya K. Nenadich  
Oscar Oliver Didier  
Gabriel Piovanetti  
Juan Carlos Rivera

Miguel Rodríguez Casellas  
Javier Santiago Lucerna  
Denise Scott Brown  
Stephen Sears  
Shalom Velázquez  
Robert Venturi