The Way towards the Expression
of the own Identity

The globalized city

Cities suffer from numerous and consecutive transformations nowadays. Different causes as migrations of people around the world, the expansion of multinational companies that are embassies of their own countries, the diffusion of world's fashions and the competition for not being "an outsider" are altering the way in which cities express themselves and neutralizing their image and expression.

Global world economy and evolution of technology generate more competition among cities. Now cities must increase their advantages to be able to gain a growing capital market. They have to compete to increase tourism, investments, services and inhabitants with limited resources. In this competition appears a new concept: City Trademark.

Urban Marketing

To face up to new and future challenges, there is a new discipline: the Urban Marketing. Urban Marketing is the way competitive cities attract new business and investments. The final aim of this discipline is to make the city's positive image more and more attractive. The life of the city and the urban development are remarkably influenced by the city's image, as the image can be a big support (if it is positive), or a big impediment (if it is negative). If it is negative, it could be an obstacle for the expansion of economic, cultural and social life. The future of the region is directly influenced by the kind of image the city has. That is the reason why city planners need to draw up a plan for the city and to care the city image.

The philosophy underlying UM is the orientation of the city to customers' needs.

The evolution of technology has brought the daily use of a large number of communication tools. For example: the fast transmission of communications by Internet, satellite and cable TV, etc., and also the creation of images. It is not a new thing that everybody can communicate easily with the rest of the world, but the way in which we communicate today has changed a lot in the last few years. We can see these changes in the methods, the supports and the channels of transmission we now use.

The origin of urban marketing is closely connected with changes in communications. We can consider marketing as a new method of geographic representation, if we consider representation as a creation (social or individual) from a reality outline. This fact is not new. Free market exchange has stimulated the cities to take care of their image. But the actual changes in the world economy have increased the number of tools a city needs to be more attractive.

Individuals, enterprises and groups of people see their own community in a particular way. They perceive certain number of images in their own cities that are not necessarily a product created by public communications. Those images are a result of people's history, but also depend on the place where the observer (the person who receives one image or another) is. So, the community has to capture its images to understand how it is perceived. Cities need to spread around the image that they wish to have, and they also need to create a feeling of belonging around the community.

Cities are not only the oldest collectivities we know but they are also the ones that produce in people a strong feeling of belonging because of the importance of their history, economy and administration. This feeling can also be a recovery and a form of self-defense of local interests in opposition to people who want to transform the city to be able to compete for a better position in the world. City crystallizes personal, politic and economic interests, ambitious and feelings in a geographic area.

Kind of images "to export"

Places have different kind of images, each one based in a different semantic field:

1) What artists (writers, painters, photographers, movie writers or directors) transmit by their art productions is what we can call the artistic and aesthetic representation where the image is imaginary as describes an atmosphere. For example: Rome seen by Fellini or Paris described by Balzac.
2) This second type refers to a mass media representation. It is the image broadcast every day by the media: television, press, radios
3) The third type can be called scientific. It is usually taken from studies or reports (sociology, politic, economic, history, marketing, etc.) to rationalize the image of the study, in an objective frame.
4) In the forth type we can talk about the politicians' representations of the places that are built by political leaders.
5) Fifth type of representation is spontaneous, as a consequence, of the inhabitants' appropriation of the space, mentioned sometimes as vivid space.
On current days the kind of representation that has more influence in the creation of the global image is the mass media one. The mass media evocation is not founded in a day-to-day reality. It depends on eventually facts, positives or negatives (sports, cultural or political events, conflicts, accidents, etc.). It is the easiest representation to expand and incorporate by society. Especially today that societies go faster and faster from a verbal type of society to a visual one.
As Don Schulz said we are going to a society with functional illiterates. A functional illiterate is the person who is technically able to read and to comprehend words, but he is inept to make up the meanings of the words in meaningful structures that allow him to act in a more complex world. The cause of these phenomena is the increase of the use of icons and graphics in detriment of the need of reading and comprehending.

The main role of the image dissociated from its content

Because of the mentioned processes, the image takes a main role and importance by dissociating the element that intends to reflect. Mean turns to be the aim and the image is dominant when we have to define an element.
For modernity purposes, people acquire certain models that have nothing to do with their idiosyncrasy and their feelings. Sometimes we adopt a foreign language that not corresponds to our own people.
Around the world people talk about "sustenance policies" and "supporting cities" and we know that most of big metropolis are working hard in the production of a trademark image throughout which they can show themselves to the world. They do this for many reasons as for example: to attract local and foreign tourism and investments, to produce employment and to sell products in a world more and more competitive
It is essential that city planners who want to insert their own city in a desirable economic reality should think in an urban marketing strategy for their city. Kotler says that places are products actually, and as products they "*should design and commercialize"* their identities and values. The ones that couldn't successfully manage to self-commercialize will face the risk of the economic standstill and declination".
But, some city planners create a logotype and look for an image that they would like to "sell" to the world to get a privileged position. And what they create is a "fake identity" of the city and an image that is emptied of content. The result of this is fashion stenography. Few cities are working in a *true message,* in understanding what they are and in searching their true identity. Few ones are looking for what makes them different from the others and what makes them unique.

We live in a reality that focus the image in what is visual, as if the objects' aesthetic were determined on formal and external rules that responds to the fashion of an epoch or recalls a past without history.

I am not saying that we should create objects without style or formalism and resign the use of technology. What I am saying is that we should put technology and formal resources to achieve the genuineness of the object. I think that we have to create a product where elements like: forms, materials, techniques and meanings shape the transmission of the product's soul. As a culmination it will compose a symphony where beauty appears as its consequence.

City planners should tell the city's stories throughout its streets, for the purpose of making the city unique. At the same time as a person is not authentic if he doesn't express himself in his style of walking, dressing, talking or making gestures, a city doesn't express itself if it doesn't transmit its essence throughout its buildings, architecture, music, artistic expressions, and smells.

If we consider the city as a product, it would be one of the most complexes, because a human being participates in it with his feelings, personal experiences, needs…. A factory product is created based on a specific technology, from the niche that investigators or businessmen find to answer a necessity of the market. From this point they search or create the product personality in relation to the public to whom the product is directed or the style of life the product produces in people, or the type of market where the product is inserted.

On the other hand, we can't generate a personality for cities. **Cities already have personality** and a way to be that is related to the customs and the history of the people who live there, the geography and the climate conditions of the city.

The ways towards the expression of the city's identity

The design of city's trademarks is similar to the tick tack toe game. We have to line up three chips. The first one is the physic configuration of the city that shows its historic dimension. Urbanism is the most accurate indicator of the second key element, the identity. The face of the city talks about the features that unify their citizens. To search those nexus we need to focus our attention in a discipline that combines historic, architectonic and urban analysis with market investigation techniques. This is the third chip.

The result of a first phase is the definition of the city identity. The second phase is oriented to the projection of that city in images. The values where the trademark is sustained proceed from the previous phase because they should be genuine. The techniques are the ones that are used in architecture design of trademarks in the business world being necessary again the use of tools of market investigation.

Verification project: intervention in San Isidro's coast area

I would like to illustrate my point of view with a work done on the occasion of an International Seminar that was held in San Isidro in 1999. This work won two prizes. One of the prizes was won at the International Congress of UIA that was held in Montreal on the same year, and the other one, in the International Union of Architects in Hungary. The authors of this project are arch. Canedo, Baridón, Sonetti and Vicario.

The project was an urban intervention in San Isidro's port and shore, located in Buenos Aires Province, Argentina with the aim of revitalizing a damage area.

The architects have chosen this area because of the patrimonial significance that has this place for the commune. The zone and its inhabitants have a very important matted root and geographic, historic and cultural patrimonies. San Isidro's people have a characteristic and typical personality, in spite of living very near the nation's capital.

As we said San Isidro is only 20 kilometers from the city of Buenos Aires, the national capital of a country that has a centralized economy. A speed highway links Buenos Aires to San Isidro and most of the "sanisidrenses" are commuters. However, in the last years this fact is

changing and many companies and branches are establishing in San Isidro or in the near area due to a big migration of people to the North Zone of Buenos Aires.

There are a number of reasons to explain this new migration to San Isidro. First of all, to reduce the large quantities of commuters that provokes traffic jams and the consequent delays to get to work, and there is also a big mass of people in public transportation with all the stress that these situations produces. Another explanation is the new way of social manifestation of certain groups of Buenos Aires that is called "piquetes". This complicates the entrance to some parts of the city. But there is also another reason to explain the establishing of new companies in San Isidro and this is the "sanisidrense's" own idiosyncrasy. San Isidro's inhabitants are accustomed to living and moving in the suburban tranquility but, at the same time, they have high incomes, with the consequently elevated quality of life so they are used to important levels of demands.

San Isidro's patrimony

The physiognomy of the city is well defined by its geographic location. It is situated on the shores of Río de la Plata, with its central area built on top of very high bluffs. Winding pedestrian's paths link the upper part of the city to the lower part, creating very attractive promenades or walks. These promenades have their origin in the time when the territory was part of the Spanish colonies of the Virreinato del Río de la Plata. On weekends, ladies and gentlemen used to go to the city's square. There, they showed up around this bourgeois city. San Isidro was founded around 1705 (this is its 300 anniversary). The city has a big historic patrimony because the most relevant characters of the nation had their residences there. Not only in San Isidro the National Song was sung for the first time, but also a lot of famous meetings had been held there. Later on, and due to its historic and geographic characteristics the city changed as the place of residence of wealthy people.

San Isidro's commune is conservative, in a way that protects its identity. The inhabitants, who are jealous defendants of their patrimony, have a considerable power in the decisions of the City Hall. Sometimes, it is difficult to carry out certain actions because the power of the people is an impediment on the implementation of new projects.

Culture is essential for every city identity and for that reason, culture is the trademark image of the city and it is a key element for its development in global scenery. It is also true that the best investment that a city could accomplish is to reinforce its authenticity. And we could do it, intensifying the original and diverse city's way of life. The cultural patrimony and the social way of life distinguish a city or a region from the others. In opposition, we could find the uniformity of global culture expanded by mass media.

If past and tradition aren't capable of having an innovative process, the city stops its development. City planners must have the ability to work in a global environment, preserving the singularity of local life. They should integrate both tradition and innovation: local and global, space and time. This crossing of vectors shows the structure where city planners can build a development strategy.

Every city has soul, a plastic force, a being in time, because city represents the human being vision and his cultural, spiritual and artistic experiences, a projection of the environment.

The marketing of personal experiences demands a reflection of the subtle spirit of the city and of its final concept of life and put into order that reflection in a proposal for the future, because as Ortega said "life is future, it is what it is not yet".

With this project we pretend to accomplish a union/urbanization between the upper-land area (central part) with the Cathedral (emblematic and symbolic monument) and the lower-land area (cost and port).

We intend to assume dialectic between built area and natural area, the old part of the city and the new one, past and present.

The interventions, punctual and realistic, pretend to enforce already existent urban situations. These situations had great importance in the moment of the intervention but they need to be classified and formalized.

The purist and geometric characteristics of the new project would make a dialogue with the already existent situations suggesting the directions that we understand are dominant.

It is not an axis project, but a limits and boundaries project. This project interconnects two sectors (innovation and tradition), make directions that produce a hierarchy putting patrimonial part on top of it and it is also open to future developments.

General outline

The project emphasizes longitudinal connections (that are parallel lines to the cost) and the links of those connections to the central historic area intervening transversal streets. The historic area has an important function as social and amusement center. These manifestations take place throughout the cathedral that is not only valuable as a symbolic element, but also as a social one, because of the main role that has the Catholic Church and its rituals in the commune. This beautiful area around the Cathedral accomplishes the function of amusement center on weekends, especially when local craftsmen occupy a big part of the square, transforming the square or "plaza" in a traditional and characteristic promenade for inhabitants and tourists. The reasons of the attraction of this traditional place are because of its particular physiognomy and the variety of cultural activities that are developed there. The same happened in the colony epoch.
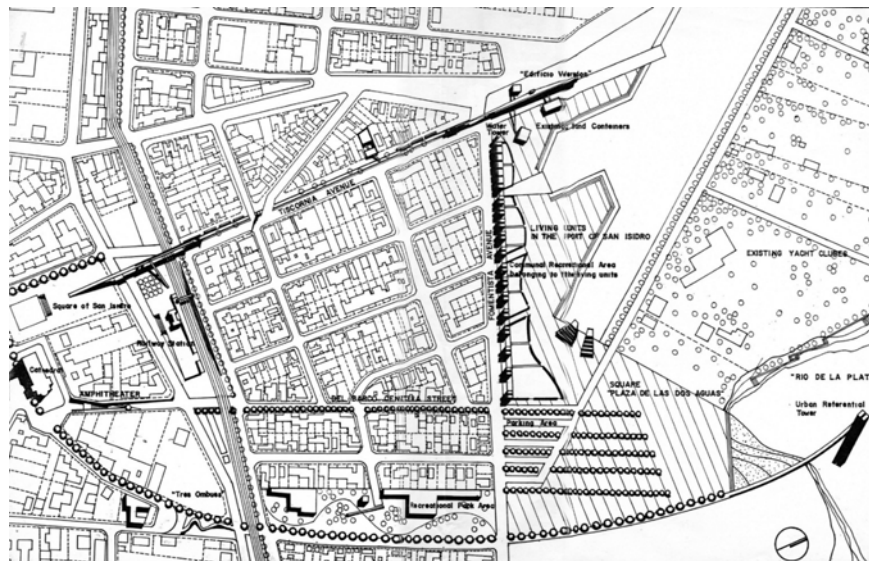
View of the general map of the urban intervention's project

Longitudinal lines:
1- We propose a pedestrian crossing in the coast with the aim of preserving the physiognomy and the characteristic peaceful of the place.
2- We suggest the Fomentista Avenue as the limit between the urban tissue and the coast's square.
3- For the railway system, the entertaining area and the boundary streets we propose a longitudinal garden with some buildings for entertaining utilization.
4- The bluffs that intensely distinguish the place
5- The upper lands that is the historic central area of San Isidro.

The slopes:

The particular proposal is the linking system of streets. The slopes join the parallel situations. As a result there is a relationship among the upper lands, the lower lands and the river.
We developed three slopes that emerge like a trident from the Cathedral connecting the square and the "view points", with the cost and the port.

a) Tiscornia Avenue:
The first slope has a strongly urban character and it goes parallel to Tiscornia Avenue, which maintains its lay out.
The idea is to build a large sidewalk that starts in the Cathedral's square, crosses over the railway, then goes down to maintain later its previous level so to add the housing after the channel. In front of the port it turns into a building of three levels that has a large sidewalk in the middle. Shops, meeting rooms and dorms are in the other levels.

b) Del Barco Centenera's street
The second slope starts in the "view point" that finishes in an amphitheater. Later on, it crosses over the railway by a bridge and finishes in front of the port, in Two Waterway Square.

c) Tres Ombúes's street
From this notable place, because of its quality and the homogeneity of its limits, starts this trip that joined together the green areas of the existent amusement sector and continues in a pier and "view point" as a reference in the zone by the needle-shape of the Cathedral's dome.
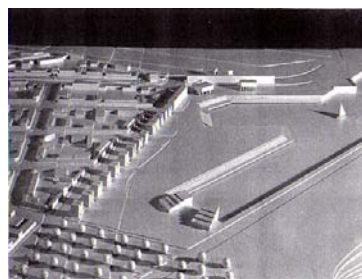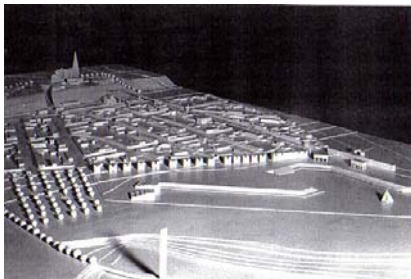
Model. Seen from the coast towards the central area and of the port.

The importance of citizenship's feeling for the building of trademarks

Cities, as we have already said, compete to obtain a place in foreign markets. They hunt clients for business purposes. If those who have the responsibility of the city's direction don't have a clear and appropriate message to the world, the city should have an inefficient and poor competition. But the communication to the outdoor client is not the only strategy they need for the formation of a trademark. They also need the essential inside communication to the citizens. We don't communicate to citizens the same way as to foreigners. We don't use the same rhetoric and we don't use commercial support. The domestic communication should have the function of building citizenship, spaces of public use, participation, cooperation and identity. To be able to compete in an outdoor market we need consolidated attributes that could be find in the participation, cooperation and individuality that we have already mentioned, which would provide a remarkable support for this competition.

The port, Two Waterway's Square and the set of housing

In agreement with these parameters, in the port of the two waterway joined the three slopes and the situation is solved in an area defined by the housing in colonnade, the large sidewalk, the pair, the tower and the wood.

These urban elements suggest the consolidation of this sector that is faulty drawn today due to the missing of its own limits and boundaries.

The building of Tiscornia Avenue arrives at the port with an abrupt appearance and a sharp ending. This arrival and the display of the svelte group of buildings conclude in the contemplation of the bluffs, the city and the San Isidro's Cathedral, which are transformed in the backdrop of the port's urban area. These create, at the same time, a necessary peculiarity for a city that respects its patrimony.

The proposed set of housing disposes the port's boundary and the Fomentista Avenue's boundary. The distribution of the units is in a straight line between Tiscornia Avenue and Del Barco Centenera's street. That disposition produces a big green area for community entertainment. The irregular and winding shape of the green area responds to an impulse of connecting it to the Two Waterway's Square and the river. The buildings have the possibility of joining themselves, provoking a rhyme of full and empty spaces that links the building / sidewalk of Tiscornia Avenue with the green curve of Tres Ombúes's street in the pier, the tower and the Río de la Plata. The units are joined by stairs that, as vertical elements, they manifest themselves with distinct colors to distinguish each building from the others.

We are searching a permeability bluff – port.

The building's structure is made of thin walls of reinforced concrete with a similar expression and ending as the existent sand dealers.

A tower–tank located next to a recycled sand dealer provides water to the units and harmonizes with an end of the stripe of buildings and the arrival of Tiscornia Avenue. This tower has its pair in the tower of the Large-Sidewalk-Building at Tiscornia Avenue because of shape and attitude. This pair of towers would be the smaller couple of a bigger pair of towers that would be the Needle-Shape-Dome Cathedral and the watch Tower, located the latter as a conclusion of the green curve of Three Ombúes's street on the Río de la Plata shores.

The existent sand dealers are located in the port, and also the bars and restaurants in grand staircase. These, together with the parking lots down the woods and the ships are different places of this setting. What dominates the place is the presence of the two waterways. One of them is urbanized, geometric, and well defined, and the other one, huge, organic and without boundaries.

The project idea and its culmination are summarized in the duality of the two waterways that become real in the square of the same name. (Two-Waterway Square)
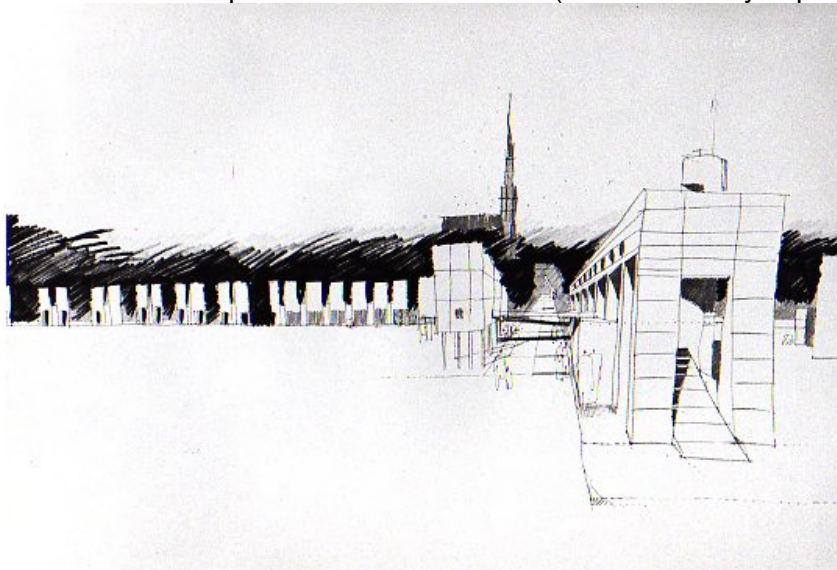
The set of housing and its backdrop: the gullies, the cathedral, and the central city

General considerations

Alain Mons in his book "The social metaphor" describes a "war of cities". These cities compete to gain territories with mass media communications. The competition to promote trademark images would be organized around strategies where the main value would be the visible product in opposition to the invisible one. The public manifestation of the city's power would be a simply slogan, a poor visual identity.

"The image's strategies of the cities embrace this modern belief of visible reality that would replace the old principle of the truth of the not visible".

What I suggest is to think about these mechanisms so we can throw light on the elements related to the identity (the invisible). To make the reality visible wouldn't be a mechanism that goes against the invisible. They would be means to rescue the basis of the city's identity and history and to transform them in axis of efficient communication.

Globalization is not similarity. On the contrary, it is differentiation and specialization. We are looking for immaterial advantages that are linked to urban nature.

As members of the city, we have to walk through a path that indicates identity and belonging. For this reason, it is necessary to mark that path or route, to draw a line, to define and guide our steps. As Le Corbusier said in his Complete Works: "Every city has its own geography, its vital relations, close by or far away: Its topography, which is the base of human developments. Its sun, that is to say, the climatic conditions that are of particular interest to the human senses. Its "attitude", the fundamental character (plastic and sentimental), which should drive the creative initiatives of urban city builders."

There are, of course, cities that are more influenced by history, geography or climate conditions than others, but every city has a path already marked that we only have to discover. Doing this we would be faithful to the city, we wouldn't betray the genetic line that is sealed in its roots.

The city planners' strategy would be to respect the geography, the culture and the facts that have defined the city and have stamped its direction. We, as city planners, need concentration in order to discover its true personality. We have to imagine the future, to anticipate the alternative directions that the city would adopt, and, if it is necessary, to give a shove in order to find the correct direction. The government and the strategists have to consider which one is the most convenient direction to achieve a more authentic personality.

City and urban life are the main creators of culture. Culture is a strategic element and a main resource for the city's development. Culture has the empowerment to generate direct employment and it is essential for certain sectors as tourism. Culture brings in investments and an added value that gives dynamism to the economic sector. Culture has the ability of joining the citizens because it makes easier the learning approach and the improvement of equal opportunities.

A city is a community of interests with tensions and contradictions among its citizens. For this reason a city differs from an amusement park designed only for the visitor's satisfaction.

The authenticity of a city is the result of its patrimony's liveliness. Cities should be alive and not transformed in museums. The restoration of buildings and landscapes should be subordinated to the primary aim that is rehabilitation of urban life.

The vivid history that is shaped in the city's streets gives personality to the city and fill up its spaces with authenticity. At the same time, a dialogue is produced between the pedestrian and its interlocutor. This dialogue transcends the individual's conscience that, naturally, looks for the essence and the spirit of things. Only when the soul is open, appears a special feeling that makes people give their own heart.

Marketing should be oriented to the transmission of the soul, the authentic and what is real.

As Le Cobursier said in La Chart D'Athens. "The city's spirit has been shaped throughout the years. Simple buildings have been reaching an everlasting value as they symbolized the collective soul. They are the bone structure of a tradition that, without the intention of putting limits to future progress' growth, prepares the constitution of the person as well as race,

customs, territory and climate conditions. Because the city is a "small country" has a significant moral value indissoluble joined to the city".

We can't create a trademark without a carefully studied plan that makes us think about the proper genesis of the city. We should also consider the hidden message that the city transmits to its inhabitants and visitors, the feelings and energy that makes people settled down or visit it. We also have to understand the reasons that make people uncomfortable in the city. We have to think about the things we can improve without attempting to the city's spirit. We have to contemplate how we can tell the world the city's virtues, that is, the emotion and wellbeing that we experience when we walk through its streets, or we visit its buildings or we travel around its geography. We need to know who would be the candidates that were going to live there.

As I have already said, the urban architectonic plan should be protagonist of this study. This plan should consider and respect faithfully the city's patrimonial values that are the ones who give personality to the city. This plan should also contemplate the direction that the city should take regarding its own characteristics and the ones of its inhabitants and current and future visitors, which are the city's clients, the ones who buys city.

I would like to remove earth from people's mind the concept that marketing is only publicity, promotion, or to invent a product.

I would like to remove earth from people's mind the concept that architecture is only related to external beauty, without considering the message and the profits that generates.

Beauty exists when we find deserving spaces that talk, that transmit sensations that express personality, in a way that put order and allow living with dignity.

For this reason, urbanism, patrimonial architecture and marketing must work together to generate a plan for a city's trademark with success.

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