Abstracts

Joan Busquets
Urban project as research

Centring on forms of intervention in the contemporary city, the article offers an initial outline of the principal commonplaces of 20th-century urbanism (the automobile and mass housing production), and architects and urban planners' attitudes to the city. Using his own projects and research experiences, the author outlines five arguments to illustrate how the urban project is a form of research in the field of urbanism. This is the case of integrating a range of accessibilities (presented in the complex project to underground the railway in the city of Delft), of using new logics to reinterpret the city of the past (old town of Toledo), of new models for building today's city (Nesselande, Rotterdam), of the question of density and mixed uses (Qianhai, Shenzhen) and of experimental projects (the train in the Pyrenees). Together, these examples illustrate architecture's stimulating responses to the challenges raised by the contemporary city.

Keywords: 21st-century urbanism, urban project, research, theory

Joan Busquets is Martin Bucksbaum professor of Urbanism at GSD Harvard.

Jordi Sardà
America by night

Chosen from thousands of postcards in Jordi Sardà's private collection, this selection of just 12 images illustrates the magic of America by night. One next to the other, they piece together a mosaic of an urban reality that was brand-new (with bridges, streets, junctions, grids and buildings) and that continues to identify the great cities of the vast American continent. American cities, unlike their European counterparts, quickly realized that light was a miraculous artifice enabling them to grow outwards and upwards, unstoppably. It is light that allows life round the clock in Los Angeles and Sao Paulo, in Buenos Aires and Las Vegas, in Rio de Janeiro and New York, and light which, on occasion, makes night, paradoxically, the best part of the day.

Keywords: Postcards, American cities, night, light

Jordi Sardà is Ph.D. Architect, Associate lecturer in the Department of Urbanism and Town Planning ETSAB UPC.

Philip Kay

Transgressing the Grid: Adventures On (and Off) Manhattan Island

Philip Kay's text gives a biographical account of his love-hate relationship with the Manhattan street grid. His series of personal anecdotes reads like a list of offences; Manhattan's orderly system of streets and avenues seems to dare its inhabitants to defy its authority, and the specificity of its locations creates lasting images and memories (from the minutes of the jury). Winner of the Urban Omnibus essay competition 2012 to mark the bicentenary of the Commissioners' Plan for New York (1811), in the category of original non-fiction writing inspired by New York's street grid as "paradigm, rubric or muse for urban life".

Keywords: Manhattan, street grid, essay, New York

Josep Maria Solé Gras

When urbanization is spelt with lower-case u

The article explores the water-city relationship from the viewpoint of the most basic urban reality: one where the key objective is the physical construction of a space that is safe, served and equipped for people. In other words, making the street liveable, or, simply, building streets to make a city.

To do so, it examines stages of urban work pending, the moments of transition in which many cities are immersed: the arduous process of transforming and improving their most basic urban conditions. Using a specific case, it presents a scenario that is both highly topical and frequently overlooked in an increasingly urbanized global picture. It is a real case in Limbé (Cameroon), though it could have been any other city.

Keywords: Lower-case urbanization, infrastructure, water, city, Cameroon

Jansana, Romero *et al.*

Recovering the Turó de la Rovira for Barcelona

The recent silent intervention in the hill-top anti-aircraft batteries of El Carmel marks a new chapter in ongoing efforts to use public space in Barcelona to trigger social cohesion and citizen identity. Rather than superposing design on what used to be here, the project aims to showcase the culture of the place with its accumulated layers of things that have happened. It reflects a profound appreciation and respect for the memory of this eyrie where aircraft batteries were erected to defend the city from bombings during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), later one of the shantytowns of the post-war years. The winner of the European Prize for Urban Public Space (2012) is an excellent vantage point to enjoy the vistas, learn about the city's relations between architecture and relief, and listen to the comings and goings of local people and the hum of distant traffic.

Keywords: Intervention, landscape, memory, Barcelona

Philip Kay is Ph.d. Communications. Columbia University in the City of New York.

Josep Maria Solé Gras is researcher in the Laboratory of Urbanism of Barcelona.

Imma Jansana and Jordi Romero are architects and heads of Jansana, de la Villa, de Pauw arch. and AAUP-Jordi Romero.

Eulàlia Gómez

Time past in passageways

Shortly after the demolition of its town walls, Barcelona saw the appearance of the first passageways, concentrated around its Plaça Reial. Today there are 15 or more, scattered throughout Ciutat Vella. Built over a century ago in the archetypal image of the French passages, today they still look almost as they did then. Some remain commercial in nature, others stand out as unitary projects; very few have service as a function. Some are public thoroughfares, others are private space; some have gates that always stand open, others have railings that are sometimes locked. They are little-known but interesting corners in a medieval city that is now given over to visitors and tourists. And, as though oblivious to their surroundings, they manage to stand alone, an opportunity for anything to happen.

Keywords: Barcelona, urban morphology, commerce, passageways

Eulàlia Gómez is researcher in the Laboratory of Urbanism of Barcelona.

Rocío Hidalgo

The founding stations of Santiago de Chile's Metro system

The article deals with the origins and the spatial expression of the first stations of Santiago de Chile's Metro system, built in the 1970s as features in a major urban project: the modernization of the city by building new road and transport infrastructures, a project headed by architect and urban planner Juan Parrochia. The stations were built to be an essential part of public space, as key pieces in a new "urban system" which, with their architecture and location, addressed both the technological requirements of this means of transport and the needs and opportunities of each of the places where they were constructed.

Using surveys and photographic records, and the analysis and representation of the location and architecture of each station, the history of various urban projects around the Metro is reconstructed, looking beyond the stations to reflect the new metropolitan dimension of the city as a whole.

Keywords: Metro, Santiago de Chile, stations, Juan Parrochia

Rocío Hidalgo is Ph.D. Architect, Lecturer in Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago de Chile.

Miquel Vidal y Angelica Ayala

Dogon country. "Hypo-development" and identity

This study carried out in Dogon country forms part of a research project about extreme cultural landscapes carried out by the Ginna Kanda collective, associated with the UPC and directed by the lecturer Miquel Vidal. It began with a study of the territorial structure of Dogon settlements in the particular topography of the Bandiagara Escarpment. Here, the Dogon people constructed a fascinating vertical landscape, the product of a fluid vertical succession where nature, culture and architecture combine (UNESCO World Heritage List).

The new cartography is based on an interpretation of the physical and the intangible elements of the place and is a means to establish specific actions. It advocates "hypo-development", taking into account economic, social and touristic variants, while striking a balance with the cultural and landscape heritage.

Keywords: Mali, Ginna Kanda, Dogons, cultural landscape, hypo-development

Miquel Vidal is tenured professor in the Department of Urbanism and Town Planning, ETSAB UPC. **Angelica Ayala** is researcher in the same department.

Aperitiu del LUB
In Paral·lel

The urban transformation of Paral·lel, one of the principal avenues marking the boundary of the Eixample, is a topical issue in Barcelona. A few years ago, the rehabilitation of the emblematic Molino (BOPBAA arquitectos) was the first step in a socio-cultural movement to recover the memory of a street that, less than a century ago, was the place to go for entertainment, leisure and vice in the city. Rehabilitation of the theatre was followed by diagnostic studies and interventions proposed by a versatile team of eight young architects, determined to rediscover the present-day potential of the avenue. The results suggest a rich urban imaginary that refers, without nostalgia, to its glorious past (splendidly illustrated in the recent exhibition at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona). The LUB's Aperitius format highlights the main issues of debate about the future of Paral·lel.

Keywords: Barcelona, Paral·lel, urban transformation, major streets

Aperitiu del LUB
Fabra i Coats, a factory for creation

The recently opened factory for creation and school for the arts is the subject of an Aperitiu by the LUB, which turns the seminar discussion into a site visit. The practices of Francesc Bacardit and Manuel Ruisánchez were the winners of the ideas competition to remodel the main mill in the old Fabra i Coats textile complex in the Sant Andreu district of Barcelona. The build (Ciutat de Barcelona Prize 2012) is an interesting exercise in consolidating the factory's features and structure to enhance the flexibility and complexity of the new programmes introduced. It is a powerful intervention and an exciting event at the service of new social practices coming out of the metropolitan environment, presented and discussed in Aperitiu format.

Keywords: Barcelona, factory complexes, urban transformation, rehabilitation, new programmes

Francesc Bacardit and Manuel Ruisánchez are architects and associate lecturers at the School of Architecture of Barcelona.

Oriol Bohigas
Barcelona Links

The exhibition "Barcelona, Links" and its catalogue identify seven central hubs in the metropolitan city with problems of continuity that disrupt the efficiency of urban reality. The title includes a reference to the urbanistic discussion of the Barcelona of the early 1900s, which proposed a system to link the towns and villages in the Barcelona Plain (Jaussely's Plan). A contemporary viewpoint and academic papers explore possible alternatives to important issues for the city's future that look beyond local scope to connect with more complex systems and involve the city's image and functions. The author suggests that this line of academic research could have positive outcomes if it is coordinated with present-day citizen participation, in keeping with the established tradition of studies at the Laboratori d'Urbanisme.

Keywords: Barcelona, links, Laboratori d'Urbanisme

Oriol Bohigas is architect.

Ferran Segarra

In memory of Manuel Ribas Piera

Grandson, son and father of architects, renowned professor and honoured urban planner, Manuel Ribas Piera was the foremost promoter of international relations at the Barcelona School of Architecture, inviting the best known architects of the time (such as Stirling, Kleihues and Aymonino), and co-founder, with Giancarlo de Carlo, of the ILAUD programme (International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design). He set up the pioneering landscape architecture studies in Catalunya, now an international point of reference. His overt cosmopolitanism went hand in hand with a staunch commitment to the city of Barcelona, at metropolitan and local level, as shown by plans for Bellvitge and El Carmel, and his openly voiced disagreement with some political decisions. For all of these reasons, we thank him posthumously for his great skill, his friendship, his culture, his generosity, his tenacity and his example.

Keywords: Ribas Piera, tribute, landscape, Barcelona

Ferran Segarra has been director of the School of Architetcure of Barcelona until 2013.

Lluís Cantallops

In memory of Manuel Ribas Piera

Manuel Ribas was an all-rounder: architect, lawyer, Professor of Urban Design at the ETSAB, bibliophile, disseminator and inveterate traveller. A connoisseur of European culture, he was influenced by Gaston Bardet, whom he met in the 1950s, and whose “culturalist” approach to urbanism he adopted as opposed to the prevailing doctrine of functionalism.

Drawing on the shared experiences of the two professors in some 20 journeys, this tribute presents some of the issues that most keenly interested Ribas Piera. One was his passion for landscape, as a constant throughout his long career, recounted in the discovery of a graveyard, a stroll around some gardens or in his contemplation of a viaduct across a valley. Then there was his natural intellectual curiosity in the history, architecture and urbanism of the towns and cities he visited: from Goteborg to Rotterdam, from classical Greece to Iran, and from the cities of Germany to the Tarn valley.

Keywords: Ribas Piera, tribute, travels, landscape

Lluís Cantallops had been professor at the School of Architecture of Barcelona since 1960.