



**International Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism
Critical thinking in housing and city
Avellaneda December 1st and 2nd**

**FUNDAMENTALS
HOUSING AND CITY**

The synthesis proposed by CAPBA (College of Architects of Buenos Aires Province) for the theme of the VIII International Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism/ VIII BIAU, “Critical thinking in housing and city”, is neither original nor has it not been analysed, but we are convinced that we will never exhaust its study because it continues to concern us as immanent to the holistic conception so well synthesized by Carlos Mijares Bracho: “The architectural work is not experienced in isolation, it belongs to a place, to a specific “there” and to a particular “in this way””. The study of the pair "Housing and City" will never end because it expresses the extremes that human habitat acquires from the point of view of its behaviour (individual / collective), of the social character of its spatiality (private / public) and from the magnitude and complexity of the parameters considered, of the projects they formulate and of the works that are executed (small scale-large scale).

The sociocultural transformations that mark individual and collective behaviour, the development of productive forces and their scientific and technological evolution and the vitality of the planet we inhabit have suffered and will suffer constant changes that force us to constantly rethink the spatial responses that

contain all these processes. From individual housing to the complexity of a moving metropolis.

It is worth remembering some concepts of architects who have thought and acted recognizing the interdependence between housing and city. Gabriel Santinelli ensures that "they are an indissoluble pair", Hector Vigliecca states that "if there is no idea of a city, any housing operation will be doomed to fail,", and Jorge Moscato makes the relationship more complex when he states: "the whole is more than the sum of the parts". The "Housing and City" pair will not fail to be a way to synthesize our basic disciplinary competences: architecture and urbanism, despite the imbalances between them, if we consider the work they provide us with or the relative impact of our contributions to urban planning.

CRITICAL THINKING

The most widespread definition of critical thinking states that "it is a cognitive process that aims to analyse or evaluate the structure and consistency of the way in which the cognitive sequences are intended to interpret and represent the world, opinions or statements that in everyday life are usually accepted as true." It is also defined, "from a practical point of view, as a process by which knowledge and intelligence are used to effectively reach the most reasonable and justified position on a subject."

Critical thinking aims to examine the structure of reasoning on issues of daily life, and has a twofold: analytical and evaluative. It tries to overcome the mechanical aspect of the study of logic, as well as to understand and evaluate the arguments in their natural habitats, for example, the juridical, the aesthetic and the ethical ones.

There also seems to be widespread agreement that critical thinking is immanent to architecture. The history and theory of our discipline stimulate and develop the skills linked to critical thinking, integrating analytical ability and visual thinking. In the words of Wright, who always stood aside from any vanguard, "the architect must be a prophet ... A prophet in the true sense of the term ... If he cannot see at least ten years ahead do not call him architect".

Now, linking ourselves to the utopias, we want to cross our reflections on housing and the city with a new critical, creative and alternative thinking that interprets and interacts with the social sensibilities that resist and oppose the global hegemony of single thought, supported by the neoliberal model and its political-economic pragmatism - supported in particular by the "triumph" of the laws of the world market and by the "victory" of democracy, freedom and Western values - that produced and promoted, during the last thirty years and from a Eurocentric vision, conceptions and interpretations of universalist character, linear and dogmatic, of history, culture and even architecture.

Unique thinking that is usually expressed with direct and simple argumentative clarity, and an apparent coherence that does not require the confrontation of critical or reflective thinking. These are ideological forms that define themselves as universal truths, as expressions of ineluctable natural laws and around which has generated an intellectual and political consensus, becoming a universal common sense, in the sign of times or in the spirit of the time.

As a contribution to these reflections is that we owe to question the hegemony of practices derived from this dominant thinking on "Housing and City". This pair has been taken as the theme of the VIII BIAU, in order to think and elaborate a

series of concurrent perspectives destined, all of them, to focus on the central questions that must be approached, questioning practices commonly naturalized by our colleagues and contributing to the creation of roads that have to be transited so as to overcome these practises.

Consequently, the great challenge and the path that we take departing from a new critical thinking, alternative to neoliberal ideas is based on the law, the respect of nature, the inclusion and recognition of the differences, the otherness, the diversity of social pluralisms, national identities and cultures within the framework of a world system, is to construct, as expressed by E. Morín, "a thinking capable of capturing the multidimensionality of realities ... We must abandon the false rationality. Human needs are not only economic and technical, but also affective and mythological, religious, communitarian and exceed material interests." In short, to demonstrate that **another world and other urban models are possible.**