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The city is an existing reality and, at the same time, in constant transformation. The beginning of this twenty first century demands a necessary renovation of the instruments of the urban and territorial project emphasising integration, multi-functionality, sustainability, high technology infrastructures and also the urban, civic and public character of the cities and the new relations between the urban and the landscape. Public spaces, acting as collective spaces of public domain, are the key for the consolidation of urban culture. In the future they should be understood not only as open and multi-functional space, but also a as place for electronic connections, for the reception of information, for learning, for interaction and movement at some times. For resting and relaxing some other times.

The city should evolve towards morphologies which are as fluid and interconnected as possible, which will facilitate human relations, implemented by the diversification of transport systems and by multiple pedestrian itineraries, making it more accessible, open and free, apt for strolling, gentle walking. Mobility systems should be based on diversify, multiplying them, superimposing all types of axis such as cycling lanes, trams and bus lanes. It is for these reasons that the new inter-connectors between systems of transportation will become key pieces in the contemporary city. It is true that transport feeds the city, but the city cannot be the exclusive place for only one system of mobility -the car-, but it should be reorganised for the pacification and diversification of the traffic systems. Metropolis is synonymous of connections. Cities and territories cannot be exclusively made of isolated objects, of autonomous products like skyscrapers, shopping centres or closed neighbourhoods. However, the dismembered inheritances as well as the urban products that conform the present leave a trail of scars and fragments. The metropolitan project must emphasise links, connections, relations, and empty spaces between the ful

lify: bridges and footpridges, escalators and torines, merconnectors and roundabouts.

There are more and more connections in three dimensions through stairs and ramps (Castle of Castelldefels), escalators (Toledo), or urban lifts (Lisbon or Salvador de Bahia).

The links, after all, are knots of great density that are used for knitting together bordering areas and lines of flow. In the fusion of flows and links, in old areas with long shape and extruded by the negative of consolidated urban masses, mega-structural forms can now appear, which as high technology fabrics, knots or lianas knit together and relate different bordering urban areas.
It is in this context where we can interpret the projects of Manuel de Solá-Morales i Rubió that are always applied to urban fabrics in which the action should be relating and connecting, something that is missing in most cities. In some, like Rio de Janeiro, the problem is urgent and emblematic: needing to re-articulate the urban areas between each other and it has been necessary to re-equip the areas of favelas and redo public space.

public space.
These interventions by Solá-Morales can be grouped according to four

types:
Public space / collective space. Interventions like the Winschotenkarden

in Groningen, the Passeio Atlántico in Porto or the Moll de la Fusta in Barcelona, which are solved by the section, by the definition of different urban levels, by the will to interrelate the city with the scenery. Urban projects of suture (generally on sea fronts) like Porto Vecchio in Trieste or Saint Nazaire. Projects that start from urban pre-existences that are redesigned and articulated from previously built volumes and free spaces. Inter-connectors of flows that because of their situation become urban buildings. The multimodal in Lovaina rises as a traditional building in a historical urban surrounding.

Buildings that are placed in big empty urban spaces with the mission of connecting like the Illa Diagonal and the complex of La Maquinista in Barcelona or the houses in Alcoi (Alicante).

The projects in Saint Nazaire and in Trieste show that the metropolitan matter on which all urban action starts must be memory. Every urban and territorial project must be related to the analytical methods of archaeology and with the creative mechanisms of art. It has to be capable of making the different stratums of memory come out creatively. It is about designing with new techniques to give life to a critical memory. The urban projects by Manuel de Solà-Morales surge from this dialectic bet-

ween the position of a new realism, which accepts the city as a given system of morphologies and activities, and the intervention that sutures refills and empties, that interchanges volumes, that creates urban filaments of connections

ments of connections.

In the city-port of Saint Nazaire, an immense military construction made of reinforced concrete, an old submarine base, in the periphery before, is made into a central space, redone as car park, supermarkets, leisure centres and urban walk that connects to other areas of the city, recuperating the contact with water. The old war machine becomes an attractive urban place.

urban place.

The Illa Diagonal in Barcelona, designed with Rafael Moneo, is a magnificent example of resolution of a big scale and complex building parting from a hermeneutic position that explains the city itself. Passing from the traditional fabric of almost closed blocks and streets-corridors to the modern city with isolated objects on green areas. Projects like the Illa Diagonal in Barcelona or the French Library in Paris, by Dominique Perrault, interpret in an abstract way the logic of the place: the new forms are based on a synthesis of the existing urban morphologies. They are projects which are clearly influenced by Collin Rowe's theoretical contribution in his Collage City and by the figure / background analysis

system and design of the city.

The Intermodal in Lovaina is an example of resolution of the urban from architecture, in a line of thought close to Aldo Rossi and Rob Krier and that brings with it its anachronistic architectural formalisation. It emphasises that collective life in the metropolis mostly happens in public transport places: underground stations, inter-connectors, stops and vehicles that are authentic places of experience.

In the Passeio Atlántico different peripheral axis of traffic and pedestrian flows are articulated with the sea front, where Porto extends on Matosinhos, from a roundabout with different levels that serve as connection and car parking, through the new promenades and buildings that try to agglutinate the critical scenery and active mass of the place. They are all public assignments designed with the will to enrich the collective space. New versatile elements -footbridges, bridges, miradors, underground paths and walks- that stimulate the multi-form urban fabric, systems of objects that interweave an existent urban reality that is always taken as a positive, nutritive information, as concentration of flows and fields of energy. It is there where the urban project begins: in the capacity of making the historical and human logic of the place come out, virtuously transforming it.





