

Madrid, ciudad en destrucción

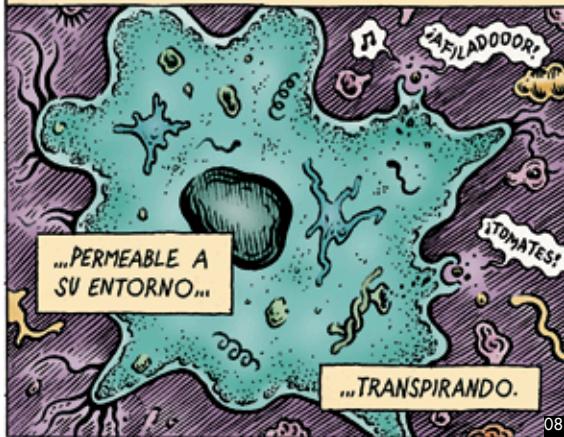
Por: MIGUEL BRIEVA

01 > My first memories are those that tie me most strongly to this city. Not only because they take me back to my childhood, which is often the stronghold of true happiness, but also because of Madrid back then, now deeply deteriorated by unbridled development. 02 > ...a certain uninhibited and genuinely native lifestyle "Come on! Stay still" ...could still be relished 03 > in Peñagrande, a neighbourhood in the northwest of the capital, at a time when the limits of the metropolis... were watered-down by the countryside, not unpleasantly so. 04 > Soolated tower blocks were interspersed with little, low houses - rural style and very Madrid - in an improvised, cheerful urban planning with very little traffic. "Ricarditooo! Go and take the bottles back to the shop..." But maaaa... we're playing... 05 > There were vegetable plots with water tanks, areas of open field with flocks of sheep grazing... 06 > "Dad... we're taking the sofa bed 'cosin!"...some parts like shanty towns... 07 >...and even a brook called Las Vegasillas, whose bends we went exploring when "on expedition". "Look, a snake..."



Madrid - City in Destruction

LOS RECUERDOS SON SUBJETIVOS, ES CIERTO, PERO ES INNEGABLE QUE LA CIUDAD ENTONCES TODAVÍA SE COMPORTABA COMO UNA CÉLULA...



08

ACTUALMENTE, MADRID PRESENTA A SU ALREDEDOR UN ANILLO KILOMÉTRICO DE DEVASTACIÓN, DE TIERRA REMOVIDA Y DESCAMPADA, UN CERCO ATROZ DE NO-LUGARES TAN FEOS COMO INHABITABLES.

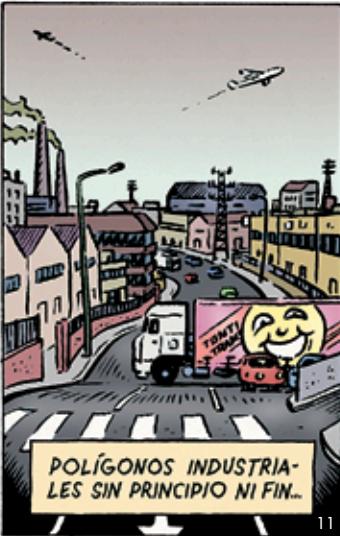


09

EMPRENDIMIENTOS INMOBILIARIOS FANTASMALES...

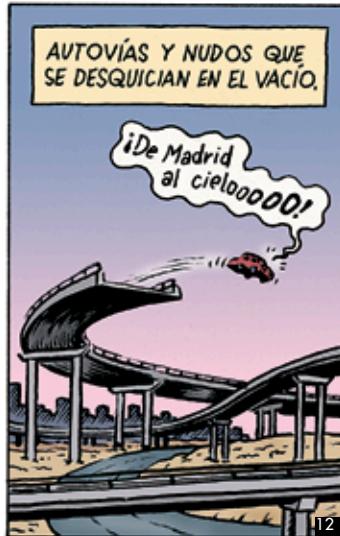


10



11

AUTOVÍAS Y NUDOS QUE SE DESQUICIAN EN EL VACÍO.



12

COMO SI SE TRATARA DE LA ONDA EXPANSIVA PROVOCADA POR LA CAÍDA...



13

...DE UNA COLOSAL BOMBA DE NEUTRONES, EUROS Y HORMIGÓN.



08>It's true that memories are subjective, but it's undeniable that the city back then still behaved like a cell... permeable to its surroundings... breathing, "Kneeeeee-grinder!" "Tomatoe's!" "09>Currently, Madrid is hemmed in by a fair ring of devastation, of ploughed up earth and waste ground, an atrocious wall of non-places as ugly as they are uninhabitable. "There we go Mr Councillor" "Ahhh! Nothing like the smell of progress in the morning" "Here soon. Absolutely whatever 10>Ghosts, real-estate business ventures... 11>...endless swaths of industrial estates... 12>Highways and junctions that lead to nothing, "From Madrid to the staaaars!" 13>As if were a shock wave caused by the fall... 14>... Whatever 15>And so, these days, that brook from our childhood has been turned into the course for another cut-rate, infinitely more dismal and swift... Madrid - City in Destruction ... the M-30

01>Condemned to turn its back on the territory that hosts it, Madrid, like all cities of our time, has been uprooted from its substrate, its past, of its welcoming and native qualities... "Farewell, real world!" "Woohoo! Now we're really going somewhere!" 02>Unerringly entering that doubt-filled limbo of blind growth and speculation, "Wait for meee!" Peking - Tokyo - NY - London - Paris 03>At the mercy of this false logic, the modern city is relegated to being a merely functional storage space....of people and goods. 04>To stand out, Madrid faces sad diarrhea... being the window display to something that no longer exists... 05>...or rather being another provincial copy of the sprawling metropolises of note. "What shall we watch then?" "The Lion King or Blas Piñar? The Musical?" 06>The Olympic bid or the Eurovegas project is nothing more than rather hysterical and delirious drifts of a lack of imagination, and a Madrid heading somewhere... "This is the VIP Torture Chamber; Mr. Anderson. Of course, that'll be legal soon too..." 07>...beyond the personal, fanatic and mean-spirited gain of its dominant elite.



SIN EMBARGO, COMO ADMIRADOR DE LA ARQUITECTURA Y TODO SU POTENCIAL, ALGO ME PREOCUPA TODAVÍA MÁS...



BASTA TRANSITAR POR EL MADRID MÁS RECIENTE PARA CONSTATAR HASTA QUÉ PUNTO SUS NUEVOS BARRIOS Y SUIBURIOS SON IDÉNTICOS A LOS DE CUALQUIER OTRA CIUDAD...



EN LAS REVISTAS DE ARQUITECTURA, ES CIERTO, AÚN PODEMOS VER HONROSAS MUESTRAS DE BUEN HACER. PERO, ¿QUÉ SUPONE ESO DE TODO LO CONSTRUIDO?



HABRÁ QUIEN PIENSE QUE ASÍ SON LAS COSAS, QUE ASÍ COMO LA PUBLICIDAD, NOS GUSTE O NO, ES EL VERDADERO ARTE DE NUESTRA ÉPOCA...

2057



NO OBSTANTE, TAL VEZ LA MAYORÍA DE LOS ARQUITECTOS Y URBANISTAS QUE AMAN SU OFICIO SOSPECHEN YA QUE LA INTENSIFICACIÓN DEL CAPITALISMO SUPONDRA, EN DEFINITIVA, EL FIN DE SUS DISCIPLINAS...



Nonetheless, as an admirer of architecture and its potential, something worries me even more... "I refer to that troubling feeling that all construction post-'60s is formal and habitable abomination."⁰⁸ It only takes a trip round recently-built Madrid to confirm just how much our new neighbourhoods and suburbs are identical to those of my other city... "Hm, it's true that in architecture magazines we can still see honourable examples of good work, but, how much is that in comparison with everything that is built?"⁰⁹ I'm not the only one who thinks things are like that, like advertising, whether you like it or not, being the true art of our times... "Look, notice the plasterboard ashlars... what PVC plumbing! What aluminium carpentry!... they really knew how to build back then!"¹⁰ Sure... nowadays we live in cardboard boxes... future generations will also know how to appreciate the wonder intrinsic to places such as Seseña, Moratalaz or San Chinarro...¹¹ Perhaps most architects and urban planners who love their trade suspect that the intensification of capitalism will suppose, without doubt, the death of their disciplines... "...taking advantage of the solar energy we get here and the air currents in the communal areas there'll be a nursery common room, green spaces and access to..."¹² "Nice... really nice, truly nice. Now get back to the studio and make me a "real" project that'll get me big bucks real fast... and then, if necessary, we'll talk..."¹³ "Because... What sense is left to medicine when the doctor's professional frame prevents him from healing or saving lives?"¹⁴

01>But... Could it perhaps be about an identity crisis exclusive to architecture? Or is it a generalised pandemic that is hitting everything? "Get out of the recession? ...Nooo... Ha, ha... impossible, being that it's a chronic and lethal disease..." That's how come **recursionism** is the new ideology du jour... 02>If the current cumulative model doesn't recognise the limits of nature or of humans, it's high time we put those precise limits at the core of a new model to be figured out... "The only reasonable ecological and social proposal for Madrid is to be deconstructed... And I plan to help as of right now!" 03>Let's think for a moment in the enormous challenge this would pose for - among many other trades - that of the architect or the urban planner. Finally something of some use! "We'd have to disperse few compact and multifunctional nuclei..." 04>It could be something truly exciting... "Kids! Lunchtime!" "I'm bringing Carabanche's tomatoatoes!" 05>Like I said at the beginning, some of my favourite memories come from the Madrid of the '70s and '80s, that fairfrom-perfect Madrid... "but at least it was alive." 06>But I don't have trouble either imagining all those new memories that could be made, shared with most of its inhabitants, in this other Madrid to be made and to be lived... "Ahhh! How lovely is the sun!" Now the name of this square really suits it!"

