

## The Sensual City

Extending our approach taken to a large number of city projects, we consider that each urban situation provides an opportunity to explore a conceptual framework based on the way that people will inhabit the city of tomorrow. Our starting point is to examine current and potential future ways of living, working, travelling and consuming in the city. The aim, prior to any formalisation, is to create an environment that permits diversity and changing uses, and incorporate these into a geography and a history. The intention is to replace a geometric urbanism by an urbanism based on atmospheres, materialities and context in a way that intermingles architecture and landscape, and that uses the most advanced technologies to create a sensual city.

The Sensual City is a project that answers the urgent question of what urban planning should be today. The urban culture developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is steadily expanding and over half the world's population now lives in cities, a proportion that is continually increasing and causing functional problems on an unprecedented scale. It is a situation that threatens our planet's resources as well as the way we live together in cities.

In Europe, there is a need to go beyond the traditional model of the historic city, take a fresh look at the suburbs and accept that they represent a fully-fledged contemporary urban landscape. Throughout the world and on all continents, giant cities with over ten million inhabitants are taking form. In the 21st century, hundreds of millions of people will find themselves living in an exclusively urban environment, an artificial universe in which technology will be omnipresent. The modernist city, placing emphasis on infrastructures and zoning, will deploy its ordinary, internationalist architecture throughout the planet and mass-produce urban worlds completely lacking in quality. Elsewhere, cities find themselves governed by nostalgia and there are many towns in France that suffer from this fate. Consequently, every new project provides us with an opportunity to innovate and place emphasis on exemplarity.

With the Sensual City, our intention is to develop an alternative approach, one in which technology is not obtrusive nor an end in itself. On the contrary, as technology is perfected it becomes invisible, it disappears from view and allows people to live in cities that can be construed as built landscapes, designed to offer a full sensorial experience. The city becomes an environment that incorporates a high level of sustainable development as well as a setting where people can take pleasure in living together and relate to its history as the founding source of civilization. To achieve these ends, it is essential that the city be deeply rooted to its specific culture, climate and geography.

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