

**Sobre el concurs «Habitatge i Ciutat»  
On the competition «Housing and the City»**

**Kenneth Frampton**

Al meu parer, en el concurs «Habitatge i Ciutat» convocat pel Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya, entre el primer i el segon premi seleccionats pel jurat, els projectes més interessants han estat el de Roberto Collová i Jean-Pierre Pranlas, el d'Albert Daniel i Claudia Liebermann i, per últim, el de Helmut Christen. Crec que totes tres propostes aconseguen un equilibri entre tres aspectes interrelacionats del concurs. Presentaven primerament una estratègia convincent per a un desenvolupament gradual de tota l'àrea. També contenen una posició clara respecte a la millora de la base residencial existent. Finalment, definien una estratègia convincent per dotar la Diagonal d'una definició progressiva.

Personalment, penso que el projecte de Christen és especialment interessant per la seva façana en pantalla al llarg de la Diagonal, per la considerable escala i la velocitat de l'esmentada façana. Crec que en aquest projecte la idea de velocitat i de grandiositat és molt notable i, alhora, hi ha l'estratègia d'enllaçar totes les peces adjacents i una idea subjacent de buit i ple que permet la formació d'una pantalla ocupada per espais.

En general, cal discernir entre dues idees: el context ha de ser respectat o ha de ser rebutjat. D'una banda, entenc que per a moltes persones avui dia és difícil prendre un gest grandiloqüent.

Si bé el projecte Collová-Pranlas posseeix potencial per aconseguir una relació molt diferenciada dins d'una tipologia de fragments, crec que la proposta peca d'una determinada convicció rítmica respecte a la Diagonal; és a dir, el contrapunt proposat de parc/plaça/jardí/edifici públic quedaria millorat, des del meu punt de vista, si es reforçava mitjançant un ritme plàstic decisiu en termes de massa. Penso en un determinat tipus de mini-torres que serien llegibles, diguem, com una forma total al llarg de la Diagonal.

Aquest ritme és present al projecte presentat per Daniel i Liebermann. També apareix un sentit del ritme semblant a la proposta de Christen, per bé que la idea de pantalla frontal contínua li proporciona una sensació més gran de continuïtat urbana.

Atès que aquest concurs es va concebre com a *concours d'idées*, crec que aquestes es troben entre els conceptes genèrics més fèrtils sorgits del concurs. Es podria definir com una estratègia comuna que en aquests tres projectes adopta la forma d'una repetició de fragments

parcials. A cada projecte, aquesta repetició rítmica està integrada per elements positius i negatius. Els primers consisteixen en determinades formes massisses similars quant a l'efecte al típic *bâtiment d'angle* del segle XIX, i els segons consisteixen en un contrapunt d'espais públics que es presenten com a recíprocs dels primers. Aquest volum o «buit» recíproc és el mecanisme emprat per cadascun dels equips arquitectònics esmentats més amunt com a mitjà d'integrar la Diagonal a les diverses condicions del teixit circumdant.

Dels tres projectes que he escollit comentar, és del tot evident que la proposta de Daniel-Liebermann és la més sensible des del punt de vista dels plans dels apartaments. No hi ha cap mena de dubte que el concepte d'un microespai s'acosta a la idea avançada a la recent publicació *Penser l'habité*.<sup>1</sup> Una preocupació semblant per oferir un espai domèstic «nou» i flexible és igualment evident a la proposta presentada per l'Escola d'Arquitectura de Lille i Louvain la Neuve, si bé no estic tan convençut de l'estratègia emprada en aquest cas a l'hora de manejar l'espai urbà intersticial, els fragments sobers, per dir-ho d'alguna manera, que necessàriament s'han de produir en un teixit urbà existent.

Tanmateix, l'ús del mur gruixut transversal a la detallada planificació interior dels apartaments és, em sembla, especialment convincent, molt més, de fet, que una altra versió de la mateixa idea al projecte presentat per Ábalos i Herreros, o que el concepte d'un gruixut mur-filtre com el que apareix al projecte dissenyat per Wall, Neutelings, De Geyter i Roodbeen. Mentre que aquest últim és una proposta d'originalitat considerable, la «paret-filtre» fracassa en l'intent d'aportar espai d'emmagatzematge suficient, malgrat el terra de doble capa. Això em sembla un punt dèbil fonamental que contradia la intenció alliberadora de la proposta. També tinc alguns dubtes respecte a l'estratègia urbana estabilitzadora que segons sembla comporta l'esmentat projecte davant del teixit general. Sembla massa esquemàtic en una sèrie d'escales diferents relacionades entre si, a part del fet que ignora la Diagonal. ■

1. Vegeu: Monique Eleb-Vidal/Anne-Marie Châtelet/Thierry Mandoul: *Penser l'habité. Le logement en questions*, ed. Pierre Mardaga, Liège, 1988.

For me, in the competition «Housing and the City», organized by the Association of Catalan Architects, among the first and second prizes selected by the jury, the projects that were the most interesting were first the design of Roberto Collovà and Jean Pierre Prnlas, second the scheme submitted by Albert Daniel and Claudia Liebermann, and third the project designed by Helmut Christen. I feel that each of these proposals achieved a balance between three interrelated aspects of the competition, that is to say they presented, first, a convincing strategy for the piecemeal development of the entire area, second, a clear position with regard to the improvement of the residential stock itself, and finally a convincing strategy for imparting a progressive definition to the Diagonal.

Personally I feel that Christen's project is perhaps the most interesting, with its screen-façade along the Diagonal, because this screen-façade is of considerable scale and has a certain speed. I think the idea of velocity and grandiosity is highly impressive in this project, and at the same time there is a strategy to link all the adjacent pieces, and an underlying idea of full and empty that allows for the formation of a screen occupied by space.

A discrimination must be made here between two ideas: the context must either be respected or rejected. On the one hand I understand that for many people at the present moment it is difficult to attempt to make a grand gesture.

While the Collovà-Prnlas scheme demonstrates a potential for achieving a highly differentiated relationship within a typology of fragments, I feel that the proposal lacks a certain rhythmic conviction with regard to the Diagonal; that is to say, the proposed counterpoint of park/square/garden/public building would be improved, in my view, by being reinforced through a decisive plastic rhythm in terms of mass. One thinks of a certain kind of mini-towers that would be readable say as an aggregate form.

Such a rhythm is, I feel, present in the project submitted by Daniel and Liebermann. A similar sense of rhythm also occurs in the Christen proposal, even if the idea of the continuous frontal screen accords an even greater sense of urban continuity.

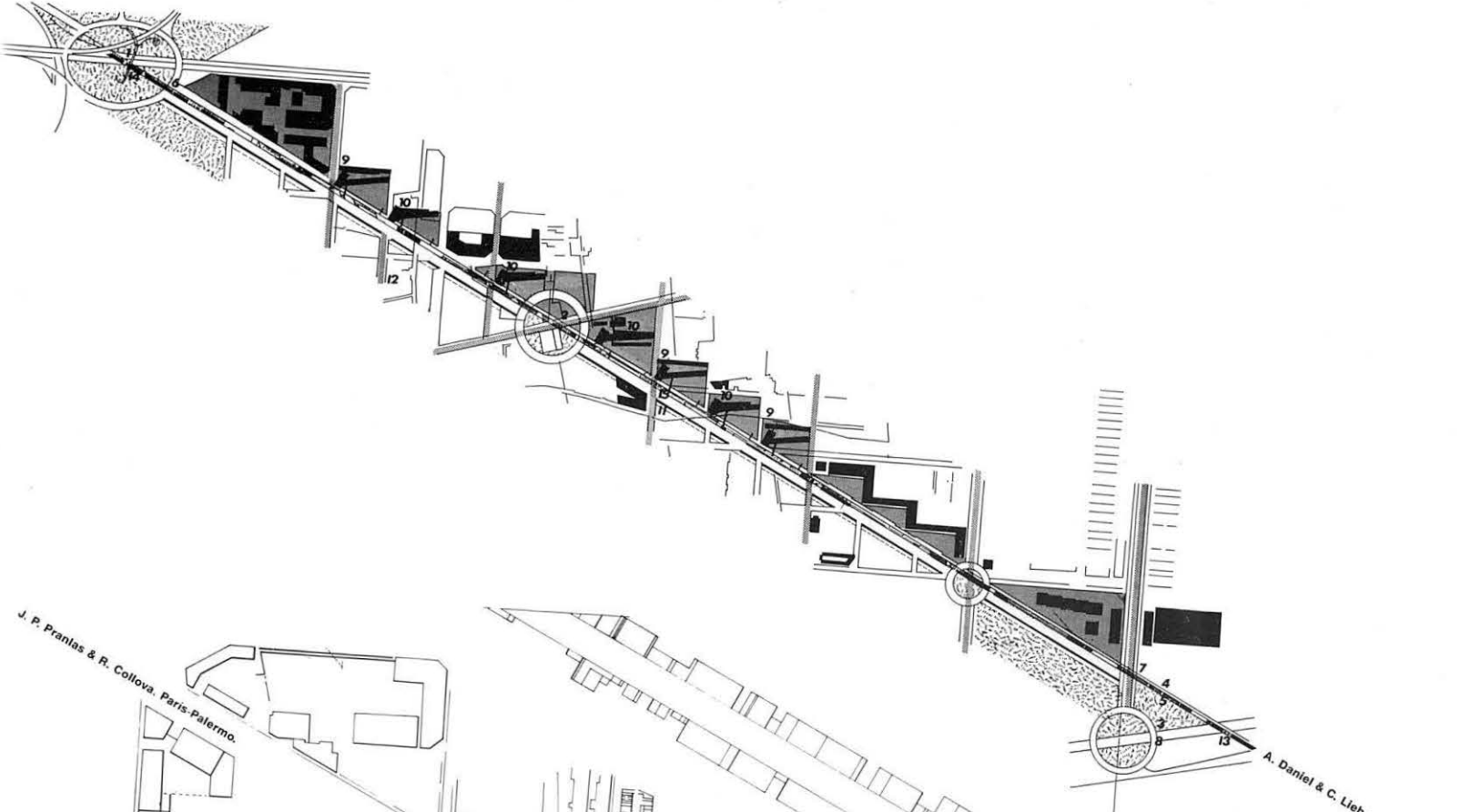
Since this competition was conceived as a «concours d'idées», I feel that these are among the most fertile

generic concepts to emerge from the contest. One could characterise this as a common strategy that in these three schemes assumes the form of a repetition of partial fragments. In each scheme this rhythmic repetition is comprised of positive and negative elements. The first of these consists of certain identifiable mass-forms close to the typical 19th-century «bâtiment d'angle» in its effect, and the second consists of a counterpoint of public spaces that is as it were the reciprocal of the former. This reciprocal volume or «gap» is the device used by each of the architectural teams mentioned above as a means for integrating the Diagonal with all the different conditions of the surrounding fabric.

Of the three schemes that I have chosen to discuss, it is evident that the Daniel-Liebermann proposal is the most sensitively developed from the point of view of the apartment plans. The concept of a flexible micro-space is close to the idea advanced in the recent publication *Penser l'habité*.<sup>1</sup> A similar kind of concern for the provision of a «new» and flexible domestic space, is surely also evident in the proposal submitted by the École d'Architecture de Lille et Louvain la Neuve, although I am less convinced about the strategy employed in this instance for handling the interstitial urban space, the left-over fragments so to speak, that must necessarily occur in an existing urban fabric.

However, the use of the transverse thick wall in the detailed interior planning of the apartments is in my view particularly convincing, much more convincing in fact than another version of the same idea in the project submitted by Ábalos and Herreros, or the concept of a thick filter wall as this appears in the project designed by Wall, Neutelings, de Geyter, and Roodbeen. While this last is a proposal of considerable originality, the «filter wall» fails in this instance to provide sufficient storage space despite the double layered floor. This seems to me to be a weakness that contradicts the liberative intention of the proposal. I also have my doubts about the urban stabilising strategy that this scheme seems to imply vis-à-vis the overall fabric. It appears to be too schematic at a number of different interrelated scales, aside from the fact that it ignores the Diagonal. ■■■

Monique Eleb-Vidal/Anne-Marie Châtelet/Thierry Mandoul. *Penser l'habité. Le logement en questions*, ed. Pierre Mardaga, Liège, 1988.

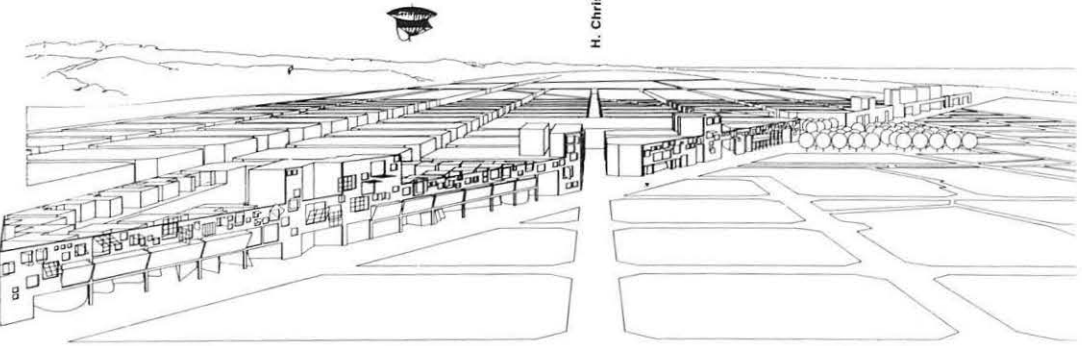


J. P. Pranlas & R. Collova, Paris-Palermo.

A. Daniel & C. Liebermann, Lausanne.



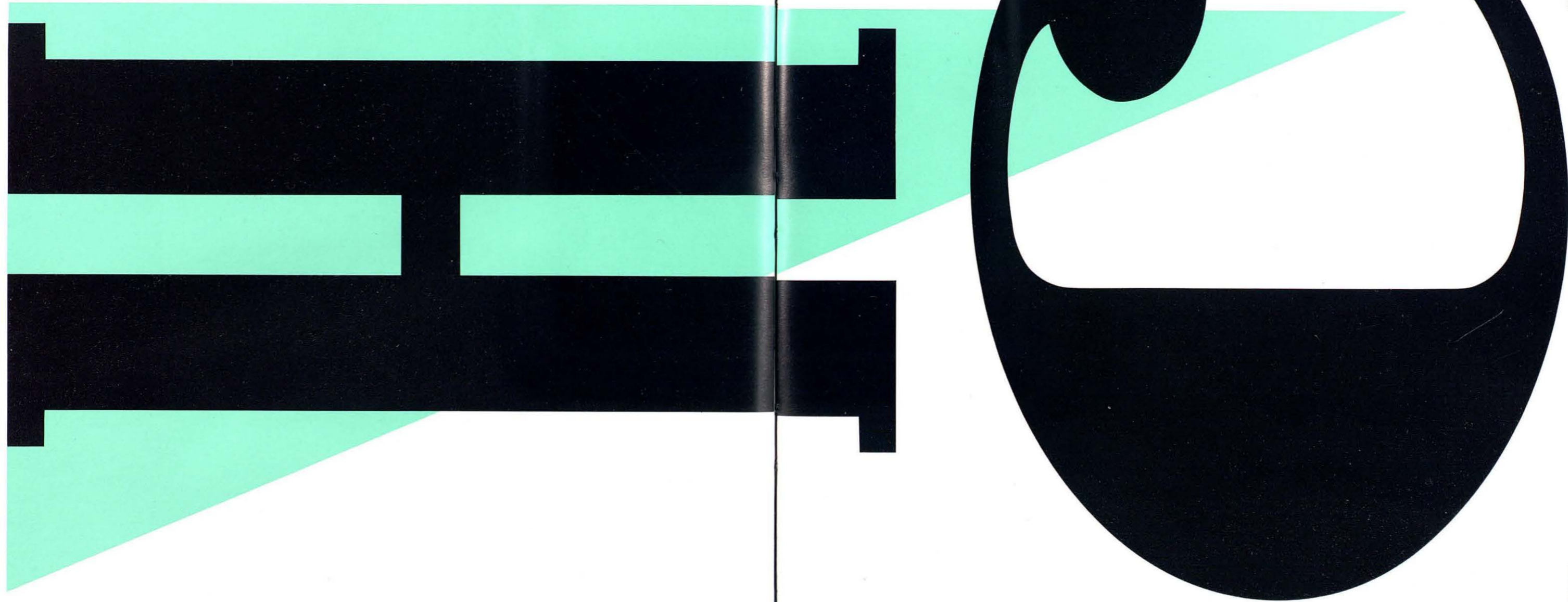
H. Christen, Vienna.



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**Habitatge i Ciutat**  
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**Vivienda y Ciudad**  
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**Housing and The City**  
**International Competition of Projects**

## I. CITIES

«... It would be pointless for me to attempt to describe the city of Zaira at her upper bulwarks. I could tell you how many stairs her terraced streets have, of what type are her arcades and porticoes, what kind of zinc roofs you would see there; but I know this would be like telling you nothing. Cities are not made of this, but of the relationships between the dimensions of their spaces and the events of their past...»

(Italo Calvino. *The Invisible Cities*).

The cities of Miquel Navarro are not realistic either, since they do not tell us of familiar urban spaces. His cities do not describe what their squares were like, where their trees were situated, the impact of their shops and how their wares were displayed, what kind of paving their streets had or the encounter between the urban network and the surrounding terrain or their connections on the edge, with the plain, the sea or the mountain.

On the other hand they have nothing to do with the ideal city. A city of this type depends upon a set of objectives and maintains a general order at the service of these. What stands out in the case of Utopia is what is desired, whether this is the geometry of the hierarchical layout in renaissance cities, the impenetrability of fortified cities, ease of communication in trading cities or the will for self administration and autonomy of some cities in the Utopian socialist world.

No. Neither a realistic, descriptive city nor an ideal one, although both are in fact two sides of the same coin: the possible.

Quite the contrary, the cities, of Miquel Navarro are conceived on the basis of the symbol and the metaphor, with one side tending towards the equivocal, as if it were defined within the context of opposite poles. Thus though his work is fundamentally sculpture, it also make an initial approach to architecture, given the basic importance given to construction as a kind of general principle upon which it is based. However, it also adopts certain aspects of painting, such as the priority of a point of vision and its having been conceived for spaces with concrete spatial limits (the walls of the rooms where it is exhibited, for example, that act as a frame).

Another aspect of this polarity are his references: these are on the one hand cultural, in the sense that known

elements from the classical avant-garde are reproduced (Art Deco, Neoplasticism, Malevich and even Giacometti), and on the other personal, a kind of associative easy-goingness that surprises, attracts and often disconcerts.

The old and the modern come together constantly: indeed, we find ourselves face to face with a city of pyramids and high-rise blocks, made from rudiments, close to archaeology and with episodes of industrial landscape. This dichotomy is further accentuated by the very concept of city: there are small, identical, repetitive constructions whose geometrical and cubic forms, reminiscent of Neoplasticism, evoke the present-day city, while there are also singular elements that stand out by virtue of their size, of their isolation, of their sculptural singularity and of their treatment. The former are made from clay and the latter from metal. In this way «Matter», through earth-mud, acquires the characteristic of a kind of irrefutable law which becomes the true physical fabric of the city. And from this base emerges the relevant episode, unique though insubstantial. The singular and the universal come together in this kind of city that so much resembles a hieroglyphic, difficult and obscure, a puzzle patiently being put together, a task that has something archaeological about it: recomposing a lost order that nevertheless exists somewhere.

The present and the past coexist also in his themes, fundamentally in those which have a sculptural and singular quality: the pyramid, a construction that denotes eternity, the beginning and the end, a funereal element where at the same time we encounter the origins of our Mediterranean or Western cultural history; the factory, with all its sense of solidity, of a model of labour, of a paradigmatic element in the industrial city; the milestones erected alone, like gigantic metal posts which, above all in his latest cities, they may be great blocks reminiscent of skyscrapers, or gantries that rise up over a landscape that is to an extent industrial, or simply contraptions, sculptures denoting a potential use, tool, utensil, equipment, something that evokes mechanics and metaphor at the same time, the sophisticated and the primitive, work and imagination.

His latest city compositions (*La Ciutat*, 1984 and *Des del Terrat*, 1985) ostensibly vary in certain aspects. The