

Por otra parte, el gran peso demográfico, económico y político que tiene la conurbación barcelonesa amenaza con romper la unidad armónica que tradicionalmente había entre la capital y el conjunto del país. Sería importante resolver la articulación de la ciudad con su área metropolitana y con el resto del Principado. Pero Cataluña no tiene los organismos políticos ni económicos que necesita para poder organizar su territorio, equilibrar los poderes locales y comarcales con los del Gobierno de la Generalidad. Con la actual ordenación política, formada por poderes autonómicos insuficientes, municipios con pocas capacidades financieras y administración periférica del Estado con un sentido y una actuación divergente, Cataluña resulta, en algunos aspectos, ingobernable.

Los artículos que siguen ponen de relieve algo que quizás el lector ya conozca suficientemente, pero que creemos necesario subrayar: nos referimos al aprovechamiento de la ocasión que representan las inversiones olímpicas para progresar en todos los órdenes. Las autoridades barcelonesas primero, tal como les correspondía, pero también las otras administraciones públicas, encabezadas por la Generalidad, se plantearon la organización de la gran fiesta deportiva como espolón y excusa para dar el impulso necesario a la capital de Cataluña hasta convertirla, en no demasiado tiempo, en una de las metrópolis más importantes del sur de Europa.

Para lograr estos objetivos, Barcelona, sus políticos, sus intelectuales, y entre éstos, naturalmente, sus diseñadores, no deben olvidar, en nombre del cosmopolitismo, su condición de ciudad catalana: cabeza y centro de Cataluña, tal como se ha afirmado tradicionalmente. Ahora más que nunca el Principado es un tejido urbano íntimamente relacionado; su unidad no se puede romper de modo artificial sin que se produzcan consecuencias no deseadas; la comunicación fluida entre la ciudad y el país interior es un requisito indispensable para el mantenimiento de la fuerza del conjunto. Sólo a partir del mantenimiento de la propia personalidad y fuerza los individuos y las colectividades consiguen trascender sus límites y fronteras. El hecho de abrirse al mundo debe significar un acrecimiento de la propia riqueza y no una disolución de la personalidad. Digámoslo bien claro: si Barcelona olvida su condición de capital catalana, no será ni metrópolis europea ni otra cosa que una ciudad provinciana.

Esta reflexión o alguna similar debería hacerse en el campo del diseño, ahora que el trabajo de nuestros profesionales se ha popularizado en el interior del país y ha adquirido cierta dimensión internacional, como señalábamos al principio. La determinación de las formas de los objetos, de los espacios y de las imágenes que han de constituir nuestro espacio vital es una actividad de capital importancia en el mundo de hoy; sólo las culturas que sean capaces de hacerlo a fondo tendrán un sitio destacado en el futuro. En Cataluña disponemos de muchos triunfos en este sentido a condición de que seamos capaces no sólo de aprovechar el trabajo hecho hasta ahora, sino también de profundizarlo y mejorarlo.

Disponemos de las instituciones necesarias: escuelas, organizaciones profesionales, publicaciones y un bagaje cultural que no se puede menospreciar. Ahora hay que mejorar todo esto. Se impone una etapa de reflexión y de estudio; también se impone un gran debate que, reuniendo a profesionales, investigadores, industriales y políticos, nos pudiera situar en buenas condiciones para afrontar los desafíos del futuro. Barcelona está de moda, el diseño catalán es conocido en todo el mundo por primera vez en nuestra historia, pero las modas pasan y sólo quedan las realizaciones sólidas. El trabajo bien hecho que reclamaban nuestros novecentistas continúa siendo un objetivo de primera magnitud.

JORDI BERRIO

«Where there is no style and norm there is barbarism.»

J. V. Foix

Times de Disseny dedicates the present number to the Barcelona Olympic Games. Obviously, it is mainly centered around the subject of design, architecture and urbanism, but it also refers to the economical dimensions of this phenomenon. But let the reader not be deceived, for the articles go far beyond this and inevitably delve into the problem of the city of Barcelona as the capital of Catalonia, as a Mediterranean metropolis and also as a meeting place for people and cultures.

But the reader should not be deceived: among all these questions, some are dealt with, others are only suggested, and some are even missing. And thanks to these latter the reader will be able, if he so wishes, to carry out a useful task of enhancing the textual proposals with reasoning, imagination and, if it suits him, empirical verification.

The Olympic Games represent the final emergence of the complex movement of Barcelona and Catalan design. The city of Barcelona seems to be internationally acknowledged as one of the most

active and original urban nuclei of our continent in the field of architecture and design. However, those of us who experience the phenomenon from within feel surprised because we are conscious of our weaknesses and deficiencies. Nevertheless, if foreigners think so, they must be right to certain extent; not totally right, this we know for sure, but there must be some truth in what they say.

The aforementioned emergence —let us accept it with skepticism— is the result of many, many years of activity. It is due to the excellent level that some of our architects have always had, the good work of the artisans, the conscious creations of designers, the work of painters, typographers and printers. All this activity which has developed over more than a hundred years has left behind a sediment of inestimable value that has constituted the strong basis on which design has developed since the sixties decade. Whether large or small, we have a certain tradition in the field of design; a tradition that now enables us to pick up the more fruitful results; a tradition which is invaluable for us no matter what international assessment it receives.

The Olympics are a very complex phenomenon which also entails other dimensions, apart from sports, that are political, economical, cultural and that have to do with design, a factor that is becoming more and more important. It is a series of events that are characteristic of our times and, as such, are the vehicle for existing tensions, individual or collective aspirations, as well as for ideologies of triumph or fight and the spiritual emptiness of religious nature. Given the diversity that they represent, it is normal that they have changed very rapidly in their one hundred years of existence according to the circumstances of the moment. Since the reestablishment —in truth, the new creation— of the Modern Games in Athens 1896, to the celebration of Barcelona'92, the Games have evolved in accordance to the history of our societies. We only have to remember the Games held in Berlin in 1936, as an exaltation of Nazi Germany, accompanied by the democratic and popular alternative ones that had to be held in Barcelona the same year and which were aborted by the uprising of the Spanish fasciste military.

This years Games represent a new progress for this majestic international celebration, precisely and very specially in relation to architecture, urbanism and design in general. As the reader will see in the following pages, never had we gone so far in the creation of a corporate image, in the exploitation of mascots, clothes, graphic work and objects especially designed for the occasion such as torches or flame holders. The brand of Barcelona, and therefore of Catalonia, has extended all over the world as never before in recent times. In the same line, the audiovisual coverage of the Games will attain landmarks never reached before. The card of the supposed form and creativity has been played to its full extent, to the point that the Barcelona'92 Games will probably go down in history as the Games of design.

We can all see the incredible urbanistic works that have been carried out, the perfecting in the communications networks. There is much to feel satisfied about; however, all this work also creates new problems as well as raising other old ones. The relations between the city itself and its metropolitan area have been upset; a worsening of the proportions between the great central city and the rest of the country are obvious. It is evident that the main aim of the urbanistic plans carried out by the municipal government during the past few years has been the creation of new urban centers equipped with services, monuments and facilities in the peripheral neighbourhoods of the city. There has been an obvious desire to dignify the most degraded sectors; to correct the disasters created during the years of the Franco régime. A noteworthy effort has been made to solve the problems of circulation and transportation: new avenues and belts have been constructed to improve traffic circulation inside the city. Nevertheless, all these improvements, as will be explained in some of the articles contained in this issue, have been made by exporting the problems of the periphery of Barcelona to its metropolitan area.

On the other hand, the great demographic, economical and political specific weight of the Barcelona metropolis runs the risk of breaking the harmonious unity that has traditionally existed between the city and the rest of the country. It would be important to solve the articulation of the city with its metropolitan area and with the rest of Catalonia. But Catalonia does not have the political or economical organisms that it needs in order to organize its own territory, balance the local and regional power with the General power. With our present political organization formed by insufficient autonomic powers, municipalities with little financial capacity and peripheral administration by the State with a different meaning and diverging acts makes Catalonia, in many aspects, an ungovernable country.

The articles that follow underline something that the reader may already know well, but we believe should nevertheless be stressed: taking advantage of the Olympic investments to make progress in many other senses. In the first place the Barcelona authorities as was their duty, but also the authorities of other public administrations headed by the Generalitat, thought of the organization of this sports event in terms of a driving force and excuse for giving the capital of Catalonia the necessary impulse to become very soon one of the most important metropolis of southern Europe.

In order to reach these objectives Barcelona, its politicians, its intellectuals and among them naturally its designers never have to forget, in the name of cosmopolitanism, its nature as a Catalan city: visible head of Catalonia as it has been traditionally considered. Now more than ever, the Catalan

country is an intimately related urban network; its unity cannot be broken artificially without producing certain unwanted consequences; the fluid communication between the city and the rest of the country is an essential requirement for maintaining the strength of the whole. Only by maintaining their own personality and strength do individuals and collectivities transcend beyond their own limits and boundaries. Opening up to the world must contribute to the already-existing richness and not serve to dissolve one's own personality. In other words, and to put it clearly: if Barcelona forgets her nature as the capital of Catalonia it will not be a European metropolis or anything else but a provincial city.

This reflection, or a very similar one, should be made within the field of design now that the work of our professionals has become popular inside our country and has also acquired a certain international dimension, as we pointed out at the beginning. The determination of the shapes of objects, of spaces and of images that have to constitute our vital space is a very important activity in the world of today; only the cultures capable of doing this satisfactorily will have an important place in the future. In Catalonia we have many chances of doing this if we are capable of not only taking advantage of the work carried out so far but also of going beyond it and improving.

We have the necessary institutions: schools, professional organizations, publications and cultural baggage that cannot be underestimated. What we must now do is improve this. A necessary period of reflection and study must ensue; also a big debate between professionals, investigators, entrepreneurs and politicians could situate us satisfactorily in order to face the future. Barcelona has become fashionable, Catalan design is known everywhere for the first time in our history, but fashions pass and only solid constructions remain. The well done work demanded by our avantgarde artists of the 19th century continues to be a very important objective.

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