

# Can Cities Dream?

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There is lots of terror on earth, and there are lots of bombs in cities these days. Cities, countries and the world are caught in a tide of nihilism whose protagonists believe that destruction is a solution. There should be a hundred times more creative effort to resist what is being negated.

Cities need to dream. They were built up slowly on thousands of small dreams. Somewhere, cities should still dream. We should make them dream. In a world full of wonders and dangers, every moment is a magical survival.

Urban Toys can move cities. They can make a city dream and the city dreams.

We should make dream bombs in a world threatened with real bombs. Dream bombs are planned for years in advance, probably requiring as much energy, financial backing, organization and know-how as the terrorist kind. They might fail to happen, but when they do, their vitality permeates the city.

What does it mean to awaken a city? It comes down to the initiative of the few. Terrorists on one side, artists on the other. We never appear to clash, but we both fight hard.

What is the difference between destroying and creating? A terrorist act devastates. It takes a life, makes it cease to exist, cease to create. A creative act cannot replace life, but enriches the experience of life. An accumulation of creative acts enriches humanity.

This is not good versus bad; destruction and creativity are never equal. Both work from the void; one using nihilism to eradicate freedom of thought, the other using absurdity as the starting point of story-telling.

## **Cities**

Stories, yes, we can tell stories, but how can we realize them, give them substance? How can we make them part of the encounters and accidents of daily life?

Any place we experience has its history rooted in the stories of its ancestors. In the city, memories of the past are shaped into cultures. It is up to us to create new stories that fuse with the unique sounds, views, smells, tastes and textures of our cities; stories that grow from its aura.

I work for cities. They hire me. In a busy city of money-movers, administrative hustlers, high-tension networks and tiny overlapping problems, the city has to realize itself and generate vigor.

*Everything around us, including ourselves, is breath-taking. This often only becomes apparent when daily routines are injected with modes of absurdity.*

## **Hapsitus**

Contemporary cities are reaching the limits of standardization and saturation. People can no longer escape the rules of social systems politically imposed on them. There is a need for emancipation, for ephemeral accumulated actions in different zones within the city that try to break through the existing network and agitate its structure...I call such phenomena hap-situs (happening) + (situation). They can appear as a result of a visible form (urban setting) or of an invisible order (urban happening) or from a combination of both.

This is not architecture as we commonly experience it. It is not a built up structure to contemplate, nor a theatrical play to applaud. It is a concentrated distribution of energy in the city, creating lapses of rebellion, fantasy and anarchy that pushes us to react. The appearance of a new organism in the city keeps the city in constant challenge with itself. The new organism is accepted or rejected, depending on the citizens.

Shapes and forms injected with imagination and illusion activate the memories of the place. Layers of shadow, wind and light add suspense. The story is told by Urban Toys. They provoke instants of enchantment and we take home the memory of the place.

### **Urban Toys and Dormant Dreams**

Each one of us is a carrier of memories and dreams. As a carrier you have to continue, like a businessman you have to make deals, like an administrator you have to manage, but as an artist you have to make a living. Like a child, you still cry sometimes, and remember drawing those elephants, dogs, giraffes and people. They got really big.

I am limited by my vision of the world, constrained by my silly funny stories. Why art? I do art mainly because I do not know why I do it. I do it because I can't define it. I do it because if I do not, I will have to sit down in frustration and think about doing it.

There is a drive, a beat that comes from somewhere in the universe, with a rhythm that never stops. The clock is ticking the hours, the minutes and the seconds. The alarm clock in your heart keeps you on the move; alert, wary.

Art is tightly controlled by the few, and this often disturbs a clear understanding of the meaning behind it. I feel better about what makes a city beat; the pulse of its arteries and veins. In each city there is a dormant dream. This book shows that the alms of the system allow for spaces of dreams within itself. The issue is how to deposit, dig into the dormant dream.

The unfolding of the dream should be slow, layer after layer until the dream manifests itself to the city. After each layer is revealed, much resistance is encountered. This is normal, as the dream is not yet a reality being lived. The most difficult bureaucracy to unfold is the art bureaucracy. I would like to unfold it so that it becomes prosaic, yet insane and provocative.

In a world tending towards the invisible, the digital, the screen, the infinity decimal, Urban Toys are palpable. They create magnets that influence the trajectories of people. They are not monuments. They are toys that function to the scale of the city. People make their own games by observing them and walking around them. They create their own stories, like children who create hundreds of different stories with the same toys every day. Sometimes they continue the story from the day before.

Urban Toys negate monuments. They are silent cultural movers. They are a dynamo that rejuvenates even the most disused parts of the city.

The representation of the ephemeral is crucial; it fragments the object and gives a freedom of interpretation unlike the static presence of the monument.

Each Urban Toy has a message, an open message ready to be inhabited by stories which become mingled in history.

Urban Toys are dream catalysts.