ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is one of the most valuable creations produced by mankind.
It is a way of understanding space and time.
It is the representation of a society within its time.

The transformation of space through architecture is the realization of an idea and the fulfillment of a thought.

The execution of a work of architecture always involves teams of collaborators and consultants whose participation is essential to the fulfillment of the building work.

Never is a work of architecture absolutely individual and original.

There always exist references from past architectures that provide their influence, and subjectivity itself is influenced by the collective unconscious.

In my office, the architectural proposal combining the functional requirements, the materials that work it out and the final expression is undertaken by teams that share decisions and adjust the design project using a step-by step approach in order to reach a solution in which everybody's involvement can be recognized.

Intuitive ideas are converted into a work of architecture thanks to the rational process of spatial construction and its subsequent materialization.

ARCHITECTURE AND PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy tries to explain the sense of existence and therefore, the *raison d'être* of man's actions.
And architecture is one of man's major actions or creations.
A centuries-long historical perspective allows us to easily relate the mythical transcendentalism of the Middle Ages to the nearly magic space of gothic cathedrals.

Nowadays, I would be able, as easily, to relate the 21st century and capitalism to the **star system** architecture; however, this is not enough to grasp reality since there has never been a homogenous and simple world.
The basis for understanding the link between architecture and reality is to destroy simplified ideas and understand a fragmented world instead.

Studying history in its simplified version confuses our perception of the moment, probably revealing it as confusion exclusive to contemporary society.
Addressing the philosophy and architecture issue should not be viewed as a search for an answer; rather, as an insight into our own contradictions.
This involves grasping reality as something multiple and complex and discovering, in what already exists, the unique features of each region and its potential, steady and transforming development.

This assertion about complexity and change is what leads to the understanding of the spirit of modernity.

THE SPIRIT OF MODERNITY

To be modern is to find oneself in a context that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, self- and world-transformation and that, at the same time, threatens to destroy all we have, all we know, all we are.
It is a paradoxical unit, a unit of disunity that launches us into a permanent whirl of perpetual disintegration and renovation, fight and contradiction, ambiguity and distress.
To be modern is to be part of a universe in which all that is solid melts into air.   Marshall Berman

Architecture must be modern because every time and every historical moment demand a modern answer, that is to say, a different and new response, in order to adjust themselves to the permanent changes in history and help its transformation.

Cultural modernity is a time when the standards and the ideological revision are set apart and expressed independently in the spheres of science and art.
The term modern was first used in the 5th century to distinguish Christianity from the pagan Roman past. Therefore, it originally means the consciousness of a time that breaks with the past, with antiquity, with the aim of considering itself as the result of a transition between an ancient world and a new one.
Renaissance was subsequently called the Modern Age, thus setting its differences with the Middle Ages.
In the 19th century, romantic Modernity objected to classical antiquity and established links with the Middle Ages.

The overcoming rationalism of the Modern movement tried to accomplish a new aesthetics for the 20th century which started from the social needs of a world undergoing a deep political transformation and dealing with the new methods of production provided by the industrial revolution.
The modern movement put forward the search for a new language putting aside history, investigating a new aesthetics that arises from the new processes of industrialization and proposing a solution that addresses large scale social problems.

This search intends to modify the scope of architecture within an ethical and social framework, taking aesthetics as the expression of society in a new world where the harmony and beauty of shapes are linked to the collective life of the city.
The search for this new aesthetics intends to achieve a language for mass production, for model reproduction based on an economy of design that enables massive planning.
It is the search for an aesthetics based on the use of simple forms, planes devoid of decoration, the absence of unnecessary relieves, continuous windows and independent structures.

This is the ethical sense presented by the Modern movement that is still in effect because today, as in the 20th century, there are millions of square meters left to build houses, hospitals and schools in a world that keeps on engaging in new technologies without putting them into effect to work out the most important problems of mankind.

The Modern movement constitutes one of the most important expressions of the spirit of modernity and many of its principles are still valid.

However, the 21st century Modernity will differ from 20th century Modernity as evolution is a continuous action in which nothing is real and nothing survives, except the change.

Architecture should take up again from the Modern movement the philosophical approach that states that what is elemental and simple exceeds the decadent superficiality of a spendthrift attitude towards architecture.

It is an approach where aesthetics is accomplished with constructive accuracy, economy of design and great functionality, where aesthetics results from harmonic proportions rather than from overabundance of shapes.

It does so by taking back Mies Van der Rohe's dictum "less is more", Amancio William's sublimation of technological expression and Wladimiro Acosta's interest in working out architectural problems with both an aesthetic and ethical sense.

UNIVERSALITY AND REGIONALISM

As people speak of globalization and international agreements to eliminate borders, regional differences reassert themselves.

Today, more than ever before, it is essential that a balance between regional characteristics and universal contemporary culture be achieved.

The Argentine crisis takes up all aspects of its reality and therefore, the identity crisis stands at the beginning of the 21st century as a problem that requires a solution so that a new historical period may start.

Argentine architecture is inserted in a historical process that cannot be solved by simplifying the space limited by its borders as these are completely random and the reality inside this physical space derives from international cultural exchange.

Admitting our complex cultural formation does not mean imitating the most economically developed centers.
Argentine culture has grown by adding contradictions that have resulted in a superficially eclectic architecture with towers copied from other latitudes and residential developments following a hardly English style, built by so-called architects for hardly educated clients.

It is true that Argentina has never been a pure and independent country since it emerged through a cultural exchange that continues and relates us permanently to other centers that cannot go unnoticed.

It is the balance between contemporary culture and the values of each region what will allow to gradually advance towards a world governed by exchange and enrichment without either reactionary regressions or the nullifying effect of standardization on creativeness.

Every place is influenced by its own history and by the invading world that surrounds it.
Those who react against this attempt to deny the possibility of universality and by doing so, neglect the uniqueness of the human condition.
Cultural servility attempts to neglect its own history and tradition without taking into account the true needs of society.
No society has grown in isolation. No society has started, progressed and reached full development without nourishing itself from other cultures and its own past— which represents another preceding culture— and without nourishing future cultures.

The language of our architecture must and can only emerge as the expression of our current reality within the complexity of the modern city.

This is a heterogeneous city with no traces of white houses and red tiles. Instead, it is a city with concrete and crystal towers, with shopping malls, with grey houses darkened by time, with factories and cars, with plastic billboards, with cables silhouetting the sky. It is a city where the legal and the marginal worlds face each other, a city featuring new dimensions and new scales of crowdedness.

If we are able to recognize our present forms and our social existence, we will be able to render authentic architecture in Argentina.

Architecture, anywhere in the world, should conciliate the impact of universal civilization with the elements derived from each place, each region and each region's traditions, including the rural and urban landscapes and, especially, the climate.

This should be achieved by recognizing what already exists in order to start from it; by turning to the collective memory in order to understand our history, which does not mean acting in a conformist or conservative way, neither does it mean holding a suicidal cultural nihilistic attitude or a utopian futuristic vision. On the other hand, it means avoiding folkloric simplifications or the import of models that have nothing to do with our needs or possibilities, which is ultimately the equation to be solved.

THE NEW ARCHITECTURE

The existing building typologies can be reproduced if they are still valid. Otherwise, new forms and models transforming the cityscape will appear.
A new work in the city should be made up of harmonious components including the existing forms and establishing a dialogue meant to complement or oppose to previous ones. New works of architecture should always reflect that they belong to the 21st century.

Respect for history is shown by avoiding its counterfeit.

ARCHITECTURE AND RATIONALITY

All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason to elaborate intuitive material and to put it under the supreme unity of thought.
 Immanuel Kant

Every thought starts from rationality and as such, it cannot neglect its principle of universality.
Rationality provides us with geometry as a means to build spaces where the components are arranged following a composition.
Rationality makes us consider our drawings as a proposal that includes structures and materials, never are they a simple graphic speculation.
Rationality allows us to understand that the language of our architecture derives from the dialectics resulting from our culture and a universal contemporary culture to which we also belong.
Rationality considers man as a social being and therefore, takes the city as the political space where he can develop his life.
Rationality intends to work out the equation between the needs of society and the possibilities of production.
Rationality allows us to arrange various components in a spatial synthesis that converts the parts into a work of art.

Rationality has created works of art along the history of mankind since reason is the only feature that differentiates the human condition from the animal nature.

ARCHITECTURE AND FUNCTIONALITY

History shows that spaces created 500 years ago are still present serving purposes other than those to which they were meant.

Here is where there is some doubt as to whether form follows function or function follows form.

Although form follows function, when a design project is carried out, architects must remember that function will change in a short time and that the new functions will adapt to the existing forms, and when this irreversible step takes place, function will follow form up to its demolition, which may happen shortly or after thousands of years.

The concept of functionality varies from culture to culture. In the Middle Ages, the gothic church served the purpose of providing a transcendental vision of the world.
Bruneleschi's work fulfilled its *raison d'être* by bringing back rational clarity to the crystal arches, vaults and transparencies that let in a bright and natural light contrasting with the transformed light of the gothic stained-glass windows.

By the turn of the 20th century, the concept of functionality of the modern avant-garde intended to achieve new forms, new types and new models starting with the denial of preconceived forms that could deny the new scales of a society made up of masses and with new means of production and technology which had been hidden by 19th century neoclassicism.
During the first half of the 20th century, new buildings appeared setting up a new language, a different expression, a large and truly original display of works: condominiums, office buildings, factories, economical housing. They were new building typologies and even new models apt for reproduction.

For example, a city hall is not only a group of administrative offices and council rooms. Rather, it is a whole with a special meaning within the city texture.

Through its form, a city hall should convey the representative character of the building that consolidates the political representation of the citizens.
From this viewpoint, the function of the building, that is to say, its *raison d'être* as a whole, bears or should bear an architectural response standing out above the particular functions that make it up.
Functionality refers to each building's *raison d'être* in relation to the whole since it is in this relation where it gets its definite form.

COMPOSITION AND GEOMETRY

It is when a column stops being a column in order to become some form with aesthetic meaning that construction becomes architecture.

The composition of modern architecture cannot be static; neither can it be solved by elemental geometric shapes because the shape and spaces should reflect the complexity of contemporary society.

A building project is the spatial construction of a vast number of measures that need to be arranged following laws of composition defined by a geometry that renders sense to each of the components.
Premises surfaces, column and beam dimensions, flag thickness, walls and partition walls, water pipes, electricity and air conditioning, frame measures, cross sections and equipments make up a group of countless parts that must be assembled in order to construct a space.
This construction in space is an arduous composition that may end in a complex juxtaposition of elements or in an extraordinary framework arranged following a geometry that relates the parts to create forms and spaces of aesthetic value.
Geometry is a means, a tool we cannot do without when planning an architectural design.
Regarding the emphasis on geometry as a mere theoretical speculation that rules out the cultural issue is to forget that without geometry the pyramids of Egypt, the proportions of the Parthenon and the Renaissance domes or the complex gothic structures would not be defined.
Geometry and mathematics help us create forms. Mathematics allow us to calculate column, beam and conduct dimensions whereas geometry allows the arrangement of the dimensions within a whole with structure and proportions that organize the space and turn the light into a model with aesthetic significance.

ARCHITECTURE AND FLEXIBILITY

Functional, useful spaces should tend to bear certain indetermination and flexibility to be capable of adapting to the continuous change.
Structure, equipments and installations must be the only static points of the space

THE INDISPENSABILITY OF THE UNPREDICTABLE

The works of architecture should present unpredictable spaces so as to reflect existence both in the space and in its movements, as if it were a maze where the absence of stability is essential.

MATERIALITY AND TECHNOLOGY
Materials should show their nature and the technology used to apply them.

In our workshops, design is still studied as a discipline of abstractions, without clear theories supporting it and away from the world of materialization.

A student cannot learn to build away from the process of design. Neither can he design without considering the idea of materialization.

Structural, constructive and installation issues should be assessed in relation to the architectural planning.

If a student lacks the materiality and the technologies to be applied in an architectural planning, the insertion of constructive features in the final stage of work will not be enough.

Materiality should precede functional organization and spatial images.

It is also important to remember Walter Gropius who says that students should go through the experience of being involved in the work at the construction site so as to establish a link between the construction and the aesthetic target.

A modern work should show contemporary technology.

Architecture emerges in response to man's need to create his own habitat since nature cannot cater for all human requirements.
This artificial world needs to be built. And although architecture, like music or any other creation by man, exists from the very moment it comes up as an idea, its execution is a necessary realization.
When we start designing some project, it is necessary to establish the spaces we want to realize, some of which are simple and elemental, others are extremely complex and varied. Yet, this image of shape and light cannot be dissociated from the materials and structures supporting and constructing the work.
The proposal of an architectural conception is closely linked to the building techniques. That is why planning cannot be regarded as a simple, speculative, graphic activity isolated from the processes of production that make the construction of a work of architecture feasible.
Architecture is the formulation of materials within a model that has aesthetic significance.

Structure plays a major role in the organization of space. Therefore, a tower should show that it is a structure capable of withstanding winds rather than a structure lined with moldings.

ARCHITECTURE IS AN INVASION ON NATURE

Architecture is an artificial world that must show its own nature in contrast with the natural world.
Architecture defines and transforms space.
It takes up a natural space and eliminates it.
The resulting space may be only internal, e.g. the man-made caves of the Paleolithic period, or it may lack interior space, e.g. the pyramids of Egypt. Architecture may transform internal and external space differently. No architecture leaves natural space unmodified or undistorted.

ARCHITECTURE AND UNITY

Unity is essential to a work of art.

It may be a simple or complex unity. Yet, the aim is that all elements lose their identity within a space and make up a whole without simplifications.

There must be a reason. Adopting a picturesque or simply nice approach to architecture only leads to superficiality.

A work should show a great idea by resorting to the least possible number of elements.

Only then will the synthesis that characterizes all great works of art be accomplished.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE CITY

Architecture should cater for the new social requirements and its massive scale modifies the design intervention.

Urban architecture will reflect contemporary commitment.
Man is a social being whose existence can only be understood through the dialectics between individuals and society.
Urban public space is not only a gap among buildings. Neither is it a space meant to improve lighting, ventilation or sun exposure conditions. It is the continent where the political life of society develops.
The relationship between architecture and society is somehow similar to the relationship between man and society. And it is there where it tries to compare the problems arising between individualism and collectivism in our world.
By attempting to be an isolated interpreter or an independent action of the urban context, architecture only manages to show or enhance the process of social disintegration which will never lead to man's reorganization since his interdependence with the society in which he lives cannot be denied.
When trying to solve the habitat issue by resorting to solutions that market mass products, man disregards the rationale for the maintenance of the city where public spaces provide men with their whole identity concept.
According to Ernesto Sábato, "Individualism and collectivism are abstractions that have a deleterious effect on the human being as the kingdom for this being is not the narrow and distressing territory of his self, neither the abstract domain of the community, but that intermediate area where love and art, comradeship and dialogue, understanding and work occur."

In the 20th century, we witnessed the absence of urban spaces in the outlying developments, which lacked the metropolitan social space we are concerned about. This is somehow reflected b y Ray Bradbury when he states that in a world devoid of squares and pedestrian streets *"an individual who walks among roads of cars is caught by the police only for walking, and he is then taken to a psychiatric institution because he has been found using his legs in a society where legs have been replaced by wheels; or because he has been found using his eyes in a society where eyes have been replaced by television; or because he has been found breathing oxygen in a society where oxygen has been replaced by air-conditioning".*

PEDESTRIAN SPACES

Urban pedestrian spaces will be the continent where the political and democratic life of a society develops.

The destruction of the means of urban social communication, such as streets, squares and avenues, is not replaced by anonymous spaces. It is in the correct relationship with pedestrian spaces that citizens find the values that round off the wealth of the city.
Massive housing plans have given rise to outlying developments consisting of isolated buildings in green open spaces.

In these cases, we do not face the chaos caused by speculation and individualism. Instead, we face gaps outlined by bureaucrats working in favor of abstractions in which the solution is only quantitative and devoid of all art—despite art being the only answer to the needs of societies.

City public spaces should be the scenery for collective life and the support for man interrelations. Therefore, the urban space should not arise only as a random gap among buildings. Instead, it should constitute a specific entity whose form needs to be defined for it to achieve aesthetic quality.

The lack of interest in the quality of urban social spaces has persisted over the last 50 years. Along these years, the objective pursued has been to build more blocks of buildings without taking into account the city space.
That is why the most valuable urban pedestrian spaces are found in ancient medieval towns or in the major Renaissance proposals or in the baroque town.

We act on the urban space following different scales. This depends on whether the spaces we are dealing with are consolidated or developing areas or outlying areas still empty. The course of intervention should include attitudes of preservation, conservation, and complementation or of creation of new areas on a case-per-case basis.

Urban social spaces should meet the requirements of a community participation that goes beyond the isolation of closed groups and promotes coexistence within a democratic project of society and within a rediscovery of the agora, the forum and the main square. This should not be regarded as a nostalgic vision, but rather as an assertion of man's values as a social being.
Urban design, unlike codes or regulations, provides the rationale for the search of facilitating courses of action.

Defining the autonomy of our own discipline with respect to urban problems does not mean taking urban design as an action of formal construction since the attitude held should include the understanding of the social content of public spaces so as to provide them with the form the city is demanding.

The proposal should be based somehow on the understanding of the requirements.
This should be understood as the spatial solution to an existing content.
This is the solution that should be put forward in a field whose autonomy cannot be debated.

Proposals should be based on ideas and criteria about the ways of living of metropolitan societies.
City life is not made up by the group of functions taking place in it. Rather, it is their integration, provided the facilitating structures that allow it are present.
City proposals should include ways of enhancing urban life instead of ways of breaking it up.

Here, once again, disintegration is viewed as the result of undefined spread and oversaturation of densities.

Devising flexible frameworks is one way of working out certain city problems. However, in many cases it has become an excuse for keeping an absolute lack of definition with respect to the proposals and plans that should work as the basis for transforming the city form.
It is worth noting that over the last century few new pedestrian spaces have been planned. On the other hand, our policy has been to accept that certain streets packed with pedestrians be traffic restricted.

Although I consider that the formal configuration of a city demands a sound knowledge of urban and social content, it must be admitted that the primary function of the physical framework will change over time. Anyway, this will not make it lose its spatial features.

If it were not like this, the city would have to be knocked down recurrently to adjust it to its new function. And this is what we find in Argentine cities where some significant works have been kept absolutely by chance.

The destruction of buildings has also reached the destruction of urban spaces.

And, in the hard task of urban repair, the structure of public spaces plays a major role.

AESTHETICS AND THE CITY

The regard for the aesthetic value of urban spaces must be recovered. This should be set as an objective of the society since the configuration of collective spaces is paramount to improve living conditions.
The harmony of the beauty of forms should stop being a privilege enjoyed by a minority to become the framework of social existence.
The inability of the political and economical power to understand aesthetics as a social necessity has made mankind miss a great opportunity.
Urban spaces should offer a gathering place, both on an individual and collective scale. The city should serve a society where community participation goes beyond individuals' isolation and solitude, and where the dialectics among men should replace the search for myths.

Our problem is the city form, that is to say, the continent, not the content.
Materialization is achieved through the economic investments resulting from the political will whereas the city form is our problem.

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ROSARIO AND ITS REGION

Effective planning involves following the right steps with respect to foreseeable perspectives.

On the other hand, defining strategies involves taking courses of action that are different from the ones planned so far in order to bring about substantial changes.

Changes meant to improve the existing reality, not meant only to plan it.

Problems are not overcome by consolidating or rearranging reality but by transforming it.

A strategy for Rosario could be to aim at settling the city as an International Center for Cultural and Commercial Exchange.

A strategic plan for Rosario should be based on what differentiates us from other cities and regions. As to Rosario and its region, it can be clearly checked against our origin, history and current identity.

Rosario originally grew as an exchange point, as the junction between the centrality of Buenos Aires and the viceroyalty or *virreinato,* as a necessary stop on the way from Buenos Aires to the conquest of Independence.

Rosario's major development and growth started in the 19th century after the creation of the Republic when it became the great agricultural export port of the *pampa húmeda—*an area that developed thanks to the effort and drive of the European immigration.

At present, it keeps on being an exchange center for agricultural exports, mainly for the agriculturally-related industry.

This has settled Rosario as an important Mercosur junction.

Therefore, it should be clear that what differentiates us is our role as center for international exchange, even if there is a long way to go to achieve the scale that we should have and that is delayed due to the lack of national medium- and long-term projects.

It is paramount for Rosario to keep on consolidating the infrastructure of its means of communication: Rosario-Córdoba expressway, consolidation of the hydroway, railway networks, the Circunvalar plan and every project directed to the growth of ports and cargo stations.

A strategic plan for Rosario does not imply having a directorial plan or a regulating plan. Neither does it mean listing or planning works to be done in a city or region.

A strategy for the city and its region should include the existing opportunities for change.

Problems are not overcome by grasping reality but by transforming it, for example by turning Rosario into a Center for International Exchange.

It is essential to develop international hotel facilities and convention and congress centers on a large scale.

Rosario should not only grow as a center for product exchange, but also as a center for the exchange of ideas.

Europe as a whole and the major American cities represent a great attraction thanks to the presence of works of architecture, museums, the cities themselves and their urban development values.

The River Seine's value rests on its dialogue with the riverbanks and the bridges.

Despite being the Mediterranean one of the most attractive seas in the worlds, Barcelona has become an international center for tourism due to its works

There are few places, like Rio de Janeiro, which attract both by their natural landscape and the city that surrounds it.

In the 19th century, a 300-meter-high tower was built in Paris to become a center of attraction to millions of tourists.

Works of architecture are better at promoting of tourism than many natural beauties.

Bilbao has become an attractive city due to the Guggenheim, and not due to its landscape or the sea.

Before this evidence, the city is still hesitant about undertaking major works.

The Empire States, the Petronas Towers, the pyramids of Egypt, the gothic cathedrals or St. Peter's dome cause more wonder than any natural landscape.

The ongoing extension of the Louvre in Paris makes us think that by the year 2009 the world expects to witness a flying carpet sheltering thousands of square meters devoted to Islamic art.

Only when Rosario starts projecting itself for the 21st century will we be able to transform the city.