

## **OPINION**

### **CALLING FOR ATTENTION**

**Silvina Donnola\***

Architect, Rosario, Argentina

Playing at being creative so that we can show Mommy and Daddy our achievements! An eternal childhood that irresponsibly submits people who will live in those spaces for years and years, victims of the immaturity and lack of consciousness of the designer.

This observed phenomenon tells us about the necessity of constantly seeking the regard of others: calling for attention. This is legitimate and natural when it occurs during the first stages of infancy. In essence, the little child looks for constant reaffirmation of his self from an adult, and with that attention begins to build his own identity.

If this constitutional need of the child is not satisfied in the proper time, this behavior will persist for all of his life, and as an adult he will try to attract and build his image based on the approval of society; specifically, being appreciated by the community of specialists to which he must show his “continuous accomplishments”, which in our field means demonstrating that he is the most creative.

In the designer, therefore, there emerges a permanent searching to satisfy the ego, his professional appetite, not caring that with this seeking he makes life insufferable for entire populations, trying to feed the necessity to echo an adoration similar to that of home life and affection from childhood, which perhaps he never experienced.

The epistemic orientation of the professional architect, starting from the university years, permanently stimulates this demonstration of infantilized creativity.

I am sharing a video in which “child-like” architects — the most famous in the world — commonly called *starchitects*, make their “funny experiments” in spaces where later thousands of people will have to live (Borrego-Cubero, 2013a; 2013b; Buey, 2013).

This video shows the climate produced by typical architecture competitions: a common mechanism promoted since the cradle and the university: this phenomenon happens each time the students delivers his project to the professor.

In the documentary, the architects rack their brains to think of designs never seen before. The project is for the *National Museum of Andorra*.

The State, as a client, asks to be represented and attended to “singularly”; in other words, do whatever it takes to be “noticed” by the world, with only one observation: be careful of the cost, considering the dramatic crisis of the European housing bubble (which will certainly leave many vacant, dead skeleton buildings in its wake). But that is the topic for another essay.

---

\* *Silvina Donnola, architect, Rosario, Argentina, e-mail: [silvidonnola@gmail.com](mailto:silvidonnola@gmail.com);  
<https://silvinadonnola.com.ar>*

So, these competing professionals generate strange neurotic forms, intellectual sophistications glued together in silhouettes with rolled paper, boxes, sticks, and similar items contributing to the style.

In the studios of the *starchitects*, the tension, mistreatment, rancid air, and hostility toward the dominated parties (their subordinate architects) define the “correct and serious” way to produce spaces for others.

Their reflections justify hideous and ridiculous nihilist productions.

The money of the developed world does not impede the waste of digital technology enabling designers to visualize the destructive atrocities that they plan in their projects. Do they know who are the “others” they are designing for? Do they feel any sentiment or compassion for the user?

In the video, lunchtime gives a preview into the coherency of the designs: junk food for junk designs, which little by little kill the body and soul of the designer and user. How will we see the world after eating crouched over like war refugees during our workday lunch?

These renowned “geniuses” pace around their imposing offices, worried about winning recognition at any cost, mistreating their fellow subordinate architects, who want only to please those who oppress them. The subordinates have grey faces because of the exploitation, accepting the impertinent violence from he who “knows”, only because of the illusion that one day, they might also become “stars”. Work spaces in grey, like the color of their work, dark souls that will be praised by the media which finance them, thanks to the blood spilled by their servile and genuflecting employees.

## References

- Buey, M. (2013) El documental español “The Competition” seleccionado para abrir el Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam, *Plataforma Arquitectura*, 6 October 2013.  
<https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-297611/el-documental-espanol-the-competition-seleccionado-para-abrir-el-architecture-film-festival-rotterdam>
- Borrego-Cubero, A. (2013a) The Competition: Trailer. <https://vimeo.com/59223875>
- Borrego-Cubero, A. (2013b) The Competition: Gehry and the Jury.  
<https://vimeo.com/thecompetitionmovie>

**Received:** 14 November 2019;  
**Accepted:** 16 December 2019;  
**Publishing:** 30 December 2019.