Advanced City Camouflage or what we forgot about the City:

## Strategies for a "new" Beautiful Urbanism.

by Cruz García

How can a new concept of metropolitan life for a city that craves for attention to its smaller unattended components be portrayed?

The new plan for urbanism in Puerto Rico has brought a huge problem to light. In a city where the misuse of public funds by the government leads to an incomplete and mediocre performance of the planning, development and city design, urbanism as a profession needs to reinvent its focus in order to survive. Urbanism is in a coma, about to collapse. No school of design offers urban studies, and when it does, it concentrates on how beautiful Paris, Amsterdam and Bogotá are. Urban construction is developer-driven, governmental laws do hardly anything to halt urban sprawl, and the city designers draw master plans that are caricatures of what urban life in any place in the world, except Puerto Rico, could look like. Le Corbusier's Villa Radieuse, Superstudio's II Monumento Continuo, and Constant's New Babylon, may be seen as radical utopian attempts, the effect of a particular situation in time, but here they are still seen as paradigms of urban design, ideally portraying real urban plans for the redevelopment of the city, even though we have a completely different social situation and urban context.

Poverty, dirt, darkness, have never been words to describe the ideal city. Instead, they are the result of the urban sprawl we're living in, and surely, everyone who lives in an area of 7500 square kilometers will have to deal with it sooner or later. Instead of ruining all the chances to improve the condition of the city, by attempting to disguise those parts of the city that are too "real" to handle, or dreaming of becoming the new Barcelona of the Western hemisphere, the "new" urbanism must reassure its status alongside the chaos its irresponsibility has created. It needs to rekindle its faith in the city and all its components, leave aside the nostalaic reinvention of the virtuous components of the modern city, and recognize that its counterpart, gentrification, has contributed to the fragmented status of our segregated society. More than ever, urbanism needs to redefine what beauty means. and reassure Architecture meaningful power; not to disguise the unattended parts of the city, but to dedicate itself with theocratic devotion to what it has been ignoring. Urbanism needs to stop disguising the contemporary city entropy with Photoshop camouflage, and discontinue its claims of "The future is here" each and every time it develops another strategy to expropriate entire zones and sell them to unscrupulous developers. Since \*the city is all we have\*, we need to resurrect it. While the city has become entropy, we need to bring back life to that entropy, and since entropy has become the product of all of the unattended parts of the city, "We" -as the profession responsible for the life and death of a city that has never been born- need to become agents alongside the chaos we generated or, better than that, we need to subvert the discourse of beauty in the city, so that what used to be unattended, will be the muse for all of our efforts from now on. Ugliness will be the new gospel of beauty.