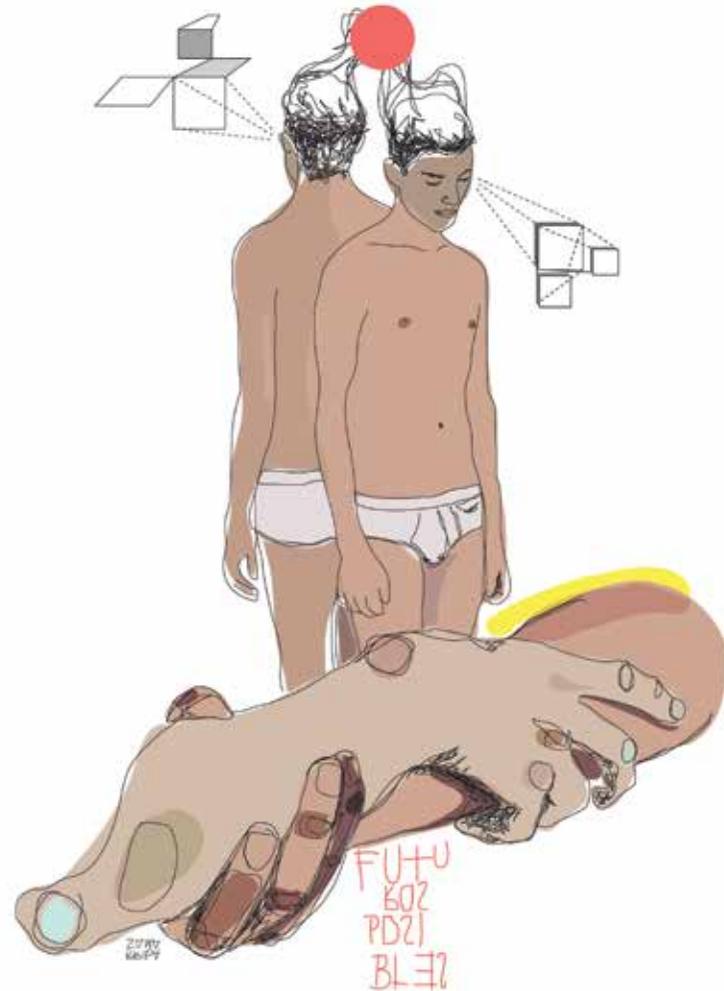


When I travelled to the future

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WE ARRIVED AT RENO, in the state of Nevada; we had to collect our camper or “RV” (for the initials in English) early in the morning. After of couple of hours of instructions on how to use it, we were ready to begin the adventure – but not before passing by a supermarket to collect a supply of beer, water and food in order to survive for a week.

Ever since I can remember I have been intrigued by the notion of time, specifically the future. For those of us who design, having the ability to foretell the future is, without doubt, an essential talent. We always design for the future. To visualize possible future scenes is, therefore, a tool which would have to be obligator in the educational processes of those who engage in designing, and is a fundamental part of the practices of architectural and design offices. But, although the importance of visualizing possible futures in designing is evident, in actual fact it is not a very methodological practice in the majority of those of us who engage in the practice of design.

And possibly this interest in the future is the main reason why, some weeks ago, I found myself in Reno, renting a camper and driving for several hours in order to enter the Nevada desert heading for the Burning Man Art and Music festival held each year in the Nevada desert. Burning Man is possibly the most extreme festival of the planet which follows 10 fundamental principles:

- 1.- Anyone can come: everyone is welcome and respected
- 2.- Facelift economy: Money doesn't work at this festival and the economy is based on a giving economy.

It is essential for those of us who design to visualize days in the future.

- 3.- On commodification: Avoid the consumer and brand economy completely.
- 4.- Radical self-sufficiency: In the middle of the desert, with no water or electricity, everyone has to subsist on their own resources.
- 5.- Radical self-expression: To express individuality through artistic expression.
- 6.- Community effort.
- 7.- Civil responsibility.
- 8.- Leave no trace: After the festival, the desert has to remain as we found it, as though we had never been there.
- 9.- Participation: Everyone is welcome to be part of the experience.
- 10.- Surroundings: The ability to connect with oneself and with the people around us and within our context.

Burning Man is a 1 x 1 model of a possible setting; doubtless, visually it will remind many

cinema lovers of Mad Max, a post-apocalyptic context of a world which didn't know how to stop the deterioration of the planet until it had been practically destroyed. A world in which society paradoxically realized the importance of not judging, of being inclusive and of knowing how to give to others without expecting anything in return. A world in which you can be Leonardo Di Caprio and the desert fails to respect you in the same way as an art student. And once a sandstorm has taken you by surprise, our physical differences become imperceptible. Burning Man is, at the same time, a warning and a hop; it is to die and not to know whether you are in heaven or in Hell. For those of us who design living, although even for a few days, the future can be transforming. **g**