

"We live in a world ruled by fictions of every kind—mass merchandising, advertising, politics conducted as a branch of advertising, the instant translation of science and technology into popular imagery, the increasing blurring and intermingling of identities within the realm of consumer goods, the preempting of any free or original imaginative response to experience by the television screen."

—J.G. Ballard, Crash (1973)

**1** Alienation is a useful concept to explain why we accept our involvement in a society that is structurally unequal and unfair. Alienation not only entails being taken as interchangeable objects in a life project designed for the benefit of others, it also describes our reaction to a world in which we are self-obsessed, impassive to the needs of others and driven to satisfy consumerist urges.

**7** The commercial systems of representation conceived by marketing experts promote meanings that are already legitimated by power as the correct and successful ones to live in the world. Their goal is to regulate individual freedom by subtly imposing ways of acting, thinking, and walking in the urban landscape. To continue belonging, we engage in a frenzy of production and consumption where the technique fosters anonymity, enabling and facilitating control by institutional technologies.

**13** Today's national governments only want to see citizen-consumers in the streets; they regulate traffic in public space, punishing loitering and appropriation. Fear of the outside isolates us and makes us crave the protective shelter of our home. There we are easy prey for the representations and ideologies of the mass media, which disseminate and strengthen the imposition of market subjectivity.

**20** The addictive use of new technologies strengthens the capitalist machine, creating loneliness, utilitarianism, a false perception of reality, and the worship of individualism. As grotesque extensions of our ego, these machines show the world our material "success" and tantalize us with a new step towards market made happiness.

**27** The poor are the most affected by pollution caused by the waste of unrestricted production. They live near or in garbage dumps. They can't afford the bottled water they need due to the lack of drinking water and the pollution of the water table. They suffer from atmospheric pollution as a result of emissions from waste decomposition and are threatened by diseases transmitted by animals attracted to the garbage.

**2** The city is modeled on the neoliberal hegemonic order. Living in the city implies immersing yourself in an ideological system that promotes the domination of capital over all areas of existence. The fast-track to inclusion is consumption, allowing us to share with others the same "lifestyle," conceived by marketing and advertising and disseminated by television, radio, magazines, internet or newspapers.

**8** The prevalence of capital extends to all areas of life, altering and shaping social identity. Subjectivity is mutilated and confined to the forms used by consulting firms, which classify and sort us in surveys according to a series of parameters (income, place of residence, house type, ownership of car, kind of job, etc.) in order to evaluate us as potential customers of some "innovative," soon to be marketed, product.

**3** Consumer society is consolidated by expanding and renewing fictional needs. Production changes as market research and marketing consultants create new consumer niches, or targets. Advertising is complicit with these dynamics, constructing attractive worlds that offer new "sensations" to satisfy wishes through products promising "freedom," "speed," "charm," "intelligence," etc.

**14** The flows of production and consumption accelerate and become more wasteful. Those who access these worlds of constantly unfilled promises become champions of the order, calling for the protection of their goods and, often, taking its defense into their own hands.

**15** We shut ourselves away in our homes, justified and encouraged by an ideology disseminated and amplified by the mass media, that emphasizes our "lack of security and safety." People perceive the streets as dangerous and constantly threatening; this threat is met with an increased number of locks, railings, barbed wire, CCTV surveillance and private security services.

**9** One way of sustaining the turnover of products and services is to change the supply according to fashion trends. Fashion guards the acceleration of turnover time in production in parallel with that of exchange and consumption. This is facilitated by improved communication and information devices, streamlined distribution techniques (enabling goods to circulate at an increased speed through the market system), and plastic money and e-banking

**16** The State's hard line cracks down on demonstrations in public spaces and criminalizes protest. Limits to the undisciplined use of public spaces can be seen in the prohibition against blocking streets, the fencing off of the world, of oneself, and of

**23** Living in the city, we expose ourselves to social demands that exacerbate the development of diseases: stress, panic attacks, anxiety, mental disorders, cardiac issues, weight problems, etc.

**29** No one believes the lie of the trickledown effect any longer, or the sham that "they don't work because they don't want to." We will not be forced to accept that we have to "earn our living." Earn it from whom? This should not be a competition, or a dis-

Iconoclastas combine graphic art and communication to create graphic resources aimed at breaking apart hegemonic meaning, as a way of resisting and influencing the social imagination, but also as a proposal for change and transformation. All the materials created can be downloaded from <http://www.iconoclastas.com.ar>, freely distributed (under Creative Commons licenses) and reproduced. Iconoclastas began working in mid-2005, based on the idea of a "lab" as a space where imagination activates creation. This allows them to move comfortably between different formats, devices and scenarios to devise research and graphic design tools that encourage cooperative practices. They have developed printed materials and posters addressing social issues that have been published in newspapers and magazines in different parts of the world, as well as appropriations. Many of these materials have led to traveling exhibitions in cultural and social spaces in cities in Argentina and other countries.

Over the past year and a half, they have embarked on a project to create a "Collective Atlas" of Argentina and its neighboring countries. To that end, they are traveling through cities and towns in different provinces, where they hold "Collective Mapping Workshops" together with Argentine, Paraguayan and Brazilian social movements, neighborhood assemblies, student organizations, fair trade networks, social and environmental assemblies, teachers, gender commissions and committees for the memory, etc. With this aim, they have been invited to Lima, Peru, and Barcelona, Spain. They define "mapping" as a playful and creative tool to construct a shared account of a certain territory. They thus conceive of it as an instance of collective construction and open participation that enables a critical insight into various realities from everyday memory and non specialized knowledge. Reports of the journeys, photos, an account of activities and a preview of this project can be found at <http://cosmovisionebeide.blogspot.com>.

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the others—encouraging participation in a lifestyle that distinguishes social classes through our ways of dressing, eating, talking, etc. It conceals labor exploitation and alienation in production, while shaping wishes and tastes. Often this involves the manipulation of the images of the women as objects of seduction. Its main aim is to encourage consumption, to widen the market for large corporations, and to sell the highest number of products around the world in order to increase profit margins.

10 We are part of a hegemonic order aimed at monopolizing profits for others. This means living under coercion, constantly threatened by elimination, or replacement. Forced to juggle so as to best fit in the narrow system of inclusion, our participation can only travel in one direction, pushing us into a labyrinth that is very difficult to exit.

11 Labor is another good that is bought and sold in the market. The prevailing forms of work today are marked by precariousness, as short-term contracts in various modes, informal work, and low pay. This leads to a savage increase in inequality, lowering the real incomes of the middle class and further impoverishing historically disadvantaged groups, with the subsequent emergence and consolidation of marginalization and unemployment.

5 Image handling is one of the most powerful and effective tools used by (economic, political and cultural) power to enforce adherence to dominant modes of thinking. Advertising plays an essential role by disseminating pleasant images of consumption and prototypes of the successful citizen-consumer, while naturalizing the competitive dynamics of capitalism while encouraging us to buy products that might set us apart from those debarred from consumption.

of public squares, the removal of street stalls and homeless performances and youth-oriented activities and the speculative growth of construction, causing eviction from places recovered for gentrification.

17 The metropolis conditions our senses. It overexcites our sight and hearing, forcing us to pay attention to changes, disruptions, threatening vehicles, passers-by, and other obstacles, while atrophying our taste and smell with an obscene supply of superfluous products. It turns us into individualistic, selfish, violent, workaholic beings, addicted to acquiring an ever increasing number of objects.

18 Urban geometry directs our bodies' use of space. It guides movement to avoid wasting time and to channel our activities into the logic of capitalist accumulation, or at least not to disrupt it. Technology reinforces control; cell phone use allows an individual to be spatially and temporally tracked.

19 We are increasingly becoming mere props in "a full life" — or what the market sells as such. We are becoming hybrid, half-human, half-machine beings, protected by objects that help us to meet our social demands. We are always available if we have a cell phone, always entertained by our i-Pod, always alienated and more preoccupied with the message we have just been texted than with our surroundings. Our contact with reality is further mediated by the technology we use to fight our existential vacuum.

6 The mass media are the main channels for advertising. They seek to create surplus value by producing and disseminating a machinery of images, meanings, views of the world, and accounts of reality aimed primarily at promoting specific economic and/or political interests. Media conglomerates — including radio stations, television and cable television channels, Internet providers, etc. — homogenize the information they distribute and increasingly influence public opinion.

put with winners and losers, as neoliberalism portrays it.

20 The anesthetic inventions of the pharmaceutical industry offer temporary relief. Psychotropic drugs (antipsychotics, anxietytics, antidepressants) bring resignation, allowing us to accept all our misfortunes, frustrations and worries so that we can go on without a word of complaint.

21 We are not trying to create a paranoid, victimizing view of the city. Instead we aim to highlight the city as a place for the interaction of individuals, for links and contradictions that can open up spaces for creation and resistance. That is why we suggest a reflection and understanding that unlocks the latrine of production, movement, consumption and waste, and provides us with critical knowledge that enables action.

24 The unease bred during the week is mitigated in the weekend, when we go, eager for relaxation and satisfaction, to the paradise of every fanatical consumer — the shopping centers. These monumental interiors volunteer themselves as secured public spaces perfectly designed to facilitate shopping. They also invite us to find artificially sweetened fun in the products of the cultural industry, such as coin operated children's games, multi-screen popcorn movie complexes, and fast food courts.

25 The capitalist city is based upon circulation and consumption, on the flows of goods and bodies. We need to know if it is possible to establish cracks in its structure. We need to unmask it, not only in terms of its planning, but also in relation to the influence of corporate, financial, state economic and political interests. We need to expose how we are complicit with a standard that benefits a few in order to stop accepting (through resignation) a scenario that breeds exclusion, poverty and inequality.

12 In our city, public space - the place where collective experience is organized - is fenced in, threatened and commodified. Just as the clock marks the passing of hours, minutes and seconds, synchronizing our actions and subjecting us to discipline and the requirement to fulfill specific goals and targets within a given time period, the dominant order determines the correct forms of bodily presence, repressing those that alter the hegemony through the use of physical and symbolic violence.

26 A large part of the population is deprived not only of consumption, but of its most basic rights (work, home, health and education). The naturalization of injustice and poverty reinforce absent challenge to the mechanisms that produce them. This allows the development of social and economic policies that increase inequality and force a large number of people to survive on the waste of society.

Iconoclastas define themselves as a laboratory of communication and anti-hegemonic resources. They are an activist mapping collective that almost always works in collaboration with other groups or social movements. Their activities are based in Buenos Aires, but take place all over Latin America. <http://www.iconoclastas.com.ar>

# LA CIUDAD POSMODERNA

LA DISCIPLINA QUE IMPONE EL ESPACIO PÚBLICO, LA VIGILANCIA SOBRE LA SOCIEDAD Y LA ACUMULACIÓN DE GANANCIAS SON LOS CIMENTOS DEL NEOLIBERALISMO.

¿LA SEGURIDAD  
PRIVADA ES  
INSEGURIDAD  
GENERALIZADA?

¿POR QUÉ LAS  
MULTINACIONALES  
SE INSTALAN EN  
ARGENTINA?

GANANCIAS EXTRAORDINARIAS

CAPITALES ESPECULATIVOS

INACIONALES

¿VIVIENDA  
PARA TODOS/A/S  
O ESPECULACIÓN  
INMOBILIARIA?

IMMOCRATIA

CONSUMISMO

WAL-MART  
Carrefour  
Jumbo

TRABAJADORES/AS

D E S P R E D I C I O N E S

¿CÓMO VIVEN  
LOS/AS HABITANTES  
DE LOS  
SUBURBIOS?

¿POR QUÉ  
SE CRIMINALIZAN  
LAS PROTESTAS  
LEGÍTIMAS?