



RADICAL PLACEMAKING

Architecture of Place Matters – It's not just about demographics anymore. It's about the psycho-graphics and culture of place. We live in a world where people have incredible choices as to where to live, and shop, and work and play. To compete in this overbuilt marketplace, it has become necessary to create branded places that are psychically branded and culturally relevant – that drive the user-customer to identify the Place as an authentic part of their personal community. We call this Radical Placemaking.

The globalization of Place, Design and Architecture has sanitized and homogenized the built environment – everywhere feels like everywhere. Next-generation placemaking will challenge this and create the alternative to 'ubiquitous-modern', and create urban places based on community, authenticity, locality, and memory. This Radical Placemaking is an antidote to the ubiquitous Global culture that we are all swimming in. Authentic Urbanism is the antidote to the Mall.

We are living in an era that is in the process of discovering how to incorporate the persuasive power of global culture (i.e. 'Modernism'), within the cultural framework of authentic local community, culturally specific meaning and regional identity. *Urban international Studios* is a unique practice that is designing places that challenge this divide. Radical Placemaking is a tool that creates a psycho-graphic of place – it integrates Locality and Modernity. We focus on Placemaking that actively engages people with engaging and authentic cultural meaning that is the basis for a new generation of urban placemaking, design and architecture.

Back to the Future - We start by doing an enormous amount of "product research" on local urban traditions as well as international urban environments around the world that people "love". It is incredible how modernism has created few Great-Places – Places that communities truly love. We study places that create rich emotional connections with specific cultures and people. All great urban places do this, which is why they are so memorable. Unfortunately, we find ourselves today surrounded by a world of the 'New'. Buildings have become what we call "shiny new cars". And like most new cars, they become quickly out of date. But unlike cars, we cannot relegate these buildings to the used car lot.

As we apply this research of traditional environments to the next-generation urban place-design, we have found that there are common elements to all memorable urban places and spaces. First, they are made from a rich vocabulary of urban typologies – they are built from a scale, design, texture and iconography that celebrates social community – they are designed as a stage for social theatre. They are psychically satisfying in a way that the coolness (and craziness!) of modern space and design can never achieve. Great shopping streets, plazas, arcades, markets, parks, promenades, etc. are places that become the stage for the communal social rituals that sustain life and culture, usually for generations. Local traditions of urban architecture provide the rich context for these memorable places. Global urbanism is erasing many of these traditional urban environments. We are now beginning to learn how to use them as paradigms for a new generation of urban places.

What we do. Our architecture combines both memory and innovation. Our architecture is based on research that we have done on local urban traditions of each project. We looked at traditional patterns of streets, arcades, plazas – and at the architectural vocabulary of buildings that reflect the complex history and rich tapestry of culture and architectural details of each region. Our approach also incorporates global, modern elements of design. All great architecture reflects this diversity and change over time; it is not static. Great architecture reflects its current place in modern history and its relationship to the past.

Our architecture advocates a next-generation “modern” style of living that uses modern and traditional architectural vocabularies. We are creating a new-unique brand for each project that provides a path for building higher densities and modern tenant requirements. We create urban projects based on familiar urban elements that people can emotionally bond with. And will hopefully create destinations that people return to again and again because of the quality of the place and the rich experience that it evokes. Our architecture reflects both the local and global world cultures that are shaping the modern city. This will hopefully become a model for creating a successful “modern” urban culture with an appreciation of great urban cultural traditions and a sustainable vision of how to build the future!!

Radical Placemaking creates the alternative to the used-car-lots of faddish and mindless-modernism that is sanitizing our urban experiences. Our architecture takes a fundamentally different approach – *Urban International Studios’* architecture is memory-rich, psychic placemaking where people actually want to create long-term emotional connections. Because of the scarcity authentic places, it creates incredible economic value. This is about creating environments that elevate to become recognizable brands – that engage a specific place, time and culture, and creates a lasting emotional connection with their user-customer. Environments that make the customer feel that the place has become an integral part of their personal culture and lives.