



Adrián Gorelik

Tuesday 28th February 5:30-7:00pm Library
(Department of Architecture)

Buenos Aires in the “long-urban-20th century”: from expansive city to archipelago city

How can the urban present of Buenos Aires be understood? This talk seeks to organise a group of synthetic hypothesis in order to understand it in a large historical perspective. Buenos Aires grew as a very cosmopolite and integrative city from the end of the XIXth Century to the first half of the XXth Century, creating a special relationship –urban, social, political and cultural– between the centre and the (popular) periphery, generalising a notion of temporality based on the modernist aspiration of homogeneous urbanization: an idea of public space, a projective imagination, a model of socio-urban cohesion. However, in the last three decades the city developed in a typical path marked by social and urban fractures. The process could be explained showing the structural change Buenos Aires has experienced: from a model of “expansive city” to a model of “archipelago city”. The expansive city played out across three dimensions: outwards in space (urban expansion), inwards in terms of society (social mobility) and forward in time (the idea of a modern project). The archipelago city is not exactly the opposite: it faces us not to a “dualistic” model according to old paradigms, but to a more complex social and urban fabric: wealth and misery are now the two poles of a dynamic process that works at different speeds, creating multiple circuits that intersect each other in many ways, but which no longer allow the prospect of a civic continuum.

Adrián Gorelik (Buenos Aires, 1957) is an Architect and PhD in History. He is in Cambridge as a Simón Bolívar Chair Professor developing a cultural history on Latin American cities. He is Full Researcher of CONICET and Full Professor of the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, where he leads the Centre of Intellectual History.

All welcome.