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III

ABOUT CURRENT PRACTICES

Designing Contemporary Living Spaces: a Feminist Perspective in Urbanism Coming from Col·lectiu Punt 6 in Barcelona

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Keywords
Feminist urbanism, Col·lectiu Punt 6, Urban Studies, Women in Design.

Abstract
Contemporary cities are often considered as a reflection of the society that inhabits in there. Urban planification has been historically shaped considering social, political and economic facts. But are cities designed contemplating everyone essentials and ways of life? How have gender studies and feminist perspectives influenced urban planification?
Those questions are raised by Col·lectiu Punt 6, an interdisciplinary cooperative of architects, sociologists and urbanists, with different backgrounds, and all of them women, working in Barcelona since 2005. From a feminist perspective, going beyond traditional gender binarism and proposing an intersectional analysis, their theories focus on the consideration of daily life as a central concept in urban planning.
This essay attempts to contribute to the dissemination of feminist urbanism theories and to illustrate how they have been progressively developed in the specific case of the city of Barcelona.

1. Introduction

> This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding. It is also, and mostly, an attempt to introduce new principles of city planning and rebuilding, different and even opposite from those now taught in everything from schools of architecture and planning to the Sunday supplements and women's magazines. My attack is not based on quibbles about rebuilding methods or hairsplitting about fashions in design. It is an attack, rather, on the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding. (Jane Jacobs, 1961)

With these words, Jane Jacobs began her controversial book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, first published in 1961. The urbanism activist, theorist, and critic, who didn't come from an academic background, critiqued the tenets of urban design and planning defended by the most renowned urban planners and architects in the United States of her time. Jacobs advocated for the construction of cities based on the daily life of its inhabitants, understanding their plurality and diversity. The basic principles of her vision of urban planning and city design were ecology, citizen cooperation in urban planning and theories of care work, among others that are still fully relevant today. In this line of thought, we locate Col·lectiu Punt 6, a cooperative founded in 2005 by women architects, urban planners, and sociologists with diverse backgrounds and life experiences, but connected to the city of Barcelona.

Drawing from the critical reading of their latest publication, *Urbanismo feminista. Por una transformación radical de los espacios de vida* (Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2019), we intend to clarify

who have been the main agents or mediators who have contributed to the implementation of the feminist perspective in the construction of the urban landscape of the city of Barcelona and to what extent it has been consolidated. The main aim is to contribute to the accounts on how architects, urban planners, and academics, as well as citizens organized in neighborhood movements, have contributed to the visibility of women and their consideration in the field of urban planning in collaboration with public institutions in recent years. Our hypothesis posits that the interaction of these multiple agents is necessary for the sustainability of urban planning.

2. Conceptual Tools and Methodology

The intention behind this research proposal is to discuss ideas and concepts that were developed within the framework of various projects carried out by the Research Group in Contemporary Art History and Design (GRACMON) of the Department of Art History of the University of Barcelona. We will take conceptual tools from the humanistic disciplines, such as the history of art and architecture and design and urban planning studies into consideration and contrast them with concepts developed within the field of gender studies. We are going to start from the theoretical approach of the studies on urban landscape and heritage to analyze the specific case study of the cultural landscape of the city of Barcelona. We understand the city concept from a holistic and global perspective; that is, it includes both the natural and the cultural sphere, as well as the tangible and intangible heritage (Nespral & Sala, 2020).
That is, beyond the formal aspects, such as urban layout or movable and immovable property, the notion of cultural or

urban landscape contemplates the socio-political and economic conditions that have contributed to the construction, transformation and reinvention of the city over time, as well as the values it represents. It's precisely these values that are associated with the capitalist and patriarchal logic under which Western cities have been built, that Col·lectiu Punt 6 aims to disarticulate and rebuild by linking their theories on design and urban planning with gender studies. Based on their theories, which are collected in various experiences and publications, we propose to analyze how the feminist perspective has been applied to the configuration of the cultural landscape of the city of Barcelona.

Figure 1. Marta Fonseca, proposals of attending care works in public transport, Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2020.

Figure 2. Marta Fonseca, Proposals of attending care works in public transport, Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2020.

To this effect, we will study the environment in which the urban landscape is produced from this perspective: the mediation space, which integrates all the actors who have fought for incorporating gender studies into the design of the city. That is, we do not exclusively privilege the study of producers (architects, urban planners, etc.), but we will also consider mediators (political, educational institutions, promoters, etc.) and inhabitants. We aim to identify and study the agents that have contributed to the consideration of the feminist perspective in shaping the urban landscape of Barcelona: urban planners and theorists, feminist thinkers, neighbors organized through collective movements, political institutions, etc. We consider that the interaction of these various actors is essential when putting into practice sustainable urban planning, which is focused on the lives of the people who will inhabit it.

3. The Feminist Perspective in Academic Studies on Urban Design and Planning in Barcelona

Isabel Campi has repeatedly analyzed how gender and a feminist perspective have contributed to questioning and challenging traditional definitions in design studies. Concerning the field of architecture and urban planning, in 2002 she explained that, historically, women had had little chance of participating in the design of the lived environment. After analyzing the work of various specialists who have pointed out this same issue, Campi outlined that "models of the city and housing, and even the concept of space itself, have been imagined and projected from a male perspective, based on criteria that may become obsolete in the future" (2002, p. 3). Zaida Muxí, architect and researcher and founder of the Col·lectiu Punt 6, has been a pioneer in the field of feminist studies applied to urban planning and architecture in the Spanish state and Catalonia[1]. Similar to Jacobs, Muxí reflects on the construction of her discipline seen from the patriarchal experience and according to its specific set of values, which she defines as biased and exclusive of knowledge, which is "of another kind, of those who aren't white, who aren't rich, who aren't powerful" (Muxí 2018, p. 18). According to her interpretation, feminist urbanism aims to dismantle these values that are reflected in our cities: 'We could synthesize that the main objective of urbanism with a gender perspective is to observe

1. One of her latest publications is *Mujeres, casas y ciudades: más allá del umbral* (Barcelona, DPR, 2018), the result of years of work. In it, Muxí proposes rewriting the history of architecture and urbanism from a feminist perspective, against the traditional totalizing accounts of Western culture, and reviewing women who have taken positions in this regard in the history of the discipline. The researcher's career, linked to the Higher Technical School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (ETSAB), has been recognized in the field (Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2019, p. 15).

reality from different prisms than the usual ones, meaning the male and patriarchal one, which is exclusive in itself, since it considers a healthy man with all his capacities at their maximum splendor, with a permanent and paid job, and a private life sorted out by another person' (Muxí 2018, p. 26). The Col·lectiu Punt 6 starts from this definition of feminist urbanism and develops it further, as we will see later.

If we focus on the study of the feminist application to urban design in Barcelona, we need to point out some facts regarding the genealogy of thinkers and activists who have worked along these lines. It should be noted that the first woman to obtain a degree in architecture from the Barcelona School of Architecture was Margarita Brender Rubira in 1962[2]. Just a decade later, the work of the architect and thinker Anna Bofill started to stand out. In 1980, the author delivered the lecture 'Woman and Architecture' in the context of the Independent Feminist Conference in Barcelona, highlighting the relationship between the patriarchal organization as a way of life in the urban environment and the construction of cities. As a member of the Ricardo Bofill Architecture Workshop, the architect participated in the conception of the Walden 7 housing building (1973-1975, Sant Just Desvern), which represents an attempt to materialize certain ideas regarding housing and sharing of domestic and neighborhood spaces traditionally considered as utopian. The design of the Plaça Catalunya Central Train Station also stands out regarding the security and visibility of this kind of

2. In fact, Brender Rubira studied architecture in Romania and what ETSAB did was to validate her studies in 1962. The first woman to study at this center was Mercè Serra i Barenys, who graduated in 1964. For more information , see Zaida MUXÍ (2013), "Primera generación de arquitectas catalanas, ETSAB 1964-1975". In *Jornadas Mujer y Arquitectura: experiencia docente, investigadora y profesional*. A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña.

infrastructure, another of the marked objectives of feminism applied to the design of cities (Col·lectiu Punt 6 2019, pp. 51-52). Alongside historian Isabel Segura and Rosa Dumenjó, director of the Fundació Maria Aurèlia Capmany, Bofill promoted the project *Women and the city* (1996-1999) in collaboration with other associations, as well as with national and international institutions within the IV Plan of Community Action for equal rights between men and women of the European Commission. They analyzed the participation of women in urban planning, and the result was the publication of *El llibre blanc. Les dones i la ciutat* (Col·lectiu Punt 6 2019, p. 52). In this context, other works and research on the topic started to emerge in other fields such as sociology, geography or anthropology. Many of these projects were carried out in collaboration with public institutions, who were responsible for urban planning in the city of Barcelona, and subsequently had an impact on the elaboration of public policies that would become the first laws that included the gender perspective in the Spanish state in the early 2000s, as we will see below.

4. The Impact of Neighborhood Movements and Citizen Participation in Urban Design

The celebration of the *I Catalan Women's Conference* (Auditorium of the University of Barcelona, May 1976) revealed an increased awareness of the need to apply feminist thought to urban design[3], which necessarily had to include citizen partic-

3. For more information: Isabel Segura (2019), *Barcelona Feminista. 1975-1988*. Ajuntament de Barcelona; Cristina Borderias & Mercè Renom (Eds.) (2008), *Dones en moviment(s): segles XVIII – XXI*, Publicacions Universitat de Barcelona.

ipation. These sessions resulted in the materialization of the claims of women as a political subject during the 1960s and 1970s in the following context: Spain was in the midst of the Democratic Transition (1975-1978), a period of total rethinking of its political system after the death of dictator Franco in 1975. In addition to academics and students, various women's groups from neighborhood movements in city districts, workers' associations, etc., and representatives of a wide range of positions and ideologies regarding the situation of women in the cultural logic of the moment participated in these meetings.

Among their main demands were issues related to labor rights, domestic and care work, education, family issues, divorce, abortion law, female sexuality, security, and urban mobility. Concerning urban planning, the presentation *Participación de la mujer en la vida ciudadana: la mujer en los barrios* (Participation of women in citizen life: women in neighborhoods), which was made by the Association of Women of L'Hospitalet stands out. The historian Isabel Segura has studied this topic in-depth, pointing out how issues such as the creation of public services such as schools, outpatient clinics, markets, nurseries, laundries or soup kitchens in their neighborhoods, as well as an improvement of the transport system were claimed in this presentation.

In fact, from 1950, and particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, the city of L'Hospitalet experienced uncontrolled growth, becoming a residence for migrants from other parts of the Spanish state who came to the large Catalan city in search of work. It quickly became one of the most densely populated cities in Europe. In areas such as Bellvitge, worker housing blocks were built that lacked the public services men-

tioned. Being located right next to Barcelona, a city commonly cited as an example of good design, L'Hospitalet's urban planning seemed particularly paradoxical. This is how the neighbors explained it in their presentation:

> As an industrial city and due to the policy initiated by the Regime (General Franco dictatorship, 1939-1975), that entailed the development of some areas and the impoverishment others, Barcelona has experienced strong migratory movements that have consequently generated new and populous neighborhoods near the periphery or sometimes even entire cities. (…) In the neighborhood, it is the woman who suffers most directly from all the deficits of collective services due to her condition as a housewife.
>
> Associació de Dones de l'Hospitalet.
> I Jornades Catalanes de la Dona, 1976.

This problem affected other neighborhoods in the city of Barcelona, whose female inhabitants, grouped in neighborhood associations, or the so-called *vocalies de dones*, shared the same needs and claimed these rights. In addition to the residents of L'Hospitalet who made their presentation at the conference, other neighborhood women's movements managed to be taken into account in urban rehabilitation processes: whereas the residents of Carmel demanded the construction of public nurseries in their neighborhood (1973–1976), the residents of Sant Andreu del Palomar fought for the recognition of divorced women and the need for spaces for them (1978), and the movement in Besós requested the construction of decent and quality housing (Magro, 2014). In short, it was a joint realization of the

need for the participation of neighbors in urban design. Their demands had not been contemplated in the rational city model, which was considered modern, typical of the 1930s, in which planning was based on the creation of polygons – housing, factories, etc. – linked by traffic, without proximity services or consideration of daily life. The slogan "*Volem un barri digne per viure-hi*" was one of the most repeated among the neighbors during these demands (Segura, 2008, p. 103).

It is not our intention to further elaborate on this subject which has been thoroughly analyzed from a historical perspective by various specialists such as the aforementioned Segura or Magro. However, we think it's necessary to stress that these claims were key in defining urban planning from a feminist perspective, with citizen participation being one of its core values, as defended by the Col·lectiu Punt 6. We have focused on an important event in recent history, but there have been multiple women's movements that have intervened in the configuration of the urban landscape of Barcelona and its surroundings in the past – from the Industrial Revolution to the labor movements of the 20th century (Borderías, 2016). If we conduct a reading of neighborhood movements alongside academic research and the institutionalization processes of feminist urbanism, we find that, from a holistic point of view, they are a key factor in the fight for this recognition.

5. Col·lectiu Punt 6 and Its Theory: *Feminist Urbanism: for a Radical Transformation of Living Spaces*

The Col·lectiu Punt 6 emerged in connection with the work of Zaida Muxí and the investigations that were being carried out at the ETSAB. The collective has gained extensive practical

experience since its foundation in 2005: multiple workshops, teaching work, research, consulting and audits focusing on the development of urban planning with a feminist perspective. The cooperative was formed as such after the approval of the Catalan Law 2/2004 by the Generalitat de Catalunya on the 4th of June on the improvement of neighborhoods, urban areas, and towns that require special attention, whose sixth point referred to 'Gender equity in the use of urban space and facilities'. It was the first collective contemplating the consideration of the gender perspective in urban planning in the Spanish state (Col·lectiu Punt 6, 125)[4].

Col·lectiu Punt 6 published its theories in the book *Urbanismo feminista. Por una transformación radical de los espacios de vida* (2019). The authors connect their research and practice to a genealogy of experiences, including those previously mentioned in the city of Barcelona. Their conception of feminist urbanism develops a model of the city opposite to the one resulting from the current neoliberal logic. They defend breaking with the spatial configuration based on the separation between the public or productive space, associated with the male role, and the private or reproductive space, associated with the female role. It is a dichotomy based on the sexual division of labor which has been perpetuated since the pro-

4. Most of the Col·lectiu Punt 6 projects have been carried out in Catalonia, many of them in Barcelona, although they have also been developed in other parts of Spain and internationally: Tunisia, Lebanon, Ivory Coast, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico or Canada, among others. Their intellectual production in the form of research articles or books is remarkable, both individually and collectively: on mobility and security, distribution of public and private spaces based on traditional gender roles, the daily life of women at night, the analysis of laws and public policies, education, among many other related topics. In the same way, they have developed various guides for the analysis of women's daily environments, based on experiences and audits of urban safety and quality integrating the gender perspective, which was the result of a cooperation with associations, schools, or public entities such as the City Council of Barcelona or the Diputació de Barcelona. For more information: http://www.punt6.org/ca/.

cesses derived from the industrialization of capitalist cities and societies of the so-called global north.

Col·lectiu Punt 6's proposition to break with this dichotomy is linked to the theories of care work and support networks developed within the framework of gender studies, which are characterized by the maxim to "put everyday life at the center"[5], in this case of urban planning. Punt 6's practical methodology is based on the analysis of the spatial use of bodies, both in homes and the public space, while identifying the hierarchical difficulties that various subjectivities deal with in their daily lives. The collective's proposal to modify these hierarchical patterns aims to enhance the networks of mutual support and collective life against male domination in physical and symbolic spaces. It argues that these networks could be developed from the existence of "hard infrastructures", which would correspond to existing physical places for carrying out certain collective activities that would facilitate said daily life, and "soft infrastructures", based on social strategies or community networks that involve sharing the management of life and timings. Some examples of the collective life in Barcelona proposed by the authors are the housing cooperative under the *transfer-of-use* scheme La Borda, the alliance of social and solidarity economy projects La Comunal, or the housing cooperative La Dinamo, which are all located in the Sants neighborhood (Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2019, 86-91).

5. The definition of "daily life" that Col·lectiu Punt 6 proposes draws upon the tradition of gender studies specialized in care work and community support networks. Authors such as Hannah Arendt or Maria Ángeles Durán, in the Spanish setting, have established themselves as referents in this regard. For a more comprehensive analysis of the concept, see Col·lectiu Punt 6 (2019), "Ruptura de la dicotomía público-privado" in *Urbanismo feminista*.

Figure 3. Col·lectiu Punt 6, intergenerational mapification of daily routines and activities networks, 2020.

Figure 4. Col·lectiu Punt 6, recognition tour with women from the neighbourhood, 2020.

Col·lectiu Punt 6 criticizes androcentric and patriarchal urbanism and the functionalist and dispersed city, a model of a rational and modern city that was governed by the principles of living, circulating and working that were gathered in the Athens Charter (1941), which was the basis of the modern architecture. In the same way, it regards new global city models, as well as smart cities and preventive urbanism, "touristification", and gentrification "predatory" as phenomena. These city models would be governed by the logic of the market, which acts to the detriment of urban identity and promotes standardized public spaces occupied by franchises and transnational chains that encourage mass consumption (Col·lectiu Punt 6, 2019, p. 103). In the case of Barcelona, this city model prevailed until 2015, entailing processes of the privatization of public services and facilities, while also making the public investment in popular neighborhoods disappear. In addition, according to Punt 6, the control and repression mechanisms of the circulation of groups that did not fit in the ideals of this city model, such as sex workers, homeless people, undocumented migrant people, etc. in the public space were tightened.

It became evident that this city model turned out to be unsustainable for many of its inhabitants which were affected by the processes of job insecurity, gentrification, environmental degradation, etc. With the change of government in the Barcelona City Council in 2015, Mayor Ada Colau and her municipal group began incorporating a much broader and more inclusive vision into public policies concerning urban planning. However, Col·lectiu Punt 6's analysis of the existing legislative framework in urban planning reveals that although these new regu-

lations consider tools to implement a more plural and inclusive design that not only favors white European middle-class men with numerous privileges, they rarely have been put into practice. The change is remarkable, but "the laws will never carry out transgressive actions or actions contrary to the system that supports them." (Col·lectiu Punt 6 2019, p. 123). However, they emphasize that "the inclusion of a gender perspective in regulations has contributed to naming and making hidden realities visible, which may be the first step to modify unequal material conditions" (Col·lectiu Punt 6 2019, p. 123).

In response to the exclusion of these "hidden realities", Col·lectiu Punt 6 proposes an intersectional feminist approach, which goes beyond the traditional gender binarism and points out different categories of oppression marked by racism, classism, sexual identity, functional diversity, origin, and migratory status, among possible others. An intersectional analysis that allows us to envision and value daily life in its most complex form, avoiding simplifications (Col·lectiu Punt 6, pp. 134-135). To apply this perspective to urban design, they once again defend the active participation of the community, which they are ultimately working for in the urban design process. This participatory urbanism, which gained prominence in Barcelona in the 1970s, as well as in other cities of the Spanish state, was institutionalized in the following decades with dwindling effects. In any case, the authors emphasize that this participatory urbanism promoted by institutions wasn't commonly implemented with an intersectional feminist perspective, although it is increasingly acknowledged (Col·lectiu Punt 6, pp. 147-148).

6. Conclusions

This essay attempts to contribute to the dissemination of feminist urbanism theories and to illustrate how they have been progressively developed in the specific case of the city of Barcelona. We have tried to clarify the main actors who have promoted their development and consolidation over time in the context of research, universities, neighborhood movements and public institutions. The definition of feminist urbanism proposed by Col·lectiu Punt 6 is based on the consideration of daily life as a central concept in urban planning, as well as cooperativeness and support networks based on an intersectional, open and plural approach. The implementation of these principles is presented as a current and future challenge in the design of cities.

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Dr. Melanie Levick-Parkin's research is focused on visual communication and design & making practices in relation to intangible cultural heritage, heritage and archaeology, framed by Design Anthropological approaches. Most of her work is about the agency of visual and material language and informed by a feminist lens. She is particularly interested in how gender manifests in/ affects how meaning is made within the public sphere, both materially and visually and how power circumscribes who is able to make meaning and give form in different spheres. She is currently the MFA Design Programme leader at the Sheffield Institute of Arts, Sheffield Hallam University, and also supervises doctoral candidates across Art & Design and for the Research England funded, Lab4living 100 Year Life Project.
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Cathy has a PhD in Design and a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. She has undertaken course and program leadership roles within the Faculty of Design, Architecture & Building at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia, including Industrial Design, Interdisciplinary Studies and Product Design. She has overseen program reaccreditations and renewals to address the global readiness of graduates. Her role as senior lecturer concentrates on introducing design process and methods for first year students; and facilitating industry projects to assist senior students in the transition from education to practice. Cathy worked for many years as a professional designer including her own consultancy business and she is a Member of the Design Institute of Australia. Her research explores the gender mix of the student population in industrial/product design education. In particular, she is interested in the educational experience for students and their transition into the profession.
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Virginia Marano obtained a Master's degree in Contemporary Art History at the University of Siena. She is currently in her second year of her PhD at the University of Zurich under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Tristan Weddigen. Her studies are funded by the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship (ESKAS). Her dissertation topic is on Alberto Giacometti and the

Post-war sculpture in New York. She did a four-month internship at Mumok (2017, Vienna) and a three-month internship at Artipelag (2018, Stockholm) and is a committee member of the Fondazione Centro Giacometti in Stampa.
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Artist and teacher. She lives and works in Turin. She trained in Florence where she graduated in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts followed by a master's degree in Modern Literature, with a thesis in visual anthropology on photography as a mode of self construction. She is currently completing a master's degree in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology. Always interested in the contamination between different artistic languages, she alternates projects of participatory art, with a particular attention to the female condition, investigated through photography, narration and performance, to a research with an intimate and dreamlike character. She develops her artistic research in the field of gender studies and visual anthropology.
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urban furniture supported by the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (2019-2022). In 2017 he wrote *La Fabbrica dell'Innovazione. Gli arredi del Palazzo delle Poste di Napoli 1936*, published by LetteraVentidue, Siracusa.
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Architect and PhD student in design at Sapienza University of Rome. Received the bachelor's degree in Architecture at the Federico II University of Naples (2013) and the master's degree in Architecture for sustainable project at Politecnico di Torino (2016). Since 2017 she has been active within the Architecture Department of Federico II University of Naples being design teaching assistant, exam and degree committee member. She has been a research fellow at the CESMA of the Federico II University (2018-2019). From 2018 she started a collaboration with the Fondazione San Gennaro, an organization that promote social innovation, as a member of the ReMade lab research team whose purpose is to experiment innovative technology to recycle urban waste (plastic and metal) on a local scale. Her main research interests are in the areas of design for social innovation, design for territories, design for sustainability.
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META WORKSHOP.
HOW TO DESIGN A WORKSHOP?
By **Òbelo**
12-13 settembre 2020
venue: AIAP Milano

WEBINAR
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INTRODUCTION TO
ANIMATED TYPOGRAPHY
By **Gianluca Alla**
September 26, 2020
venue: webinar (Zoom)

SLEEPING BEAUTIES
By **Archivio Tipografico**
+ Studio 23.56
October 2-3, 2020
venue: Torino, Archivio Tipografico,
Via Brindisi, 13a

WEBINAR
VALORIZE YOUR OWN OFFER...
HOW TO BUILD A BUSINESS
WITH LEAN APPROACH
AND DEVELOPE SYSTEMS
OF MONETIZATION ORIENTED
TO THE VALUE FOR THE MARKET.
By **Stefano Schiavo**
October 24, 2020
venue: webinar / Zoom

BOOK ARCHITECTURE
AND STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVE
By **Cristina Balbiano d'Aramengo**
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