

## ARCHITECTURE: A REFLECTION OF OUR TIME AND PLACE.



The historical memory is the main fact which remains adhered in the Colombian culture, expressed openly throughout manifestations which show us the diversity and influences that have created a society which has been transformed since the beginning of its time.

Relevant and important changes have been a crucial part on the process of developing an urban life and an architectural memory; undoubtedly the European heritage which is common in the daily Colombian life through costumes, language, religion and cultural interbreeding.

The Colombian Architecture has been the result of a series of events marked mainly by submission, political power, evangelical mission accentuated by the Catholic church and undoubtedly an inherit culture which has been significant for the development of our history.

Going back in time to the pre-Hispanic settlement, when emerged the first civilization in the territory which is nowadays known as Colombia, there were tribes organized politically and economically; the center of their lives was based on mystical beliefs, on natural phenomenon and the importance of protecting and taking advantage of their territory as a way to survive.

The discovery of the "*new world*" America, in 1492 brought in the beginning of a new age which was established by the European heritage and marked strongly the direction of our primitive culture.

One of the biggest changes that came together with this new discovery is related with the way of thinking about settlements, which passed from being rustic shacks made of *adobe* and roof made of palm leaf, where the whole family share in just one place full of the spirituality and home warm, to the majesty and stunning principles that marked the duality between the antique and new.

All the conquest process took place in the century XV when the Spanish crown expanded its domain to the American territory which is the beginning of the born of new cities and spaces created as of principles of aesthetic values coming from the old continent.

The emersion the big squares as the center of the economical and political power started to be repeated among the territory, it was when the villages were born taking into account the main square as the center of everything. This little principle was decisive for the urban planning but not only the economical and political factors were enough in the construction of the new villages. The Catholic Church accomplished an important role as well.

It is known as a big and dramatic process which went on for more than three centuries, during that period of time, Colombia was consolidating and inherit style of architecture giving as a result big cities much of them seen under the same style of language. The Spanish brought new techniques to build houses, taking into account natural conditions and a defined habitat. The Colonial time marked significantly the course of the development of the society in our territory, the mixture of different cultures, Europeans and Africans (slaves brought by Spanish) gave as a result a multicultural evolution of the new society.

Nowadays those architectural relics built years ago, are the main attractions for locals and visitors who admired the beauty and splendor of the buildings and streets full of history and memories; religious architecture mainly, with a touch of Baroque period ornaments in cities like Cartagena, Villa de Leyva, Mompox and Popayan, Their stones paths still have the remnant of the Spanish expeditions, their roof made of Spanish tile, their big windows protected with forging iron decorated with figures of special order.

Since 1510 to 1810 approximately It is considered a crucial time in the construction our historical memory, time which determined the process of evolution and emersion of the “New Granada” society, more than 300 long years of Spanish possession, adjustments and big changes.

But it is precisely this time which starts creating a new society under their own principles and ideas. Colombia declared their absolute independence in 1810 from the Spanish crown and it was the beginning of the creation of a new identity and transformation.

The earliest 90's signified a drastic change in the discernment of the way to see the architecture. The birth of the *Modernism*, a new revolutionary style which broke with the traditional patterns of the classical architecture, If we see this changes as the way that the country evolved in its way to plan and organize the territory we can consider this time as the Golden time of our architecture and urbanism.

The modernism and its revolutionary ideas came to Colombia through architects who transformed the concept of industrialized architecture, using new materials such as glass and concrete, that's why Bogota for being the Colombian capital was the first scenery to give life to the new way to build and create architecture.

It was during this time when the most important public and private constructions got their significant value in the process of creating a new city. Important architects in that time were invited to Colombia to work on the construction of a new plan for the city. Le Corbusier came to Colombia to direct A pilot project which pretended to organized the city according to European patterns, however his new ideas did not give the expected result. So, the memory of these time is based on the new ideas of the new generations of architects formed in Colombia and some of them who came from different countries, the mixtures of their ideas gave as a result the cities, the new buildings and the creation of the country called Colombia.