

BEYOND VS

UGLY CITIES

#5





I'M LISTENING.

AND, I'VE BEEN THINKING...



I WENT ON A TRIP TO EUROPE LAST YEAR AND... I LOVED IT. THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE PLACES I TRAVELED TO. SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL.

NEARLY A BILLION PEOPLE TRAVEL TO EUROPE EVERY YEAR, BEY. THEY ARE LARGELY ATTRACTED BY SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CITIES AND LANDMARKS.



IT'S HARD TO EXPRESS, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY ABOUT THE PLACES I VISITED. THE ARCHITECTURE WAS PART OF IT, BUT THERE WAS MORE...

I SEE. EUROPE'S ARCHITECTURE IS INDEED CAPTIVATING, OFTEN REFLECTING CENTURIES OF HISTORY. BUT ITS CHARM EXTENDS BEYOND THAT, ENCOMPASSING CULTURE, ATMOSPHERE AND MORE.



SOME PLACES HERE ARE LESS THAN INSPIRING. WE NEED TO STEP UP OUR GAME.

UNINSPIRING PLACES ARE NOT UNIQUE TO THE UNITED STATES, BEY.



I KNOW. I GUESS I JUST FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOME ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT HERE TO MAKE OUR CITIES LOOK BETTER.

ABSOLUTELY, BEY. BEAUTIFICATION IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS, AND THERE IS MUCH WE CAN DO TO ENHANCE THE APPEAL OF OUR COMMUNITIES.



LET ME GUESS, MUCH IS ALREADY BEING DONE TO BEAUTIFY OUR CITIES.

YOU ARE NOTICING MY PATTERNS ALREADY.

THOUGH YES, MANY ARE ALREADY WORKING TO IMPROVE OUR CITYSCAPES.



BUT IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN TURN BACK TIME AND REBUILD EVERYTHING...



ON THE CONTRARY. OUR OWN HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE ARE KEY TO CREATING ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT CITIES. ARCHITECTS, CITY PLANNERS, AND ARTISTS LEVERAGE THOSE VALUABLE RESOURCES EVERY DAY.



I KNOW THAT AN ARCHITECT IS AN ARTIST IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, BUT THEY'VE GOT TO BE DEALING WITH A TON OF CONSTRAINTS. WITH THINGS LIKE BUDGETS AND REGULATIONS, HOW CAN THEY MAKE A MASTERPIECE?

IT IS A CHALLENGE. THESE PROFESSIONALS MAY NEED TO NEGOTIATE 'FUNCTION' WITH 'FORM', BUT THEY DO THIS BRILLIANTLY. THE MASTERPIECE IN A DESIGN ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT LOOKS, BUT ALSO HOW IT FITS IN AND IMPROVES ITS SURROUNDINGS.



THAT'S A GOOD POINT. I AM WORRIED ABOUT HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO BEAUTIFY OUR CITIES WITH THOSE CHALLENGES, THOUGH.

IT IS A PROCESS, BEY. BUT REMEMBER, AESTHETICS ARE OFTEN A PRIORITY IN DESIGN. DESIGNERS STRIVE TO CREATE VISUALLY APPEALING, SUSTAINABLE, AND LIVABLE SPACES DESPITE THE OBSTACLES.



TAKE GREEN SPACES AS AN EXAMPLE. THEY ARE GAINING MORE ATTENTION AND FUNDING EACH YEAR. PARKS, GARDENS, AND PLAZAS NOT ONLY MAKE A CITY MORE BEAUTIFUL, BUT THEY IMPROVE AIR QUALITY, CREATE WILDLIFE HABITATS, AND PROVIDE RECREATIONAL AREAS FOR PEOPLE TO RELAX, EXERCISE, AND SOCIALIZE.



GREEN SPACES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, URBAN ARCHITECTURE, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING. THEY ARE WIDELY ENCOURAGED FOR THEIR MANY BENEFITS.



SO IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GREEN SPACES, RIGHT?

CORRECT, BEY. THERE ARE MANY OTHER TOOLS AND TRENDS THAT IMPROVE THE AESTHETICS OF OUR COMMUNITIES. WATER FEATURES ARE ONE SUCH EXAMPLE, AND WHEN INTEGRATED INTO DESIGN THEY CAN BE USED TO ENHANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

RIVERS, LAKES, AND EVEN MAN-MADE PONDS CAN PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT IN AN URBAN LANDSCAPE, BUT ALSO SUPPORT WILDLIFE AND HELP WITH NATURAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT.



LIGHT IS ANOTHER METHOD OF BEAUTIFYING CITIES. CREATIVE AND STRATEGIC LIGHTING NOT ONLY ENHANCES SAFETY, BUT CAN CREATE AN INVITING ATMOSPHERE AND HIGHLIGHT THE SURROUNDING ARCHITECTURE.



THERE ARE OTHER MOVEMENTS LIKE COMMUNITY GARDENING IN URBAN SPACES. THESE ARE OFTEN COLLECTIVELY GARDENED BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE, OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEIGHBORS TO GROW THEIR OWN FOOD, CONNECT WITH NATURE, AND PROMOTE SOCIALIZATION.



GOVERNMENTS ALSO PARTNER WITH ARTISTS TO ENHANCE AN URBAN AESTHETIC THROUGH MURALS, SCULPTURES, AND EVEN GRAFFITI. PUBLIC ART IS A POWERFUL MEDIUM FOR CULTURAL EXPRESSION, COMMUNITY PRIDE, AND ECONOMIC ENRICHMENT.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE REALLY OLD BUILDINGS DOWNTOWN?



BUT WHAT ABOUT THE 'FUNCTIONAL' STUFF? IT SEEMS LIKE WE COULD MAKE THE PRETTIEST CITY IN THE WORLD, BUT IT WOULDN'T DO MUCH IF THE ROADS AND BRIDGES ARE AS UGLY AS SIN.



ABSOLUTELY, THAT IS AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF CITY BEAUTIFICATION.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IS CRUCIAL. BY PROTECTING AND RESTORING HISTORIC SITES, WE MAINTAIN A CONNECTION TO OUR PAST. NEW TECHNOLOGIES LIKE 3D SCANNING ARE BEING USED FOR MORE ACCURATE PRESERVATION OF THESE IMPORTANT PLACES.

HOW DO YOU BEAUTIFY A ROAD? ISN'T IT JUST CAR EXHAUST AND CONCRETE AT THE END OF THE DAY?



THE AESTHETIC PORTION OF TRANSPORTATION WAS LONG UNDERSERVED, BUT HAS GAINED IMPORTANCE RECENTLY. MANY LOCALES NOW DEDICATE PROJECT BUDGET TOWARDS AESTHETICS, PLACE-MAKING, AND SUSTAINABILITY.



IT STARTS IN PROJECT PLANNING WITH BEAUTY IN MIND. THINK OF A QUAIN TOWN, A SCENIC OVERLOOK, OR UNIQUE BRIDGES.

AND BEYOND PLANNING?

DESIGNED ELEMENTS LIKE COMPLIMENTARY COLORS AND PATTERNS FOR PAVING CAN ADD APPEAL...

... AS CAN PLANTING NATIVE TREES, SHRUBS AND FLOWERS ALONG STREETS AND HIGHWAYS.

DECORATIVE LIGHT POLES, STREET FURNITURE AND SCULPTURES ALONG A ROADWAY CAN FOSTER AN IDENTITY AND ESTABLISH A SENSE OF PLACE.

SO THE GOAL IS TO INCORPORATE ART AND DESIGN INTO NEW INFRASTRUCTURE?

PRECISELY. AND MANY OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS DEVELOP CONSISTENT 'STREETSCAPE' STANDARDS SO THAT THE LANDSCAPE OF ONE PROJECT WILL COMPLEMENT THE NEXT.

THAT MAKES SENSE. I CAN SEE HOW A UNIFIED STYLE COULD BE MORE APPEALING THAN A DIFFERENT LOOK ON EVERY BLOCK.

SO SPENDING MONEY ON BEAUTIFICATION ISN'T JUST FOR SHOW, IT CAN ACTUALLY BE A GOOD RETURN ON INVESTMENT?

INDEED. AND BESIDES DIRECTLY BENEFITING THE CITY'S RESIDENTS, AESTHETIC INVESTMENTS CAN ALSO BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY ATTRACTING TOURISM.

CORRECT. REMEMBER EUROPE'S BEAUTY AND THRIVING TOURISM. WOULD YOU PREFER VACATIONING IN A VIBRANT CITY, OR A NEGLECTED ONE?

MOST PEOPLE WOULD AGREE. BEAUTIFICATION INVESTMENTS NOT ONLY PROVIDE TANGIBLE BENEFITS LIKE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SAFETY, BUT THEY ALSO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE, HIGHLIGHT HISTORY AND CULTURE, AND ENRICH COMMUNITY PRIDE AND COHESION.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP? I'M GUESSING IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH GETTING INVOLVED IN MY LOCAL COMMUNITY.

THE VIBRANT ONE, OBVIOUSLY.

THAT'S A GOOD START. YOU CAN LEARN ABOUT UPCOMING PROJECTS AND ATTEND PUBLIC MEETINGS LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY FEEDBACK.



YOU CAN ALSO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL INITIATIVES LIKE CLEAN-UP DRIVES, COMMUNITY GARDENING, AND TREE PLANTING.



EVEN PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS CAN USE AN EXTRA HAND.



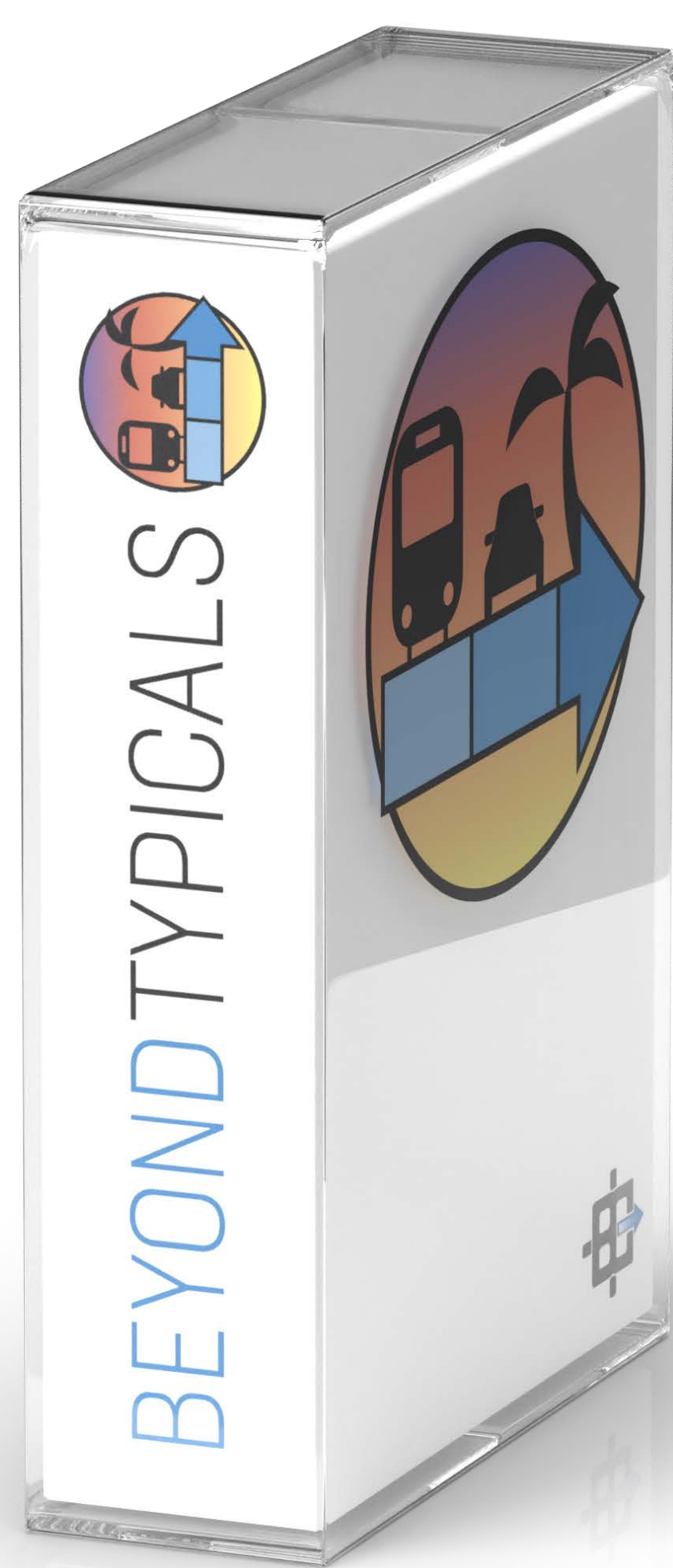
WELL, I'M RELIEVED TO KNOW SO MANY PEOPLE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING TO BEAUTIFY OUR WORLD. THERE'S A LOT TO DO, BUT WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

ME TOO.



AND I CAN'T WAIT TO GET INVOLVED AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE!

DON'T GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF, YOU'RE JUST A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES.



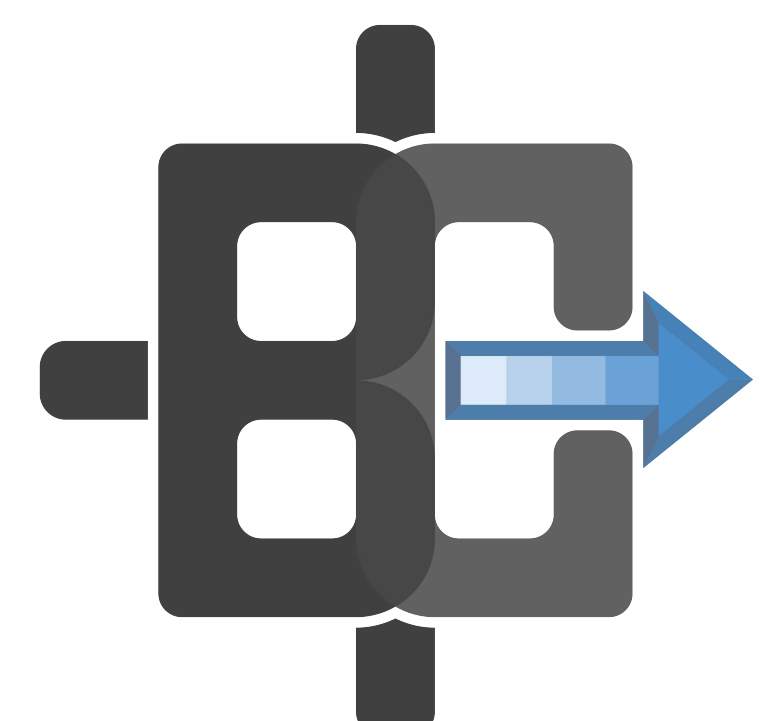
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WRITTEN BY: SAM LYTLE, PE
BRIAN SROUFE, PE
CHAT GPT

LAYOUT AND DESIGN: SAM LYTLE, PE

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