

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
Master of Science in Sustainable Architecture  
**Honors Theses**

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**THE IMAGES OF CONTEMPORARY CITY**

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How to represent the metropolis of XXI century? Photographs, movies, postcards and also music videos are building a richer collective imagery shared by media. Urban designer and city administrators need to communicate urban transformations directly to citizens. The use of render relies on citizens' desires, telling in images how their city is being transformed into the city of dreams.



[IMMAGINE 0(1) – Thesis's cover]

The study shows how architecture's renders could be considered as works of contemporary art.

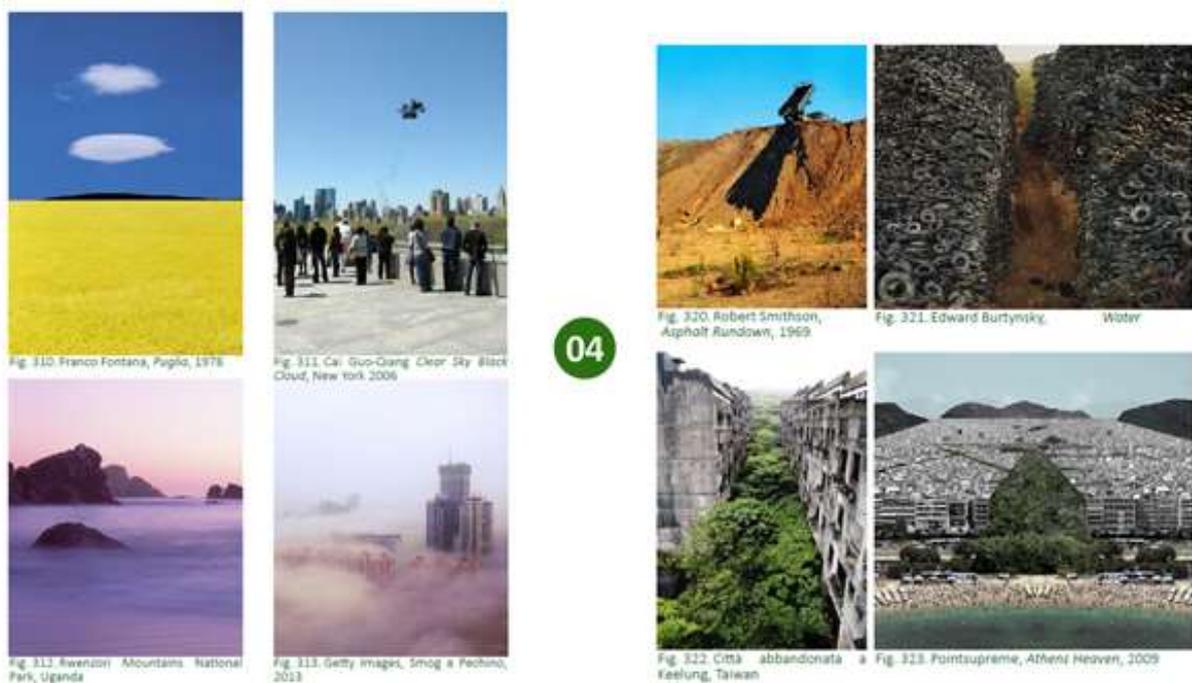
Like Renaissance and Baroque paintings, renders offer interesting indications on the society's perception by artists. Obviously renders offer a "foreshadowing of society", a description of the expectations, whether sincere or misleading promises, designed to confuse ideas.

These images have a very strong persuasive power. Who creates them has the ability to enhance the positive characteristics of an urban intervention and sometimes the process gets to completely disrupt the message: the architecture disappears, leaving only a cliché and many doubts about the validity of the proposed architecture.

These clichés are various: happy people, lush green, exaltations of entertainment and fun. Dreams of contemporary citizens are the true render's protagonists because they are what citizens want. Projects (and renders) are confirmed by citizens only if they can give shape to their desires and enchant them.

The research, after an excursus on the representation of the city in history, focused on the representation of the contemporary city through these clichés. Sociologist Giandomenico Amendola in his essay *From Daedalus to Icarus: a new demand for city* [original: *Tra Dedalo e Icaro: la nuova domanda di città*] identifies ten ideal types of cities coinciding with citizens' wishes. From this starting point I have assumed seven graphics ideal types: the "answers for images" to Amendola's cities, that collect these clichés.

For each ideal type has addressed a theoretical analysis on the physical mutation of cities, accompanied by a reading for images of the same. An iconographic contribution of over 600 images was collected and presented in consistent compositions. The iconographic sources are vast: not only architecture's render but also photographs, movies, comics and art installations. The purpose is to find similarities able to contribute to the collective imagery. Hence the identification of graphic cliché and awareness of their weight within the composition.



[IMMAGINE 0(2) –Examples of compositions about sustainability]

For this reason the great architectural firms make use of communication professionals for images, not only architects but photographers, painters, cartoonists, video makers and especially advertising experts. Cities have become showcases of architectural and urban interventions that seek the approval of citizens and tourists, investors and politicians. In the images' society, where television and web are the primary means of communication, projects need to use a visual communication more and more sophisticated and efficient.



Fig. 369. Il render più noto dell'intervento rappresenta una scena di ipotetica vita del quartiere in estate.



Fig. 372. Elementi primari visibili: rampicanti, alberi e personaggi coprono in parte gli edifici.



Fig. 373. Elementi sussidiari (biciclette in giallo, persone sedute in viola, bambini in azzurro e donne in rosso) e elementi naturali (in verde) sono essenziali nella narrazione grafica.



Fig. 374. Linee verticali ed oblique indirizzano lo sguardo verso punti specifici della composizione. I palmi costituiscono punti fermi.



Fig. 375. Schema prospettico e del centro visivo dell'attenzione (regola dei terzi). Gli elementi sussidiari sono collocati in posizioni strategiche.

[IMMAGINE 0(3) – *Ideal type of sustainable city. Analysis of the render for Millennium Village in London*]

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