

## Whatever Happened to Aesthetics within Urbanism? Oblivion or Prejudice?

**Miguel Lopez Melendez**

Research Associate, Harvard University Graduate School of Design  
mlopezme@gsd.harvard.edu

### **ABSTRACT**

Most contemporary architectural and urban debates have overlooked, if not diminished, the critical character of aesthetics as branch of philosophy and mediator of our social interactions. Urban transformations entail social, economic, environmental, political, technological, psychological, and aesthetics changes. Thus, the ubiquity of aesthetics demands more sophisticated critical methods to counter the pragmatism and technocratic approaches within contemporary design practices. But the urgency to tackle the challenges of urbanization has condemned the critical framework that aesthetics provides to oblivion within design. In contrast, this text situates aesthetics at the center of contemporary urban debates and defends its analytical power to tackle the challenges of urbanization, such as climate change, social inequity, and migration crises.

**Keywords:** aesthetic blindness, aesthetics of urbanization, Urban Theory and History, urban theories and histories

**Topic:** teoría e historia de la ciudad y el territorio