RICARDO BOFILL

- Kisembo Emmanuel
- Mwesigwa Allan
- Musiimenta Ian
- Owor Derrick
RICARDO BOFILL

• Born 1939 in Barcelona

• He is an honorary AIA member, and has won numerous awards throughout the world for architecture.

• Further, he is a published author, co-writing Espaces d’une vie and L’Architecture des Villes.

• Bofill protests about social concerns in Architecture i.e. including wishes and involvement of its users.

• Formed an Architectural workshop Taller de Arquitectura in 1963.

• CITY PLANNING
• LEISURE
• TRANSPORT
• HOUSING
• OFFICES
RICARDO BOFILL’s work draws upon the past, referencing local histories, classical compositions, and/or traditional building methods, while imagining and innovating stylistically and programmatically to meet the needs and desires of the community that is yet to inhabit these spaces.

The present, the designing of these spaces, lies between retrospect and prospect = Memory - Future.
The use of a historical perspective in his design approach allowed for continual analysis and interpretation of a given culture and its architectural heritage.

Defying Socialist and Corbusian urban planning models, which generated ill-used and vacant spaces by creating isolated and repetitive city blocks, Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura proposes a sustainable, Mediterranean city model.

Such model is defined by a network of public space that connects proportionally scaled streets and squares.

In his book "Espaces d'une vie" Ricardo Bofill states, "it is essential to recover the discipline developed during the Renaissance—city design. Personally.

Bofill Expresses his aims in urban design:

"a concern of the firm has always been the common public space.....the goal has been the development of a new typology of urban tissue based on the ambiance of the Medieval. Renaissance and Baroque examples of street, square and open space"

PORT OF KOBE, Japan. Project 1991

LA FABRICA, Barcelona 1973

VILLAREAL DE SANTO ANTONIO, Portugal. Project 2011

MANZANARES PARK. Madrid, Spain. Completed in 2003
AGRICULTURAL VILLAGE HOUARI BOUMEDIENNE, Abadla, Algeria.

Client: Ministry of Housing, Government of Algeria
Total area: 36,000 sqm

He was interested in the urban planning problems of the developing countries and the experience they had gained in the construction of housing developments by the Algerian government, through the agency of France, to be applied to the construction of new centers of population in semi-desert areas where agriculture was to be promoted.

"A large central square, such as found in all Arab towns, serves as marketplace, meeting place, setting for festivities and spectacles and vital axis articulating the town."
The composition of the urban nucleus on the basis of the combination of single-family dwellings offered infinite possibilities, which had to be limited and serialized in order to keep the cost of the operation as low as possible.

The geometrical forms chosen, drawn from Arabic and Mediterranean traditions, made for a first grouping of two or three dwellings laid out around a courtyard to compose a block.

A grouping of several blocks composed a neighborhood, and several neighborhoods, a town, with the proportion of built space to open public space being kept constant.
A grouping of several blocks composed a neighborhood, and several neighborhoods, a town, with the proportion of built space to open public space being kept constant.
Client: Ricardo Bofill

- A brutalist former cement factory on the outskirts of Barcelona, Spain.

- Ricardo saw the potential to convert this site into what would become a landmark architectural feat of “adaptive reuse of industrial space” that ultimately translated into a remarkable live/work commercial property development.

- The conversion of the abandoned cement factory from the late 19th century into RBTA’s studios and Ricardo Bofill’s personal residence, began with a process of destruction, demolishing pieces of the structures to reveal hidden forms.
The renovation project, which began in 1973, incorporates various architectural languages; Catalan Civic Gothic style and Surrealist elements and is an early example of European Post Modernism.

The remaining eight silos were transformed into offices, a model making laboratory, archives, a library, a gigantic space known as "The Cathedral", used for meetings, exhibitions, concerts, and professional activities of the architect.

Above the Cathedral lies Ricardo’s residence, green roofs and terraces. The entire complex was planted with lush gardens to create the effect of an oasis within the industrial area.
But it is Bofill’s monolithic conversion showcased here that is undoubtedly his most personal work, a successful, and beautiful experiment in repurposing space, which has become a landmark of alternative living.

Another striking feature of the build are the lush gardens that surround the building; these gardens have been brought to life with a variety of trees such as eucalyptuses, palms, olive trees and cypresses.

“The factory is a magic place with a strange atmosphere that is difficult to be perceived by a profane eye. I like life to be perfectly programmed here, ritualized; in total contrast with my turbulent nomad life.”

So, have you spotted a disused factory in your area lately? Might you look with new eyes on that space after this?
Client: Kobe Steel Industries / Mitsubishi Research Institute Inc.
Total area: 84 ha

The city of Kobe located in a beautiful natural setting between the Rokko Mountains and Osaka bay, experienced an important growth on a thirty-five kilometre long strip along the sea.

- The ideas for this site are based on a clear urban scheme, made of streets and plazas connected to its surroundings, which foresees the possibility of extension on the adjacent sites. The identity and the centrality of the project is obtained by the clarity of this relationship to Kobe East, the train station, Oji Park, and by its general skyline, so that it stands out as a major landmark for the area.
One of the architectural challenges of the scheme was the combination of two different scales; the village scale (Italian village, New York Village, Kyoto traditional districts) which consists of buildings two to three storeys high, and the tower scale, (like in San Geminiano or New York).

This contrasts of scales and life styles between the atmosphere of the village, directly linked to the human scale and the very urban, modern way of life that one can experiment in high buildings, was the adequate response to the new demands of current and future generations.
The district includes residential areas, office towers, business centers, a museum, a concert hall, an educational centre, a scientific research institute, the headquarters of the World Health Organization, hotels and a marina.

The streets and the roads of the scheme follow a rigid pattern at the large scale planning to allow for clarity and functionality of the design.
• VILLAREAL DE SANTO ANTONIO,
Portugal. Project 2011

**Client:** Municipality of Vila Real de Santo Antonio

**Total area:** 100 ha

The water frontage of Vila Real is an underused wasteland with a great urban potential. The unifying master plan aims to reinforce the presence of the river façade and enhance the public space to create a vibrant mixed-use area. Integrating the natural reserve between Vila Real de Santo Antonio and Monte Gordo, the scheme promotes a sustainable environment.
Inspired by Vila Real’s rich architectural heritage, and particularly by Marques de Pombal modern urban design, the plan is based on a geometrical grid offering generous green areas and encouraging pedestrian circulation.

The area around “Doca Pesca” starting at “Punta da Areia” and following the coastline to Monte Gordo, provides 150 residential units (hotel and apartments), a retail area, conventions centre, leisure and cultural facilities, parking facilities and a yacht marina. “Punta de Areia” area offers 600 (residential units (hotels and apartments), amenities and parking infrastructure.
Client: Municipality of Madrid
Total area: 600 ha

The ambition of the project was to transform an area containing the Spanish capital’s sanitation and electricity supply infrastructures into a major park, which will also meet the recreational and sporting needs of the surrounding districts. The previous studies on the treatment of the river that begun as part of Madrid’s sanitation plan.
The environmentally sensitive scheme for the Manzanares Park represents not only the creation of a great natural space but also the recuperation of the Manzanares River for the citizens and visitors. Both elements, nature and river, are the ideal components with which to produce synergy between the site and its vocation as a metropolitan park.

The project foresees covering the sewer exits at the northern end of the park and isolating the water purifiers and electricity plant to hide the installations from view and mask possible emanating smells.
Lessons for Ugandan towns

In Uganda today, the norm is to demolish all existing structures considered dilapidated not taking into account the aspects of a timeless city. To create timeless cities, we ought to take into account the history of buildings and their heritage in contemporary society just like Bofill does in his projects.

In Bofill’s urban planning projects, the design respects and adheres, whenever possible, to its contextual setting, creating a smooth and continuous flow of architectural ideas envisioned through time. It is therefore imperative that we compose and develop related typologies that systematically give a feel of time in our cities.

It is normal and not uncommon in Uganda today to plan for new urban areas only and mostly in the horizontal sense taking up large areas of a non-renewable and non-expansible, highly valuable resource of land. Bofill introduces new ideas into the realm of the vertical neighborhood, village and city, giving rise to higher densities and lower plot coverage.
Lessons for Ugandan towns

In all Bofill’s designs, he draws from the meaningful and practically sound pool of cultural heritage of the people among whom he designs giving rise to generally acceptable typologies and neighborhoods at the local scale. Uganda being rich in cultural diversity should utilise and maximise their potential in the development of a multiplicity of design languages, creating regional architecture that is specific to time and place.

Many a time, African traditional architecture and planning is not considered during extensive urban planning projects in Uganda. Unlike our planning practices, Bofill draws from ancient and traditional architectural styles such as the Catalan Civic Gothic, Medieval, the Renaissance and Baroque styles to create architecturally rich and habitable neighborhoods.

Bofill’s concern has always been about the common public space composed of street, square and open spaces creating a new typology of urban tissue that is both livable and workable. This calls for more usable public open spaces that create connections and links within the cities of Uganda, and less of the inaccessible open areas like city square.
Lessons for Ugandan towns

From Bofill’s projects like La Fabrica, we are called to a new mindset of adaptive reuse and repurposing of spaces through conversion other than demolition. This calls for a new set of eyes to look upon our existing industrial and warehousing spaces for reuse and purposeful conversion such as the Coffee Marketing Board in Bugolobi.

Ricardo Bofill always considers the possibility of future extension of urban centers thereby utilising space efficiently. He also inculcates the ideas of Pedestrian and Transit Oriented Development into his designs, incorporating different scales into the neighborhood for both identity and habitability. Ugandan cities should emulate this model.

From the Manzanares Park, we learn the concept of efficient natural resource utilization incorporating ideals of sustainable development and vibrant mixed use areas into the city. Uganda needs to borrow from this concept for more vibrant cities and towns.