

HISTORY OF URBANISM. 6 VIDEOS

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Since a year ago I did the [compile a series of videos](#) on urban policies for an audiovisual session in the course [Rethinking urban policies 30 years later](#) I have not stopped saving references. Under the category [videos](#) of Delicious I currently count 220 references of audiovisual material focused on the themes of this blog. Maybe at some point I will update the selection of the most interesting but, in the meantime, I want to highlight those that I have identified for the additional history category. They are almost rarities whose vision in 2011 offers us brushstrokes on the conception of urbanism in the 20th

century.

[Lewis Mumford on the city](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=e5b_59mls4M

The City In History, one of the classics of urbanism in the 20th century, written by Lewis Mumford, in pictures. The beginning of the 1960s and the city as a theme is sufficiently important for a project like this to seem interesting, at a time when, as we can see, some ideas about spatial conception that are outdated today were central at that time.

[The City - 1939 Documentary - Clip 1: From Farms to Factories](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=V93rubGKjCc

I found the video at [The Suburban Prelude: The City \(1939\)](#), a post about the documentary 'The City', created for the 1939 New York Exposition, an event that, in many ways, marked the urban model for decades and, above all, the concept of territory-mobility in the United States and, consequently, outside its borders. The documentary has the signature of Lewis Mumford and sought to serve as inspiration to imagine the city of tomorrow. The chapter that I link is one of the initial ones and reflects in images the apocalyptic vision of the industrial city.

[Anatomy of Los Angeles \(1969\)](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=7-R1b2Tz9fY

Los Angeles, the perfect model to explain the urban sprawl and its environmental, social and economic consequences, seen from the perspective of 1969. "It is a true urban laboratory" we can hear. Today we know that the experiment has many obscure points.

[The Living City \(1970\)](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=DSArSP7g2to

A good material -not for its audiovisual quality, by the way, things of the time- to explain in images and with perspective the traditional optimism of the great planner. London, in the 70s, urgently needs urban renewal and the municipal authority prepares this video to explain its main interventions within the city, also mixing them with details about daily life in the city.

[Unfinished London - Episode 2](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=yUEHWhO_HdY

I have already talked about this video [some other time](#). In fact, your invoice is not old, since it is only a few years old. However, it collects images of London in the 70s and the plans of Abercrombie that, over the decades, sought to complete a series of rings of road mobility infrastructures. It is precisely this that serves as the plot line for the documentary, since it focuses on how these plans were frustrated due to lack of money and neighborhood opposition, which prevented the development of infrastructures that would have made London a city whose physiognomy would be very different

from what we know today. You can also watch the [opening episode](#).

["New Moscow" \(Новая Москва\)](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mQHVS_IWKRQ

One of the most interesting rarities. Stalin's well-known plan for the renewal of Moscow through a pharaonic project. The video gives us the perspective of some things that we know well today. Among other things, seen the video with a certain irony, it can serve as an example of how urbanism -in this case, a process of traumatic reconstruction- has been used to strengthen the spirit of the people with great phrases about the pride of a new urban identity , something that abounds precisely in the promotional videos of the great urban operations of our time.

Along with these videos, it's also a good idea to review [A History of Urban Documentary Filmmaking](#), a good entry on the origins of handheld urban exploration and the evolution of this type of work.

I'm sure there are many more pieces out there. I think of oddities about the urban spirit of Walt Disney, recordings of Le Corbusier and other key names, recordings of construction projects from decades ago, retro-futurist filming, etc. It will be a matter of expanding the catalog.

[Image](#) taken from the archive [The Commons](#) on Flickr.

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