

Casanova+Hernandez Architecten



Casanova+Hernandez, founded in 2001 by Helena Casanova and Jesus Hernandez, is a design and research studio based in Rotterdam. It focuses on rethinking and designing our urban habitat in order to create vibrant cities while promoting environmental and social sustainability.

Working with an interdisciplinary team and with experience developing projects in very different cultural contexts in Europe, South America and Asia, the office has expanded its capabilities and its international network through close and fruitful collaboration with experts in different continents.

Casanova+Hernandez is structured in two complementary platforms: C+H Projects and C+H Think Tank. C+H Projects is the design platform of Casanova+Hernandez. It operates in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture and urban design, often combining them to create hybrid architectural landscapes. C+H Think Tank works as an independent platform that analyses urban and social problems and proposes innovative design solutions, new urban strategies and advice on the implementation of new policies.

www.casanova-hernandez.com

Q. What makes a successful PPT?

What makes a PPT successful is a good story told to the audience in a moving way. During a PPT presentation, the architect is not only a professional with technical and artistic knowledge, but more a story teller executing an inspiring performance. The architect becomes someone who is capable of communicating ideas and dreams, making the audience to dream with him.

A good PPT should be inspiring, but it will be successful only when the audience gets really moved by it.

Q. What is the most important element in a PPT?

The most important element of a PPT is the relation between message and rhythm. Like in cinema and in music, a good message can become boring when it is explained with the wrong rhythm, losing the attention of the public. On the contrary, an attractive and dynamic presentation could have no impact when there is no message to communicate, looking artificial and empty.

At the end a PPT should reflect the way you think in architecture, and we think it is very important to find the right balance between content and form, message and rhythm, between the story to tell and the way in which it is told.

Q. Do you have any know-how to making your PPT?

Every PPT is different, but the process of creating all of them follows a similar method. First, we analyse who is the audience and what is the message we want to transmit. Second, we draw by hand on A3 sheets a storyboard similar to the storyboards created by filmmakers. In each A3 sheet we draw small rectangles representing each slide of the PPT, and we indicate with key words and quick sketches the content of each slide. Third, we use a standard PPT layout to insert images and texts. Finally, we check the rhythm of the presentation, adding or taking away some slides.

Q. What is different between PANEL and PPT?

There are many differences, but for us the most important ones are the level of detail that it is possible to represent through each of these presentation tools, and

the time factor. In panels you can transmit easily technical information with drawings, details and texts, but in a PPT shown through a projector, it is difficult to show detailed drawings with lines which are very often not visible, needing the presentation then many slides and zooms.

A PPT has as well a limit of time. The communication can be limited to five minutes or one hour, but finally a story should be told to the public in a period of time, and as a consequence the whole PPT should be organized around factor time to make it effective. On the contrary, a panel does not have a limit of time to be examined. It can present a lot of information that can take minutes or hours to be examined.

Q. How do you get ideas for PPT?

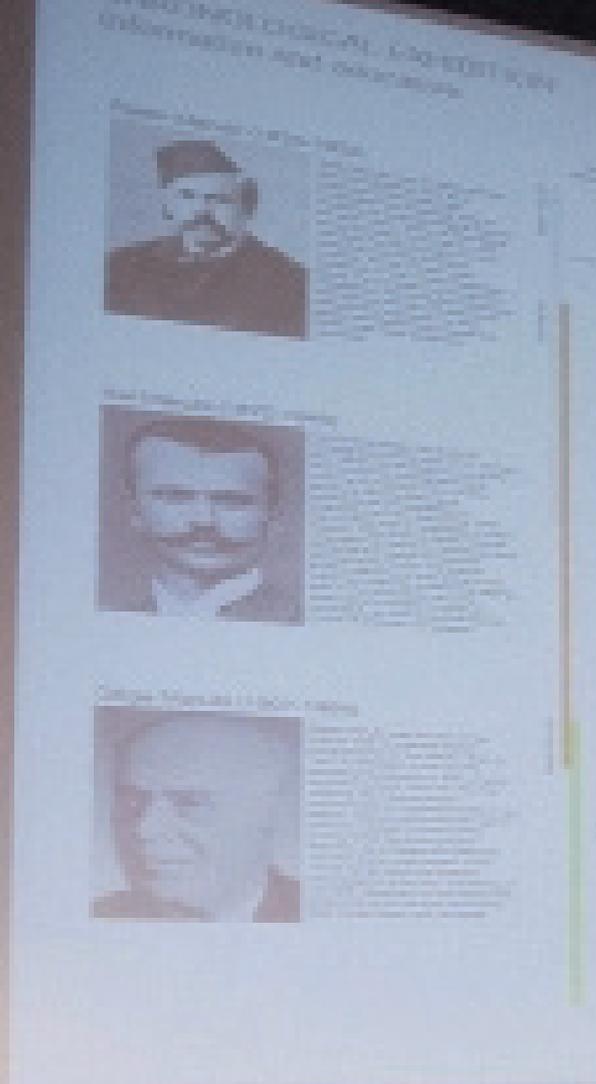
First, the ideas related to the content are based on the ideas, which are the conceptual base of the projects themselves. Second, the ideas about how to explain the projects are influenced indirectly by the visual media, cinema, publicity, theatre, dance and any kind of performative arts.

Q. What is important to you when you have presentation?

For us it is important to understand who is the audience and where is the presentation. It is not the same to present a PPT to a small group of politicians and municipal representatives in a small meeting room, than to present it to a group of architects and urbanists, to a large group of students, or to a general public not familiar with the architecture in a large auditorium. The language, the images, the rhythm and the narrative should be adjusted to communicate well with each kind of audience.

Q. On presentation, have you any gesture or word when you want to get attention from clients.

The gesture is to stand in front of the projection and to walk on the stage. Our presentations use to be very dynamic with many images and sharp concepts explained with few words. The rhythm is quick and the audience is constantly bombarded with images and ideas. Moving on the stage is part of the show and makes the presentation more dynamic and intense. For presentations for invited competitions we always ask for a wireless microphone



when possible to have freedom of movement. We move and talk without reading any text, just looking to the public or the jury adapting the speech and the rhythm to the circumstances of each specific presentation in order to attract the attention of clients, a jury or the public.

Q. Any episodes or memories related to a presentation?

When we were invited to the restricted competition for The National Photography Museum Marubi in Albania, we knew that the jury consisted of five or six members and we expected a presentation in a small room, just for the jury.

When we arrived to the presentation we were guided to a large theatre with hundreds of people as audience and the jury seated in the first row. The Prime Minister was in the audience, the Minister of Culture in the jury and the presentations of the five selected architects were broadcast live by the national TV. This presentation awaked such expectation that the organizers even installed giant screens on the street out of the theatre to allow people who could not enter the theatre to follow the presentations. We were impressed because in the Netherlands you can find crowds around giant screens only during important football events such as the World Cup or the Eurocup, but that would be unimaginable for an architectural presentation. Other competitors did not know either about this situation in advance and some of them got very nervous with this great expectation. On the contrary, we enjoyed deeply that presentation because the context was very unusual and the organizers made a big effort to promote the architectural event among citizens. When we went out of the theatre many people on the street congratulated us and told us that our presentation was the best one. We won!

Q. Do you consider your appearance when you prepare presentation? (ex. Dressing, make-up..)

During a presentation, your public appearance is clearly a communication tool and it is part of the image that you project towards the others. Perhaps because we use to make many presentations we do not pay special attention to the dress code and we dress similarly than how we dress during a working meeting with a client.

Q. Anything say to those making their PPT? A presentation is a project in itself. You have to prepare it, even if afterwards you improvise. Don't read! If you were in the shoes of one who is client, what would you look for and why?

In a PPT presentation forget about explaining a project and focus more on provoking feelings. Surprise the audience, question the questions, think intelligently and make people think. If I were a client I would not be so interested in understanding completely a project during the presentation, but more in finding an inspiring architect presenting a special project just designed for me. I would look for something that makes me dream, that awakes my imagination, perhaps something not expected, but always something with spirit and soul.

Perhaps we think that way because in the end, we see the presentations not only as a way for juries and clients to select architects, but also as a way for us to know as well which clients can understand our ideas and can help us building our dreams.

