

Capital

This issue of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, devoted to sport facilities, was planned a long time ago, in anticipation of the Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Then November 13 happened. At AA, we were, like so many others, shaken by this tragedy that took place a few meters from our office. Our thoughts go out to the victims and their families. Since then, many subjects that have no direct relation to the attacks seem secondary. In this regard, the role of architecture in defending our freedom is not obvious, but it remains vital when thought of as the initiator of urban rehabilitation and social mixity.

Sport infrastructures are key in achieving both these objectives, in the same way as multifamily housing and cultural facilities, yet doubtless these issues are often a front, city-branding taking over. In 2012, London hosted the Olympics as a result of its Legacy strategy. It was an opportunity to develop a huge area of industrial wasteland in the eastern part of the city. However, the result was not as successful as it seems. The bill was a hefty (€12.5 billion euros – admittedly a paltry sum compared to the €37 billion of the last Winter Games in Sochi, the most expensive in the history of the Olympics) and, most importantly, the developments led to the creation of a soulless urban model. And what about what is planned for Rio? While the Olympic Committee believes that 63% of the Carioca population will have access to public transport after the 2016 Olympic Games (against 13% in 2009), the public-private partnership established to rehabilitate the port area has begun urban planning on a privatization model, which has resulted in the mandatory displacement of populations. So, the favela Vila Autódromo on the fringe of the future Olympic village has been emptied of 80% of its inhabitants. It is likely that in 2016, Rio will boast a rehabilitated city centre, but will also see accentuated social inequality. Having decided to focus developments on Seine-Saint-Denis, could Paris change this trend if it is chosen for the 2024 Olympic Games? This French department remains the poorest in the country, despite the transformations that have been carried out for the last 20 years. And what if sport contributed to reincarnating the values so roughly endangered since November 13, on the scale of the city, as it often does on a more local scale? Is this just wishful thinking? More a state of emergency.

Emmanuelle Borne