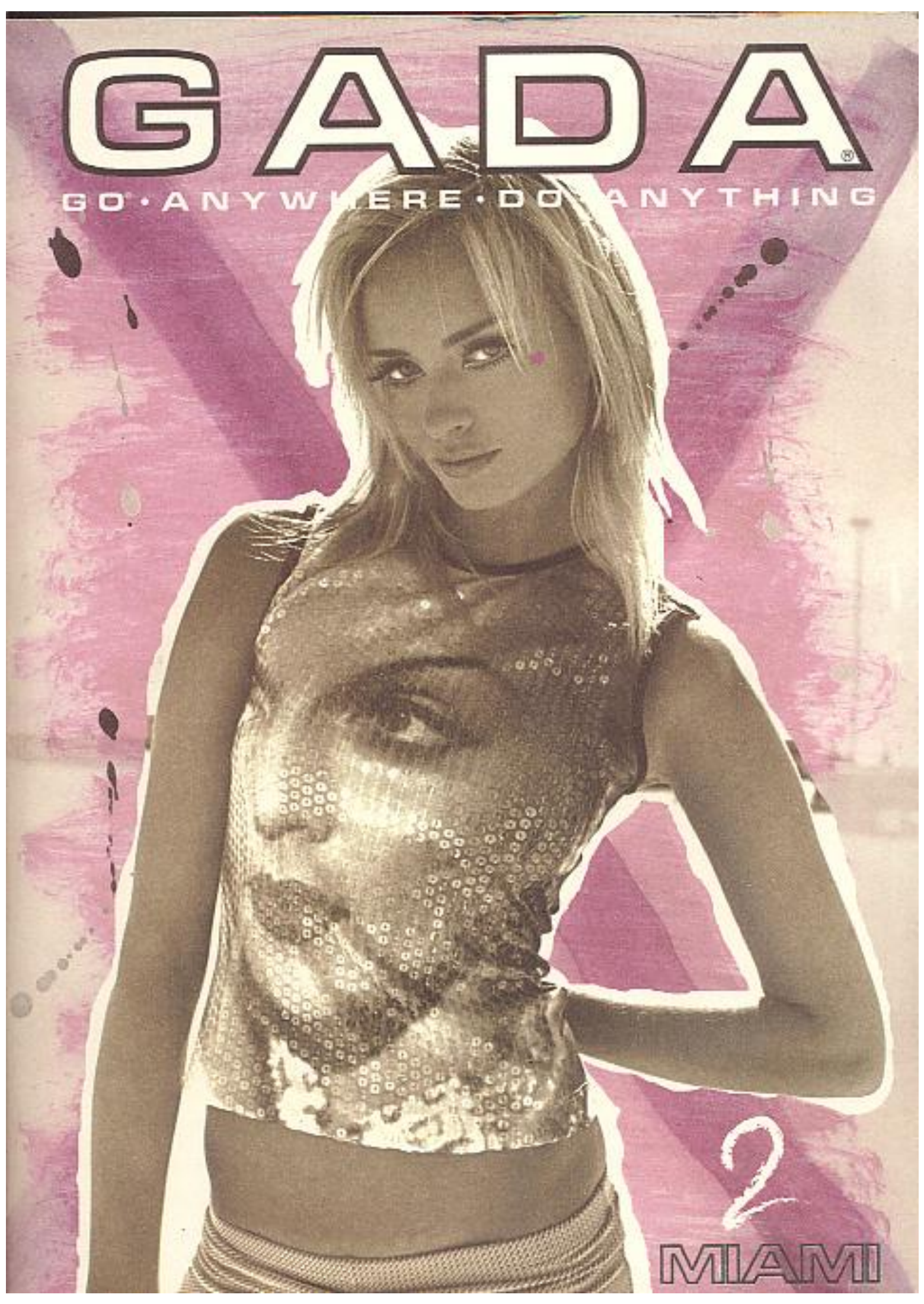


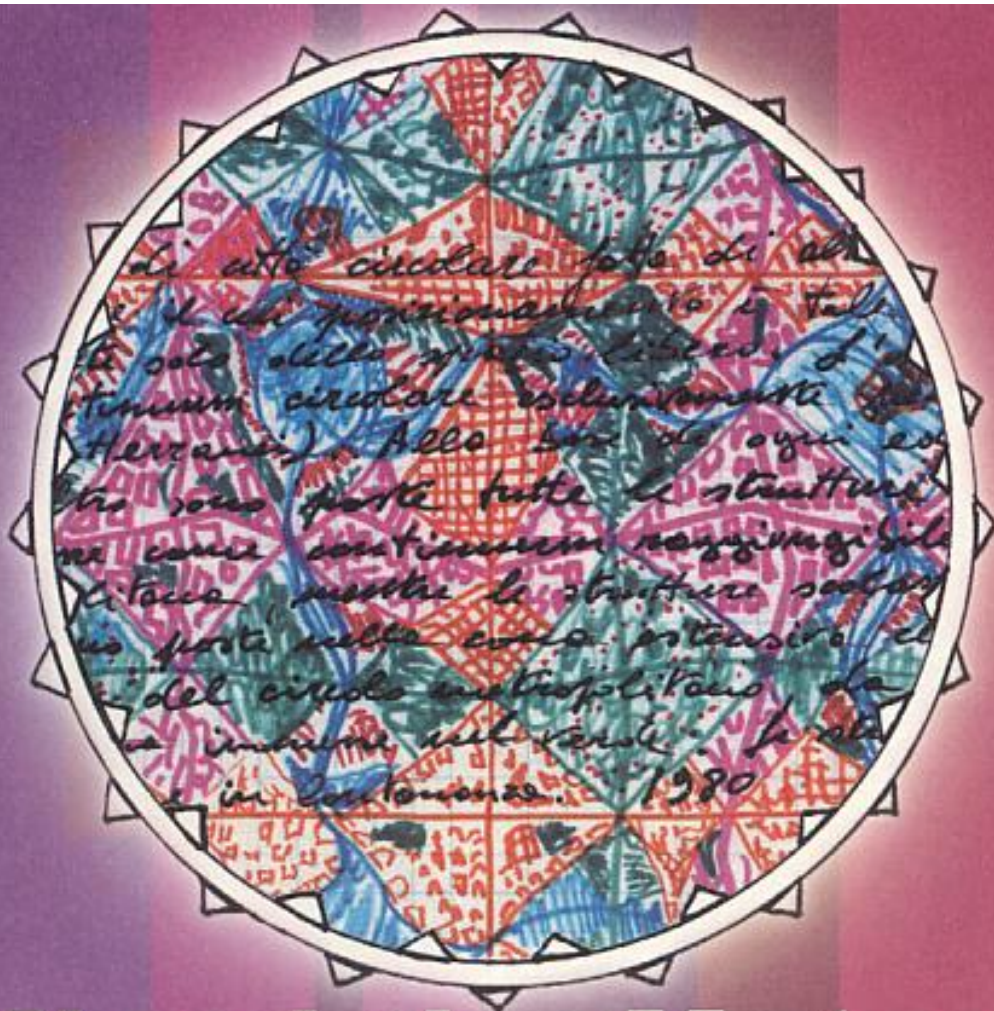
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MIAMI



words by  
**emanuele viscoso**

# Miami the Metropolis

My attention has always been captured by the concept of an "Ideal City" although I am not a philosopher or a professional city planner. Everyone with a minimum of creativity should feel compelled to participate in this forum with his ideas, along with the major philosophers and city planners whose job is to do so. We remember Tommaso Campanella with his book "The City of Sun" and Leonardo da Vinci with an incredible number of ideal projects. From theory to reality, historical city founders like Romolo, founder of Rome, Dido, founder of Carthage, Nimrod founder of Babylon, Darius, founder of Persepolis, Alexander founder of Alexandria and of course many others, have done great things (Carl Fisher, for example, founder of Miami Beach or George Merrick, founder of Coral Gables.) In contemporary history not many modern city founders can be related with the above-mentioned mythical personages. Everyone knows that Coral Gables is not Rome, but what they do have in common is an ideal. Classic or modern, they were warriors, renaissance men, dreamers, and investors with a fantasy. No one was a bureaucrat, no one an employee. That's why they could dream creating something really new that materialized into an ideal.

As a matter of fact, a city is an ideal continuum of human resources and cultural contents, not simply a continuum of houses, buildings and streets. Architecture by itself appears like a city but it is not a city. Travelling all around the world I have seen many cities. The most beautiful of cities have always in common the presence of history, the cultural side, the geographical beauty of the site and their architectural beauty. The facilities are in walking distance and your journey is a pleasure. The intensity of their specialities, the presence of nature and water, the good attitude of their habitants are all magical ingredients.

Some cities can be considered special because they have something more than other cities (this can be unintentional.) A beautiful geographic position or something good and useful done just for their habitants that didn't require action. Other times, instead, there is a kind of competition among cities. We have seen it in many cities from the past and, especially, with the Italian Renaissance cities.

A city must look for its specialties and its beauty, must exalt them, and if necessary create them. At the same time, a city has to delete the ugly things and enrich the neutral things with new motivations and new poles of visual, cultural and humane attraction. Many of the modern problems come from missing these important goals.

The most beautiful city is one where every house, every street, every square and every district compete with each other in beauty, richness, and elegance. Every single improvement is able to better the whole city. When this happens, a city becomes "special" (i.e. Florence). That's why every public administrator, in charge of any potential resource of her city, even a simple park, should tell herself: "I will make this park the most beautiful park in the world!" Only reasoning in superlative terms one can have superlative results. Who made this in the past, always left a special heritage to the future generations. But, to do it, requires the "competence of beauty" and an adequate and specific cultural preparation. In most instances, public administrators have not shared this vision.

An absurd city is one with all the houses on a side and all the facilities for the residents on another side. A city where a district is only for offices (and when they close it is desolate), another district only for stores (and when they close it becomes desolate also); where all the restaurants and hotels are in one place so that if one wants a coffee he is obliged to take his car and run for miles to arrive where all the coffee shops are. An absurd city is one that appears to be the suburbs almost everywhere. This city exists and its name is Miami but... But I still believe that this area represents the most exciting opportunity to create an ideal city because of nature and water ways, beautiful houses and commerce, dynamic civilization and cross-roads of ideas and culture. Miami has the potential to be an ideal city. Not much history is behind this city, but amazing geography where one could insert what is missing. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to insert more nature in complete towns like London, Paris or Rome unless we demolish part of them. Instead, it is possible in a city like Miami, born in a fortunate context of green and water, to insert, step by step, all that is now missing, starting with history and new kinds of districts inspired by other urban experiences, also imitating what is considered the best all around the world. Leonardo would have gone mad with happiness in Miami: after all it reflects strictly his conception of a city with a constant presence of water to both delight the habitants with beauty and also allow for good transportation and navigation. Not many towns in the world can boast a similar appearance: Venice, Amsterdam, Leningrad, Stockholm, Miami and, until the start of the 20th century, Milan. Among these cities, Miami is the only one not yet fully appreciating this distinction.

Miami can be a beautiful and ideal city. But first, it must find in itself the consciousness to be a metropolis. Then, the brave heart to become this metropolis will need subscribers.