



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Creative Cities Network

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# Buenos Aires

## UNESCO City of Design

Buenos Aires is a cosmopolitan city that evolved out of different waves of immigration from different cultures (Italian, Lebanese, Armenian...) that in turn have created a remarkable eclecticism. With more than 13 million inhabitants, Buenos Aires is the 3rd largest urban center in Latin America.

### Fast Facts

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- Cultural industries generate 7% of local output and 4% of local employment;
- Annual local investment in cultural activities is 180 million USD or 58 USD per capita

### Design and the City of Buenos Aires

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The local government has identified several factors that depict Buenos Aires's comparative advantage in the design industry:

- A large demand for innovative design products, from a multicultural population base;
- The city is a cultural hub for Latin American countries;
- A tradition of melting different cultural influences;
- A strong supply of qualified labor and training facilities;
- 3 generations of local designers have created a solid tradition:

**Buenos Aires**  
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- The 1950s group (Maldonado, Bonet, Ferrari-Hardoy, Kurchan, Bustillo);
- The contemporary group (Blanco, Kogan, Shakespear, Fontana, Chávez, Pensi, Well);
- The youngsters (Churba, Trosman, Cabezas, Sarmiento, Aguirre, Stein).

## **Development of the design industry**

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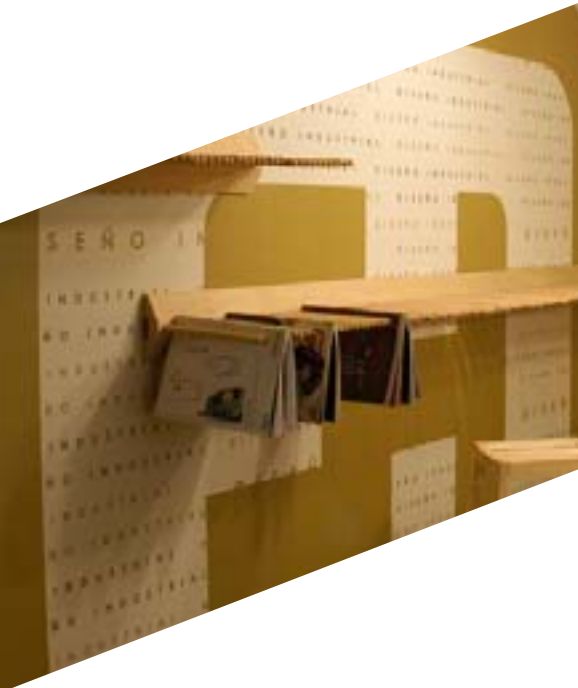
Design is not a traditional industry in Buenos Aires, but it is developing fast in recent years due to the comparative advantage of the city. Industry events (fairs, exhibitions, seminars) concentrate on Fashion Month and Design Month.

- From 2001 to 2005 Fashion Month grew from 11 activities to 60 activities;
- Fair Puro Diseño includes now 300 stands and receives 80,000 visitors;
- Fair Fashion Buenos Aires: 44 designers in exhibition, 30 foreign agents;
- Fair Casa FOA (housing architecture): 50 studios, 7500 m2 of exhibition space;
- Espacio El Dorrego holds other design fairs where 350 designers show their creations;
- Palermo has become a cluster for the design industry – more than 300 related shops and studios are a new attraction for tourists;

## **Public and Private Investment in Design**

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- The city government is supporting the development of a modern design industry with policies and resources. A leading initiative was the creation of the Centro Metropolitano de Diseño (CMD) in 2000, with an annual budget of 2 million USD.
- Public investment in infrastructure related to design is about 25 million USD – CMD, business



incubators, trade fairs, urban rehabilitation, etc.

- As for the private sector, investment in the fair Puro Diseño amounted to 0,5 million USD, and 1 million USD for Fashion Buenos Aires.
- Design has been integrated into urban planning – renewal of urban elements, the airport, the underground, visual information system, etc.
- The local design industry has a marked outward orientation – CMD links with advanced foreign design centers and access to the international network ICSID, reciprocal trade missions, replication of fair Casa FOA in Brazil, etc.

## Training Centres

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- Universidad de Buenos Aires has a solid reputation in several design areas, offering courses in clothing and textile, industrial and graphic design, sound & image design and architecture. This training centre is complemented by 30 other private centers.
- As the local design industry becomes stronger, the number of students (many of whom are coming from neighboring Latin American countries) enrolling in design is growing quickly.

