

**Event:** Exhibition Opening “Utopías de Buenos Aires”

**Date:** Monday, September 23, 2024

**Time:** 12:00 hours

**Location:** Hall of Building O1

The exhibition on display today tells an extraordinary story: a journey through a succession of unfinished architectural projects that, in hindsight, reveal themselves as utopian visions for urban development.

There were two utopian visions. The 16 original plans and the 25 recovered printed plates included in this exhibition document two moments in the recurring ambition to relocate the Argentine capital. The first arose in the nineteenth century, through proposals that ranged from an island in the Río de la Plata to the country’s southern region. The second emerged in the twentieth century with Le Corbusier’s project: a type of island connected by a bridge to a five-tower complex known as the “City of Business.” These are original plans for streets and buildings; for courts, ministries, and the Argentine Congress; for financial districts and corporate headquarters; for cafés, plazas, and theaters. In essence, this was not only the transfer of a nation’s administrative center, but also the relocation of the people who gave shape to the urban daily life of Buenos Aires at the time—a unique living cultural heritage.

None of these projects succeeded. Buenos Aires chose to remain Buenos Aires. Still, this history of ambitious visions and interrupted plans has become part of the community’s identity, revealing the ideas and aspirations of a period driven by the search for the perfect city—a city that, as we now understand, does not exist.

Buenos Aires has been built upon utopian visions, and today we gather together to uncover them. This exhibition, organized by the Center for Documentation of Latin American Architecture and Urbanism, is the result of research supported by the Argentine Congressional Library and the Organization of Ibero American States as part of the 2021 agreement focused on conserving, sharing, accessing, consulting, and preserving Ibero American architectural heritage. Thus, it belongs to all of us—not only to architects and future architects.

To our students and professionals, this is the ideal moment to say: never stop dreaming. The Royal Spanish Academy defines the word “utopia” in two ways. The first describes a plan that is nearly impossible to achieve, and we choose to leave that meaning aside. At Universidad de Lima, we embrace the second definition: the vision of a future society that promotes human well-being. This idea is embedded in our mission through our commitment to the well-being of society, and in our vision through our contribution to building a better world. Welcome to this exhibition, where utopia has been preserved as part of the construction of knowledge.