

Hi, I'm Mauro Porcini, PepsiCo's Chief Design Officer.

Join me for our new series where we dive into the minds of the greatest innovators of our time, with the goal of finding what drives them in their professional journey and in their personal life. Trying to uncover the universal truths that unite anyone attempting to have a meaningful impact in the world. This is In Your Shoes.

"I don't want iconic because of a look, I want iconic because it has made a difference."

I'm quoting the guest of today, he's an architect and a founding partner of Rojkind Arquitectos, a Mexico City based innovation firm focusing on design, business strategy, and experiential innovation. He's also one of four co-founders of the non-profit organization MXDF Urban Research Center. His work has won numerous awards, and in 2019 he was named the senior vice president of architecture of WeWork. According to Forbes, he's a representative of a Mexican generation of architects transforming his country. Michel Rojkind, welcome to In Your Shoes.

Hey, Mauro, thanks.

wonderful to be back.

Michel, you're saying it right, because this is the second time we're recording this podcast.

The first time was actually not in a virtual way, it was done physically in our studio, in the PepsiCo Design Center in New York City.

Today instead, I am in the Hamptons, two hours driving from New York, you are in Tulum, in beautiful Tulum in Mexico, and we're having this conversation virtually because the conversation we had before was before the COVID pandemic, before the world changed once and for all.

And especially thinking about the topic that we touched, the idea of architecture and people connecting with each other, many things have changed, and so we both thought it was probably ideal to re-record the podcast, we never launched it because of because of COVID.

so here we are today, and in full disclosure,

Michel is also a very good friend of mine,

I know him very well, and I respect him and admire him for many different reasons.

He inspires me not just as an architect or as an innovator, but as a human being.

And today we'll try to make this aspect of Michel come out, because

I think it's also relevant from an innovation standpoint, from a creative standpoint, and for any business

working with creatives and innovators.

So again, Michel, great pleasure to have you with us today.

Great to be here, even though I'm in Tulum.

So... Let's start this conversation.

It's magical you can connect with people wherever they are around the world, it became so natural and so quick in the past few months.

Actually, you're in Tulum, you're in the middle of nature

in a place that is just amazing,

and then you're coming back to another place

that is amazing in so many different ways

that is New York City.

Where do you find your inspiration, does nature and the...

being away from the city and people inspire you,

or is the city and the people and the energy that you face that inspires you?

You always live in between the two worlds, it's really you.

Yeah, and that's been a very interesting question for myself, Mauro,

the idea of why do we think we need to go out and

reconnect to nature when we should reconnect to nature every single day.

And In fact, we shouldn't feel independent from nature,

we shouldn't feel the need to reconnect because we are nature, no?

So I think that Inspiration at least to me,

it's kind of a mode that you turn on within yourself,

saying like inspiration is not a one-hour thing,

and I always mention this also,

like your practice is not one hour of yoga or one hour of meditation,

your life becomes your practice.

So, if we understand how to turn on this mode of being aware of things,

most everything will inspire you.

It doesn't matter where you are, because you'll find inspiration in nature

or you'll find inspiration in chaos,

and I mean, coming from Mexico City,

that I lived-I was born and raised in Mexico City,

and Mexico City's so chaotic that every day there is inspiration.

So I think it's a matter of kind of fine tuning your senses or your antennas

and just being open to the experience where you are.

And I definitely say that, of course, chaotic experiences are inspiring, yes.

They also get a little bit tiring and stressful

because of the high-energy vibrancy,

so that's why I feel that as humans,

we always kind of go back to the woods or to the sea

or to some nature place that grounds us, no?

That makes us come back to our roots

and kind of find that little moment of peace

and space within ourselves kind of to rebalance this energy

that has a crazier effect in chaotic places like New York.

But I have to say that they're both inspiring,

I think that having the privilege of being able to do that,
I think it's really something that also you learn to use that in favor of, no?
because you and me also talked about how important it is to understand
that first of all, with the pandemic,
we could isolate within our homes, but also having the possibility
to grab a car and go to the beach or grab a car and go somewhere
and also disconnect in a different environment.
So both of them are incredibly powerful in terms of being inspired
about something creative or something going on with the world
that we're actually going through right now,
all these changes, no?

Yeah, I totally, totally agree.

well, I said it earlier, you somehow said it as well,
you're more than an architect,
you are curious and interested on everything that's going on in the world.
Actually, you did start in a different way,
you didn't start as an architect right away,
you were a musician, and actually a pretty renowned one in Mexico,
so can you tell us more about your beginning,
and then how you moved from music to architecture?

Yes, I have to say that I was fortunate enough
to sign with a record label at the age of 19,
I was 19 years old when Virgin Records signed us with my band,
I was a drummer, I say I was a drummer because I'm not playing drums anymore,
I'll play now and then, but not professionally.

But, back then I played professionally,
for-we cut four albums with Virgin Records,
we did tours, we had videos on MTV, it was an amazing rollercoaster,
it was an amazing ride to experience.

Which on one hand, I did not stop doing architecture,
I started studying architecture at the same time
where we were signing with the company,
so I maintained both careers professionally in parallel,
of course doing the effort to maintain my school and doing the effort
to maintain being okay with the touring and the concerts and the band,
and trying to understand what gave to the other one,
and it was very interesting because I remember at least
when I was studying architecture that I liked architecture,
but I was not fascinated with architecture at the beginning.

What really started to make me feel fascinated
about architecture was traveling with my band.

When I was getting on a bus or getting on a plane, arriving in a new country,
seeing airports, infrastructures, public spaces, housing, buildings, hotels,
that started really making me open up to saying-
to seeing the power of architecture and the power of city planning
and the power of designing things, and understanding

what gave back to communities
and what didn't give back to communities,
because also I think that started informing...
or forming me as an architect to understand that
I wanted to do things that gave something in return.
But I didn't take any of them as a hobby, Mauro,
I was very serious on both of them.
I'm very fortunate to have this amazing mother,
that I grew up in a house where my father was a scientist,
national science prize liver disease researcher,
and a mom who went to India to look for her guru.
So this kind of split family, of studying all the time,
this knowledge of this researcher,
and my mom talking about spirituality.
And it was beautiful because my dad wanted me
to pursue a very serious career,
and my mom was, "Yes, but you should understand that
if you have more options in your life,
things will get better, because then if in architecture it doesn't go so well,
you still have your music, but if music doesn't go so well,
you still have your architecture."
So I kind of had this beautiful balance
that made a lot of sense to me back then,
and now even more so.
And it made the experience more powerful,
it made the experience of being a musician
more interesting because I knew I was nourishing my brain
and my creativity with architecture,
and also the other way around.
And it came to a point where I was very grateful with music,
but I knew that I didn't want to be a musician for my whole lifetime
in that serious way, because at least most of my friends in Mexico, Mauro,
ended up being either producers for bands or maybe worked
in a record label, but the actual player in a band,
like the Rolling Stones, didn't happen in Mexico.
I mean, you have a couple of bands that are still going, like
El Tri or some other bands,
but I thought it was kind of a good idea to understand
that I really had nourished and learned
as much as I could during those years,
from 18, 19 to maybe 25, 26 years old.
And then I finally got a client that wanted me to do his house.
Which was funny because I was not pursuing clients,
I was playing music, but I was doing this renovation for a friend,
maybe his closet space and then maybe a kitchen space and then an apartment,
and then somebody saw that apartment and looked for me.

And when they actually looked for me,
they were like, "Oh, where's your office?"
And my office was a Macintosh,
I just had my computer, I didn't have an office,
but that kind of sparked the cue that made me realize
that I really wanted now to commit to architecture.
So I was not happy with the direction that the band was going anymore,
and so I decided to quit the band and
pursue a full-time career as an architect.
And started my own firm back in,
1998 or 1997, somewhere around there. It's been a long time now.
But... There are many people that are
in that kind of situation like you, they're doing something
and then there is something else,
and they feel that what they're doing is not really ideal,
it could be in work, it could be in your private life,
and they see that there is eventually another opportunity,
but there is always that difficulty to take the decision, to act,
on something that eventually you desire or you feel.
So-And that's the reason why many people don't change, don't make that change.
So what was that moment you were like,
"okay, I really need to do this switch, I really need to change?"
Was it something that you found inside yourself or something happened outside,
think about people that are right now in the same situation as you
and they need to take, that decision,
what advice would you give to them?
First of all, I've always followed my heart
and I've always followed what feels right within my heart, no?
I've been fortunate enough to be very open and receptive in terms of energy
and feel things that then my mind comes in to play,
and then I can intellectualize what I'm feeling, no?
But that's why I always recommend people to practice things
that create a sense of awareness,
because the more that you're aware of how you see your world
and the view of your things will make you
definitely make the better decisions or the best decisions.
Because if you make a decision when you're mad, upset, depressed, or in a rush,
you will probably make the wrong decision because
you're not actually letting yourself feel
what is happening to you emotionally with the results.
In my case in particular I'll come to recommend something,
but in my case in particular, Mauro,
it happened in parallel.
While I was not happy with the way the band was going,
because the band was a rock band
that started becoming a pop band,

and I didn't want to be in a pop band, I wanted to be in a rock band.

So by the fourth album where the lead singer was already planning to be a lead singer independently, him on his own without any band and blah blah blah, the client looked for me to do his house in architecture, so it was like, "oh, this is happening exactly at the right time" And I don't believe in coincidences at all.

I think that things have an order and a structure, they happen for a specific reason, so there was no coincidence that I was not excited anymore with the direction of the band, and suddenly a client appears and wants me to do his house, no? So any recommendation is just sit down and listen to yourself and listen to what feels right within you and what feels right in terms of decision making, no? if you're going to be in a lousy job that you don't like but it pays you well, you're going to have to face the consequences because you're going to be paid very well, but it's going to maybe rot your heart, no?

And it's gonna shrink your heart like a prune. But if you make a decision that your heart will grow but there's not a lot of money involved; it might feel like the wrong decision.

In my experience, at least in my life, the moment I've taken decisions out of heart, the money follows up.

When you do things with your passion, when you do things with your heart, you know that you're committed to something and you're coherent about the way you act in your life and the way you do what you do no matter the profession, you'll eventually be okay.

Eventually there's something about making the right decisions from the right approach, or as I say, from the heart that suddenly everything kind of falls in place, and it creates this sense of protection where money starts coming in and there's a way to balance that off.

And most of my friends that have taken decisions just for the money because they're going to be better, at some point they regret it, no? Because they did make money, but they're lousy, they feel bad, they messed up maybe their families because they took the wrong decision.

But I would just say, practice more things that give you a sense of mindfulness and and awareness to yourself, no?

You also have something that somehow is complementary to this and that is unique to you I like.

I think you are aware of it, but we never talk about this, but it's your ability to think big.

and it came up to my mind when you mentioned the fact that well, in Mexico, the probability to become the Rolling Stones was not very high.

So I was like oh, who will think when you create a band
to become the Rolling Stones,
But that's you, you think in that way,
there was COVID and you reached out to me,
with ideas to change the world, to go to the United Nations,
and you came to New York and there are amazing artists that you don't know,
and I remember a conversation where you were like,
"Well, let's go meet this person, I'm going to write this person,"
nothing is impossible, right?
You always think big, and how important it is to think big to change the world,
we do innovation in companies like PepsiCo for instance, we drive innovation.
And it's so important to think in that way, to not be trapped in the day to day,
not be trapped in the year cycle of your job, in the rotation of your job,
but really think beyond the boundaries that society somehow imposed to you.
So how important is it for you to think in that way?
Well, I think that personally when I started studying architecture,
I didn't study architecture to be a Mexican architect, Mauro,
I studied architecture to become an architect,
and I played drums to be a drummer,
so this whole thing about nationalism
or where you are or borders or walls within borders.
I never understood that, even now with the pandemic,
I think that this whole thing about I mean,
we could've saved so many lives
if we would've had more cooperation amongst nations,
and we didn't because we're still playing this game of borders and nationalism,
and I will tell you what I want to tell you, but I won't tell you everything.
So that delay or that lost in translation
has created many problems amongst us,
so I don't know why since I was a kid I didn't think of me in a local way,
I didn't think of yes, I'm going to do this
in my little town or in my little country or my big country.
I always thought of maybe as a kid, no?
That when you go out and play, you don't think who you're going to play with
and you don't prejudge the guy you're going to play with, you just go out and play.
And the same thing happened at least to me with music, Mauro,
that when you're a musician, you might have your band,
but if somebody plays amazing onstage, you want to play with that guy,
because you see a guitar player that's amazing and you're like
oh, I would love to jam with this guy because I'm a drummer,
and why I want to play with this guy is
I'm going to learn by playing with this guy, I'm going to up my game
if I play with somebody that's a better player than I am.
And that started following up in sports as well,
when I was doing taekwondo or mountain biking,
I remember I would want to go in to the classes of the more advanced people

because yes, I was going to get maybe beaten up faster by the taekwondo guys that were better than me,
but I would learn faster to be able to stand up to these older generations of guys that were already there.
And in the same way, I would always talk with my brothers and sisters or friends, like guys, let's sit down with the best people on the planet, I don't care where they're from, and even before, Mauro, I mean, there wasn't as fast communication as now with social media.
I remember starting to do projects in architecture where I would reach out to my heroes, and in this case Cecil Balmond, who's an amazing structural engineer who has done some of the most amazing projects in the world, who was working with Arup at that time and did an amazing part of the company called Advanced Geometry Unit, where they were doing this crazy research about structures and buildings, and I remember reaching out to him when we shortlisted for a competition. And I said I don't have anything to lose, I'm going to send him an email, and I sent him an email, "Dear Cecil, I would love to work with you, I admire your work as an engineer, I'm a Mexican architect, blah blah blah, we're shortlisted for this competition." Long story short, he replied, and we entered the competition, we didn't win, but we became good friends.
So I started getting confident about reaching out to people, because the only thing that we have to remember that is really important, if you're reaching out to somebody, it's important to bring something to the table.
If you don't have a good conversation, if you don't have good ideas, if you don't have good curiosity, people won't listen to you.
But if you reach out to somebody because you're curious and you're trying to think of something that eventually will make a difference, people will listen.
And again, it comes back to does it feel good in the heart, what you're doing, is it really from the heart or is it from your ego?
Are you doing it because of this character that you're building for yourself that you don't know who that is, or are you really open and honest in a very generous way to invite people to work with you?
Because I know friends that call people up and they invite them to work, but then they tell them what to do.
So it's like why are you inviting somebody to pitch in with ideas, and then you're going to tell him exactly what to do?
Then don't invite a creative person, invite somebody that just takes orders and can fill out the form the way you want it to be filled.

But if you're inviting people to play or jam or do this work that is not yours but it's a group or a more people involved process, then you're doing it the wrong way. So invite people to play in that sense, and that's why I always come back to the kids, no? And not kids in an immature way, but kids in a more energetic way, where you're playful and curious and that creates these type of relationships, and the funny or the most beautiful part of this, friends that I've reached out to over time, Mauro, is that we've become friends. We found out that it was not only about the work, it was more about the way we thought, no? In the case of the Bjarke Ingels or the case of Stefan Sagmeister, that at first it was like wow, let's do something together, and then it was like you know what? Let's just be friends and have these amazing conversations, and if we work, yes, that's good, if we don't work, it's okay, no? And that's so important, to start with that authentic, sincere, kind purpose and intent, one of growing together, have fun together, and bettering each other, that's so important to drive results. And on the what you say, there is another element that you didn't mention but is really you, and it's the idea of respect, it's you are respecting the people you are connecting with. Often we don't respect each other, a manager doesn't respect the other manager, a community of designers don't respect the business community and vice versa. We invite agencies and partners and we don't listen to them, we impose on them certain directions. What you're talking about is this idea of respecting each other and being open to empower the other party to take his or her value to the table. So you mentioned the need of us to bring something to the table, there is also the need of us to respect the other, to let the other bring that something to the table, right? Yeah, it and this comes back to-it's interesting, people might not know this about me, I have a 15-year-old daughter and I'm separated from my first wife, which is Claudia, but it starts even from there, Mauro. When I split with-Claudia's my best friend, I have to also say that, she's become my really, really best friend over time, and she's my ex-wife, and there's people that don't even get along with their exes. But even from that like super tight family circle, the moment we split up, we told each other that if there was going to be somebody in her life and there was going to be somebody in my life, we should think about what they would add to the family, and if they didn't add to the family, they were not invited,

and that was kind of like the agreement, no?
You can choose anybody you want,
but if they add something, that's a beautiful thing.
So I took that in to heart as well, and with everything I do, if I'm working,
I always say that it's an open invitation to sit down at this table.
Just think what you're going to bring to the table,
because you're going to eat amazing food,
we're going to take care of you, yes, but what do you want to do,
you want to wash the dishes, you want to bring the wine,
you're going to bring the dessert,
you're going to put the music in the background,
so if we all put a little bit in that table,
it's a better environment to work in.
So again, it's like when you're inviting somebody,
let them grow, let them put something,
and let them create a platform or an environment
so people can grow and nourish from there.
So it's like an empty box, and you say what are you putting in the box?
Okay, put trust, put fun, put all the ingredients that you want,
but every now and then look at the box
so it's not empty anymore, because everybody took out all the little pieces.
So, again, it all comes back to two things, Mauro, to one,
the more you're aware of yourself and
your experience during this lifetime as a human being,
the better it's going to be, because you're gonna create better results.
And the second is that I of course love the idea that
we were fortunate enough to study different careers,
but during difficult times, most of my decisions come
from a human perspective rather than the architect who studied architecture, no?
And even more so with this pandemic, and we talked about this, Mauro.
Once the pandemic started creating an effect in the world in general,
I remember first of all telling my people okay, go to your homes, lock down,
I'm in quarantine,
you'll still get paid, we'll figure out a way to connect,
the service people that helped us even clean,
I gave them three months away, paid leave, go to your families.
And I remember my staff saying like, "What are we going to do,
about how can we help with architecture and with urbanism?"
I said, "Guys, let's help as humans first of all.
If we're fortunate enough to be at home, how can we be of service to others
by thinking from a human perspective first of all,
then we can put the hat on of the architect and
the politician, or the landscape designer,
or the urban planner, or whatever you want."
First of all, it's how can we help as humans,
because first of all we are humans on this planet,

and then yeah, you study one career, I study another career.
But it has to come out of that, it has to come from a place
where we understand that we're in this position right now
because we didn't pay attention to our humanity, we didn't pay attention to the other.
We went off this rollercoaster of speed, of decisions, of systemic mistakes
that kept on growing, that I always mentioned that with or without COVID-19,
we were actually going to face something like this.
So it was actually COVID-19 that made us kind of
maybe wake up a little in our awareness to what's going on,
and to really think if we're part of the problem or we're part of the solution, Mauro,
which I think is the main question
that we should all be asking ourselves.
So let me ask you something about COVID-19
and the impact on society that it's having.
you are the lead of architecture,
the head of architecture of a company like WeWork,
and then you have your own architecture firm.
do you think the way people will interact in the workspace is going to change
temporarily
and then going back to where we were, or is it going to change permanently,
if it's going to change.
No, I think it's going to change permanently, in what sense?
it's going to change permanently
that first of all we are acknowledging how little we use our own homes.
We're acknowledging that we have breakfast,
leave the house, and then come back at night.
So your house is empty for how many hours,
which doesn't make sense because the cost
of the rent that you're paying for your house
and the cost you're paying for an office,
so we're going to be more efficient on that,
I think we're gonna see time hacking,
and what do I mean by time hacking?
We're going to see people creating shifts, so you're going to get the morning shift
or the night shift, so you're going to be able to work from your home
a certain amount of hours so there is less commuting
and there's less traffic and there's less pollution,
and we're going to fix a lot of the different things
that I think we're creating the problems,
and we've also talked about this, Mauro, even just the idea of summer vacations.
Why does the world, complete world, need to go on vacations on summer?
So those are the two months that become the worst months for traveling,
the worst months for enjoying an experience or being connected
to some beautiful nature place because everything is packed,
everything is expensive, we all try to commute at the same time.
So there's people right now even talking that

vacations are going to start being shifts,
where certain countries go on their two month vacations
maybe in January or February,
then two months for another country, two months for another country,
and you stabilize a tourism year-round economy,
so it doesn't spike only in Easter, summer, and then December or New Year's.
So it starts to balance, and the same thing with again, the house.
The house will-you'll start seeing transformations within the house.
workspaces will still be workspaces,
but I'm seeing beautiful well I'm seeing two different experiences.
One experience which I think is really bad
is when people are designing based on fear,
where you're seeing like yes, it looks creative,
but I hate those examples because like
I don't want to go to a restaurant and
be in an acrylic cabin talking to my friend Mauro,
because it's going to kill the experience of being in a restaurant,
I wanna be in a restaurant where I can be with my friends
and listen to them and understand them,
and one thing is being careful, and the other thing is really making sure that
whatever we design doesn't kill our freedom
and is not jeopardizing how free we are as humans.
And I'll just use one simple example:
before 9/11 and after 9/11, the flight experience and traveling.
I mean, not-traveling after 9/11 became awful for everybody,
everybody was treated now like a possible criminal,
so even the way you enter an airport, the way you're scanned,
the long it takes for you to get from,
I mean, now we have to plan that it's one complete of lost time for traveling,
and it came out after that incident, that of course something needed to change.
But if everything now becomes based on fear that
yes, you can be of course doing something wrong,
but for one person, everybody else is going to pay for that,
so the whole experience of traveling changed?
What are the experiences that are going to manifest today in the world out of
COVID-19
that we'll regret later that change because
now you don't even want to say hi to the hostess
at the entrance of a restaurant because
she's the other one that you have to fear now, no?
Because she can infect you with something.
So there's those two sides, the one based on fear, and some beautiful options where
you're seeing office buildings where instead of creating terraces towards
the outside of their existing buildings,
they're pushing terraces towards the inside, Mauro,
adding vegetation, opening natural ventilation,

so you're more connected to nature,
you're more connected to certain conditions that give us strength as humans,
because if we're isolated all the time, of course when we go out to the natural world,
we're going to get I don't know how many different things.
It's like kids, when kids are little, they put their fingers in mud
and then they lick their fingers,
they're just creating antibodies to become like stronger beings, no?
But if you isolate them like the boy in the bubble, of course
when he breathes natural air, he's going to get sick.
So it's interesting to see how things are changing, I'm excited also, Mauro,
about the options happening in Europe where a restaurant can only-
If a restaurant had like maybe 50 tables on the inside,
and now they can open maybe with 10 or 20 tables.
So the agreement or relationship with the government is like okay,
open up with 20 tables on the inside.
We'll close the street on the outside, make it pedestrian so there's no cars,
and take the other tables outside.
And they're doing that, and once they're doing that,
the community's saying like wait,
I don't want cars to pass here anymore,
this is beautiful because we're taking the streets.
Can we object to having cars pass?
And there's governments saying okay, we're going to shut down those streets,
we're going to make them pedestrian,
and we're going to have this outdoor life.
So I think, it's-again, it's a balance of how much indoor-outdoor, how much open
space?
Are we going to run away, to hide from the chaotic conditions of cities
to kind of feel more connected to nature
or are we going to connect nature to chaotic environments to create a balance?
And I think that's kind of where the world is heading right now,
is like we went the wrong direction because
we're stressing ourselves out to then have to go and
breathe a little bit of air in our secluded area in nature
to come back and keep on rushing like like crazy.
So, this slowdown at least for me, it just, I mean, it just hit the right places,
I mean, and again, I have to say that I'm fortunate to be a person
that can stay at home and can be with my daughter.
And not have to be fighting out there like
the doctors are doing or all the service areas,
I mean, they're the frontline workers, all my respect to them.
But even questioning do we want to go as fast as we were going,
or do we want to slow down and reconnect and rebalance many things,
because we cannot go back to normal, at all.
You think-you mentioned some of the changes that we're going to see in the cities.
we're a company working with beverages and we're trying to understand

how people will eat and drink in the future.

And obviously we were living in a world where people would go to work in the morning and stay all day at work, and then go back at night, and you would have a break during the day to go eventually to a restaurant, I'm thinking about the city centers of cities like New York, Milan where I come from, I guess also Mexico City where you're from, and now these cities are really different.

The mayor of Milan a few weeks ago asked people to go back, to some form of working from the office, but he was voicing the restaurants and all those activities that were suffering for not having people in the city.

So sooner or later people will go back somehow in the city, but with the shift you were talking about earlier, with this kind of hybrid work that we are-that we keep talking about, do you think this will redesign the cities as well, the city life as well?

For instance, you mentioned that the restaurants will have open space outside of the restaurant,

but, we have enough restaurants to serve all the people that were in the city, if there are half of the people, do we need all those restaurants?

And if we don't anymore, they will be replaced with what?

How will our cities change, if they will change?

No, they definitely will.

We're gonna understand how much, I mean, just the excess itself, excess of food, excess of fashion, excess of building, excess of how many things, and again, we also talked about this, Mauro,

and I can't remember the economist that was saying it's incredible to see that everybody's talking about this big recession that's going to hit, but now that most people are being quarantined and only buying the essentials, why is there going to be a recession if they're buying the essentials?

What were we buying before?

So that means that we were spending all this amount of money on useless things or excessive things and doing buildings for more housing and more buildings for office space, and more...

Even before utilizing what we already have.

So again, there is no balance of what exists, what can we transform of what exists, instead of just getting more permits and more permits because it creates an economy.

An economy based on what?

So when we talk about systemic, and we can get into-I mean, we can talk about systemic injustice of everything going on now with the protests too, to systemic ways of even making an economy work in certain countries, we have to come back and reframe that, because that's creating a huge problem.

But in the immediate response, for instance, I think in working with WeWork,

I think that what's happening now,

in that most big companies cannot force their people to go to a specific building in the middle of the city because they all need to commute from different places,

WeWork is becoming a great option because we have so many buildings spread out in the city that it just makes total sense to walk to the place that's closest to you. I don't care, check in to any office space, just check in, and we'll all interconnect from where we are. And I don't have to make you go in to the subway, I don't have to make you commute for two hours, and it starts kind of making a logic sense of understanding how to use your cities. And again, we all know European cities that depending on where you live, you cannot send your kids to a school that you want. You send your school-your kids to the school that corresponds to your zip code, otherwise you cannot travel the distance because you're going to create traffic, you're going to create this chaos where if you have a good foundation, things kind of make much better sense. But definitely, we're going to see big changes, Mauro, I think that this eventually is hitting hard the local economy, the small entrepreneurs. I also-I mean, even what we do in architecture, I always try to find out ways if we're working with big companies, how does a big company subsidize a smaller company to give them an opportunity to really thrive and survive, no? So, it was interesting for me in Mexico to see how my friends that are in the gastronomical business kind of react in a very quick way that friends of mine in New York couldn't. Because what happened in Mexico is that for instance, the big or the well-known restaurants, small businesses but well-known chefs, once they had to shut down for COVID, they found out how to how to make a delivery service where they were doing breakfast, lunch, dinners. And then they said well, what do I do with my waiters? So they said okay, you're going to have to deliver the food, are you willing to sacrifice for a couple of months to shift what you were doing as a waiter now to be part of a team that you're going to deliver food to houses in order for us to thrive during these two or three months, or four months or whatever-however long this takes, just to gap or bridge the gap, no? So they were very resilient and they really first of all created a presence within the community, you were happy to see the waiters that you know from the restaurant knocking on your door, bringing the food, and found a way to react, which friends of mine in New York couldn't do that, Mauro, because they needed to ask for a special permit to become a restaurant that could deliver food. Which I don't know how the permit works in terms of the gastronomical scene in New York, but it was not as agile as our third world country in Mexico.

Which most of the time a lot of first world countries look at third world countries to figure out how we're dealing with crisis and chaos, and how are we resilient to even learn from that, because that even shows a fragile system that's put in place that makes things very rigid. That's why I say it's important to come back to systemic things that are wrong and how we can rebalance or at least recalibrate to make sense of a new direction, no?

You say something so important, the ability of a country or people or any community to look at that diverse community, a different community, and eventually-with open eyes and open hearts and learn from them. Often there is so much disconnection that sometimes unfortunately it ends up even in races more, other form of hate that we see everywhere in society, but in reality, there would be so much to learn from each other if we would, once again, be open to look at others with respect. You mentioned the difference between developed countries and developing countries, so many times developed countries look at developing countries in ways like well, you have so much to learn from me, developed country, when in reality there is so much to learn from the diversity of the two systems in both directions. I have one last question, in your last answer you mentioned-you used a word, pollution and abundance. obviously as a company in food and beverage and packaged goods, we are really sensitive to this topic, our CEO, Ramon Laguarta in the past few years has been doubling down on our investments in the world of sustainability. what's your point of view on sustainability in the world of architecture, but in general, creativity, design, how can we as innovators in this world push sustainability in the right way, but also in the conscious way, understanding what are the boundaries, the constraints, not in a naïve way, but really in a way that can change, progressively, the world?

Well, first of all I think that at least in architecture, I knew it made me very uncomfortable when people were talking about sustainability and things about being self-sufficient, because we kept on talking about self still. And it was uncomfortable and it made me mad because it was like we really want to be sustainable, why are we talking about self-sufficient?

I'd rather talk about what I can do for the others rather than yes, I'm creating a net-zero building where all my energy is balanced to a net zero. It's like oh, that's great, but I would love to see a new generation where your building gives light to this community next to you that doesn't have money to pay for their own light,

because it's a slum area, that can't afford
that they don't even have electricity to connect to.
So what happens when your building gives water to my community,
when your building gives light to my community,
when it gives power to my community?

We should be thinking that way,
where it's like is your building giving something? No.
Then you don't get to build it.

Out, next one, that should be regulated, it should be a law.
Beautiful.

So if every building was responsible for giving something to the community,
and I'm not saying only in taxes,
not because people would say yes, that's why you pay your tax
and then your tax goes to the city, no, no, no.

I'm saying besides the taxes you need to pay,
why aren't we on top of systems that makes out build-
that make our buildings create value for others?

So that's what I'm saying about the responsibility
or a shared responsibility that we all have.

So from buildings that add value to cities, but as humans,
I don't care where you work, Mauro,
are you a good human or you're not a good human.

We should start understanding what's the value of that, not only how you work
on your nine-to-five job, and you make things, it's like your every day,
and coming back again to your life is your practice.

If you don't understand your life as a practice of your values,
as a practice of what you're fighting for, you're getting it wrong,
because it has to be about the way you interact with
the world in everything that you do,

not at your nine-to-five job, not at your one-hour gym thing,
not at your retreat to the beach, it's on your every day, all these conversations.

It should be about adding value to the next conversation,
we're planting seeds that will eventually grow
in other people's minds and spark conversations on their own.

So I think sustainability is about first of all,
acknowledging if we are part of the problem or part of the solution,
because all of us have part of the problem
and all of us are part of the solution as well.

So I think with awareness, we can actually go back a little bit and
understand more so than not I want to be part of the solution
and less part of the problem.

So I'm going to work on the things that I'm doing
that I definitely know that will make a better future
and make things right, and stop doing the ones that oops, I didn't know
that they were creating this problem.

But you have to take a couple of steps back to understand it,

because I think that the real problem with this, Mauro,
is a specialization on things.
I'm so specialized in the things that I do
that I don't think about the rest, and we talked about this.
I do, I do bottles of-caps for bottles, no?
So you might be the best guy doing the caps for the bottles,
but you don't know if the bottle has water or cyanide.
So you can say you're the guy doing the best caps for bottles,
but you have to understand what's the bigger picture on that.
So it's just having this awareness, what are the things that help and
what are the things that not help,
and how do we spark responsibility in a shared way,
where we all want the same thing,
I mean, we all want a better world, we all want this relationship
to the other in a better-way, not all of us,
but I really hope that with this awakening that's going on,
more people are going to want to connect in a truer,
in a more
in a more awakened way.
And I think this is what we're seeing in the world right now,
this waking up that's shaking
so many pillars of our society to really question
what we need today and where we want to go.
Well, Michel, this is wonderful, we talked about business,
we talked about innovation,
we talked about creativity, design, architecture.
But we did it through the lens of people, right?
We used words like empathy, love, respect,
and this is what innovation and business and
progress in society is about, right?
Is people creating some form of value for other people.
And we should talk more in any kind of environments
about this kind of values, about empathy,
love, kindness, respect,
because that's really the driver of innovation and
that's really what we all need
and deserve in our journey that we call life.
So Michel, I didn't expect anything less from this conversation,
we could go on and on for hours, but it's time to wrap up.
I just want to thank you for sharing your ideas and your emotions as well,
and I hope to see you soon in New York.
Thank you, Michel.
Thanks, Mauro, pleasure being here with you
and talking about at least some of the things that to us resonate more,
which is how we're growing as human beings and
how we're being more at least responsible for the day to day things

and having more awareness, and I know that you're there and I know that I'm there
and I know that's what, I mean, keeps our friendship going,
that we're humans and we want to grow in the right way,
we want to learn more to be better responding in what we do.
So thank you, Mauro, a pleasure always.
Thank you, Michel.