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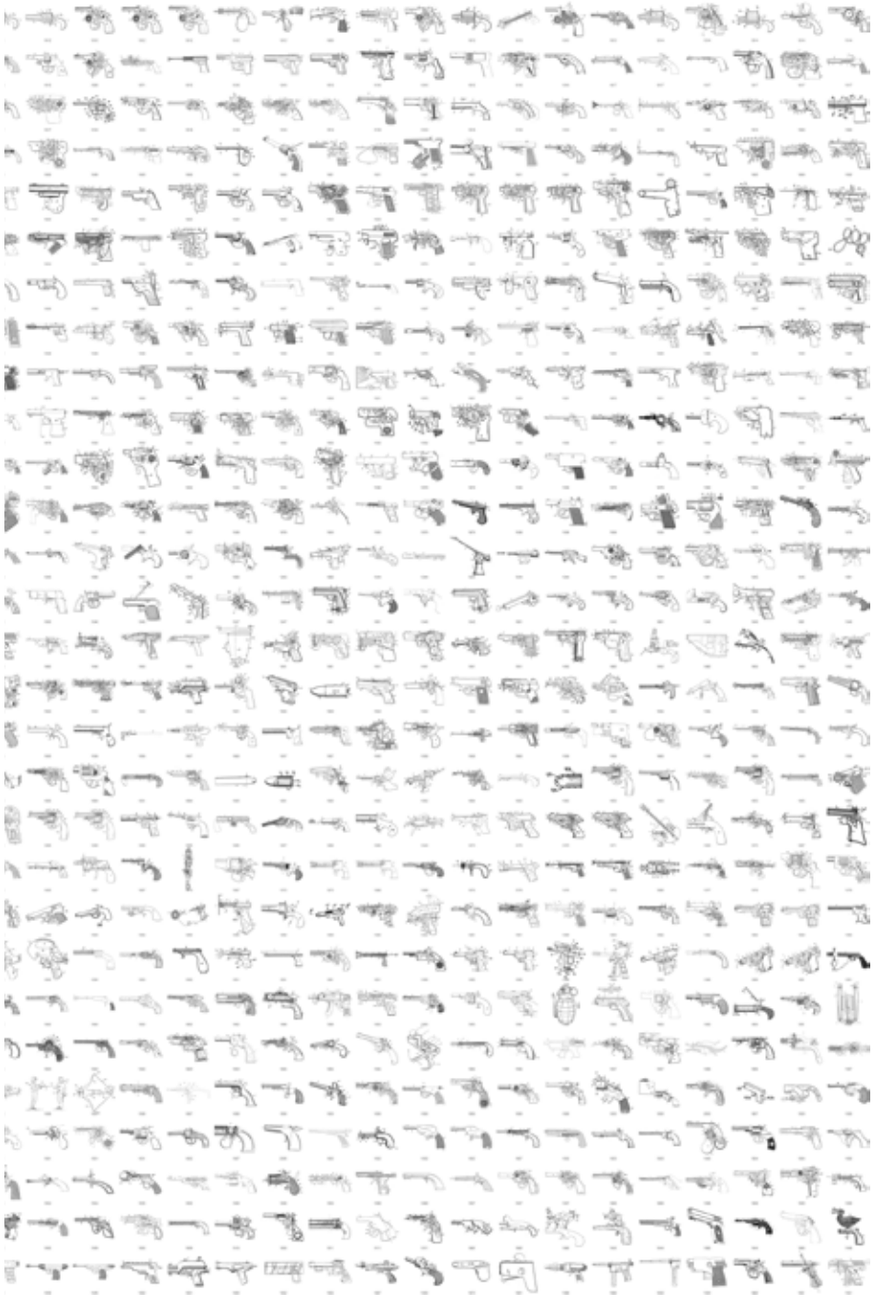
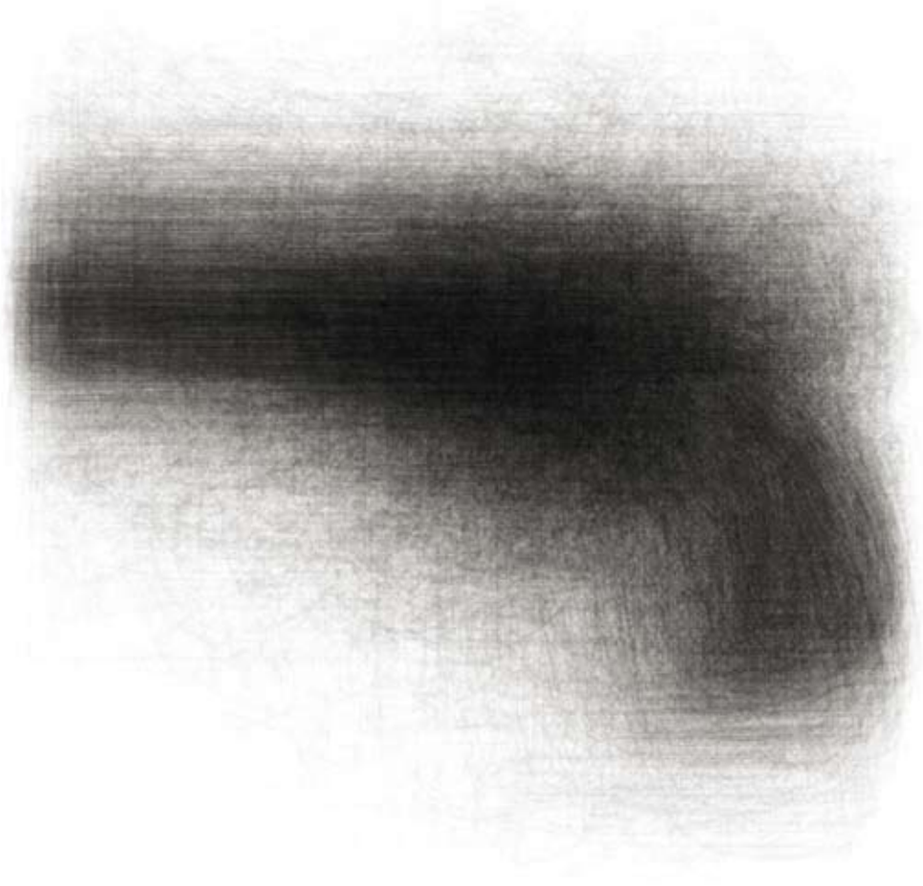


MAS CONTEXT

CONFLICT

ISSUE 10 SUMMER 11



MAS Context, a quarterly journal created by MAS Studio, addresses issues that affect the urban context. Each issue delivers a comprehensive view of a single topic through the active participation of people from different fields and different perspectives who, together, instigate the debate.

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Conflicts are an inevitable part of our society. Their origins can be political, economic or social; their outcomes physically and emotionally impact cities and countries, economies and societies; we can't avoid them. It's the moment to discuss the consequences and how design can be a useful tool to address them.

Embrace your Conflict

Issue statement by **Iker Gil**, editor in chief of **MAS Context**

The word conflict has a negative connotation. It instantly generates images of destruction, suffering, struggle and tension for us. At the same time, conflicts are inevitable. No matter how much we want to avoid them, they are always present, whether they are armed, social, political or any other kind. If we can't avoid them, the question is, how can we think about them as an opportunity? Why not look at conflicts as a tool to test innovative and unexpected solutions? This is exactly how we explore the topic of Conflict in this issue, a starting point for a new approach to familiar issues. The issue presents the work of designers who use lenses of conflict to develop their projects.

The interdisciplinary design practice Urban-Think Tank shares its approach to working in complex environments that calls for simple solutions. Their Caracas Metro Cable and other interventions in the slums of Caracas and other cities are opportunities to redefine and design their socio-economic system in a more integrated way.

Ethel Baraona Pohl and César Reyes from dpr-barcelona interview Cameron Sinclair, co-founder of Architecture for Humanity and its Chief Eternal Optimist, about the work AFH is doing in areas of natural and man-made conflicts.

Charlotte Malterre Barthes from OMNIBUS, along with Valentina Genini, explore the relationship between prostitution, migration and urban territory using Zurich as a case study, a city with one of the highest ratio of number of prostitutes per capita of industrialized countries.

The consequences of the Lebanese Civil War in Beirut's public transportation system are exposed through the film "Under the Bridge" by Sydney-based filmmaker Nora Niasari. By studying the past and present, we can lay the groundwork for new thinking.

Photographer Jonathan Andrew documents the current condition of World War II bunkers in The Netherlands, France and Belgium. Most of them abandoned, these imposing structures are a reminder of the conflicted past in Europe.

Simon Scheithauer shows the ways "the case of Weimar vividly illustrates how planning can surface opposing views. Conflicting views, dispute and controversy in this context are productive and a precondition of progress."

We also look at two architectural projects, one that solves a future conflict and another one that is the source of a conflict. The first is represented by "Water Shore Habitat," the proposal by David Garcia Studio, the winner of the first Prize in the UNESCO Delta City of the Future competition. For the latter, we have the City of Culture in Galicia by Peter Eisenman. A controversial project since its inception (budget overruns, oversized scale, lack of program among others), it serves as a starting point for a discussion between Vladimir Belogolovsky and its author.

Architect Alex Lehnerer writes about the "Opposition Drawings", the tool that emerged in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s and was used by supporters and opponents of the proposed high-rises.

After the Swiss referendum that decided on a constitutional ban on the construction of any new minarets in 2009, Mika Savela speculates about what the imagery of classical Switzerland would have looked like if merged with late 19th century images of Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

And incisively, Javier Arbona argues that "sometimes deleting the image is what architecture needs a bit of" in a short of letter to the editor.

Finally, artist Thomas Hillier, in "The Emperor's Castle," explores the tempestuous relationship between the Emperor, the Princess and the Cowherd. As Thomas describes it "these characters have been replaced by architectonic metaphors that create an urban theatre of conflict within the grounds of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo.

As we said, conflicts are inevitable; go ahead and embrace them.

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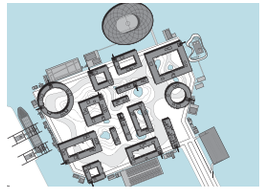

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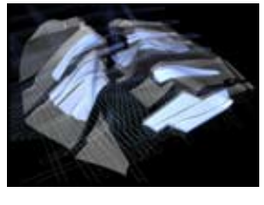

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Under the Bridge

Film and essay by **Nora Niasari**

Dora Transportation Hub - Under the Bridge
© Nora Niasari

Beirut's public transport infrastructure has experienced a lifetime of conflict in its struggle to provide an ongoing platform for citizen mobility. Through the window of history, we can retrace the establishment of the Lebanese railway system to the beginning of the twentieth century. These railways not only connected the major cities in Lebanon, but neighboring countries including Syria, Iraq and Turkey where the line operated along the famed 'Orient Express' train route from the late 1920s to the 1940s. Today, such developments for infrastructure seem unimaginable with the ongoing socio-political struggles in the Middle East. In Lebanon's case, years of war and post-traumatic recovery have created uncertainty for the future of its public transport infrastructure. Since the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War and the collapse of Beirut's public transportation system, three key developments have taken shape: Cola Transport Hub, Dora Transport Hub and Charles Helou Bus Station, which embody the ongoing failures and conflicts of contemporary Lebanon.

During pre-war Beirut, 'Sahet Al Borj' (Martyrs Square) was the centre of the city in the downtown district, a vital artery for private taxi services and the renowned 'Tramway Beirut'. In partnership with Electricity of Lebanon (Electricite du Liban), the tramways were powered by electrical power stations and operated along rails throughout the streets of Beirut. Buses were introduced by the public transport sector in 1964, replacing the tramways with a fleet of 138 'Renault' brand buses. Through a network of lines and stops, these buses successfully linked outer suburbs, metropolitan districts, roads, and streets of Beirut within an interval of six to seven minutes for each bus. In 1975, the Lebanese Civil War broke out, completely destroying the historic railway system and the fleet of buses, marking an end to organized public transportation. Everyday mobility for Lebanese citizens ceased to exist as transport nodes in Beirut were the first to experience destruction, creating barriers and borders in every district.

Within the chaos of the Civil War, 'Sahet Al Borj' (Martyrs Square) became a no-man's land due to its location along the Green Line and people were displaced to the newly established transport hubs of 'Dora' in Bourj Hammoud (Christian East Beirut) and 'Cola' in Tarik Jdideh (Muslim West Beirut). Located underneath populated highway bridges, Cola and Dora operated as productive intersections, using the cross roads for economic growth and social interaction. People from the outer suburbs of Beirut would travel to these hubs early in the morning to set up market stalls whilst private taxis and mini buses would transport citizens between the shores, the Bekaa valley and mountain villages to the north and south of Beirut. Due to their dependency on the residential areas surrounding them, these roundabouts provided a layered activity that removed them from the statically-enforced characteristics of infrastructure and providing a new platform for the operation of private transport companies.

Cola Transport Hub
Aerial view

Cola Transport Hub
Under the bridge

With the destruction of the buses and railways following the Civil War and the rise of informal transport hubs, the public transport sector experienced a seven-year halt to operations. Following this period, the Lebanese government purchased a fleet of secondhand buses from France to re-establish the public bus network. These buses were stored in the airport warehouse where they were partially bombed during the Israeli invasion of 1982. During the internal war of 1989-1990, the remaining buses from 1982 were stored in the Christian area of 'Bir Hassan,' where violent sectarian clashes destroyed them completely. Despite these conflicts, there were a handful of 40 buses still operating on the main roads of Beirut until 1996-1997. Realizing this number was not sufficient for the urban population, the Council of Ministers in Beirut purchased 200 buses of 'Karossa' brand from the Czech Republic. Not only were these buses the incorrect size for the Lebanese terrain, they were designed for an average climate of -20 degrees, which did not meet climate specifications for safe operation in Lebanon. This led to countless irreversible malfunctions and breakdowns in the buses because no money was allocated for spare parts. Year after year, the number of buses declined until they reached absolute failure and became ruins to the conflicts that destroyed them, essentially neglected to death.

Dora Transport Hub
Aerial view

In post-war Beirut, public transportation has been silenced whilst private transportation companies are providing a short-term solution for mobility. Abandoned buses and tramways can be seen as tombs from a distance in 'Bus Cemeteries' located at the central stations of 'Mar Mikhael' and 'Sahet Al Abed,' with one or two caretakers watching over 500 buses on a daily basis. Cola and Dora still remain as central transport hubs, however, their socio-political fabric has changed significantly. In Cola, political forces including Hezbollah, The Amal Movement, and the Lebanese Army govern an overlapping area of Shiite and Sunni Muslims in South-West Beirut, where rising tensions and clashes are ever-present under the bridge. Independent bus and taxi drivers are suffering due to the extreme monopolization of bus depots by private companies, creating chaos and a feeling of constant fear in their daily activities. This chaos is mirrored in the Dora roundabout, where Syrian workers as young as fourteen occupy the large expanse of orange dirt under the bridge for days and weeks without jobs. Whilst having no social integration with the Lebanese population, they travel from Syria early in the morning at the prospect of getting picked up for manual labour to support their families. These transformations are evidence that the transport hubs in post-war Beirut are not only zones of conflict at a local level, but are symbolic of the sectarian struggle that divides Lebanon today.

Dora Transport Hub
Under the bridge

Whilst Cola and Dora have operated as informal transport hubs since the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War, Charles Helou Bus Station, a damaged monument to the Civil War, was re-established in 1995-1996 to formalise a central terminal for Beirut's private transportation sector. Located in the industrial port of Beirut, the investment of this colossal multi-level terminal was intended to create an organized system for the operation of all private bus and taxi companies. By the year 2000, management changed and companies began to operate independently of existing regulations, creating conflict between these private offices and Beirut Municipality. Many offices left and operated elsewhere, which fell against the wishes of the Council of Ministers to limit all long-distance ground transport to Charles Helou. As a result, Beirut Municipality limited the maintenance of infrastructure within the station, including office spaces, shops, mini-markets, public toilets, car parks and sidewalks, causing the station to rapidly deteriorate. In its current abandoned state, the ground level of Charles Helou operates as terminals for buses and taxis where you will find informal food stalls, roaming salesmen and a makeshift Islamic prayer zone whilst the upper two levels remain vacant and solely operate as a void for projections of what the city could be. Through these atmospheres of chaos and conflict, it is clear that Cola, Dora and Charles Helou Bus Stations have the incredible potential to act as catalytic engines to transform the synergy

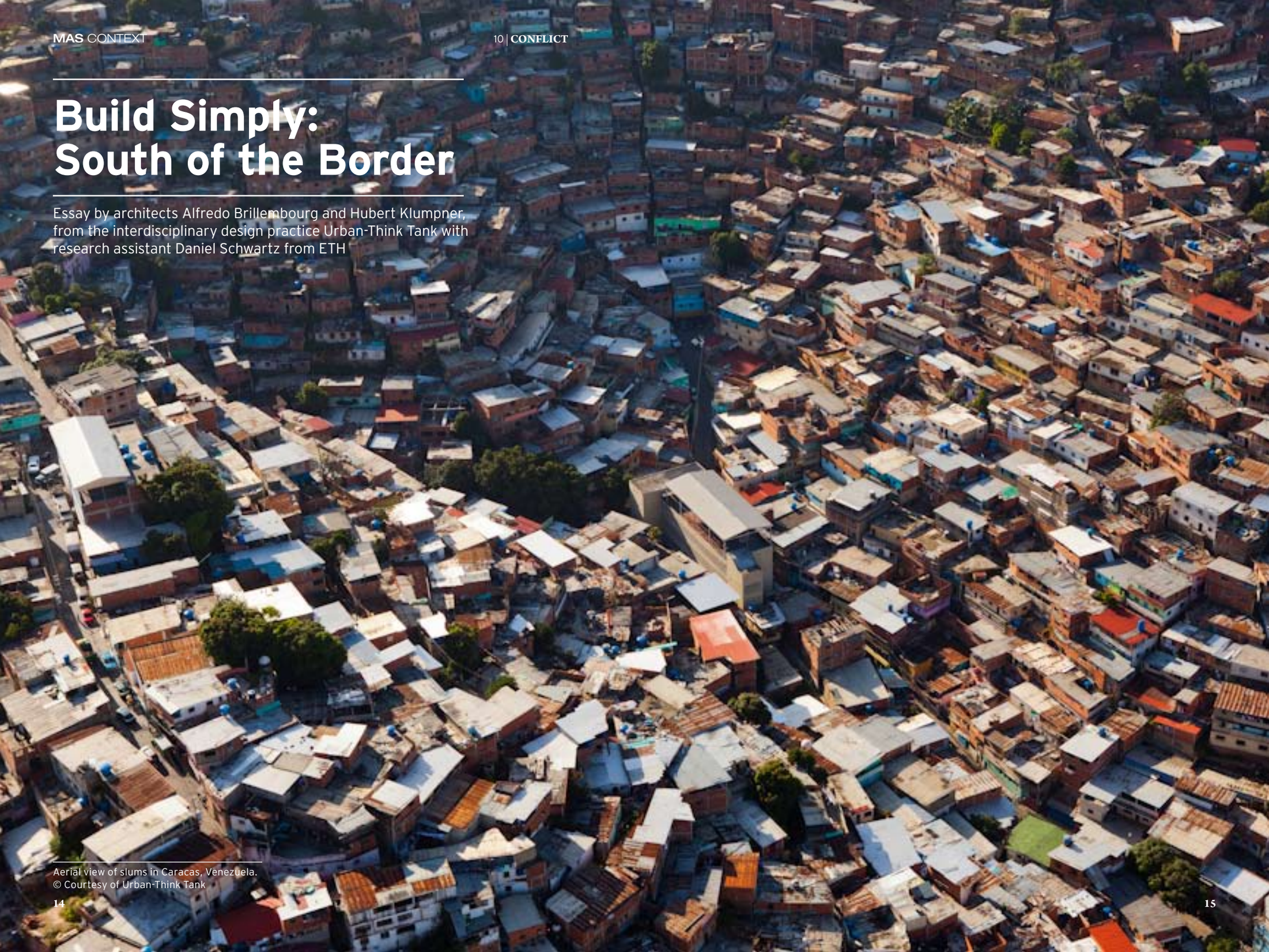
Charles Helou Bus Station. Aerial view

of social and economic life in Beirut. And while the buses remain standing in the cemeteries amongst the wild growth of nature, the private bus companies continue to monopolize the system and disregard the necessity for change in a country struggling to recover its lost identity. The sheer immobility of Beirut's public transport infrastructure emphasises the nature of post-war development as both a constructive and deconstructive act where the deficiency of a centralised control has caused the failure of implementing a public service for its people. The solution remains undetermined in a system with no time frames and no political commitments, creating conflict within all institutions seeking to rebuild the longevity of Lebanon's civil services. Beyond the economic and social values that could be achieved, the future success of these developments could ensure the hopes and aspirations of its people beyond a short-term expedience of corporate profit that currently overshadows the long-term potential of rebuilding Lebanon.

Charles Helou Bus Station.Under the bridge

Build Simply: South of the Border

Essay by architects Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner, from the interdisciplinary design practice Urban-Think Tank with research assistant Daniel Schwartz from ETH



Aerial view of slums in Caracas, Venezuela.
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

More than half the world population today lives in cities. In India alone, it is estimated that, within the next two decades, 380 million people will migrate from rural areas into metropolises. That's equal to 20 new cities the size of Mumbai or Sao Paolo. In this context, it is somewhat ironic that Western real-estate firms are promoting sprawl in Indian cities as the norm. As demographic and geographic developments in Asia, Africa and South America will inevitably lead to increased urbanization, one might think that cities in these regions should prepare for the numerous "consequences" that come with dramatic population shifts to urban zones. Surprisingly few politicians, bankers and urban planners, though, have thought it necessary to take action.

After founding the Urban-Think Tank (www.u-tt.com) more than ten years ago, we began to explore the conditions that often correlate with a city's successful shift to a mega-city. Cities are not only adapting to population increases, but also to the attendant increase in environmental pollution, traffic congestion, crime and poverty. Of the 3.45 billion people who live in cities today, 29 per cent — a billion people worldwide — live in slums.

Can we, as architects, propagate the city as a model, when the scale and dimensions are so new to us (even if we ourselves live in cities)? Our early work grew into a fundamental research project, pondering this central question. Today, U-TT sees itself as agency for research and development and an instrument for social change.

It became clear to us that greater simplicity of both architectural concepts and construction details can improve the design of our planet. Phrased another way, we became pungently aware that to operate in poor, urban zones, we would have to overcome real limits in regard to land, money and time.

Given this dilemma, we decided as a design firm to implement realizable micro-projects, rather than proposing grand master plans that would end up in the dark recesses of a bureaucrat's drawer. Indeed, we decided that we can change market interests and institutional priorities within cities and slums through organic and rhizomatic development. Our project is not philanthropy. It is an opportunity to redefine design and our socio-economic system in a more integrated way. Socially responsible urban planning begins with an exchange between local conditions, populations and multi-disciplinary experts. For the ever-growing city, we need a form of architecture that both targets the lower strata of society and receives their support. In this vein, we seek to implement a democratization of the planning process. Our office's design process favours seeking alternatives to the existing planning culture — away from a maximization of consumption towards a maximization of production. We believe in cities as centers for learning, creativity, recycling and distribution, though this vision has not yet firmly rooted within the public's imagination.

Our first task as designers is to catalyze the process of turning the growing metropolises in the southern hemisphere into a network of innovative nodes. Caracas, the city where we live and work, is a huge and ideal testing ground. In the metropolitan region, two million social housing units are needed, but only 50,000 to 80,000 are built annually, despite continuing growth. The slums of Caracas are the result of three decades of politicians ignoring the reality outside of their offices. Population increases between 1958 and 1989 brought roughly 4 million new inhabitants to the city, 60 per cent of whom now live in slums. The political system in Venezuela confirms the rule that the problems of city growth must not be delegated to an ambiguous later date. Such political negligence in Venezuela is illustrated by the Caraqueño, who pays more for a litre of drinking water than a gallon of petrol. Crime is another frightening aspect of this situation. The murder rate in the city is the highest in the whole of Latin America. Within this reality, one must address the lack of alternatives facing residents — particularly the youth — through the development of new building type and spatial program.

The house is often cited as a metaphor for the city and the city as a metaphor for the entire planet. We believe that the identification of simplicity within complex urban form has led us, at the beginning of the 21st century, to develop the concept of an "urban planet". The idea embodied in this concept is of a modern "macropolis," or one globally connected city. If we accept the idea that we are in a unified, urban planet, then we can reassess development on the basis of our built city ecology. The project for an ongoing process of urbanization can be seen in two ways: on the one hand, the model of the global city for metropolises like London, New York and Tokyo; and on the other, the global slum for cities like Caracas, Sao Paulo, Lagos, etc. Today, we know that these two are intimately linked, like two sides of the same coin.

Neighborhood meeting
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

What is lacking, in our opinion, is a joint effort to link "top-down" and "bottom-up" initiatives. In other words, municipal administration and the general public must sit down together to draw up an agenda for the planning of our environment. Only then can we meet the basic needs of the population in terms of energy, transport, infrastructure, construction, waste disposal, food, water and social relationships. The cities on our planet need more than office tower blocks, museums, opera houses, airports, outstanding sporting events, etc. The Guatemalan architect Teddy Cruz put this concept of meaningless development in a nutshell, when he remarked: "It's time to put Marcel Duchamp's urinal back on the wall." We know that urbanization in the form of prestigious and signature buildings attracts investment and creates wealth. However, this story, too, often seems like an American or European fairytale, imposed upon other regions of the world where wealth does not flow, but rather accumulates in bubbles. Cities in these "developing" regions witness a marked increase in the income of a small segment of the population as the majority remains or sinks lower into poverty. The consequences of this global trend are

San Agustin neighborhood with Caracas Metro Cable
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

evident even within the wealthier geographies, such as the banlieus of Paris or the shrinking cities of the American Midwest.

What we witness in contemporary slums is the result of decades of neglect. In South America and recently the Middle East, we have learned that delaying action in this state of urban crisis leads to revolution. As Joseph Schumpeter predicted at the beginning of the 20th century, creative destruction will lead to greater problems for all of us. A base of the population pyramid living in slums gives hope for a new dialogue in architecture through reforms on a small, yet comprehensible, scale. This is the line of thought and action we are pursuing at U-TT. All of our prototypes, from dry toilets to inner-city cable cars, are assembled in our "urban toolbox". Simplified forms of construction are the only realistic design position possible for architects operating in slums. The cities we imagine will not be new, but rather retrofitted. Novel urbanisms will emerge on top of existing models. The concept of planning an ideal city or new town for the vast majority of people is unrealistic. It is a concept grounded in the modernist denial of limits and diversity. It is a mode of design that claims omniscience without proof.

The lack of institutional structures, such as schools, hospitals, post offices, and police stations, along with the absence of public buildings and traffic infrastructure, has led to a void of responsibility in cities of the South. With spaces, programms and typologies, we are trying to fill this void by inventing a city that is in the process of acquiring a form. We seek to foster a city that exists in a state of constant self-recognition.

In the Caracas San Agustin slum, which extends over a steep, 200-metre high hill, some 40,000 local residents protested against a planned network of roads that would have required the clearance of significant housing and communally-valued spaces. At the time, we urged the government to build on the specific qualities of the barrio, arguing that this was not a hill covered with houses, but a house the size of a hill. Vertical lift, we identified, was missing. In order to avoid the road-centric proposal, which would have been a typical slum eradication project based on the car city, we conceived of a cable-car line. The outcome was a minimal intervention transport system, with a maximum capacity of 3,000 persons per hour who could be conveyed in both directions. With the collaboration of the local authorities and other organizations, we looked for suitable locations for the masts and stations so as to integrate the system as delicately as possible. Inaugurated in 2010, the system has been built by the Doppelmayr-Garaventa ropeway company with five cable car stations. Two of the stations rest at the foot of the hill and are situated directly above existing underground stations. The three other stations are laid out over the long slope and are combined with recreation facilities for education, sport and music. In this way, the connection points of the system have multi-use functionality and strengthen each element of the programming. The Caracas Metro Cable, just as those in Medellin and Rio de Janeiro, show how hillside communities can be integrated into a metropolitan transport system that serves all citizens, regardless of their income and the local topography. This concept of a city without car traffic can be adopted as a model for other metropolises. While technological innovations are certainly crucial for such development, we see the design process, in these contexts, as a matter of creativity and social organizing. This is the turf of 21st century urban design.

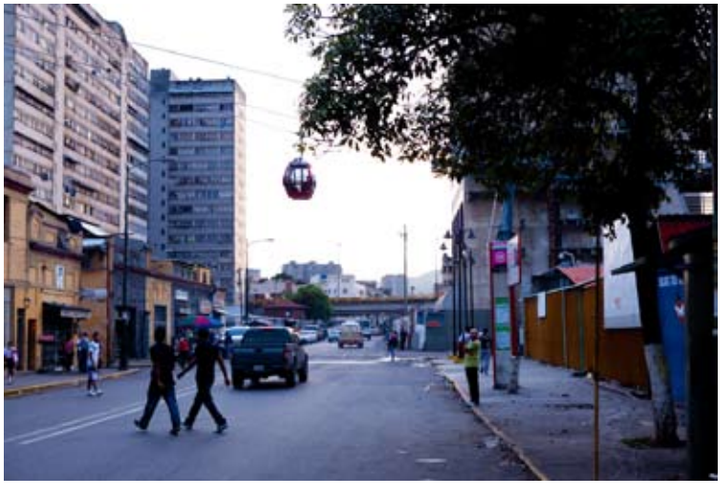
Residents of San Agustin neighborhood with Caracas Metro Cable in the background
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

Night view of San Agustin and the Caracas Metro Cable.
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

Sports grounds are usually the only remaining street-level spaces in cities left unbuilt or structure-free. But these spaces are too often insufficient — they can only fit one football field or a miniature baseball diamond. Thus, the sole direction in which sports facilities can be extended is vertically — with layers comes increased surface area. The vertical gymnasium (GV) is a typology for a sports complex comprised of vertically stacked basketball courts, weightlifting areas, a running track, football pitch on the roof, climbing wall and relevant atheletic facilities. In this way, a ground area of 1,000 square meters can be built up to provide facilities covering 3,800 square meters on four floors. To meet the needs for sports and recreation in the barrios of the city, more than 100 of these vertical gymnasiums would be needed. Therefore, in 2006, U-TT proposed a plan for "100 Gimnasio-Verticales para Caracas". The project is based on a feasibility study that would closely link the barrios to form a more cohesive city-wide network. The first model built in Santa Cruz is active day and night and is used on average by some 15,000 visitors each month. Since its opening, the crime rate in the area has decreased by 30 per cent, and the building type has now become part of a nationwide anti-crime program bearing the name "180 Degrees". We may not be able to stop drug usage and violent crimes, but we can offer alternative activities, such as football leagues organized in an environment where the concepts of fair play and tolerance are communicated.

We developed the prototype of the vertical gym from the YMCA sports centres in New York City. But in translating it to the Caracas context, we determined that it must be a flexible design, adaptable to a variety of urban spaces and needs. Now, in Caracas, one of the new vertical gyms adjoins a cable car station and is specifically tailored to the recreational activities of the San Agustin community. From simplicity, one can add necessary complexity and specificity. For example, different spatial programs for the ground floor zone necessitate individual planning. Shops may be incorporated for local vendors, a swimming pool can be added with seating for 500 spectators, or educational facilities may be inserted for younger visitors. All these variations are based on standardized, simple plans, which U-TT makes available free of charge as a download. The prototype is in the creative commons, as we believe that for this tool to be successful, it must be replicated and reinterpretated whether we are directly involved or not.

Grotao Community Center and Park in Sao Paolo
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank



Caracas and the Caracas Metro Cable
© Courtesy of Urban-Think Tank

Urban-Think Tank is also creating its first structures outside of Caracas. On a steep 6,000 square meter landslide site in the second largest favela of Sao Paulo, a music centre is taking shape. The Centro Comunitario de Acción Social por la Música Paraisóplis (CCASM) has existed as an institution for more than 36 years. The building we have designed for it is the first of its kind and profits from the experience we gained in developing the vertical gyms. It fits precisely in its unique urban situation and contains a variety of spaces for musical education. Tangentially, it offers a wide range of cultural activities created for the masses, by the masses. Here, we proposed a new vertical organization. The actual "building" is a space set between the terraced landscape and the stacked, specialized rehearsal and performance areas for music and dance. The CCASM is not based on any model, but it can serve as a model for other communities. The scheme attracted the attention of the acoustic specialist Karl-Heinz Müller, who is now a member of our planning team.

Driven by the need to create an appropriate environment in our cities for large sections of the population, we have also studied the situation of children and senior citizens more closely. In the favelas, the bulk of the population is disadvantaged in one way or another. Worst of all are the conditions for children suffering from autism and Down Syndrome. In locating the school for autistic children, known as FAVA, on a sloping site, it was important for us to leave open as large an area as possible for a park, which is something rare in the

centre of the city. We designed the building as a compact volume, therefore, and set it in one corner of the site. As a result, the spatial program extended to a five-story structure.

In Caracas, however, lifts are service-intensive installations and would make a building of this kind unsuitable for disabled children. Our solution was to build a long ramp around the outside. Access to the first two floors is via the ramped topography. The development was financed from a new tax conceived to flow into structures with a social role. Companies can donate up to 100 per cent of their annual tax to finance such schemes.

We work in a complex environment that calls for simple solutions. That means using available, local materials and labor. Most people believe that low-cost construction must be inferior to expensive forms of building. We wish to overcome prejudice of this kind as well as outdated ideas of how a project should be developed. Only if we shift our expectations away from a product to a process and reconsider traditional development strategies will we be able to find economically feasible solutions for the masses of people in the slums. And only if we do that will we have vibrant cities for every strata of society that lives in them.

Under Conflict, Can We Still Give a Damn?

Ethel Baraona Pohl and **César Reyes** from **dpr-barcelona** interview **Cameron Sinclair**, Chief Eternal Optimist and co-founder of **Architecture for Humanity**.

Cameron Sinclair's postgraduate thesis focused on providing shelter to New York's homeless through sustainable, transitional housing. He co-founded Architecture for Humanity (AFH) in 1999 as a response to the conflict in Kosovo. Through a series of competitions, workshops, educational forums, and partnerships with aid groups, AFH has woven a world network to create opportunities for designers to respond to crises and conflicts. They published a first compilation of smart social conscious design in "Design Like You Give A Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises" (Metropolis Books, 2006). Today, with AFH having 73 chapters in 25 countries and more than 4,650 volunteer design professionals, Cameron Sinclair is not a name-dropper's recourse anymore, not even after his naming as Advisor to the Obama Administration. We had a conversation in Barcelona with the architect who started a crusade on developing support in social, cultural and humanitarian design.

We asked, "Under conflict, can we still give a damn?"

Camp Corail Cesselesse.
© Eric Cesal used with permission of the Open Architecture Network

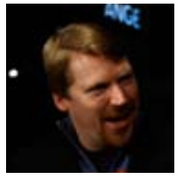
"In view of increasingly fragmented identities, we need to find a form of co-existence that makes it possible for conflict to work as a productive confrontation: "a model for unconventional participation that allows outsiders to judge existing debates without the fear of rejection." [1]

1. All margin quotes extracted from the book "The Violence of Participation" by Markus Miessen. Sternberg Press, 2007.

DPR: Hi Cameron. We know this is your first time in Spain and also, we do know that AFH Spain is really new… ?

CS: Brand-new.

DPR: So, it's interesting for us to know why Spain is becoming an important node or a central point for your organization?



CS: This is the second country I visited this week and yes, I found it interesting to see how so many architects are thinking and talking about Spain. It seems like the role of social architecture has come back to Spain. I think in Spanish architecture there has always been an element of social responsibility, but in the last ten years, with the big boom, people became more fascinated on sculptural buildings, museums and so on, focusing less on social issues. Now, with the financial crisis, I think there is also a kind of personal crisis and we're getting more requests from Spain to engage with us.

DPR: Sounds provocative that, at the same time you started looking to Spain, people from here also started looking at you. Where does this reciprocity come from?

CS: I think it's due to the financial crisis. People started to look back on what they've done for the past ten years, asking themselves, "What I did in the past ten years, did it really affect my community?" and now they are really interested in giving more social responses.

DPR: I can tell you that even living here, sometimes it's hard to perceive this kind of attitude you're talking about. We have the sense that we've been living architecture from a more superficial point of view and not interested in these social issues...

Haiti Earthquake
© Getty Images (top) and k-bob (bottom) used with permission of the Open Architecture Network

"Participation is war. Any form of participation is already a form of conflict. In order to participate in any environment or given situation, one needs to understand the forces of conflict that act upon that environment... if one wants to participate in any given force field, it is crucial to identify the conflicting forces at play."

CS: Yes, it may be true, but the fact is that if people say that it's okay for architecture to be superficial, then it will be superficial. If you say "No, no. Architecture needs to have a social value," then architecture will start having it.

Is it the same when you think, why did anyone want to become an architect? If you ask a seventeen year-old why he or she wants to be an architect, it's not to be a celebrity, it's not to be a millionaire, it's to make changes to their community.

DPR: Knowing about your activities in Haiti or with the Pakistan floods, we were wondering if you [AFH] also act in other kinds of conflicts, not natural ones but man-made ones, such as wars, geopolitical or armed conflicts. And if so, how do you manage it?

CS: Yes. We have some work in Afghanistan and will start working in Sudan. By the way, we have students from the UIC (Universitat Internacional de Catalunya) University working on this program [2] about the Sudan issue, and it's really interesting to talk about it, because it's really a complex issue. A lot of people from the international community think now about Sudan that there is a fifty-fifty chance of peace or war. And the real fact of it is to wonder if there is a hidden arrangement of interests waiting for war to start. But we build infrastructures to prevent war. So in a way, architecture is there for preventing war. And we do it almost in an aggressive way. You have to fight the violence as aggressively as it is.

I'm going to show today [3] some projects in the favelas of Brazil, which are very dangerous.

DPR: Yes, in that sense, talking about Afghanistan or Brazil is almost the same, they are both dangerous places to work in.

2. Cameron Sinclair was invited to Barcelona by the Master International Cooperation: Sustainable Emergency Architecture from the UIC ESARQ. More info: http://www.uic.es/en/international-cooperation

3. The interview was done on Cameron Sinclair's first visit to Spain, when he gave a lecture at the Association of Architects of Catalonia (COAC) Barcelona on January 19th, 2011

Skateista, Kabul
© Uggi Kaldan (top) and ISAF Public Affairs (bottom)

"What we need today are more dilettantes that neither worry about making the wrong move nor prevent friction between certain agents in the existing forcefield if it is necessary."

CS: Yes, it's a war there. It's a war politically and socially, and as violent as a physical war is. We have to think that architecture never creates peace, never. But it creates the vessel and the place where peace can happen. For architects, if they understand that they are not the leader, if they move like a guide, then it's architecture without ego and it's more humble in its approach. The best way to face a conflict is with a humble approach.

DPR: And talking about the favelas issue, how do local people react to your work there?

CS: Well, if you come in and say "I'm an architect," they will kick you out. But when you sit down and you discuss an issue with them, and as an architect you understand that you're not on a vacation, they let you in. Our architects live in the community, they don't live in a luxury house, they live in the favela.

DPR: They become just one more within the population...

CS: Yes, that's the point.

DPR: We were wondering if it has been difficult for you to find people interested in working in such dangerous places?

CS: The people who work with us, are pretty tough. They're a little crazy, by the way. For example, Daniel Feldman, who worked in a favela for a year a while ago, he went back to Colombia, where he's from and where the flood happened. And because he had confidence, he called the office of the president, met with the first lady and said, "I have worked in a favela, I know what it is to work in dangerous places and I want to help." They hired him on the spot. Architects become very tough after working with us and they can really engage with their communities. They can work in tough neighborhoods, deal with tight budgets and be creative. They actually build in hope.

Homeless World Cup Legacy Center, Santa Cruz, Brazil
© Daniel Feldman used with permission of the Open Architecture Network

"An alternative model of participation within spatial practice...actors who operate from outside existing networks, while leaving behind circles of conventional expertise and overlapping with other post-disciplinary fields of knowledge."

DPR: We have read in the last year in a few magazines and blogs [4] a bit of criticism on the architectural quality of your projects. What can you tell us about it?

CS: It's funny, you know. I defend my architects very well. You can be critical about the quality but, if you don't step in their shoes, you can't understand the challenges. The fact is that we go into communities, bring water for the first time, we help to bring education for the first time, we bring health-care for the first time. We're not going there to create the "Bilbao effect" in a favela or in a poor neighborhood.

In Haiti, we went to a school where we brought clean water and sanitation. The school doubled in attendance and we focused on the quality of education. The quality of the building it's ok, but the quality of education is our main task.

DPR: Ok, so let's continue talking about criticism. We had also been reading that there are some sociologists and anthropologists that refer to the work of some non-governmental organizations (NGO) as a "new colonialism" [5]. What can you say about it?

CS: Absolutely. We're very unique in the fact that we only work with local architects and engineers and a minimum of fifty percent of our staff is local. Usually, it is more. But we had a hard time as well when we saw some NGOs with the big jeeps or driving coasters and we were only on bicycles, so the criticism is valid. We, as an organization, need to listen to the people. But me, I'm not going to listen to an anthropologist from Harvard University, but I am going to listen to the community leader. When they say, "listen, we need an outside expert." I'll bring it. But if they say, "we don't need it, I'm absolutely not bringing him. I think academics and intellectuals always undermine people locally and don't believe in the strength of the community.

DPR: Yes. This is the most common attitude...

4. Pedro Gadanho, Architecture for Humanity [December 11th 2009] visited on May 21th 2011

5. NGOs as the new agents of colonialism. http://www.indymedia.org.nz/article/76194/ngos-new-agents-colonialism [October 30th 2008] visited on May 21th 2011

"Micro-political action can be as effective as traditional state political action... In this context, it could be useful to re-think the concept of conflict, seeing it as an enabler, a producer of a productive environment rather than as direct, physical violence."

CS: We have to separate the colonial activity from this intellectual activity, which is also a kind of colonialism.

DPR: According to this, how is your relationship with other NGOs? Do you work together? Do you have any kind of agreements?

CS: Originally, we were independent, more combative. But suddenly we began to understand that we could influence them somehow. It's like saying, "do you want to be a pirate on the pirate ship or do you want to be a pirate in the big NGO ship." So, we wanted to get into the big ship and share ideas to be more sustainable. That was the best that we could do. There were organizations at those times that were acting separately and now they come to us with some requests, they come to us for advice.

DPR: Now, before ending the interview and knowing that we're "friends" on twitter, facebook and we follow the activities of Architecture for Humanity through the social networks [6], we want to know if the social networks have been really useful to spread your work or to interact with other communities?

6. You can follow AFH network activity at @archforhumanity and AFH Spain through their facebook site

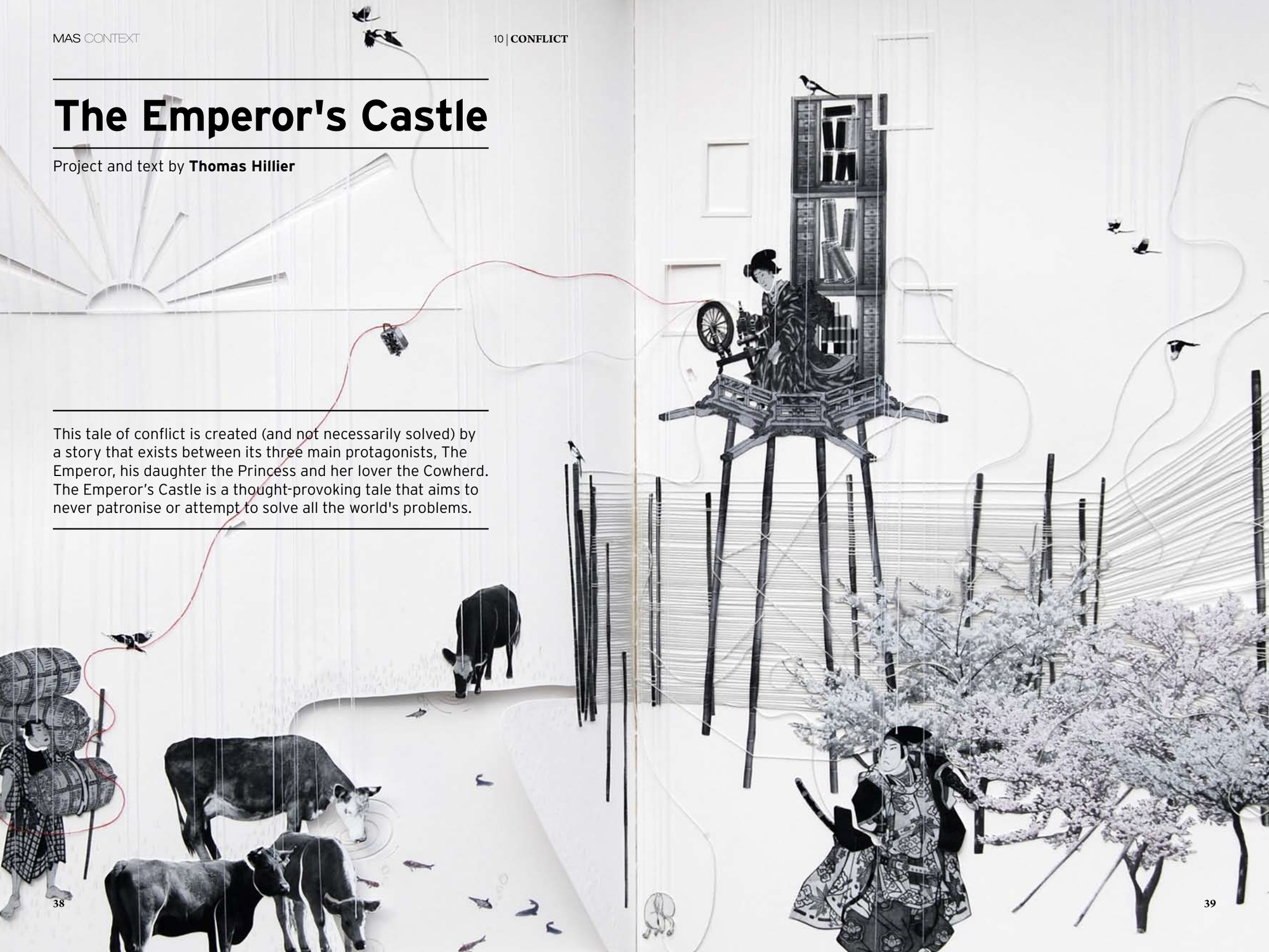
CS: I will answer with an anecdote. When we wanted to go to Burma, nobody could get anybody there to work with us, so we used text messaging on mobiles and we started using twitter to communicate with the local people and finally we found people to work with us through these technologies. So, in circumstances when it is hard to go physically to a certain place, we use social networks as the first step to know what is happening there. We did it in the Swat Valley in Pakistan, where it is really dangerous. We used social networks, Facebook and Twitter, to communicate with the designers and receive updates.

DPR: Thank you Cameron!

The Emperor's Castle

Project and text by **Thomas Hillier**

This tale of conflict is created (and not necessarily solved) by a story that exists between its three main protagonists, The Emperor, his daughter the Princess and her lover the Cowherd. The Emperor's Castle is a thought-provoking tale that aims to never patronise or attempt to solve all the world's problems.



The Emperor's Castle - A Fairy Tale Conflict

The Emperor's castle originates from a mythical and ancient tale hidden within a woodblock landscape scene created by Japanese Ukiyo-e printmaker Ando Hiroshige. This tale charts the tempestuous relationship between two star-crossed lovers, the weaving Princess and the Cowherd, who have been separated by the Princess's father, the Emperor. These characters have been replaced by architectonic metaphors that create an urban theatre of conflict within the grounds of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo.

Seeking, extrapolating or even creating these narrative mythologies upon which to draw opens a world of limitless exploration, limitless cities with their own unique identities and without boundaries, only that of your imagination. Here is my city, a city that's more than a city; it's a narrative world illustrating how literature can be directly translated into urban, architectural space.

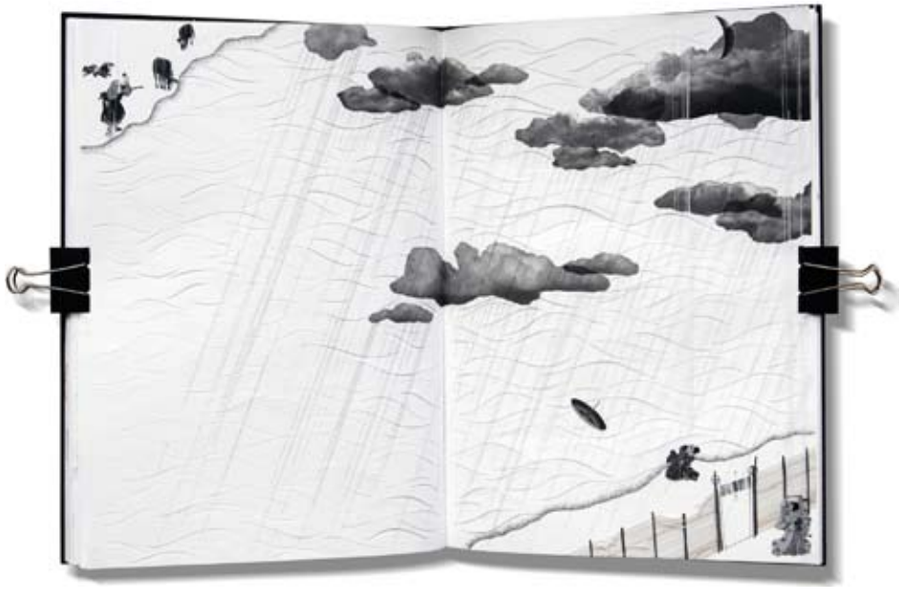
The first two images are two acts from a series of five that illustrate and explore the narrative structure of the tale, creating a series of clues that inform the future architectural proposition. These hand-cut, hand-stitched paper assemblages are cut directly into the sketchbooks, creating a two and a half dimension research '*storybook*'.

Eternal Punishment (top)

Illustrating his anger over the Princess' relationship with a humble cowherd, her father the Emperor separates the couple, placing them back in their original locations. To be sure they would never meet again, he closes the castle and opens the heavens. Rain falls, causing the moat to flood and creating an island of the castle surrounded by a deep and swift lake unassailable by any man. Rain has fallen on this land ever since.

The Last Meeting (bottom)

Seeing the sadness of their friend the Princess, the birds and animals come together to decide how to stop her torrent of tears. The sky becomes black as all the magpies and crows, with their wings spread wide, form a bridge across the lake. When the Princess realizes what the birds have done, she stops crying and rushes across the feathered bridge to embrace the Cowherder and renew their pledge of eternal love.



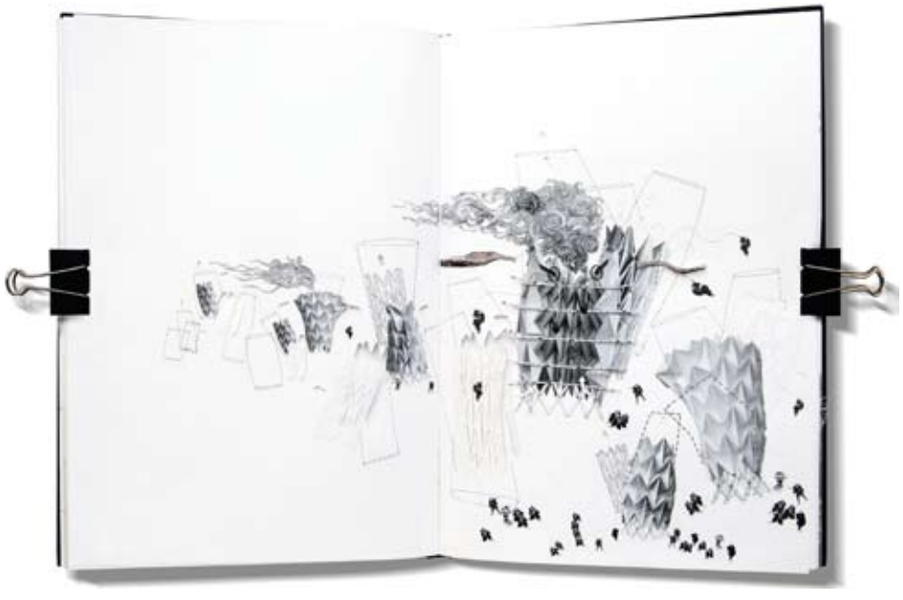
The images on the right page are hand-cut paper collages that explore the architectonic transition that form this architectural proposition.

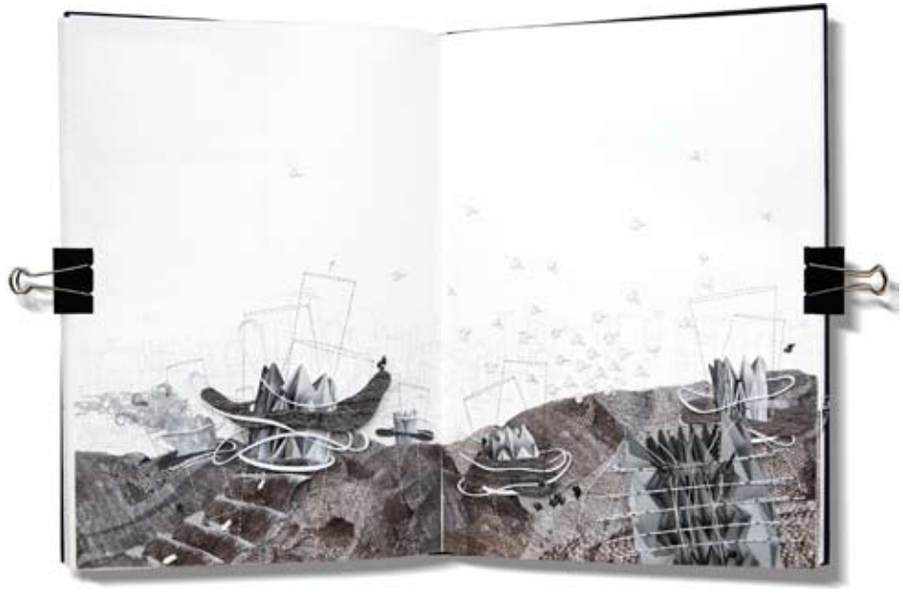
The Emperor's Origami Lungs (top)

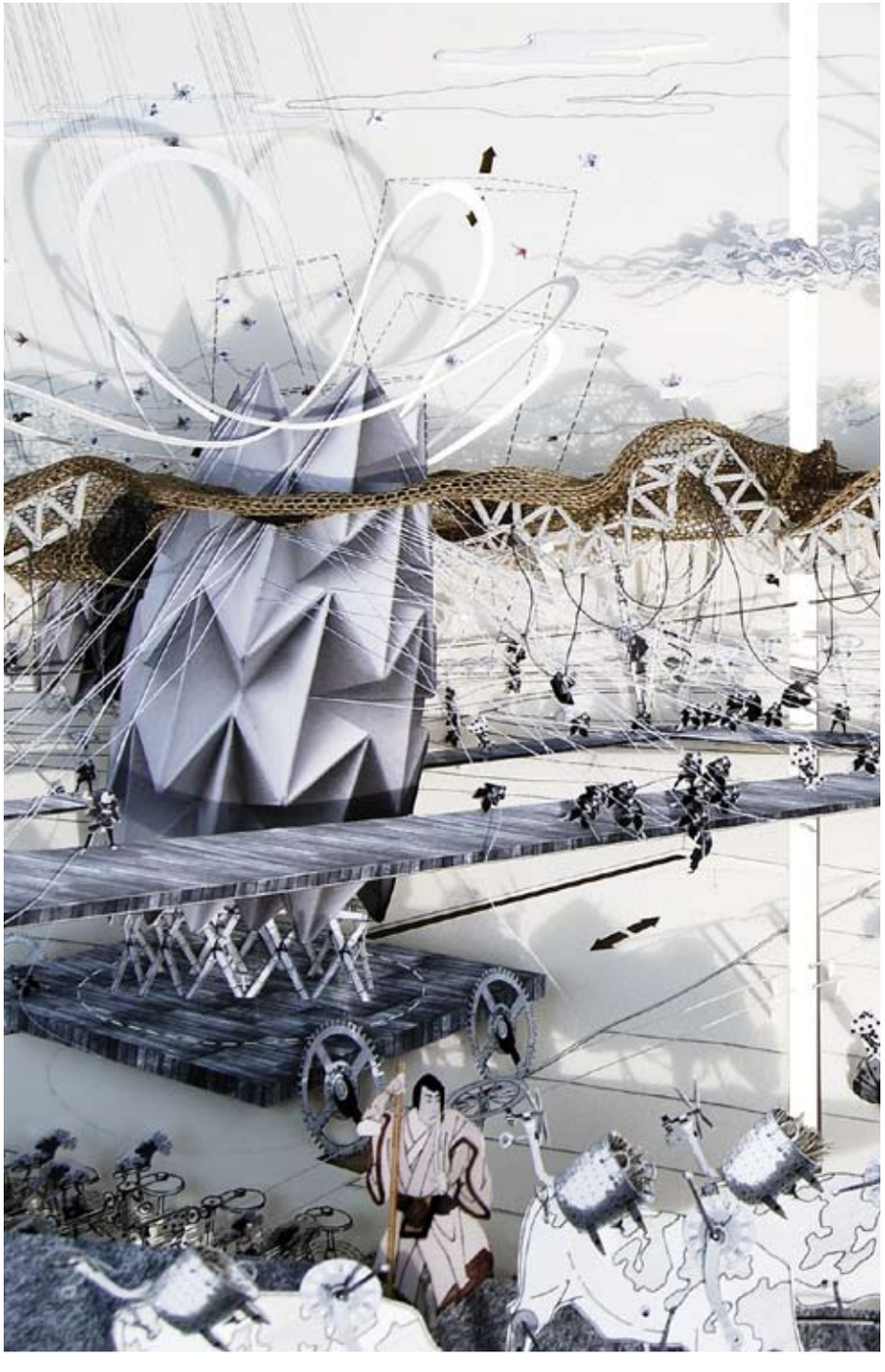
The Emperor's lungs come alive through differing gestures and surface transformations based on geometrical tessellations adopted from origami crease patterns. The lungs imitate the motion of breathing through expansion and contraction, creating a bellowing volume that allows the Emperor to project his emotions both visually and audibly. They rise and fall creating a bobbing motion that produces a rippling effect onto the surrounding skin. The severity of these ripples will depend on the anger of the Emperor and can cause the newly knitted areas of skin to become loose and break, stopping the Princess from ever reaching her beloved cowherd.

The Princess's Knitted Canopy (bottom)

The Princess, a flexible, diaphanous knitted membrane, envelopes the spaces below and is fabricated using the surrounding 'Igusa,' a natural rush material used in the fabrication of tatami mats. Igusa expels a soothing scent as the skin undulates, which is said to calm body and mind. This scent acts as a perfume of remembrance to the Cowherder and drifts out over the city, calming the minds of its many inhabitants.





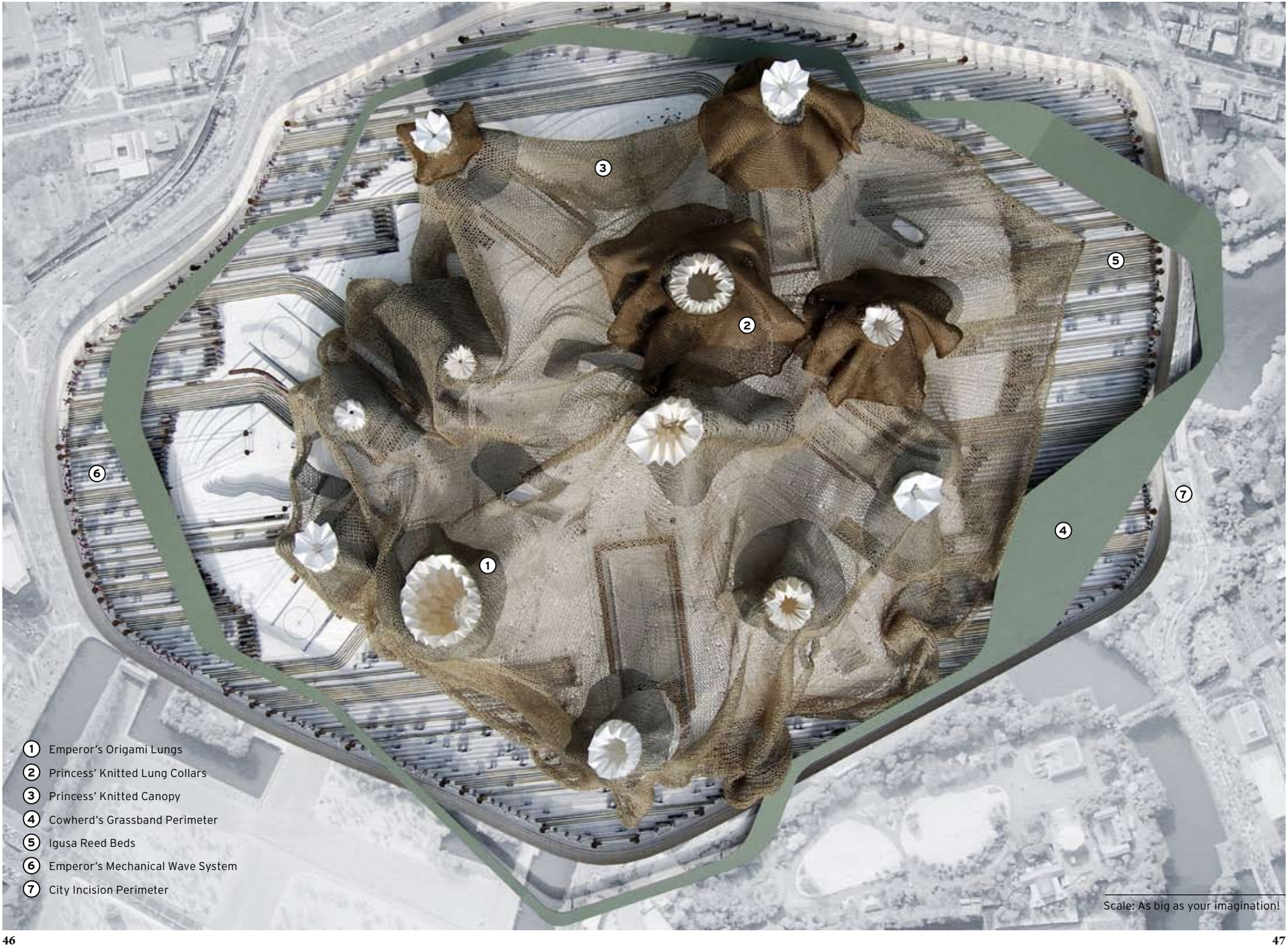


This city is motivated by the dramatic actions of these architectonic props when placed within the urban context. Relationships form between them and the people of the city that in turn create the landscape, form weather patters and all the natural elements that surround us. These props interact with one another, creating this narrative piece of architecture that slowly unfolds before ones eyes in the centre of Tokyo city.

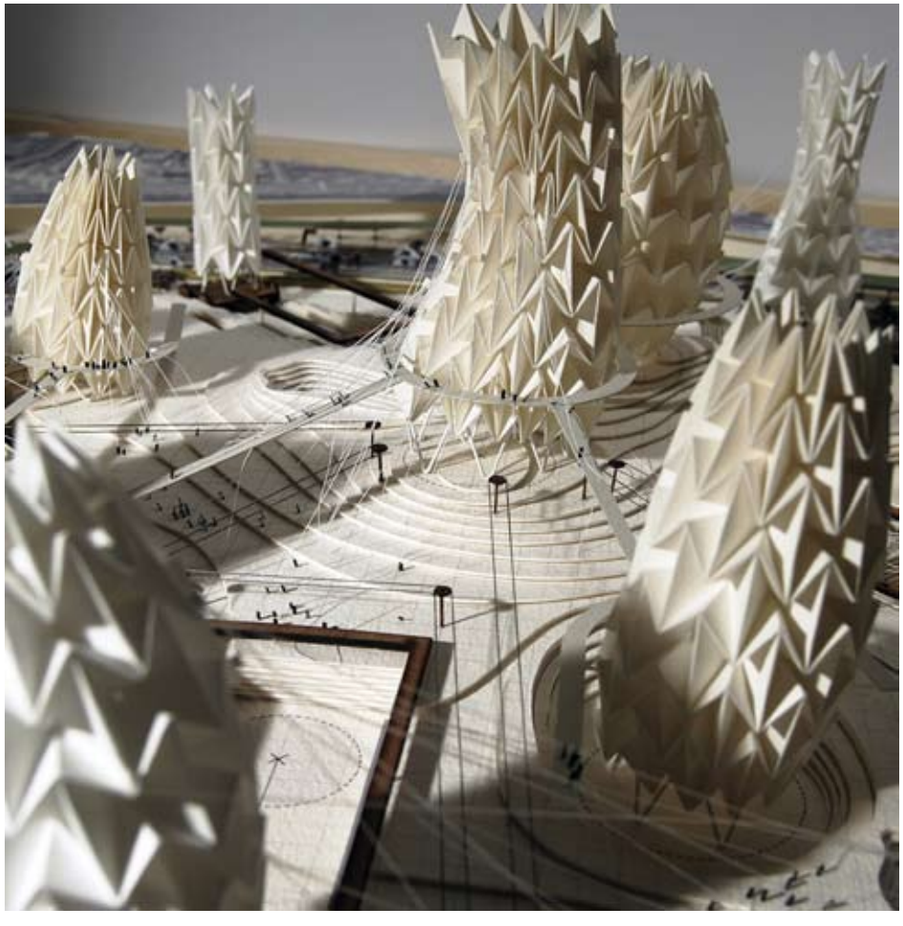
The Princess's membrane knits itself ever larger in aim to reach the grass parkland perimeter representing the Cowherd, thus recreating the connection lost. Linked within this skin is a series of enormous folded plate lung structures; these origami lungs of the Emperor expand and contract blooming like flowers creating the sensation of life. The lungs, deployed around the site, act as physical barriers that manipulate the knitted skin as it extends towards the outer parkland, manipulations controlled and articulated by the Emperor's army using a series of complex pulley systems which pull back the lungs and surrounding skin, forcing the knitting to begin again.

This piece of narrative architecture was the vehicle to examine current day cultural and social issues in Japan such as unconditional piety, relentless work ethic, and conflicting attitudes of love.

How the work was represented throughout was key in illustrating my precise architectural ambition for the project. Tokyo is looked upon as the city of 'bright – lights' and ever-evolving technology, yet within its underbelly exists the ideal of 'exquisite craft' that has defined Japan over the centuries; I wanted my work to compliment these ideals. The work is represented through the medium of precise and meticulously-crafted hand-cut paper collage paired with pencil work, thread work and even large-scale hand knitting.


1 Emperor's Origami Lungs
2 Princess' Knitted Lung Collars
3 Princess' Knitted Canopy
4 Cowherd's Grassband Perimeter
5 Igusa Reed Beds
6 Emperor's Mechanical Wave System
7 City Incision Perimeter
Scale: As big as your imagination!

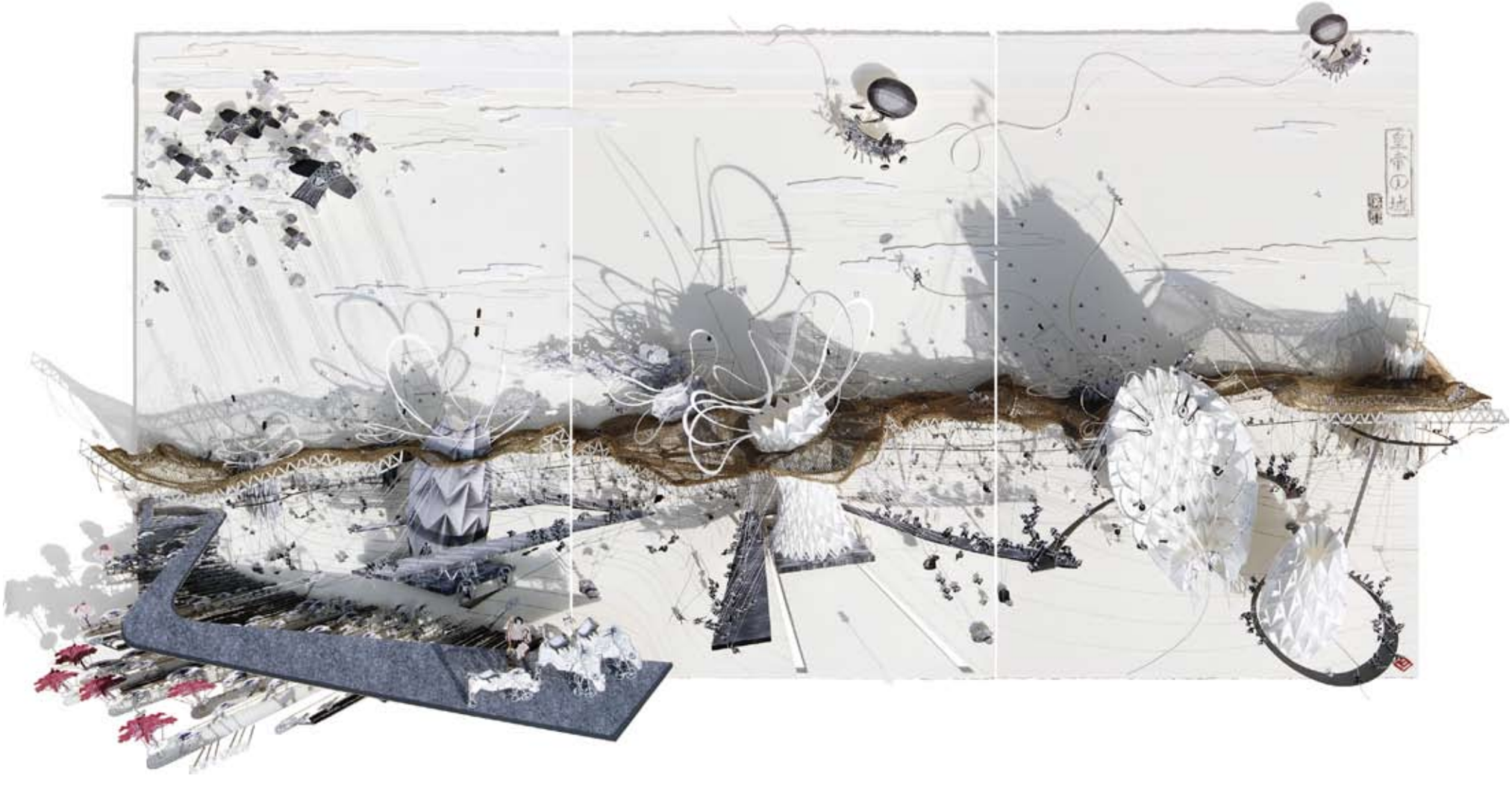
The contoured landscape underneath the knitted canopy exposes a series of interconnecting walkways that allow the Emperor's army to scramble from one lung to another.



The Emperor's origami lungs.

The lung movements generate a bellowing volume of air, which is forced upwards sending the woven lung collars into a thrashing frenzy, visually increasing the impact of the Emperor's anger.

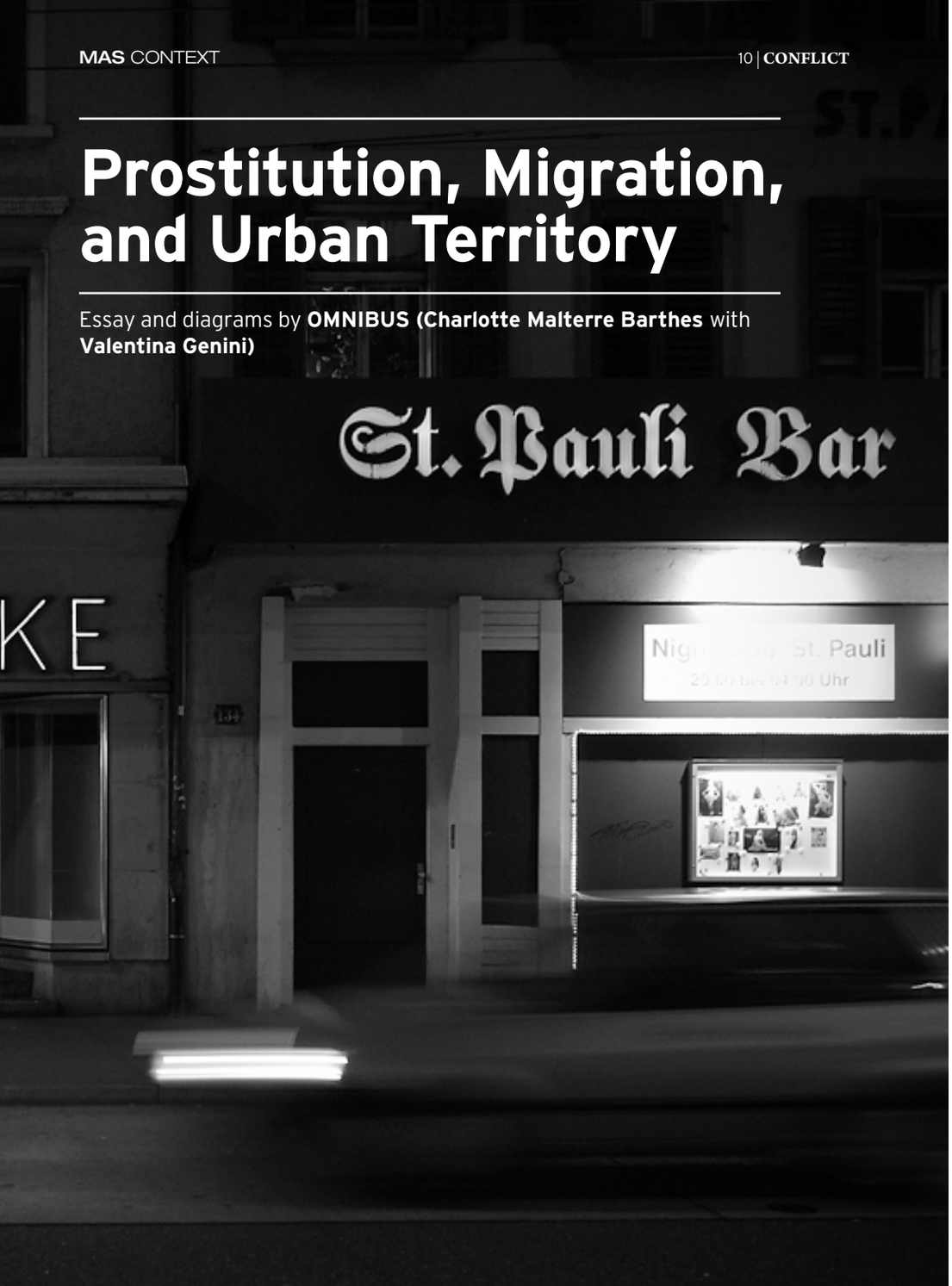
The grass band of the Cowherd is the park the public uses to view the unfolding spectacle. This band hovers above the 'Potemkin' mechanical waves that represent the deep and swift lake. These waves are interspersed with the 'Igusa' rush meadows that are cut and dispatched to the Princess for knitting.



The final triptych, a section through this urban theatre illustrating the frenetic 'life' of the building. This 1.8m x 0.8m piece is the culmination of the research and design synthesis previously shown.

Prostitution, Migration, and Urban Territory

Essay and diagrams by **OMNIBUS (Charlotte Malterre Barthes** with **Valentina Genini)**



Militär-/Langstrasse, Zürich: St.Pauli-Bar
© Flickr user Dom Dada

"The ambivalent attitude of the police towards prostitution, alternating tolerance and persecution, is a response to the ambivalence of society as a whole to the phenomenon of prostitution".

Ashworth, White, Winchester, "The red-light district in the west European city: a neglected aspect of the urban landscape"

Prostitution is generally and traditionally defined as an exchange of sexual services for money or material remuneration. [1] However, according to Marxist theory, it is more than that, because of the notion of power over one person's body by another. 'Sex work' [2] exerts individually a right of command over another's person for a time: domination. Control over bodies might be the main goal of all societies and is, over women bodies [3], fundamental. Doubtfully, it is no overstatement to extend this projection to the urban space and the desire of control exerted by authorities over prostitution. Domination, particularly in terms of space, is conflict generating. When street- practiced or in reserved districts *de facto* visible, prostitution is often attached to general degradation of life quality and stigmatization of areas, as dirty, dangerous and depraved. The conflict between prostitution and the urban space [4] relates to the sexualisation of the city and the production of moral geographies, and to the consequent migrations.

To opt for Zurich as case study allows recognizance of migrations in the city as a concrete paradigm while today, prostitution phenomenon is on the rise. Clients are estimated in the whole country between 200,000 and 280,000 per month, approximately 10 to 15% of the country male population between 20 and 65 years old. [5] The lack of restrictions, combined with the country's wealth, has pushed the number of prostitutes per capita in Zurich to one of the highest ratio of industrialized countries. Based on police figures, [6] Zurich has about 11 prostitutes per 1,000 people, similar to the rate of Amsterdam, known for its sex trade.

With the assumption that the more explicit and visible prostitution is, the more it sexualizes the space it occupies and the deepest the conflict it generates, a relation is to be established between mobility and visibility of prostitution.

1. Pateman C. (1998) "The Sexual Contract," Cambridge: Polity Press.

2. The term of 'sex work' used by officials such as the World Health Organization acknowledge the idea that prostitution is a work like any other. Certainly, those being forced to prostitution by violent means can not be enclosed in this term. The International Organization for Migration estimates 500 000 women trafficked to the EU states (1995). Considering this, the term of 'sex work' will be bracketed in this text.

3. This work concentrates mainly on female prostitution, as prevalent phenomenon.

4. Ashworth, G.,White, P. & Winchester, H. (1988) 'The red-light district in the west European city: a neglected aspect of the urban landscape', Geoforum 19, pp. 201-12.

5. Fondation Scelles. (07-06-2006). La prostitution en Europe, une activité en constante mutation.

Prostitution in urban territories: Sexualizing the city

Prostitution signals the presence of sex in the urban space. The city is sexualized and organizes human sexual relations in a Manichean way to perpetuate distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' sexual identities. [7] Namely, socio-spatial practices encourage people to adopt heterosexual identities without them being conscious of it. Only confronted by 'abnormal' different manifestations of sexuality (prostitution, homosexuality, hard core pornography, etc…) do they come to question their own sexual evidence. Hence prostitutes constitute a key sexual identity about the limits of 'heterosexuality.' Prostitutes are symbolic of 'sexifying' heterosexuality, [8] thus being banned from clean realms of heterosexual citizenships.

Prostitution occurs in a variety of settings. In street prostitution, the prostitute solicits customers while waiting at street corners or walking alongside a street, visible but possibly only at a certain time during the day. Prostitution also takes place in some massage parlours, identified as such. Where prostitution is more out in the open, solicitation is done at bars. Brothels or sex clubs are establishments specifically dedicated to prostitution, occasionally red-lighted at night. Prostitution can also take place at the prostitute's apartment or in a rented room when solicitation of costumers is done from behind windows or through advertising. In escort or out-call prostitution, the customer calls an agency and the act takes place at the customer's place of residence or more commonly at his hotel room, thus reducing direct visibility.

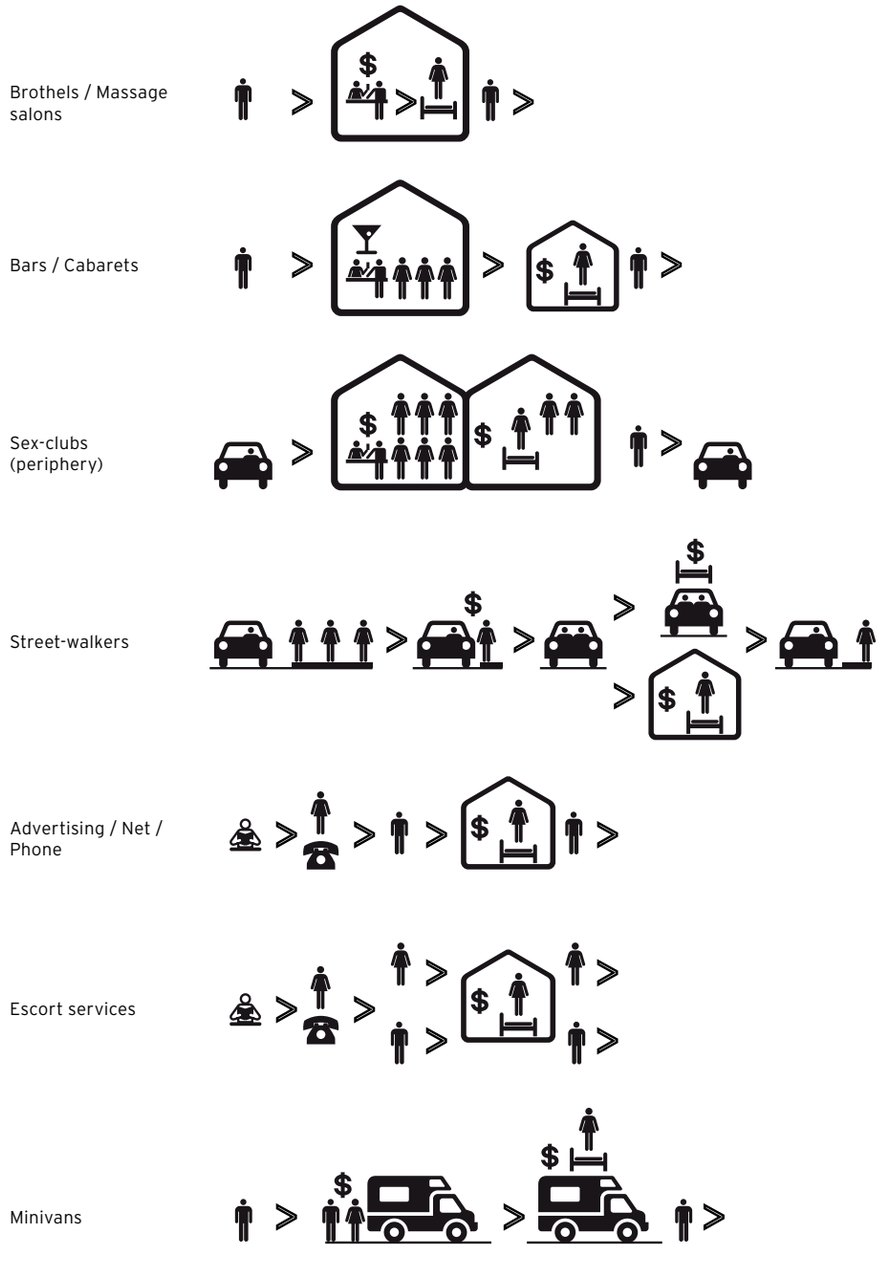
Hypothetically, because visible prostitution sexualizes its pertained space, a connection can be recognized between mobility and visibility of prostitution. A recognized, legalized business such as a brothel implies certain spatial inertia, due to reputation and tolerance. But visibility is here delimited by a building facade. On the other hand, with a much more explicit exposition, with visible prostitutes and clients, thus much more 'sexualized', street prostitution is constantly stigmatized and extremely mobile. Thus, the question of visibility is central to the spatial aspect, as it sexualizes the city and directly influences morality and therefore movements of prostitution (migrations), a paradigm that could be labeled as a conflict.

6. Allen Matthew. (June 14, 2007). Police crack down on east European prostitutes

7. Hubbard, Philip (1999) Sex and the city: Geographies of Prostitution in the Urban West, Aldershot ; Ashgate Publisher

8. Nast, Heidi, Pile, Steve. (1998) "Places Through the Body", London; Routledge.

FORMS OF PROSTITUTION



Spatial morality and migration: the creation of spatialized moral order by state and law

As the ordering of urban space plays a crucial role in producing and reproducing sexual identities that accord to notions of being 'a good citizen' in western societies, law is a key element to spatial morality.

Law is one of the most powerful means used by society to control behaviour. [9] Jurisdiction seeks to regulate and control prostitution expressing a moral condemnation of it as well as supposedly offering some degree of 'protection' to those engaged with it. Clearly, on the legal aspect, cities and governments (and to a certain extent, civil society) have an impact on where and how prostitution should be practiced, [10] if legal or not, if tolerated or not, and how this relates to its migrations. Therefore, contemporary vice laws are crucial to geographies of prostitution. Moral control and spatial ordering generate a spatialized moral order.

Regulation of 'sex work' often relies on the strategic containment of prostitution in sites where it can be subjected to regimes of surveillance by state and law as by social society. Legal codes, norms and understanding vary from locale to locale. [11] It seems that some forms of prostitution are more tolerated than others; prostitutes working the streets are seen as less acceptable than off-street prostitutes who conduct their affairs in the private realm, presumably on the basis that the presence of prostitutes in the urban space might indicate the state's tacit approval of 'sex work'. Namely, law regulates activities that offend public order and decency and expose the citizen to what's allegedly offensive and injurious. [12] One must concede that jurisdiction concentrates on the 'good' citizen and doesn't necessarily consider populations involved in prostitution, a classic double-standard position.

Another regulation of 'sex work' consists of banning prostitution from city centres and can be related to authority's desire to 'clean' the urban core. Typically, the phenomenon of 'out casting' and peripheralization addresses questions of 'mapping out' specific sites of the body and the city. This means to send away a certain form of prostitution composed of lower classes (fragile/visible/troublesome) and keeping the high-range prostitution 'needed' as sex outlets for business centres.

Current vice laws are difficult to summarise, as they embrace contradictory notions of sexual rights of individuals, gendered space, morality, economy, etc… However, moral control and spatial ordering, as well as mobility and human factors, make spatial order a key element to migrations and locations of prostitution in urban space while underlining the pernicious conflict between 'visible' sex-trade and the city.

9. Karras, R. M., (1996) Common women: prostitution and sexuality in medieval England, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

10. See in annex: Zürich strichplan

11. Pue, W.W. (1990) 'Wrestling with the law: (geographical) specificity vs. (legal) abstraction', Urban Geography 11, 4: 566-585

12. Wolfenden Report (1957) Homosexual offences and prostitutes, London: HMSO.

Prostitution, migration, urban territory: case study Zurich

Migrations of prostitution in Zurich: a brief historical overview

Zurich, as urban centre, has a history of prostitution [13]. Spatially, in the 19th century, the business of prostitution was mainly concentrated in the *Niederdorf*, as 9 of the registered tolerated bordellos were located there. The *Niederdorf* was an area of leisure, packed with drinking houses, bars, informal business and cabarets, enjoying a regional and extra-regional reputation. Women who were to sell themselves moved to the *Niederdorf*, where the chances were better to find clients. Located a bit offside from the new commercial area *Bahnhofstrasse*, away from high traffic streets but close to the city centre and the Railway station, accessibility was high and lead to a considerable increase of frequentation. In the *Köngengasse* and the *Weingasse*, the density of bordellos was relatively high, 2 of the 5 houses of the *Köngengasse* were brothels or such, like the Hotel Krone.

The *Hottingen* district was ostensibly quieter, where *Eidenmattstrasse* and *Kreuzbühlstrasse* 'First-class' establishments were. They profited directly from the neighbourhood of the *Variétés* theatres 'Corso' and 'Pfauen,' just as the theatres could benefit from the bordellos as extension of their entertainment areas. The *Culmannsttrasse* brothel was situated a bit away from the city centre. Close to the ETH and University, it was visited by students and professors. The *Aussersihl* brothel was characterised otherwise. It was located in the *Zollstrasse*, a nearby street of the railway station, a low-rent area with a poorer population. Most of its clients were workers, soldiers and young recruits at duty in the close-by *Kaserne*.

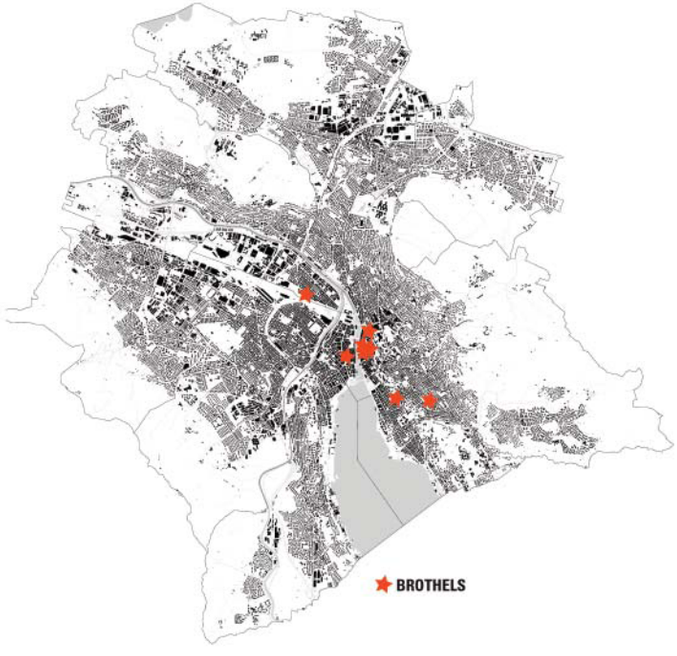
In a word, prostitution businesses at the time were located around multifunctional leisure areas such as *Niederdorf*, close to obvious business poles like the *Kaserne* or theatres , near communication nodes such as the railway station.

At the end of the 19th century, gold times were over. Brothel owners tended to give away the business quickly, pressured by authorities. Concurrence was harder, and brothels started using advertising methods, girls standing barely dressed at windows and doors of the houses

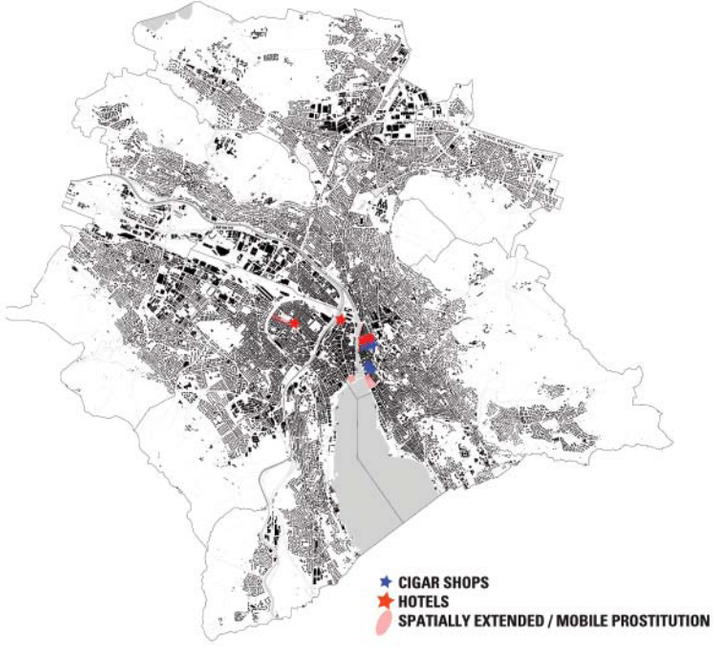
13. Sarasin Philipp, Bochsler Regula, Kury Patrick, exhibition catalogue Wertes Fräulein, was kosten Sie? - Prostitution in Zürich 1875 - 1925 (2004), Baden, ed. Hier+Jetzt

PROSTITUTION IN ZURICH THROUGH TIME: SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

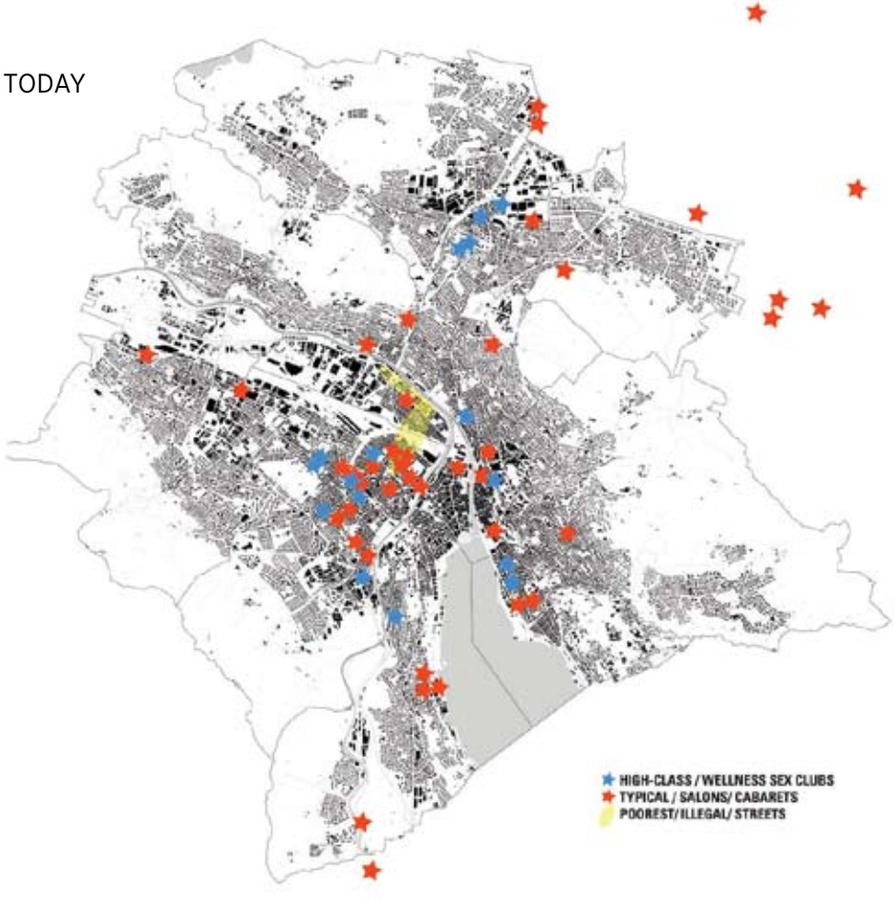
AROUND 1850



AFTER 1897



TODAY



and typical red-lights were installed. Since most establishments were in the vicinity of residential houses, grievance from inhabitants was considerable, a criticism that was to be addressed repeatedly through time. Complaints concerned the behaviour of the girls, loud music, dancing and general activity buzz. Brothels became objects of popular resentment. Unexpected razzias and police investigations were increasing, which upset clients. Harsh controls and consequent busts and prison sentences deteriorated the commerce. Civil society grievance got considerable, as did pressure from morality groups. Finally, in 1897, many bordellos of the city were closed down by authorities and prostitution was officially forbidden. Almost immediately, illegal establishments came out. Drinking-halls, cabarets, bars and pubs soon took over and offered alcohol and sex at all price range. Between 1893 and 1900, one could find 300 various businesses with a parallel function as bordellos.

These were located again in the *Niederdorf* and in the *Aussersihl* around *Langstrasse*. Those areas seemed predestined for prostitution business, both being densely packed with beer halls and small hotels. The back rooms of cigar shops and postcard stores functioned as cover for prostitution. In 1913, thirty-four cigar shops were registered, and often prostitutes owned the shop themselves. By December 1913, this undercover business was closed by official judgement. In general, the massive prostitute population in the streets and places, in cafés, restaurants, Music-halls, *Variétés* and theatres, from elegant ladies (*demimondaines*) at the 'Corso', winking young girls on *Bürkliplatz* and poorly-dressed street-prostitutes on *Limmatquai*, in the streets and bars of *Niederdorf* or installed in the *Aussersihl*, confirmed a spatially-extended and mobile activity of prostitution in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Prostitution activity declined and leapt into clandestinity as moral pressure of both war time and post-war were not favourable to legalization. However, typically, *Langstrasse*, *Niederdorf* and its extension *Seefeld* [14] were stigmatized as prostitution areas throughout the 50's and 60's. As the 1973 oil crisis happened, the working immigrant population was sent home as the inland work market deteriorated. Consequently, a void in the housing area formerly rented by this population was produced, namely in the 4th District -*Langstrasse*. Prices of rents were decreasing and the milieu took over, as authorities' control was low. At the end of the 80's, lax drug policy created the

14. (11. December 2006). Urs Ledermann - der Vermieter des Seefelds. Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

so-called tolerated 'open scenes,' draining drug-addicted prostitution activity around the railway-station, *Letten* and *Limmatplatz*. After having given up on hopes that a policy of tolerance would lead to self-regulation and containment, those areas were police-cleared in 1995 [15]. Activity of ealing and prostitution deported themselves to *Langstrasse*.

Switzerland legalised prostitution in 1992, and in 1998 the first legal brothel, called 'Petite Fleur' ('*Small Flower*') re-opened in Zurich. Street prostitution remains illegal. The city authorities issued in 1991 a 'Strichplan' [16] that identifies 14 street portions dedicated to streetwalkers where they are allowed to propose sexual services from 7 PM to 5 AM. Contravening is penalized by up to 500 CHF fines [17]. Apparently, police forces are outnumbered and cannot guarantee the respect of this 'Strichplan.' [18] *Langstrasse* and *Niederdorf*, even though both were recognized as prostitution areas, do not appear on the map.

Beautification and migration tendencies

When the project 'Langstrasse PLUS' [19] was launched in 2001, it was in response to the organized outcry of local residents and merchants concerned about the growth of street sex trade in the *Langstrasse* area. With the declared goal to achieve a better life quality and a safer environment for its inhabitants, the instruments concerned legislation as well as real estate management, with a constant promotion through advertising campaigns. To cut down the sex-trade establishments, the city established the policy of buying pieces of real estate and restructured them with offices, trendy bars and standard flats. This has re-valued the area, chasing out some of sex-trade related businesses, although there are still some 250 brothels or such in the district. [20] Street prostitution is not tolerated in most of the area. In practice, this program intensified the repression of outdoor sex markets, thus redirection some customers to the indoor sector, a move facilitated by online technologies. In fact, many of the women who had been working on the streets got cell phones and headed for sex-clubs.

This can partly explain the phenomena of the migration of prostitution toward the periphery of Zurich. Those sex-clubs are now established in the suburban areas of the city. [21] Dispersed in the outskirt villages, housed in quiet residential neighbourhoods, these types

15. Cowell Alan. (March 12, 1995). Zurich's Open Drug Policy Goes Into Withdrawal, The New York Times.

16. See document in next page.

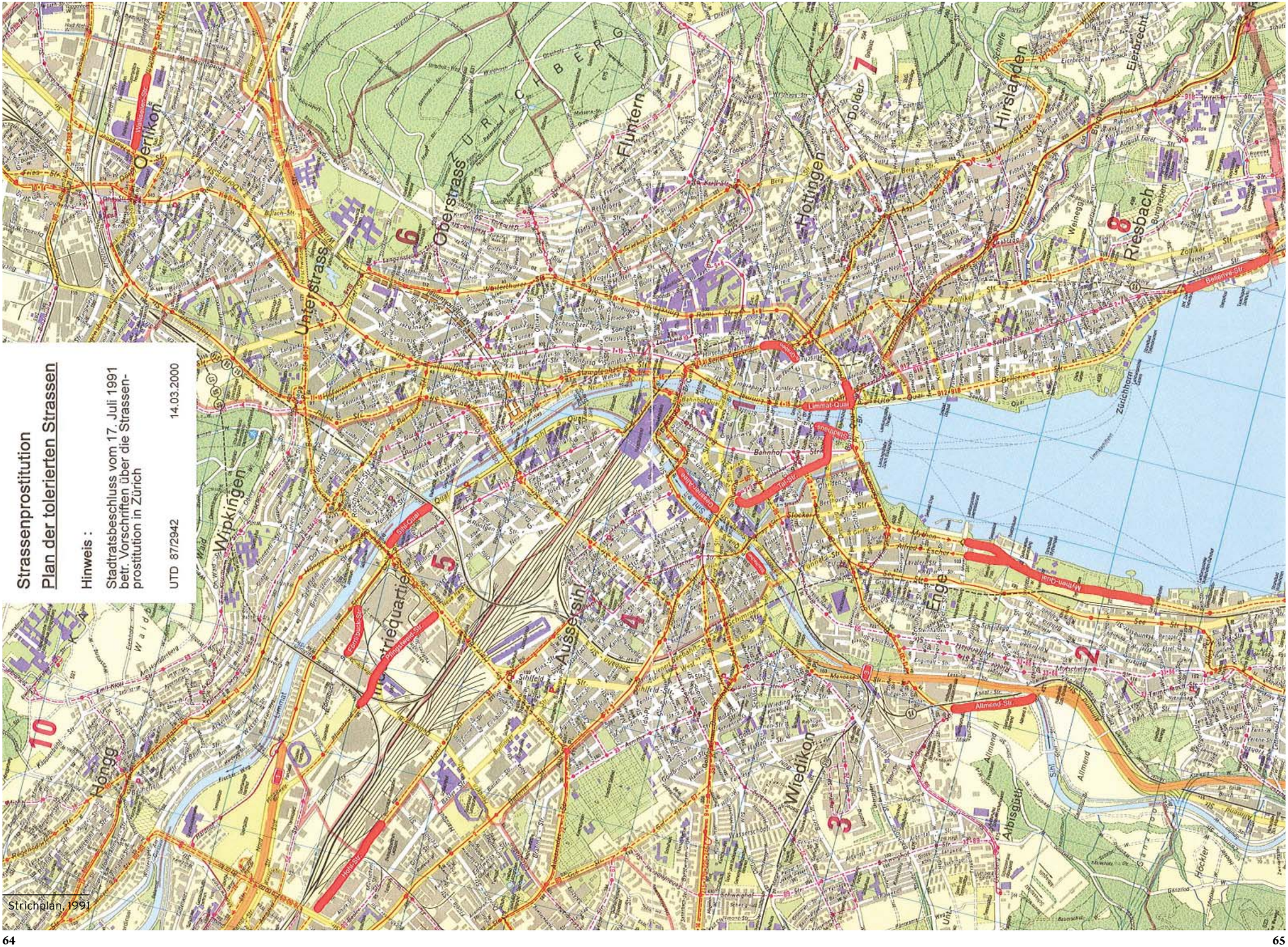
17. Vorschriften über die Strassenprostitution. Stadtratsbeschluss vom 17. Juli 1991 (2204)1 mit Änderungen bis 14. Mai 2003 Gestützt auf § 74 des Gemeindegesetzes.

18. Interview with Rolf Vieli, in charge of the 'Langstrasse PLUS' project at the Zurich City Police, 10-05-2008.

19. Stadt Zürich. (2001). Langstrasse PLUS. Available: http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/internet/pd/ls/home.html. Last accessed 21 June 2008.

20. Keller Monique. (10/06/2008). Langstrasse à Zurich, ou la mutation du quartier chaud en quartier bobo. La Tribune de Genève.

21. Some are located in the wealthiest areas of the very centre, like club Aphrodisia, near the Neue Börse.



Strichplan, 1991

of services are strongly internet-based, and display on their website to potential clients the location of the club, how to reach it, types of proposed services and pictures of the prostitutes. Graphic codes used in those web pages are very colourful and catchy, attempting to draw attention.

Basically, the Internet advertises those clubs on a private platform that replaces the public platform with which they cannot physically advertise. In fact, spatially, those suburban brothels sport a quiet, common, innocent appearance of family houses and office buildings. They only become identifiable at night when their character is red-neon-proclaimed. This semi-anonymity might be partly due to the increase of communication and mobility that leads to separate places of contact and places of transaction, thus reducing the need of visible display. It might also be the wish to be mapped out from moral geography in order to avoid stigmatization and reaction of the local authorities. The hole in the cantonal regulations those clubs are exploiting might be filled as soon as civil society once again complains.

Conclusion

Through time, the migration of prostitution in Zurich has been drawn by different tendencies. Certainly, poles of business, such as theatres or caserns were at a time crucial, whereas communication nodes and axis became more and more attractive for prostitution business as mobility has been expanding. Nevertheless, the inertia of persistent entertainment areas is high, as one can see with the case of the *Niederdorf*, being identified with the sex trade for more than a hundred years.

However, two opposite tendencies could be observed in the phenomena of the migration of prostitution: on one hand, the increase of communication and of client mobility, together with beautification programs lead by the authorities, partially caused a peripheralization of prostitution, especially towards the northwestern areas of the city, the airport area and the *Glattbrugg* neighbourhood, out of range of municipal jurisdiction. Certainly, officials are concerned that this migration from city to periphery may head even further towards remote locations being dangerously isolated for women involved in prostitution. But the fact that part of the sex-trade is out of cities and out of citizen's view is without doubt satisfying for the Zurich municipality.

22. Switzerland possesses a precise urbanism code, with each city defining what kind of business is allowed to open where. However, fighting against sex-establishments is a difficult task for authorities. Businesses open since longer than 10 or 15 years are nearly impossible to chase away. As for new ones, when a business solicits an opening permit, it is often not clearly stated what it will be (cabarets are typically not supposed to be sex-establishments)- Interview with Rolf Vieli, in charge of the 'Langstrasse PLUS' project at the Zurich City Police, 10-05-2008.

23. Landolt Christoph (21-04-2011) Prostituierten-Rekord auf dem Silhquai. Tages Anzeiger.

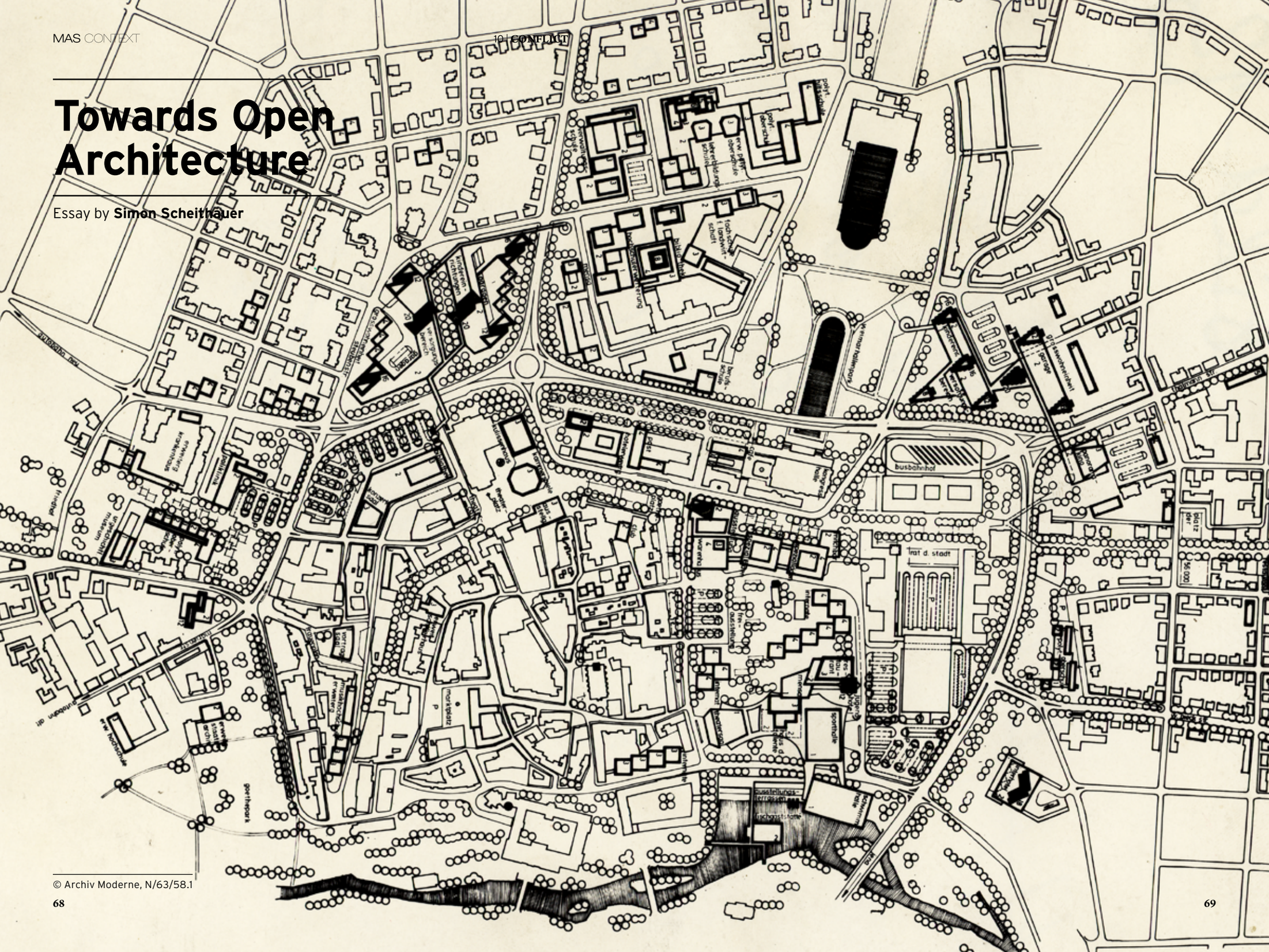
On the other hand, authorities still seem to favour centralized, defined and tolerated 'sacrificed' red-light districts such as Langstrasse in order to be able to operate control, as well as to maintain a certain offer of sex-outlets in the city. Therefore, credits allocated to programs are voluntary limited or so it seems. [22] Beautification strategies might as well function as demagogic tools to quieten down public opinion. [23]

Officials' contradictory and ambivalent positions typically demonstrate the complexity of the topography of prostitution. Scarcity of geographically reliable information in addition to the factors' intricacy makes it indeed difficult to issue ultimate conclusions on this changing matter. Nevertheless, one can stress that migrations of this activity in urban space are inter-dependant of laws and moral control, tolerance issues, accessibility factors and spatial ordering. As all of those elements are subject to vary, prostitution adjusts through migration, migrations that illustrate the conflicted relation between sex and the urban space.

Note
This article was initiated in 2008 in the frame of the Seminar 'Urban Mutations on the Edge' with Prof. Marc Angélil, and Deane Simpson at the ETH (Swiss Institute of Technology)

Towards Open Architecture

Essay by **Simon Scheithauer**



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In 1967, the city of Weimar announced a competition in order to re-organize its centre. The city itself – at times home to many famous writers, painters, musicians and philosophers, founding place of the first German republic and cradle of the Bauhaus – was and still is considered to be a kind of 'nucleus' to German culture. The municipalities' undertaking was part of a broader approach by Eastern Germany's government – ruled by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) – to 'reconstruct' its cities along with the intended construction of a communist society. [1] The general concept of a *socialist city* is a rather diffuse construct, which is especially true for the late 1960s. Whereas in the early postwar period, architecture was subject to the dogma of *national tradition*, along with the end of Stalinism a paradigm shift led to a more functionalist architecture. [2] From the beginning of the decade, the SED government undertook a major effort, which the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was only the most visible part of, to obviate Eastern Germany's economic decline. On other levels, officials were desperately trying to introduce an (at least almost) realistic relation between monetary and actual value of production. The government knew it could not meet the people's needs, especially sufficient housing space, unless it would promote industrial methods of building. In the course of this development socialist architecture lost its distinctive features or, more precisely, they were changed from aesthetical to more ideological ones. By the end of the 1960s, with the events today known as *Prague Spring*, [3] the attempts of reform in Eastern Europe and the GDR came to an end. Today, what used to be 'behind' the *Iron Curtain* often appears as some obscure world of political oppression, economic incompetence and everyday oddity. Phrasing it 'behind the wall' of course implicates a perspective from either the western side of it, or in my case, from a temporally distant position. More important though, contemporary views often contain the notion of something unknown, alien, of something that is different from what we are dealing with today.

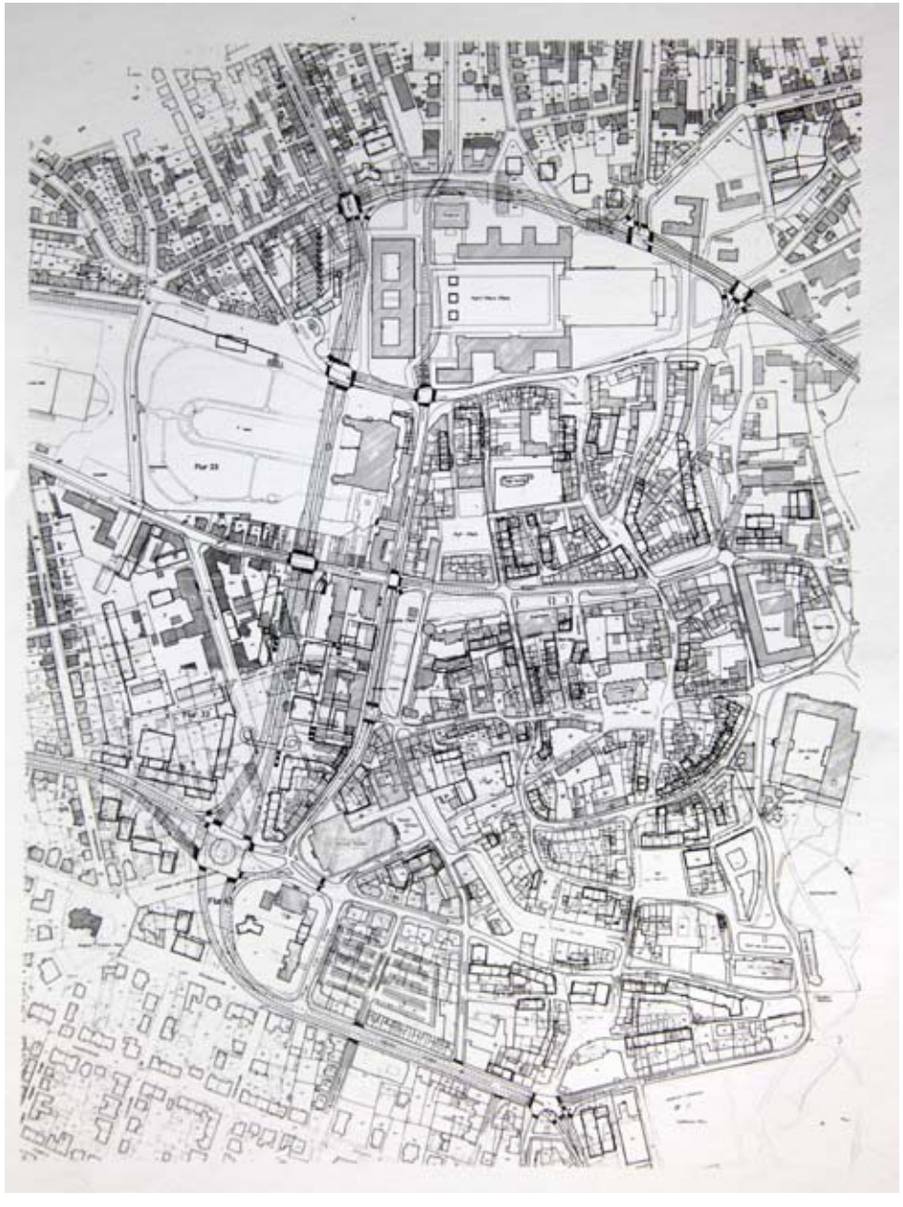
As the architect and historian Holger Barth states, examination of competitions allows much more information about the prevailing views on architecture and the city than the actual practice, because competitions were much more driven by idealism. [4] This is certainly true in regards to the plannings undertaken in Weimar at this time, which were ambitious regardless of the economic capacity – or lack thereof. They had been preceded by a general town planning scheme,

1. In Socialist parlance, 'reconstruction' in this context is used as 'remodeling to increase benefits.'

2. In 1954, Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, declared a turnabout towards an industrialized way of building. The paradigm shift started having influence on the GRD after the first national congress on building in 1955.

3. The term describes the event in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of 1968, when reformist Alexander Dubcek came to power. In April, the Warsaw Pact invaded the country in order to halt the liberalization of the country.

4. Holger Barth, "Grammatik Sozialisticher Architekturen" (Berlin: Reimer, 2001), 31.



Municipal Planning Department: Rekonstruktionsplan, 1967
© Stadtarchiv Weimar, 13/1671 Bd. 1.

which already addressed many aspects of the competitions brief. The brief then included an eight-pages program of all kinds of functions; thousands of square meters to further model the city as a major cultural centre of the country. The existing city was segmented into different parts that were meant to be designed according to their urbanistic role, whereas the transportation network was to be equipped in a way that would meet 'modern requirements'. At that time, this apparently meant to separate different types of traffic (motored, pedestrian etc.) and having a four-lane bypass road to border around the centre on three sides. At the same time, the existing morphology of the urban fabric was proclaimed the basis of future planning. The historic centre was to be preserved, but since large parts of it were defined as 'architecturally marginal', they were excluded from protection. It is rather easy to unmask this technocratic lingo as the pure functionalist ideology it represents. The dogmatic approach is most obvious on closer inspection of the data used for argumentation by the city officials: Traffic counts, for example, indicated 3000 cars passing one of the major junctions in a period of 16 hours. Needless to say, that means a little more than three cars per minute, which is why the drawn conclusion to extend the street to four lanes must be irritating. This, of course, is a reason for distrusting the officials claiming to follow actual necessities. This megalomanic planning continues in the competitions' actual submissions.

The winning proposal is characterized by a major bypass-road paling the centre's western side. The design mostly follows the preferences verbalized in the brief. Two sets of up to twenty stories-high buildings are positioned at the two main intersections, which these so-called 'dominants' were supposed to mark. In the centre, major parts of the existing urban fabric were completely destroyed, to be rebuilt with large sets of buildings providing functions according to the program. This was to become the basis of future city development, paradoxically claiming to preserve the 'historic milieu' of the city. I am not at all condemning the architects for being radical, brutal or not sensitive enough. It is an unalterable truth that destruction sometimes is a precondition of the new and there always is a certain bravery in following a vision, but it is also critical not to always be doubtful. Today, architects of that time appear to be commonly viewed as barbaric. Without question this is an awful commonplace, since there are many architects whose work is widely appreciated

VEB Hochbauprojektierung Erfurt: Winning proposal, 1968, photography of the model
© Stadtarchiv Weimar, 13/1671 Bd. 2

today – by other architects. Still, in Germany and Europe we are today seeing large-scale approaches to rebuild what, in the eyes of large parts of the population, has gone lost – by removing what exists today instead.

For the case of Weimar, these discussions are obsolete. Even though further planning was undertaken subsequent to the 1967/68 competition, there was no actual impact on the city's morphology. First of all, the intended massive destruction of the urban heritage was not without consequences, but already criticized even at that time. The president of *Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar*, Helmut Holtzhauer, published a scathing cirticism on the competition results directly after its end. [5] He especially opposed the idea of excluding large areas of the city from protection by marginalizing its value. He exposed the brief's contradictory goals to take the existing city as a basis for future planning and at the same time demolish large parts of it. He was the only one openly criticizing the plannings, but he admittedly was one of the few persons whose status allowed public cirticism. Without question, there were differing definitions of something being of cultural value, which must necessarily lead to harsh dispute. Another reason that must not be unterestimated is that the phase subsequent to the competition coincided with another paradigm shift in the economy and in architecture, as well as building in general. The national housing construction program of 1973 meant to use precast concrete slabs to build millions of apartments in the open countryside next to the city, leaving the inner cities more or less untouched. The developments could not be implemented to the existing city, because the prefabricated elements could only be put together perpendicularly. Therefore, buildings could not be just filled into empty plots, but whole neighbourhoods would have had to be cleared out first, which would have been much more costly. The socialist economy did just not have sufficient capacities to carry out the ambitious plannings undertaken in Weimar and elsewhere. Looking at the carefully restored façades of Weimar's inner city, this is forgettable happenstance, and even though it was merely a coincidence, it should be a warning to us how reality can be fatally misjudged.

The case of Weimar vividly illustrates how planning can surface opposing views. Architect and writer Jesko Fezer in this sense describes architecture as a 'cultural method of negotiation.' He argues

5. Helmut Holtzhauer, „Weimar – Kritik eines städtebaulichen Ideenwettbewerbs", Deutsche Architektur 3 (1969): 186. – The instituton mentioned was in charge of the alls research, exhibiting and memorizing facilities of the city of Weimar. It was later turned into the Klassik Stiftung Weimar.

that architecture is a tool to articulate, to uncover and discuss problems rather than solving them. For him it therefore is necessary to accept conflicts as proliferous and to value buildings as crossing points of contradictory discourses of reality. [6] In Weimar, the competition brought up the question of whether the existing city should be preserved or rather replaced by something else. The conflicts between present and future are always there, but in moments like the one described, they appear to surface in order to be dealt with. Architecture therefore is not only a 'room for possibilities' (*Möglichkeitsraum*), but first of all a 'room of negotiation' on what the result should be like, [7] on what the preconditions are, on nothing less than how life should be. Conflicting views, dispute and controversy in this context are productive and a precondition of progress. Still, it is no guarantee for a 'solution' to turn out right, because the very idea of an '*architectural solution*', which implies a problem solving by means of design, is part of the problem. Architecture does not solve any problem on its own; if anything, it states a new problem itself. In this sense architecture, as a culminating point of countless aspects of social life, does not end at the property line and does not finish at completion of a project. Architecture should therefore not be understood as evolving linearly towards a finished and hence closed 'solution', but rather as a discoursive process for the creation of what Umberto Eco calls an 'open work'. [8]

6. Jesko Fezer, „Entwurfsproblem Wirklichkeit," HORIZONTE 3 (2011): 49.

7. While the latter term was coined by Jesko Fezer (cf. Note 6), the former concept was developed by Robert Musil in his masterwork *The Man Without Qualities*.

8. Umberto Eco, "The Open Work". Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

The Great Mosques of Lake Geneva

Essay by architect **Mika Savela**

In 1697, the Hapsburg Imperial forces defeated the Ottoman army in Zenta, Serbia. This event came to mark the Ottoman Empire's eventual loss of its territories in Central Europe. As a result, *Europe*, both as a continent and a mindset, became in many ways, not only less Ottoman, but less Islamic than it had been for centuries. Somehow, the memory of the Turks almost reaching Vienna and their presence in the heartlands of Europe was erased into oblivion.

As conquerors, the Ottomans did not systematically tear down the traditional monuments in their provinces, nor spread their religion by force. Instead, they built new institutions, such as schools, mosques, minarets, fountains and baths, as new monuments in the urban fabric. In fact, they built systems that would, in the long run, change both the social and built traditions of cities. In one aspect – the street café – they succeeded beyond all expectations. After the Hapsburg conquest, however, most of the physical remnants of the Ottoman rule were demolished, adapted or intergrated, and with them, in a way, direct reminders of this *otherness* was lost.

After Zenta, the Ottoman Empire remained somewhat isolated from the rest of Europe. One by one, its territories in Northern Africa and around the Mediterranean were snatched by growing European superpowers. At the same time, Western popular interest towards the *otherness* of the Orient started to grow. The West no longer remembered the Turks as *Terrible* conquerors, a veritable threat in the backyard, but instead found them exotic and faraway. This significant shift in thinking and the division of power marked the beginning of romanticized Orientalism, as trips to Constantinople, Damascus, Cairo and other exciting, immensely old cities became more commonplace for the wealthy, European, grand touring elite, inspired by the heroic example of Lord Byron and the like.

In 2009, the Swiss referendum decided on a constitutional ban on the construction of any new minarets to existing or future mosques, in order to protect its skylines and alpine landscapes from possible further Islamic influence, leaving the total number of minarets in the country, so far permanently, at four. At a time when urban silhouettes are changing rapidly and the global urbanization keeps escalating, such forceful attempts at keeping the urban landscape static and uniform might seem like a luxury only a few can afford.

In any case, Islam has returned to the West, not trough monuments but with people. How should one really feel about the Swiss decision of banning, not really minarets as such, but the visibility, and any claims of otherness in the urban landscape, especially when, throughout history, power, stately might, religion, industrialization and modernization have shaped cities everywhere? Outside the western world, these have often been imported forcefully, with systems of rule and order, changing the environment and traditions forever, for better and for worse. What is the worst case scenario for Switzerland?

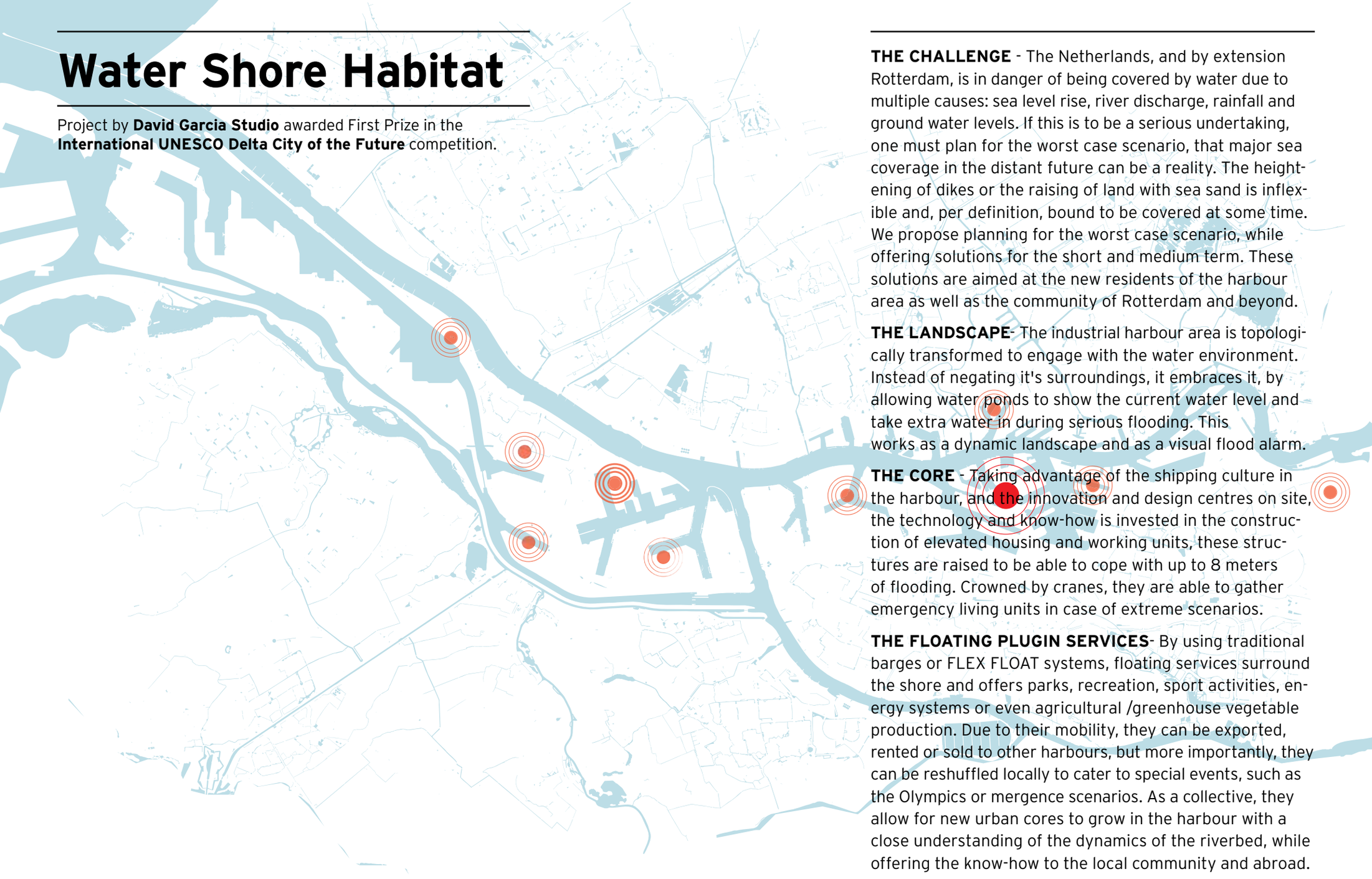
While historical speculation seldom leads anywhere, it does seem tempting to ponder how the Swiss vote would have turned out had the Battle of Zenta ended differently. What would the imagery of classical Switzerland have looked like? How would that carefully preserved image, now so tightly knit into the conception of national landscape, have changed? Are minarets not as beautiful as they were hailed by the late poets and architects, like the young Swiss-born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, who in 1911, after seeing them, wrote *"upon the hilltops of Stamboul the shining white 'Great Mosques' swell up and spread themselves out amid spacious courtyards surrounded by neat tombs in lively cemeteries....Then during the moonlit evenings and black nights if Stamboul my ear was filled by the swooning of their souls and those undulating recitals of all the muezzins on their minarets when they chant and call the devoted to prayer! Immense domes enclose the mystery of closed doors, minarets soar triumphantly sky-ward; against the white-wash of high walls dark green cypress..."* [1]

These images have been created as a blend between late 19th century photochrom prints of both Swiss lakeside cities, and Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, often captured by the same photography companies, collecting beautiful landscapes – now deposited in image archives. As far as the pictures go, the beauty of Bosporus waterfronts and Turkish mosques looks no different from the churches and castles by the cities around Lake Geneva — the caïgues and the rowboats, the embankments of greenery, the nostalgia and sadness. In the end, these different aesthetics of the idealized cultural landscapes seem like a surprising match. The questions we may still have are ultimately directed to the ownership and claim of landscape and its history.

1. Le Corbusier, Journey to the East, ed. Ivan _akni_. (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1987), 94-95.

Water Shore Habitat

Project by **David Garcia Studio** awarded First Prize in the **International UNESCO Delta City of the Future** competition.



THE CHALLENGE - The Netherlands, and by extension Rotterdam, is in danger of being covered by water due to multiple causes: sea level rise, river discharge, rainfall and ground water levels. If this is to be a serious undertaking, one must plan for the worst case scenario, that major sea coverage in the distant future can be a reality. The heightening of dikes or the raising of land with sea sand is inflexible and, per definition, bound to be covered at some time. We propose planning for the worst case scenario, while offering solutions for the short and medium term. These solutions are aimed at the new residents of the harbour area as well as the community of Rotterdam and beyond.

THE LANDSCAPE- The industrial harbour area is topologically transformed to engage with the water environment. Instead of negating it's surroundings, it embraces it, by allowing water ponds to show the current water level and take extra water in during serious flooding. This works as a dynamic landscape and as a visual flood alarm.

THE CORE - Taking advantage of the shipping culture in the harbour, and the innovation and design centres on site, the technology and know-how is invested in the construction of elevated housing and working units, these structures are raised to be able to cope with up to 8 meters of flooding. Crowned by cranes, they are able to gather emergency living units in case of extreme scenarios.

THE FLOATING PLUGIN SERVICES- By using traditional barges or FLEX FLOAT systems, floating services surround the shore and offers parks, recreation, sport activities, energy systems or even agricultural /greenhouse vegetable production. Due to their mobility, they can be exported, rented or sold to other harbours, but more importantly, they can be reshuffled locally to cater to special events, such as the Olympics or mergence scenarios. As a collective, they allow for new urban cores to grow in the harbour with a close understanding of the dynamics of the riverbed, while offering the know-how to the local community and abroad.

THE NETHERLANDS FROM MILD FLOODING TO WORST CASE SCENARIO

THE CORES

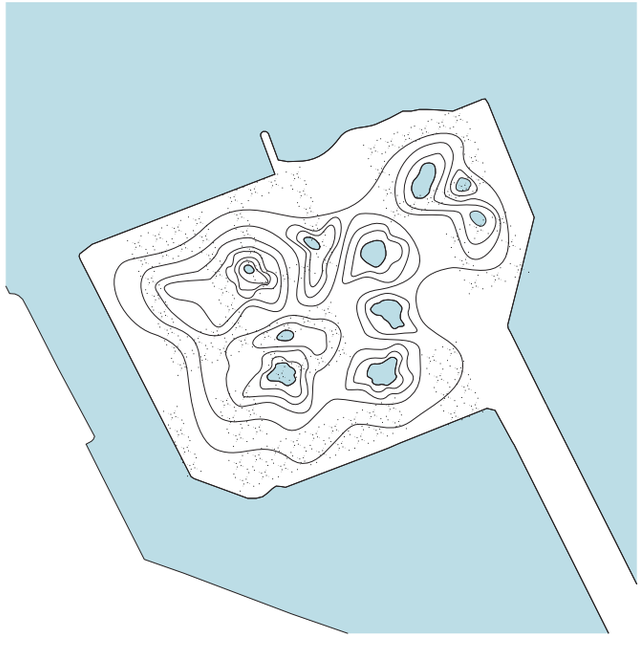
Existing environment

Shoreline is 5 times longer than the quays, offering extensive water contact

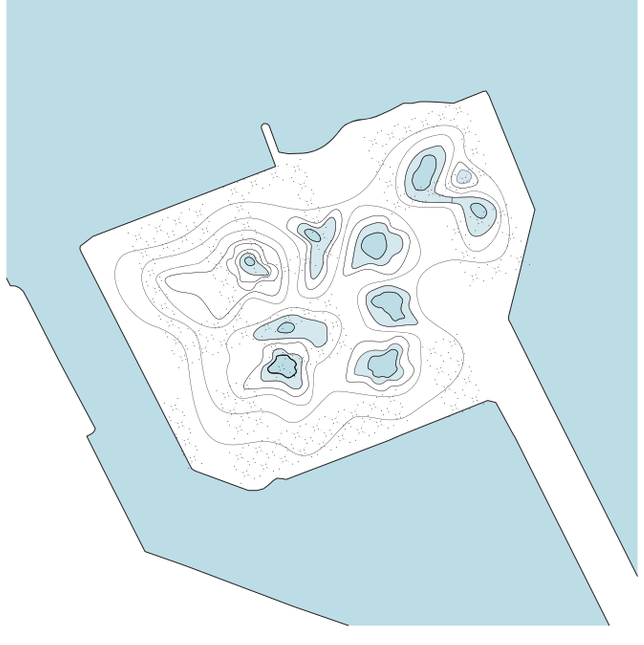
Static cores offer housing and work space

Floating plug-in units can move according to demand, in Rotterdam or beyond

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY



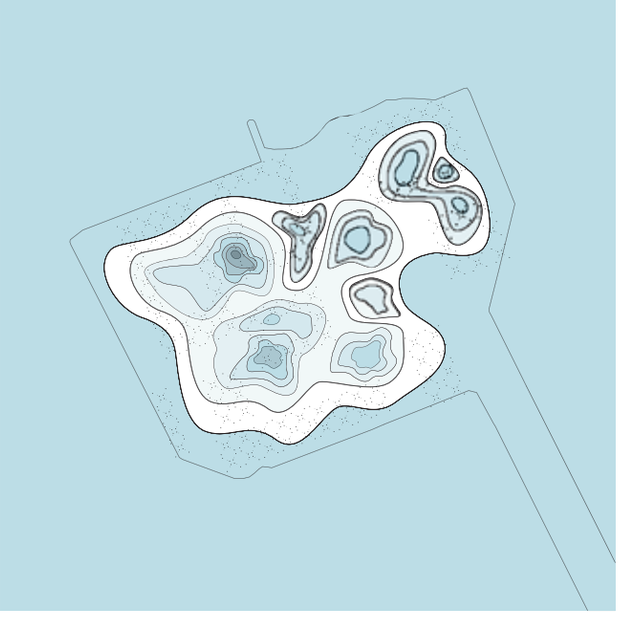
The landscape embraces the medium it lives in, by offering pools which show the existing water level



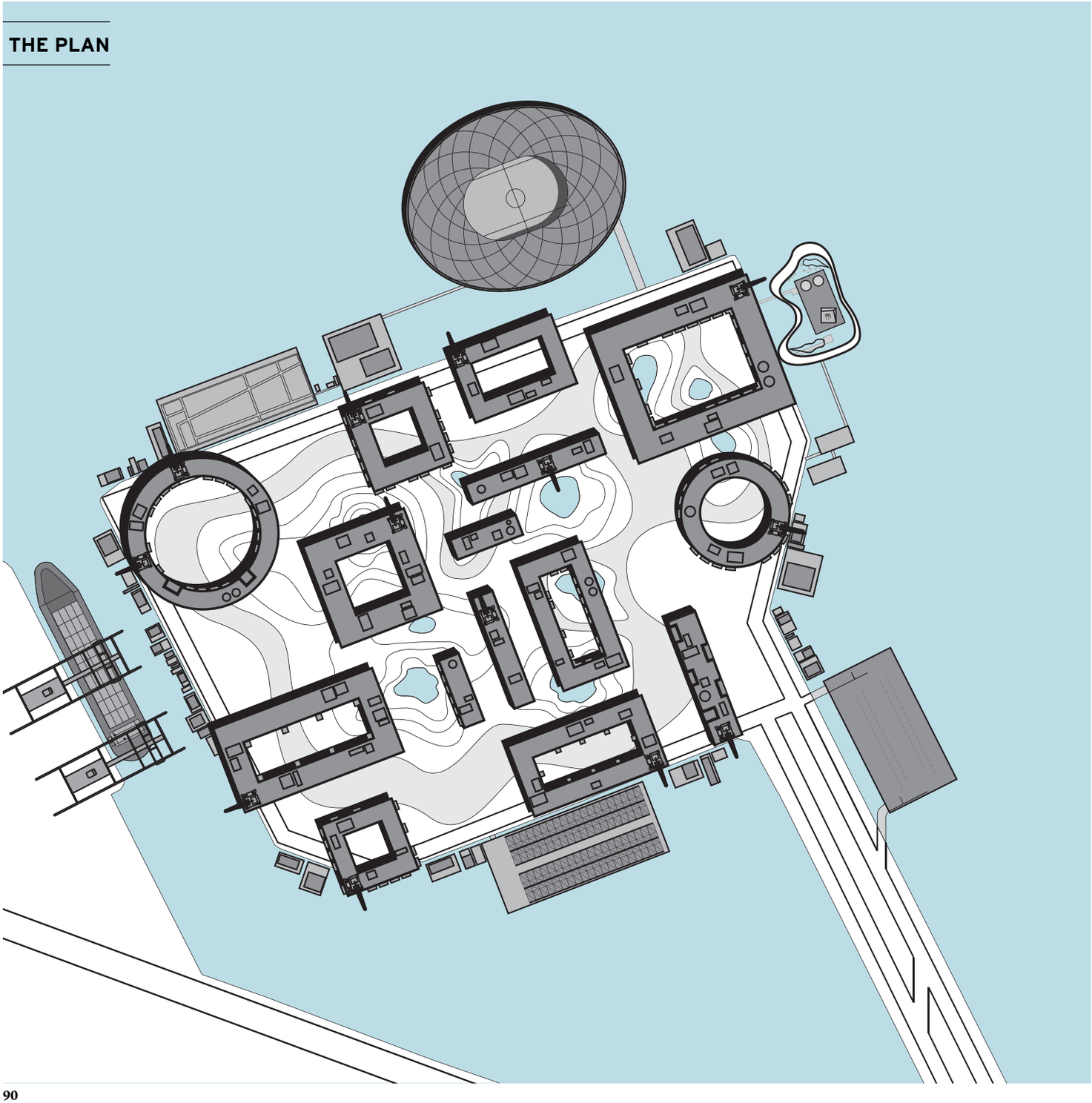
If the water level rises, the pools take in some of the water while becoming a silent signal of the change

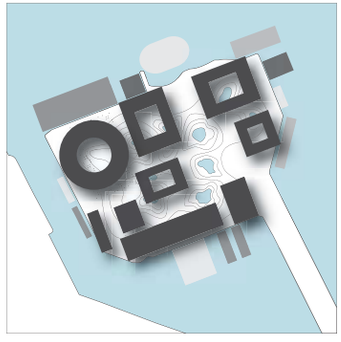
Connection to the housing and work units is always maintained by a raised landscape well above the norm

In case of major flooding, they become islands of their own, offering emergency platforms and access to the plug-in units

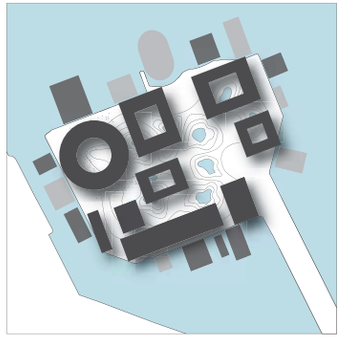


THE PLAN

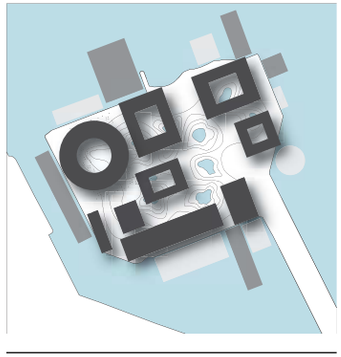




Habitual environment, plug-in services are varied, and offer cultural, sport and recreation services as well as energy and production platforms

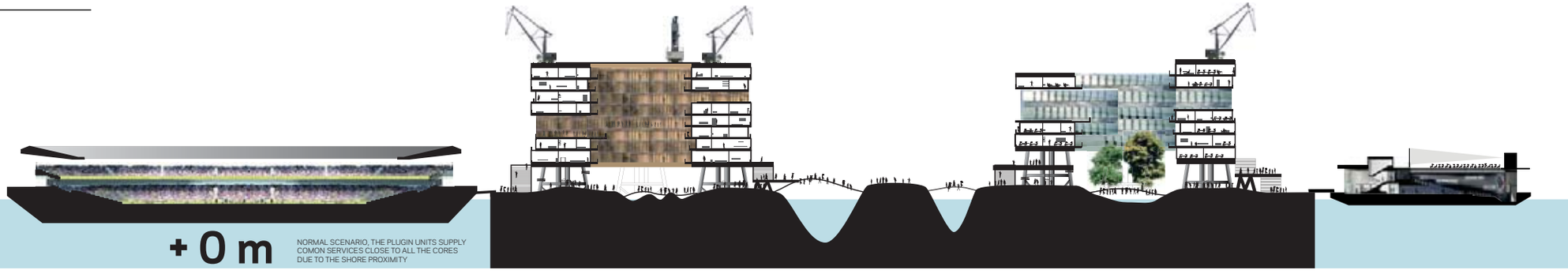


In extreme situations, such as flooding, the platforms can focus on energy and emergency services



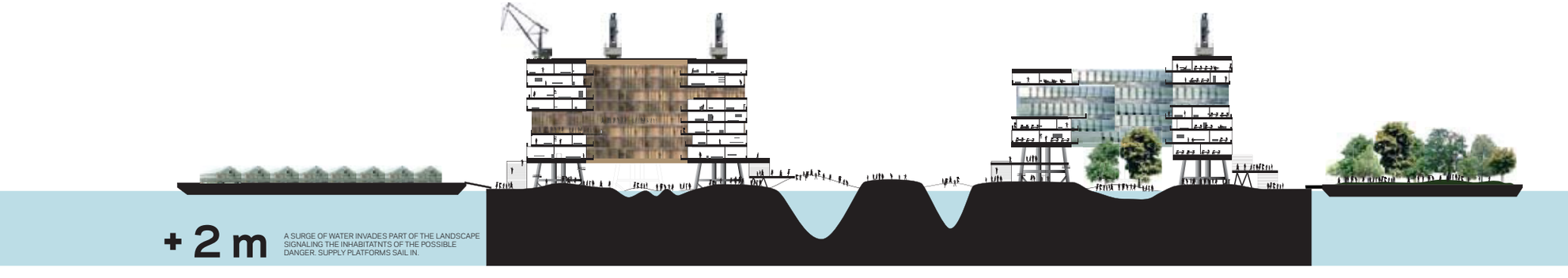
Eventual major events can gather monothematic platforms, for example, a major sporting event like the Olympic Games

SECTIONS



+ 0 m

NORMAL SCENARIO, THE PLUGIN UNITS SUPPLY COMON SERVICES CLOSE TO ALL THE CORES DUE TO THE SHORE PROXIMITY



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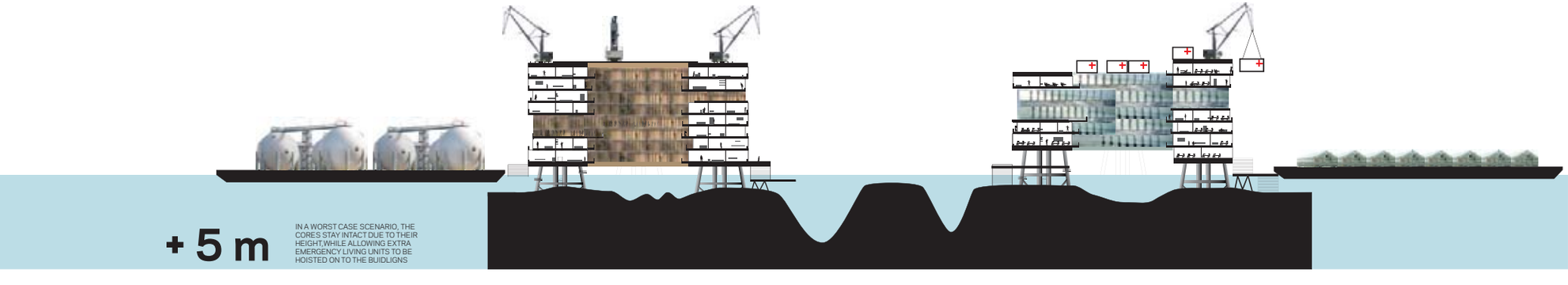
A SURGE OF WATER INVADES PART OF THE LANDSCAPE SIGNALING THE INHABITATNTS OF THE POSSIBLE DANGER. SUPPLY PLATFORMS SAIL IN.



+ 5 m

IN A WORST CASE SCENARIO, THE CORES STAY INTACT DUE TO THEIR HEIGHT,WHILE ALLOWING EXTRA EMERGENCY LIVING UNITS TO BE HOISTED ON TO THE BUIDLIGNS

Image Conflict

Letter from **Javier Arbona**

Dear Iker,

In a previous conversation we had over Twitter, I mentioned something about turning in an image from the Demilit stash. Oh well. I think the image isn't going to come out for this issue after all, unless you find an (unlikely!) wiki-leak. It's a funny story, if I could remember how it goes. We tend to work in this way, full of doubts and second-guesses. Emails fly, and our excitement grows, until someone brings in questions. Conflict brews under the surface. What would an image accomplish in this case? What are we trying to convey, or are we only aiming to get chuckles and little brain sparks for a second? And so the circle goes, round and round.

I hesitate to call this kind of discussing and testing "research," as has become all too common in art and architecture circles of late (once again). That's not to say that we don't have to turn to research at times, but to adopt such Floridian logics of the creative city economy would be to duplicate existing forms of conflict and destructive forms of competition we see in the world: class conflict, knowledge conflict, data conflict, spatial conflict, urban conflict and more.

But I feel like I owe you a better explanation, because the issue on Conflict comes at such a crucial time. When we started Demilit a little over a year ago(!), to write a proposal for the Toward a Just Metropolis Conference at UC Berkeley, we had a very different idea, I suppose, about what we would be doing. Bryan Finoki has a post about it on Subtopia, for the curious. Conflict for us was, back then, a social and spatial product, one could say; a kind of permanent shock doctrine that the "war on terror" has spread into all corners of space and life. And organizing a panel was logical at the time.

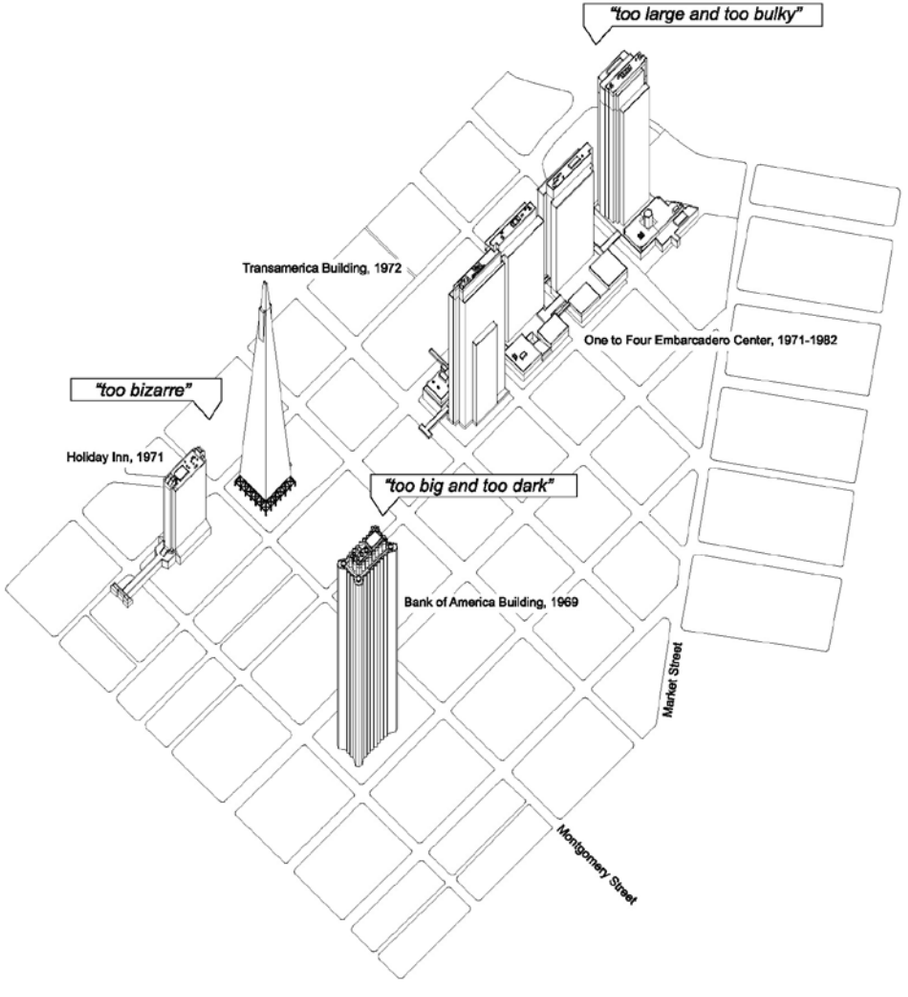
But as Demilit has evolved over the past year, it has become more and more important for us to go outside and walk. We flirted with the idea of walking as a way of doing the original Berkeley panel itself, but then (surprise!) changed our minds. Conflict is inherently spatial. It has histories of built violence and symbolic violence in the landscape. It is perpetrated in such subtle ways, at times, that a spatial practice of exploring, listening, recording, and so on, not only becomes useful...It becomes a calling. Also, as we know, "conflict," in its most polite and intellectual ways, is one of the most central devices of architecture-making. Without the debates there would be no such thing as a "modern" architecture. But if this is true, architecture's most cherished ways of working are often those that are put in a sort of no-fly zone. The untouchable practices of the discipline are not open to question. (How would firms thrive if not by having a ready pool of predictable talent?) I'm of the opinion, and not to speak for my collaborators who may think differently, that it is now the time to identify the places in the architecture discipline where conflict is held back under a tense accord. Sometimes deleting the image is what architecture needs a bit of.

Best,

Javier Arbona

Downtown's Will to Form

Essay by architect and urban designer **Alex Lehnerer**



San Francisco troublemakers
© Alex Lehnerer

Every self-respecting North American city needs one — including San Francisco, of course. One simply can no longer do without a high-profile financial or central business district. Finally by the 1960s, the "inspiring drama of the free enterprise" [1] required a suitable and solid representation in every larger US American city.

When it came to the development of a typical American downtown, San Francisco in this period was among the most sensitive and hesitant communities. Tall buildings stood in direct competition with tall hills, with the outstanding landscape qualities of the Bay Area and its fine-grained development contradicting the image the citizenry had of their town. And so San Francisco took its sweet time before allowing its high-rises to go forward. Between 1930 and 1958, only a single tall office building was constructed, and only in 1959 did the city acquire its first modern high-rise, the Crown Zellerbach Building on Market Street.

1. Earle Shultz and Walter Simmons (1959), "Offices in the Sky", 7.

Policemen and Trouble Makers

Without criminals, there would be no police — and the same is true of fires and the fire department. Both institutions work simultaneously preventively as well as via intervention. Precedential cases originated by these troublemakers are constantly necessary, as they lead to sensitization. Such villains then compel the introduction of preventive measures designed to eliminate the emergent problem for the wider community once and for all.

In the San Francisco of the 1960s, a quartet of such troublemakers suddenly stood together in close proximity, generating public annoyance in the financial and business district: the Holiday Inn and the Transamerica Building were regarded as "too bizarre," the Embarcadero Center as "too large and too bulky "and the Bank of America Building as "too big and too dark." Nonetheless, it seemed almost impossible to charge the Bank of America with ignorance of its context — contradicting such an argument were the 1500 bay windows on its façade.

The anti high-rise movement then active in San Francisco had definitively lost the battle against the four offenders. All that remained was public defamation. The Transamerica Building had an especially hard time of it. Its appearance was said to be incompatible with an attractive downtown. Regarded as embarrassing and uneconomical, it was soon nicknamed "The Egyptian Embassy," and was illustrated in newspapers and magazines wearing a dunce's cap.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the wrath of activists was directed principally against purportedly ugly, unwieldy, excessively tall and poorly sited office buildings. [2] One recipient of ill favor was US Steel, when it proposed erecting a 150 meter tower on the waters of the Bay. Newspaper articles caricatured the building as an ungainly "steel giraffe," one that palpably disturbed the site's sense of balance and proportion. [3]

But the controversy gave rise to a remarkable tool. Since the ranks of the high-rise's opponents contained a few architects proficient in drafting, so-called Opposition Drawings [4] could be prepared. On the basis of a bird's-eye view seen from the direction of Bay Bridge, architects and supporters of the US Steel Building attempted to demonstrate just how well the structure was adapted to the existing urban context. The building's opponents now provided a perspective from the opposite direction, from Telegraph Hill. These images showed how strongly the US Steel Building would plunge the proud Bay Bridge into shadow — that is to say, how a private office building would blight a public icon.

In the end, in 1971, the *San Francisco Supervisors* (SUPES) granted permission for the construction of the US Steel Building on this site, stipulating that it would have a height of only 53 m (175 ft) at most. This deployment of counter-perspectives functioned as well in the case of the 20-story Haas Towers project — against which no objections were raised until the lawyer had it immortalized from a number of different perspectives from Russian Hill. Virtual buildings were now regarded as having evidentiary status, and the discipline of urban simulation was launched. The more scientific and the more complex the methods used to generate these anamorphic images, the greater the public's preparedness to regard them as objective. The first setting for such activities was located directly behind San Francisco's Bay Bridge, at the Environmental Simulation Laboratory at UC Berkeley, founded by Donald Appleyard in 1972 and containing fabulous apparatuses, gigantic city models, and swiveling endoscopes by means of which one could navigate at eye level through models of the city.

2. Chester W. Hartman (1984), "The Transformation of San Francisco," 269.

3. Donald Appleyard and Lois Fishman (1977), "High Rise Buildings Versus San Francisco," 87.

4. Ibid.

Real Simulation

Even such an ingenious simulation cannot replace a personal or real interaction, that is to say, a 1:1 experience of the critical object in urban space. Switzerland and its cities are well aware of this fact. Ideally, one drives or moves through the city physically and in real time.

In 2007, it was possible to contemplate a 126 m (413 ft) tall steel scaffolding that had been erected in the former industrial quarter of the Swiss town of Zürich (Kreis 5) from close up. Next to the Hardbrücke, its quartet of steel profiles marked out the edges and complete height of the future Swiss Prime Tower. According to law, each Swiss building project must be rendered beforehand in its actual planned dimensions through a socalled *Baugespann* (structural mockup). The ordinance includes the construction of dormer windows, tool sheds, but also of high-rise buildings. For a specified period of time (2 months), the citizenry, assuming it is willing to exercise a minimum of imagination, has the opportunity to visualize the project within its three-dimensional boundaries and to discuss its urban integrity. Thereafter follows an act of participatory democracy, the voting in a referendum. In the case of the Swiss Prime Tower, however, the full 126 meter tall scaffolding would not have been necessary. For reasons of proportionality and safety, the city would have preferred a "preview" measuring just a fraction of that height. Since they were planning to erect the tallest building in Switzerland to date, the clients spared no expense and effort in erecting this spectacular simulation, spending more than 100,000 Swiss francs for purposes of prestige and advertising.

Little Big Plan

The desire not only to simulate visual qualities, but to actively and preventively guide them as well was manifested beginning in the 1970s in San Francisco's *General Plan*, and finally in the same city's 1983 *Downtown Plan*, which was the work of planning director Dean Macris. [5] The plan reduced building heights and building bulk on the basis of a floor area ratio and geometric bulk definition. It envisioned landmark protection status for 266 important buildings, and required the preparation of a shadow study in order to ensure that new buildings would permit adequate sun and light to reach the surrounding streets. Whole streets and their views acquired quasi-landmark status.

5. Hartman (1984), 274.

The virtual envelope becomes reality for immediate public review: 126 m tall "Baugespann" of the future Swiss Prime Tower, Zürich. © Alex Lehnerer

All of this is familiar already from New York. Of interest is this manifestation of San Francisco's collective taste and the yearning for visual attractiveness. This approach called for the architectural treatment of high-rise roofs with hat-style structures in order to avoid the so-called "refrigerator look" (i.e., a monotonous sequence of androgynous glassfronted crates). [6]

6. Ibid., 273.

Cynical commentators soon joined the fray. Allan Temko, architecture critic with the San Francisco Chronicle, commented that the plan was more concerned with aesthetic matters than with the effective restriction of growth and density in San Francisco's downtown:

> "Nor would I trust Macris' chief assistant on design matters … His contributions on the Plan would not require architects but milliners. So we'd put these party hats on buildings, as if we didn't have the most colossal dunce cap in the world on the Transamerica Building." [7]

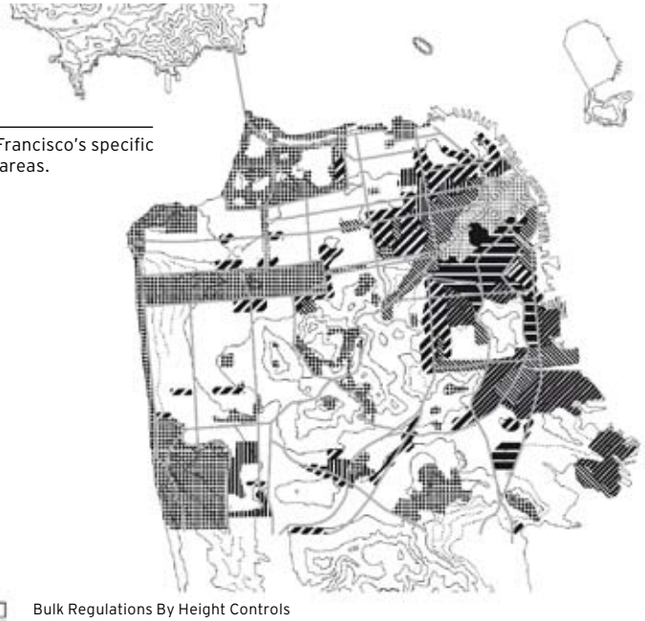
7. The City of San Francisco (1983), "The Downtown Plan–Proposal for Citizen Review."

It was calculated that by the year 2000, the plan would in principle permit the construction of more than 24 million sf (2.2 million square meters) of new office surface, in particular to the south of Market Street. This meant growth rates similar to those registered in the years prior to the plan's adoption. Such figures recall the reproach of "overzoning" that had been leveled against New York's 1916 resolution. As far as San Francisco's citizenry were concerned, Dean Macris' plan was simply too weak, and represented an inadequate planning for exercising control over the "vertical earthquake" taking place in San Francisco's downtown. Resistance was so great that in 1985, the city's Board of Supervisors (the municipal governing body) endowed the plan with the force of law, but with an addendum, a limit on the maximum building volume per annum. To begin with, this was set at a maximum of 950,000 sf for the entire city — a "growth cap" lower than the square meters covered by certain individual high-rises in New York City.

What San Francisco was proposing here was definitively "the first quota system for city planning." [8] Alongside the "beauty contest," designed to determine whether the "hat" on the high-rise tower corresponded to the prevailing ideal of beauty, decisions would be yielded to the discretion of a review panel, which granted building permits to the numerous applicants and filled the annual quota. Administratively, it is only possible to get a handle on this process when a multiplicity

8. Paul Goldberger (1987), "When Planning Can Be Too Much of a Good Thing."

Building Bulk



San Francisco's specific bulk areas.

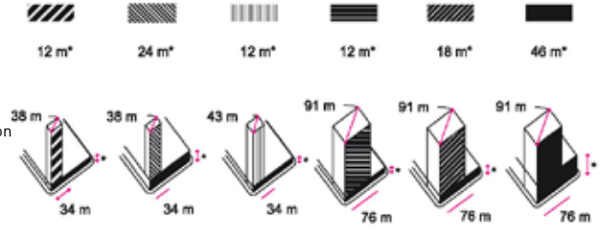
Bulk Regulations By Height Controls
OPEN SPACE (Any Development Subject To Review)
See Chinatown Area Plan, Downtown Plan, Rincon Hill Plan

Method of measuring bulk.

Maximum Plan Dimension:
The greatest horizontal dimension along any wall of the building, measured at a height corresponding to the prevailing height of other development in the area.

Applied to other building forms

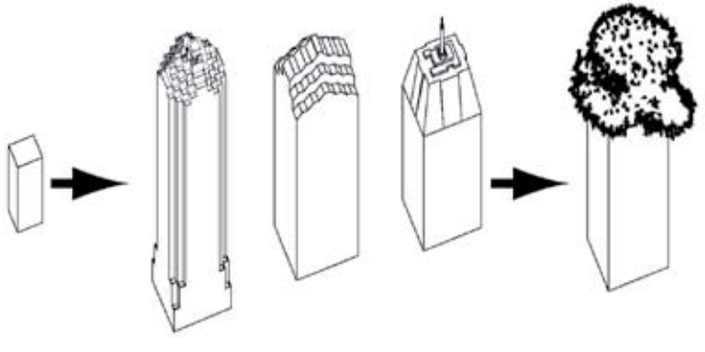
Guidelines for each bulk area: a tower's max. diagonal and lateral dimensions.



Quality of Street Views

Map of streets with excellent views that deserve protection, San Francisco.

Anti-Refrigerator Look



333 Bush St.
151 m tall
43 floors
*1986 by SOM

Embarcadero West at Battery St.
123 m tall
34 floors
* 1989 by John Portman Associates

505 Mongomery St.
100 m tall
24 floors
*1988 by SOM

The Latest Hat On Top Of The American Skyscraper (Almost Every City Has Adopted A Green-Roof-Program)

of additional guidelines are introduced, for example those regarding the economic relevance of a specific project for the city. One year later, in 1987, Proposition M reduced the annual quota by 50% to 475,000 sf, making high-rise development in San Francisco virtually impossible. Even where this was not the case, it was charged that (to cite *New York Times* critic Paul Goldberger) "they have all turned out to be tame examples of the post-modern style, cautious little buildings that struggle not to offend." Goldberger goes on to criticize the high degree of determination exercised through the required review process:

> "San Francisco no longer has planners, it has design czars. The city government through its planning department and the public through referendums have become the controlling forces in determining what happens in downtown San Francisco. They go far beyond the normal mandate of setting out the basic outlines of growth through zoning laws, as planners do everywhere else; here, they determine the specific design of individual projects, and ultimately decide whether or not projects can go ahead at all." [9]

9. Ibid.

The "hats" set on the towers, however, were intended to counteract another downtown tendency familiar under the term *Skyline Wall Syndrome*. As speculative projects controlled by similar marginal conditions and land costs, office high-rises tend to have similar numbers of stories, and hence similar heights. In many cases, such utilization does not approach the potential legal limit, but instead corresponds to a purely economic calculus: how many times must the building lot be multiplied into the heights in order to be profitable while avoiding excessive costs, for example, for vertical accesses? This *Economic Height* often lies well below the maximum utilization set by law, and by falling below it, disempowers the potential for architectonic shaping offered by such legislation. And the developer of a neighboring parcel determines the height of his tower on the basis of similar calculations. The height differences between buildings deemed desirable on the basis of aesthetic criteria, then, can be administered on the basis of general rules only with great difficulty. And if the maximum possible utilization is set somewhat below the economic height that prevails in a particular period, then that standard functions as a height limit, once again generating a uniform sequence of buildings.

A genuine predicament for the city. A successful, that is to say, interesting and dramatic skyline with its peaks, valleys, and jagged canyons, is very difficult to shape consciously. Lowered height limits, once again, generate uniformity, while also restraining inner-city growth in undesirable ways. Helpful instead is a constant radical revision of building laws and maximally turbulent pricing developments in the land and real estate markets. One indispensable ingredient, of course, is a local, egocentric corporate headquarters that functions like a mountaintop cross, so to speak; another is a collective architectonic expression on the part of office towers that shifts rapidly over the years.

Note
This essay has been republished with permission from the author from the book "Grand Urban Rules" by Alex Lehnerer published by 010 Publishers in 2009.

WW2 Bunkers

Photographs by **Jonathan Andrew**

World War II military bunkers are still present in Europe. These imposing concrete structures have stood the test of time, some reused but most of them abandoned a long time ago. Photographer Jonathan Andrew documents in his "WW2 Bunkers" series the current condition of these structures in The Netherlands, France and Belgium. These images are a reminder of the conflicted past in Europe.

Type 583a / M 178. Fire control post for medium and heavy batteries. Heerenduin, Ijmuiden, The Netherlands.
© Jonathan Andrew

Type L483. Central radio transmitter bunker. Spaandam, The Netherlands.
© Jonathan Andrew

Type 703. Emminkhuizen, South of Renswoude, The Netherlands.
© Jonathan Andrew

Type 669. Heensche Mole, The Netherlands.
© Jonathan Andrew

Military casemate Type 623. West of Koudekerke, The Netherlands.
© Jonathan Andrew

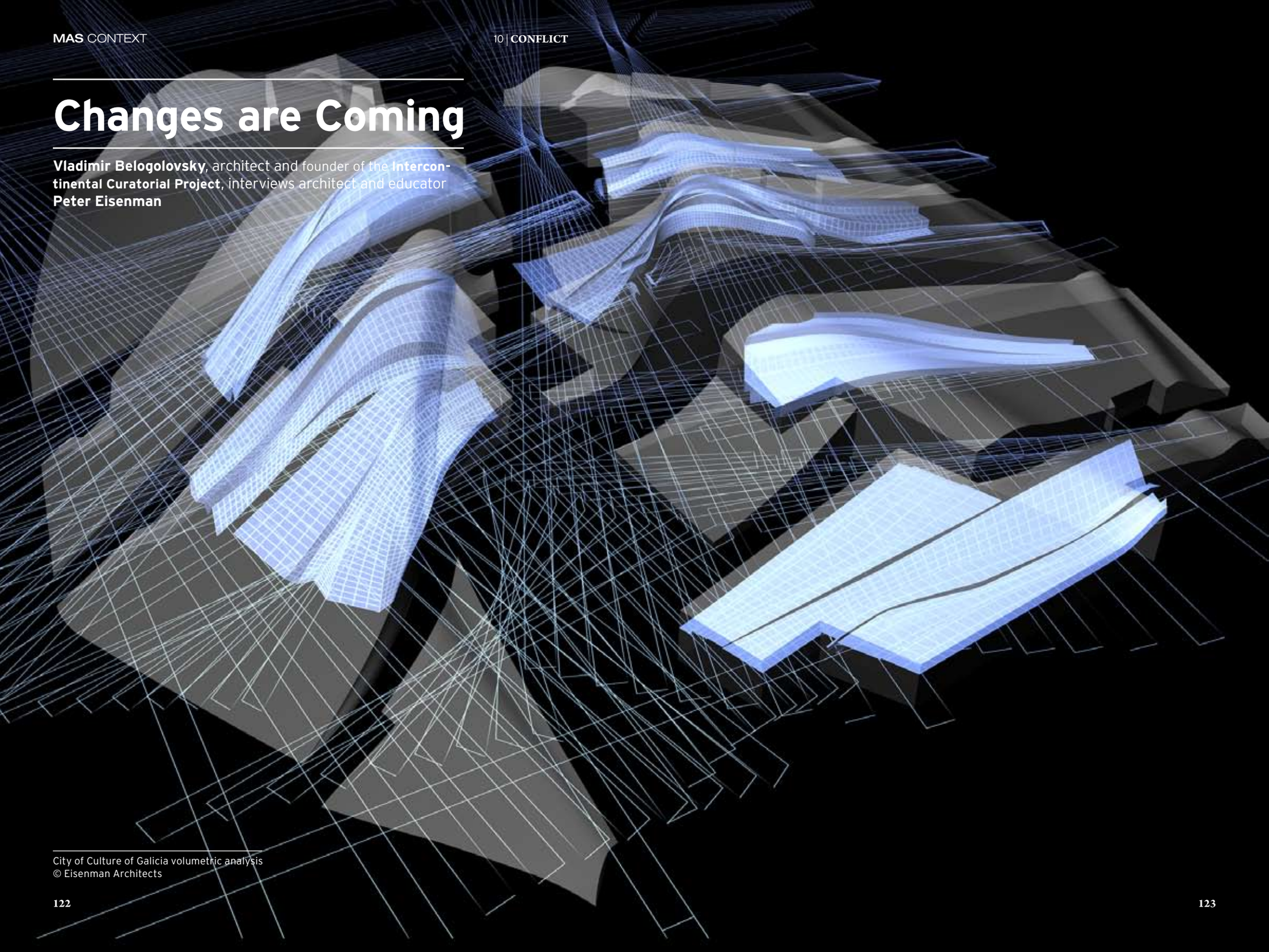
SK observation tower. Fliegerhorst, Hemiksem, Belgium.
© Jonathan Andrew

R636 fire post control. Leffrinckoucke / Zuydcoote, Plage l´Ouest de Zuydcoote, France.
© Jonathan Andrew

Dragon teeth. Riegelstellung Dune, BPT. 34 WN. 136H.
© Jonathan Andrew

Changes are Coming

Vladimir Belogolovsky, architect and founder of the **Intercontinental Curatorial Project**, interviews architect and educator **Peter Eisenman**



City of Culture of Galicia volumetric analysis
© Eisenman Architects

In the mid-1960s, Eisenman was a member of a loose collaborative famously known as the "New York Five," together with Richard Meier, John Hejduk, Charles Gwathmey and Michael Graves. Individual projects of this group were based on the theory and aesthetics of Le Corbusier and significantly influenced architects worldwide.

For many years, Eisenman submerged deeply into the field of pure theory. He taught in the most prestigious universities around the world, published the critical magazine *Oppositions*, and even founded the exploratory Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York. In 1980, the architect started his practice with a purpose to build.

Today, his mind-boggling stadiums, office buildings, museums, and convention centers can be seen in America, Europe, and Asia. He has a long list of victories in international competitions and is a recipient of many prestigious awards, including a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Architecture presented in 2004 at IX International Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Eisenman brought ideas of deconstructivism into architectural discourse, which were based on his collaboration with Jack Derrida, the French philosopher and pioneer of this movement. In 1988, Eisenman took part in the Deconstructivist Architecture exhibition organized by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA). Since then, this term has become associated with the architecture of abstract fragmented forms, exploding collage compositions, and dynamic broken lines.

Among other projects, the architect is currently working on the City of Culture of Galicia in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, which is commissioned by the Ministry of Culture. With an area of over one million square feet and a budget of half a billion dollars, the complex is being built based on a design that won an international architectural competition. Eisenman's project was selected over the proposals of such superstar competitors as Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, Jean Nouvel, and Dominique Perrault. The complex consists of three pairs of buildings: the Galician History Museum and the Heritage Research Center, the Music Theater and the Administration Center, and the National Library of Galicia and the Galician National Archive. Today these buildings are at various stages of construction and the Galician National Archive is already completed and is in operation.

Museum
© Eisenman Architects

Aerial image of the City of Culture of Galicia from the southeast, 2009
© Eisenman Architects

Archive
© Manuel Gonzales Vicente

VB: Many of your projects are tied to Derrida's denial of the idea of absolute beginning…

PE: Derrida said, "There is no value of origin."

VB: He said that 'any beginning is preceded by a trace or series of traces. There is no one truth. There is no one absolute beginning. Everything is open to traces of beginnings. Before there was something there was a trace of something.' In Santiago you identified four form-defining local traces: historical downtown street grid, typography of the hill, abstract Cartesian grid, and symbolic sign of the city of Santiago, a scallop shell. You then superimposed these four abstracted traces to create an imaginary site condition, which became a real site for your project.

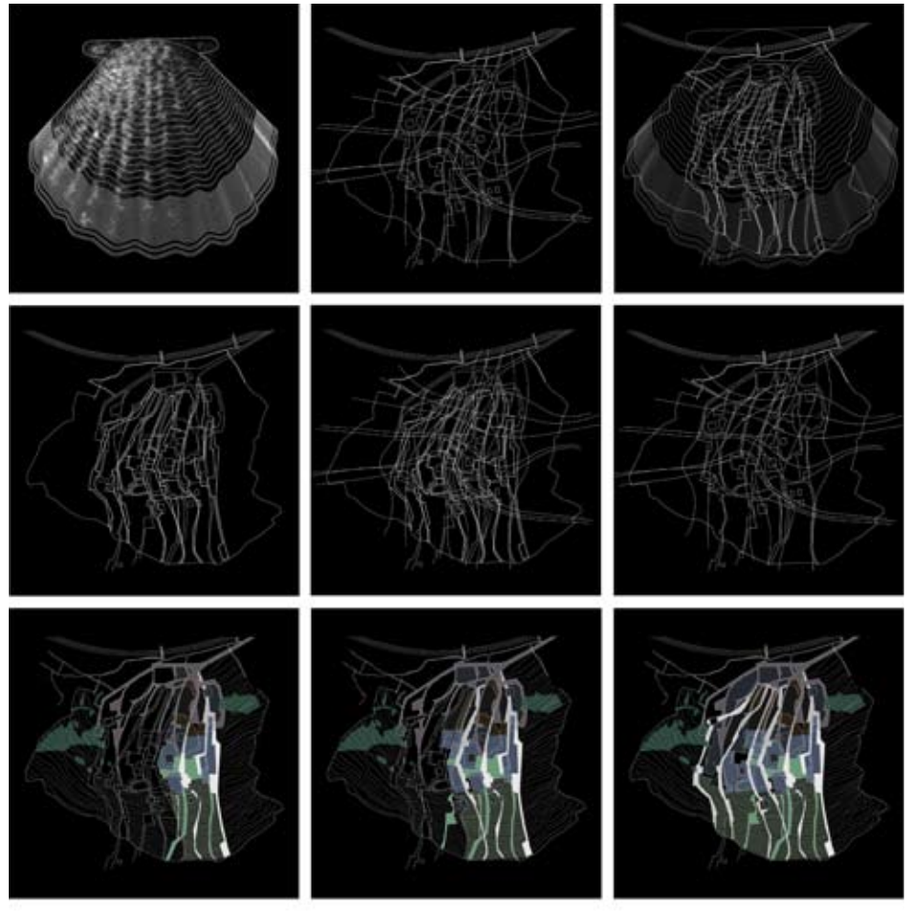
PE: Yes, the building form came out of that superimposition. The beginning, therefore, is not the actual site, but the traces of the site in the Derridean sense.

VB: Why are these traces important to you?

PE: Well, because if you think that the belief in origin, in presence, in the metaphysical and the transcendental signifier is false and you accept Derrida's thoughts, then these traces are very important. Because they show that it is possible to develop a project that doesn't make primary the actual physical site. Freud said that Rome is not what we see today, but it is many layers of history and of place. That is my concept of landscape. In every project we question the idea of the metaphysical character of the actual site. This is what makes our approach different, not better, but different from other architects.

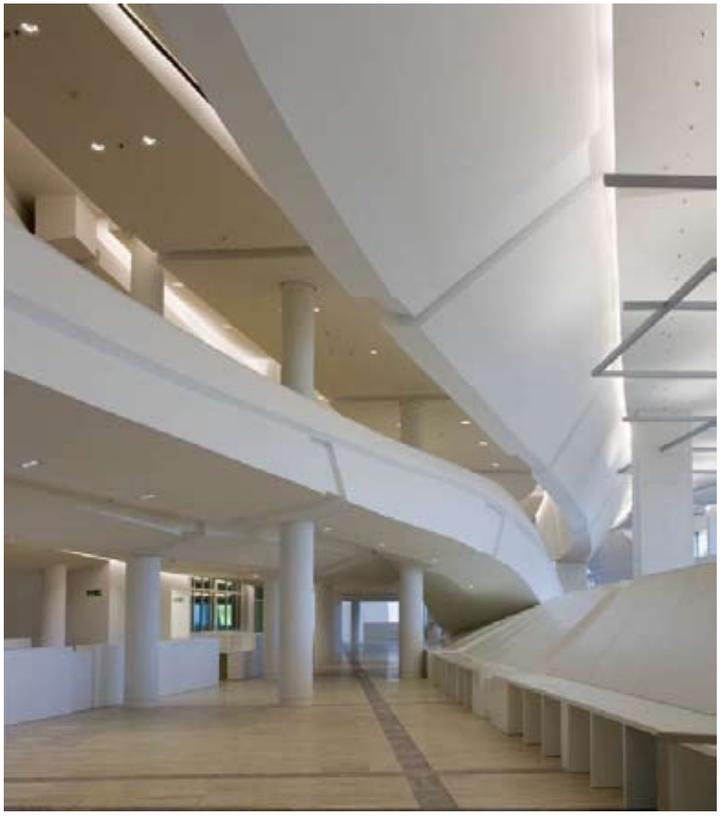
VB: Are these traces important to you to develop a particular geometry or do you think it will be possible for the visitors to decode and identify them?

PE: Yes, I think so. I want people to experience these traces and decode them, absolutely. The people who saw the project tell me they feel the origins of these traces.



Shell to site plan
© Eisenman Architects

Archive gallery space (left); Archive looking down stairs (top right); Archive reading room (lower right)
© Eisenman Architects



Archive research area
© Eisenman Architects

VB: You once said that you don't want to do a lot of buildings. Instead, you want to do 20 buildings because you have about 20 good ideas. What is the main idea about Santiago and how is it different from your other projects?

PE: First of all, the particular overlay of these local traces is different from any other project. What makes it different is that it produces different effects on the interiors. The materials are different. All materials here are local and the articulation of pavements and facades is all based on abstracted local traditions. There is a whole area of the interior where the mirrored glass is on the floor and the stone is on the wall, which reflects in the glass and makes you believe that you walk on stone. So you don't know where you are. There are numerous such effects that one experiences throughout the project.

VB: When I asked you about the Santiago project in relation to green and sustainable architecture, you said, "I don't know anything about 'green' or sustainability."

PE: Because 'green' and sustainability have nothing to do with architecture. Some of the worst buildings I have seen are done by sustainable architects.

VB: I would not argue with that statement. But you can't deny that your Center of Culture is trying to negotiate a dialogue and peaceful deal with the surrounding landscape and nature. Isn't it an attempt at creating a sustainable project?

PE: I wouldn't go as far as calling myself a sustainable architect. For example, I am using stone in this building and stone buildings last forever. I don't think it would be difficult to do a sustainable building. To get a LEED certificate, you have to do the bathrooms the right way and all kinds of strange things. Believe me, I could get a certificate if I wanted to, but I didn't set out to do a sustainable building, although I tried to be as honest as I could.

VB: You said that architecture needs to question traditions and be critical and that the great oxymoron of architecture is that it needs to create places, but instead it displaces places. Is it also true for Santiago? What is the displacement there?

PE: Take a look at that glass floor. You begin to displace the ground that you are walking on. The roof of our building is the hillside. You cut the hill, put the building in, put the roof over it, and it looks like the hillside. Now the floor inside is no longer the ground. We put the glass on the floor and it reflects the real ground, which is above your head. So we are producing our own commentaries by questioning such conventions as ground, floor, walls, facades, interior space, etc.

VB: In his book Landscrapers, Aaron Betsky said, "Buildings replace the land. That is architecture's original sin." That is because by replacing land, buildings take away space, sunlight, air, and so forth. Is the Santiago project an attempt at redemption for such inherited sins of architecture?

PE: Well, I can't disagree that you might read it this way, but I can't claim that I was interested in such redemption.

VB: Wasn't your purpose to recreate nature and not to take away from nature by building something new in its place?

PE: Not nature, but unnatural nature. Through advanced computation processes, we have the capacity to create unnatural nature. I wanted to create something that would seem like nature, but under closer inspection one would realize that it is not nature. I call it unnatural nature. Our buildings in Santiago look like a hilltop. They don't look like they have been placed there. They are made to seem and look like they have come out of the ground like giant mountains. In other words, it is like a natural process – something that would take 10 million years has happened in 10 years. So if that is what you mean by redemption, I'll buy it.

Hemeroteca foreground, 2008
© Eisenman Architects

Heritage research center
© Eisenman Architects

Archive and library
© Eisenman Architects

Panorama of Santiago de Compostela, 2009 (top); Model sections (middle, bottom) © Eisenman Architects

VB: Your architecture is never about representation and now you are trying to represent and replicate nature.

PE: But it doesn't represent nature. It is an unnatural nature. My architecture never represents anything. It is not representing an unnatural nature. It is an unnatural nature. This is not nature. But it is not against nature. There is man-made, there is natural. I want unnatural. This is the first time that I have done this.

VB: You have done buildings that look like they try to shake things up. They are intended to challenge, reorient, and disturb people. Was that still part of your intention in Santiago?

PE: No, not to disturb and shake things up. The intention here is to make people more aware of the natural environment because most people when they walk in the forest they just see trees and stones. Here people don't just walk in nature. I want them to believe that they walk in the old city, in history, they walk in time. I want them to feel things, touch things, and to make them more conscious of their environment. Inside all the buildings, the spaces are very different. For example, in the library the book shelves are part of the flow of the space. The books feel like they are part of the ground. All six buildings feel different, but they play as a kind of string sextet.

VB: You said not that long ago, "We are no longer in Modernism, we are no longer in Post-modernism, we are no longer in Deconstructivism, we are no longer anywhere."

PE: I think we are in lateness. Something is coming.

VB: You don't think green architecture can claim to be the next new paradigm?

PE: (Laughter) Oh no, never! For sure not.

VB: Why not?

PE: The idea of the environment has always been part of architecture. It is not a theoretical position. It is just one aspect of architecture. The next paradigm shift will be tied to the fact that we are now leaving capitalism and moving into a kind of social economic structure. When General Motors, the symbol of American capitalism, is owned by the government, then we are no longer in capitalism. When the Chinese communists are capitalists, when the Russian communists are capitalists and the American capitalists are socialists, this will lead to changes. This will change architecture as well, I believe.

VB: How will it change architecture?

PE: I don't know but it will. The next big paradigm shift in architecture will be driven by economics.

One can't disagree with the architect's statement. Rough economic reality already has shaken the profession by forcing architects to seek new, more economical and sustainable alternatives for their solutions. Eisenman is not being particularly frank when he says, "The idea of the environment has always been part of architecture." That is simply not so. In the middle of the 20th century, in days of cheap fuel and belief in infinite availability of an atomic energy, construction was prodigal, environmental contamination – monstrous, development of individual transport – impetuous and suburban sprawl – out of control. Only in the late 1960s the first so-called green projects of singular rebellious architects and artists began to arise. Today such projects are no longer a rarity, and in the midst of the current economic slowdown, their number grows in record rates. Clients are pressed to be more vigilant and more responsible for social and ecological consequences of short-sighted construction. Perhaps the green methods of construction do not qualify for becoming the next paradigm in architecture, but if such a master of pure abstractions as Peter Eisenman reflects on the integration of his architecture into landscape, then no matter what is going to be the future of architecture, its aspiration of harmony with nature is inevitable.

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Urban-Think Tank is an interdisciplinary design practice dedicated to high-level research and design on a variety of subjects, concerned with contemporary architecture and urbanism. In 1993, Alfredo Brillembourg founded U-TT in Caracas, and in 1998, Hubert Klumpner joined as co-director.
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Changes are Coming
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11 | **SPEED** FALL 11

Our next issue will focus on the topic of SPEED.

The urban conditions around us are constantly changing. With a faster or slower SPEED, the built environment is transformed as it does the way we experience and engage with it. In our next issue we will be looking at the pace in which physical and social changes happen and the consequences and opportunities available.

For information on the submission guidelines and other questions, please visit www.mascontext.com

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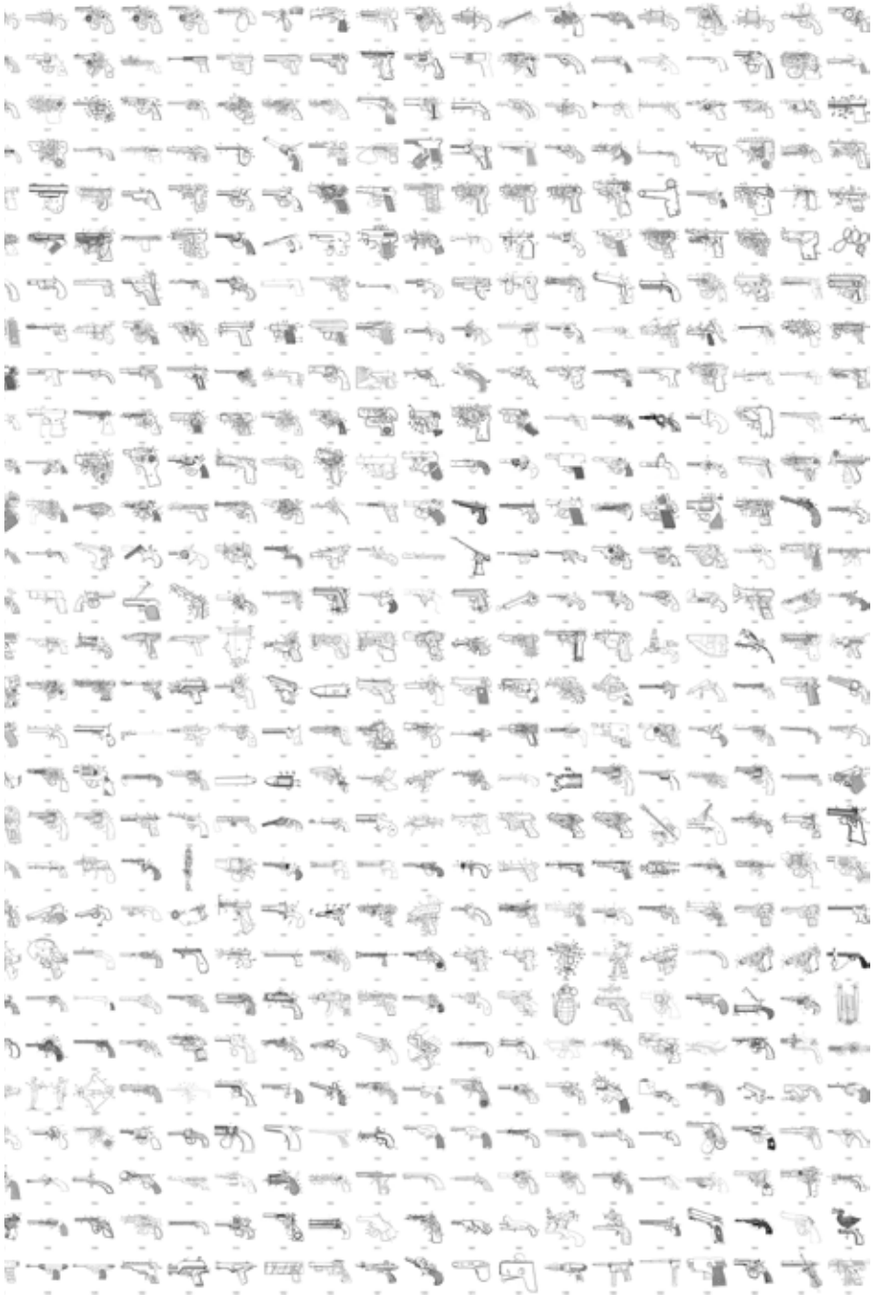

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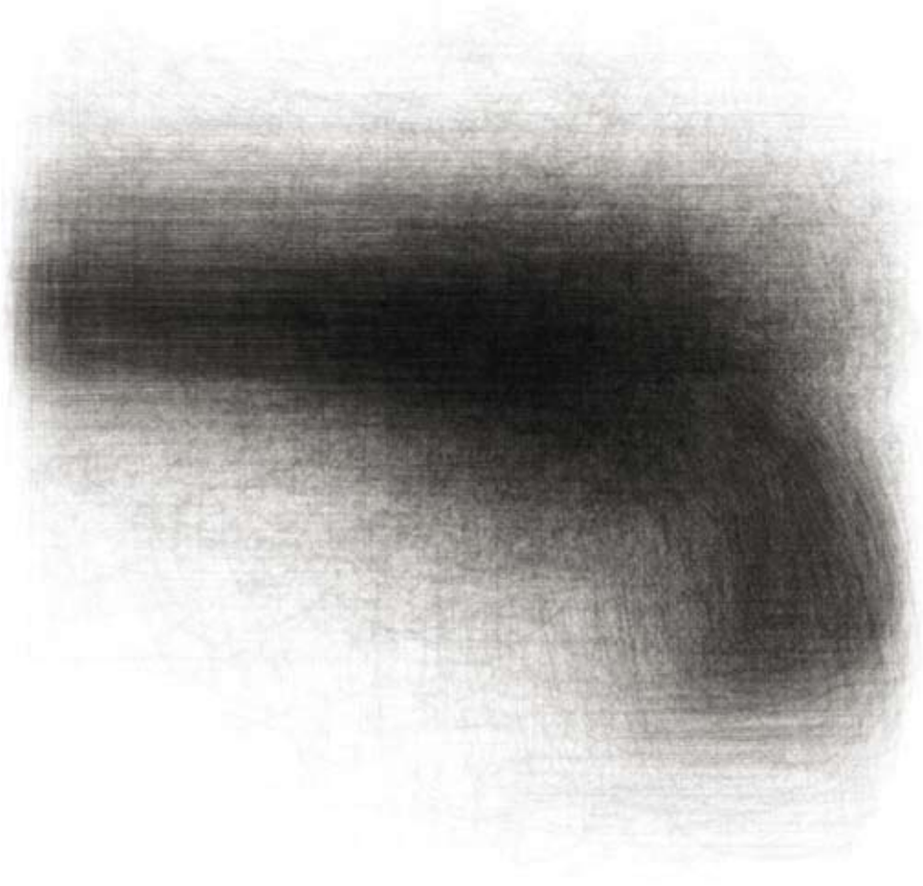
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