

INTERMEDIATE UNIT 8 (2009-10)

POLITICS OF FABRICATION I

POLITICS OF SKIN GRAFTING

HAVANA, CUBA

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION, LONDON

TUTORS: NURIA ALVAREZ LOMBARDERO

FRANCISCO GONZALEZ DE CANALES



REASSESSING THE IMMEDIATE

Based on AA school's everyday life, three small workshops will reassess the relation between the individual and the collective. With a special focus on governance, the aim of these three exercises will be to dismantle previous assumptions in order to reconsider the relation between architecture and politics in everyday, seemingly banal situations.

W 1 IMMEDIATE GOVERNANCE: WINDOWS, DOORS AND TRANSITS

This first workshop questions the Students' Association room. At the AA, the general population is represented by select students in a quite straightforward, unionist way. However, when mediating with the rest of the school, the relationship between the association and students is scarcely represented, using only a blackboard on the door. This exercise redefines the Students' Association room, focusing on how elements of transition such as doors and windows are strategic within the political expression of a space.

LENGHT 1 WEEK
AA STUDENT FORUM DOOR

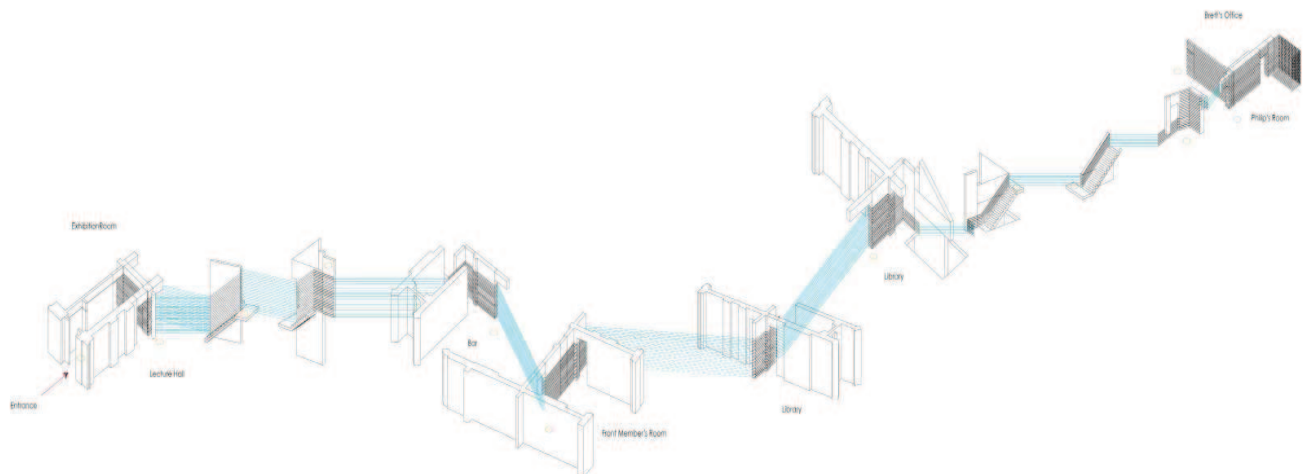
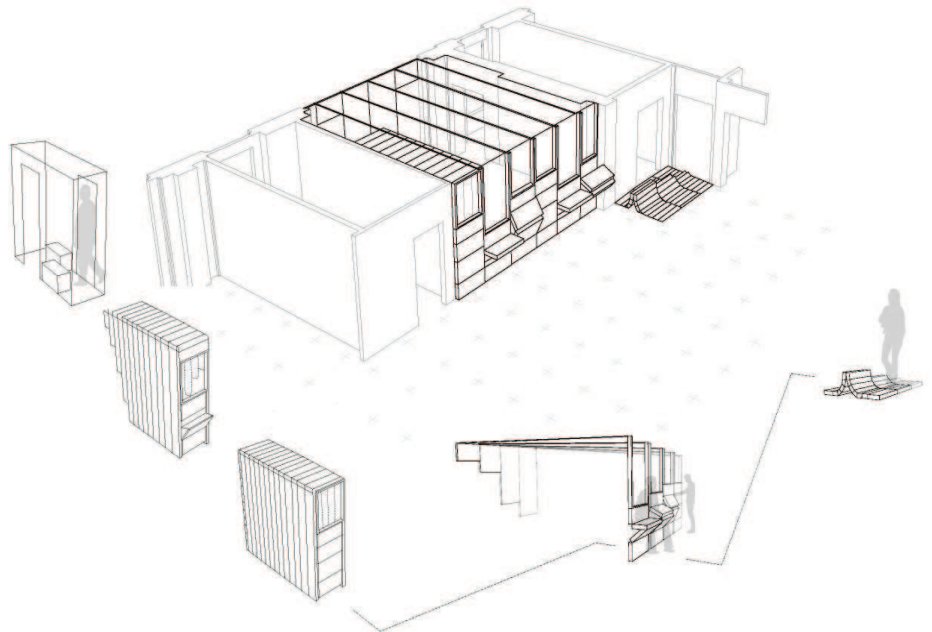


LENGTH 2 WEEKS
AA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

W 2 MEDIATED GOVERNANCE

Representation, transgression, and re-appropriation

This second workshop focuses on the Director's office. Perhaps one of the most opaque rooms at the AA, the Director's office neither represents nor reflects any specific relation with the individuals, students, and staff that it represents. The office's external envelope should be critically rethought to establish a link between AA governance and members.

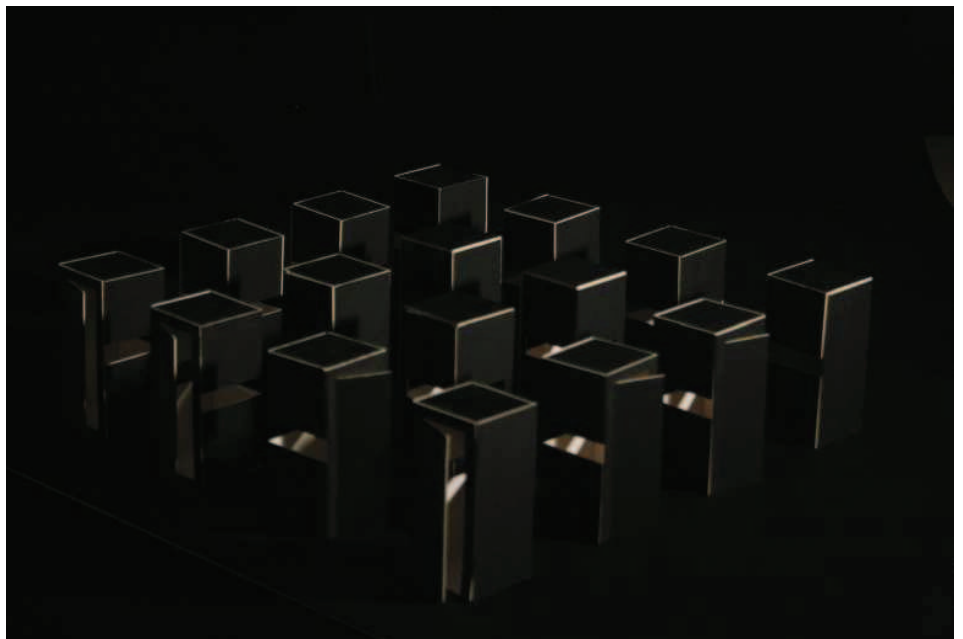
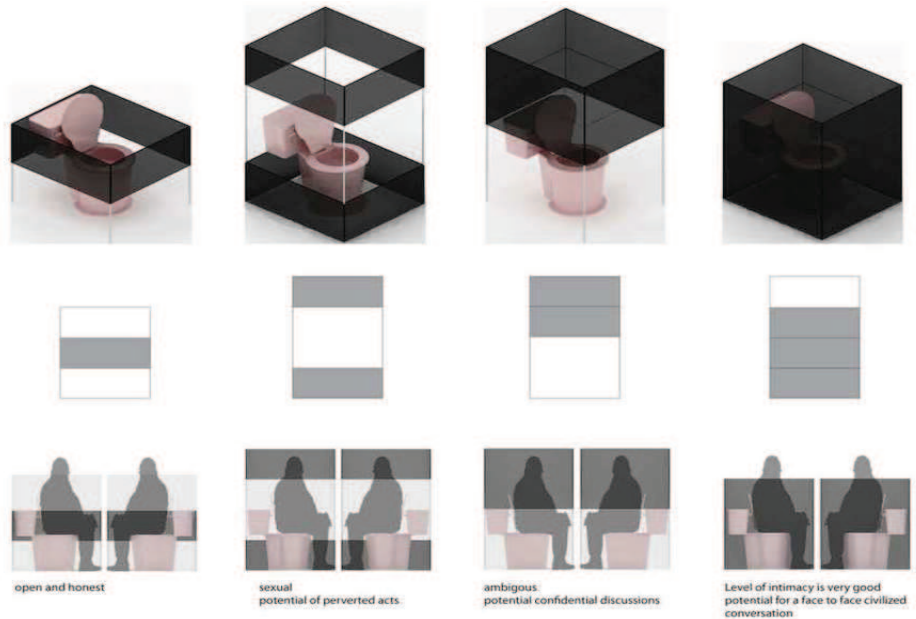


REASSESSING THE IMMEDIATE

W 3 TOP-DOWN, DOWN-TOP

Top-Down and Bottom-Up are design strategies that express two fundamentally different political attitudes toward governance and representation. Bottom-Up strategies suggest that a politically loaded envelope is constructed by summing up different reactions from a multitude of individuals. Top-Down strategies suggest that a system of rules has to be set a priori; in this kind of approach, individuals can be already imbedded into the structure of the system or can activate this system politically by appropriating its rules. The aim of this workshop is to explore and compare these two strategies by designing two installations—one Top-Down and the other Bottom-Up. Each student will submit proposals, and the best entry will be built and showcased for public review.

LENGHT 2 WEEKS
NO SITE SPECIFIC



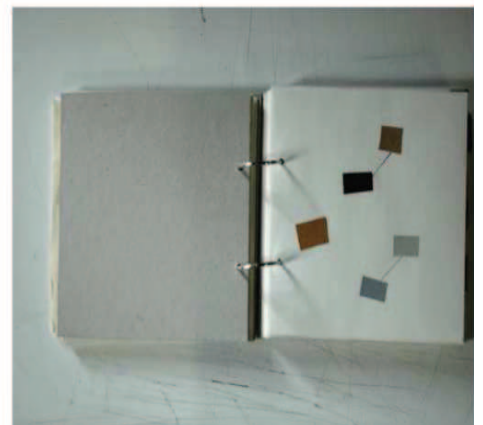
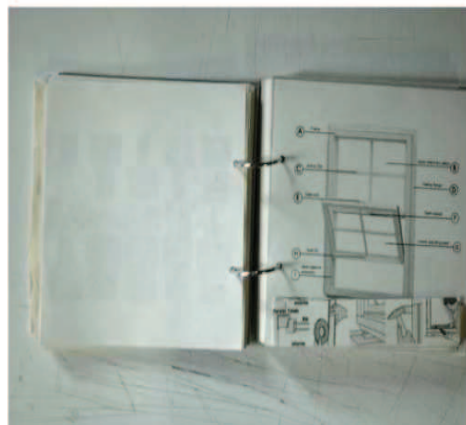
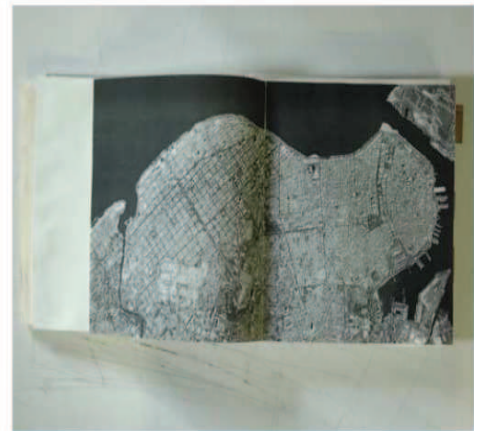
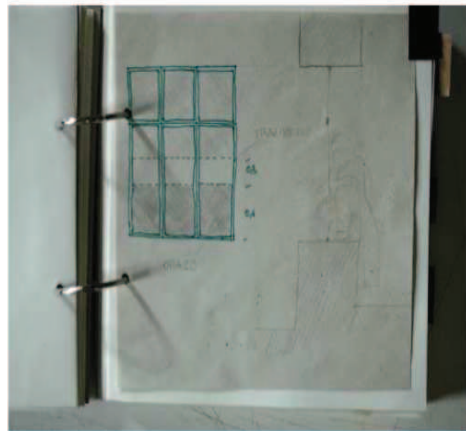
WORKSHOP IN MADRID: AUGMENTED BOOK

This AA-ETSAM one-week workshop in Madrid presents a challenging opportunity for a collaborative design studio around books --reconsidering contents, contexts and containers. By infiltration methods, students are expected to develop consistent experimentations on design procedures manipulating previous existing materials, binding and unbinding, infiltrating and relocating information.

The raw materials are 13 booklets produced by inter unit 8 students at the AA. These booklets are dealing with designs for politically involved scenarios. Collaborative group of students will transform these booklets through a series of particular operations whose aim is to imprint and feed with information the initial document.

Tutors Nuria Lombardero, Francisco Gonzalez de Canales, Izaskun Chinchilla, Antonio Juarez, Paula Montoya, Jose Luis Vallejo y Andres Perea.

LENGHT 1 WEEK
PORTFOLIOS





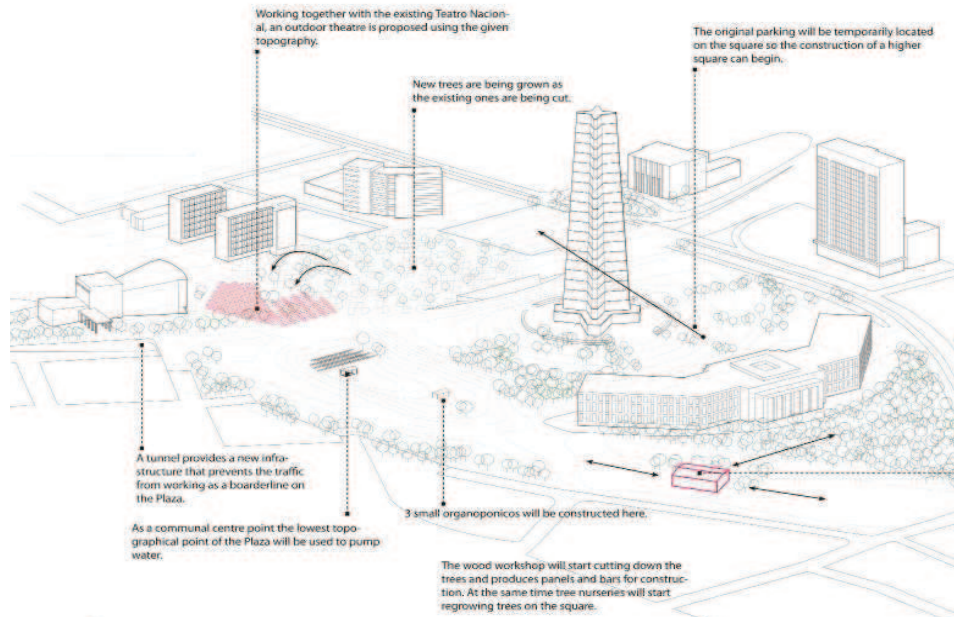
SHARING BY URBAN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

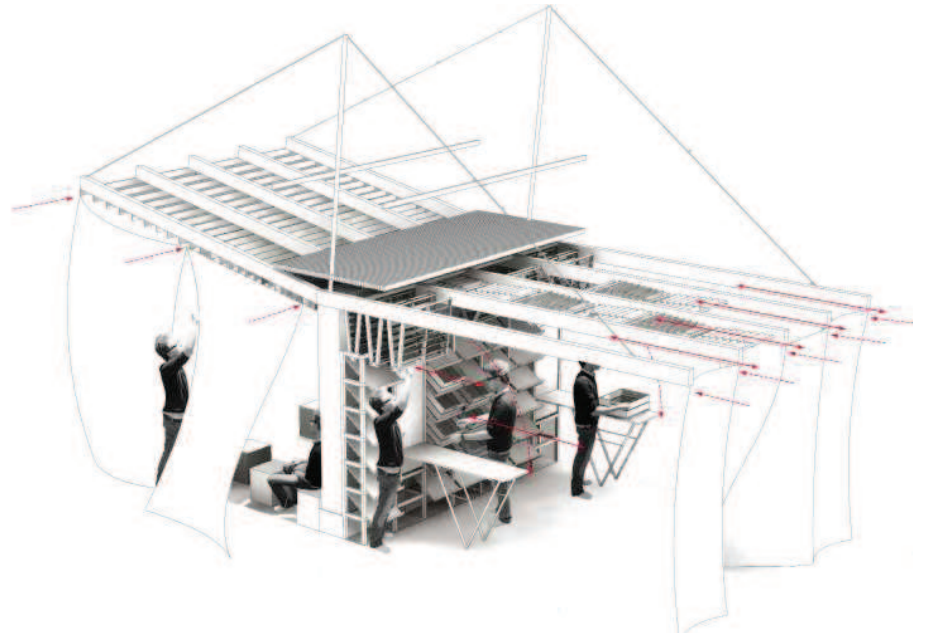
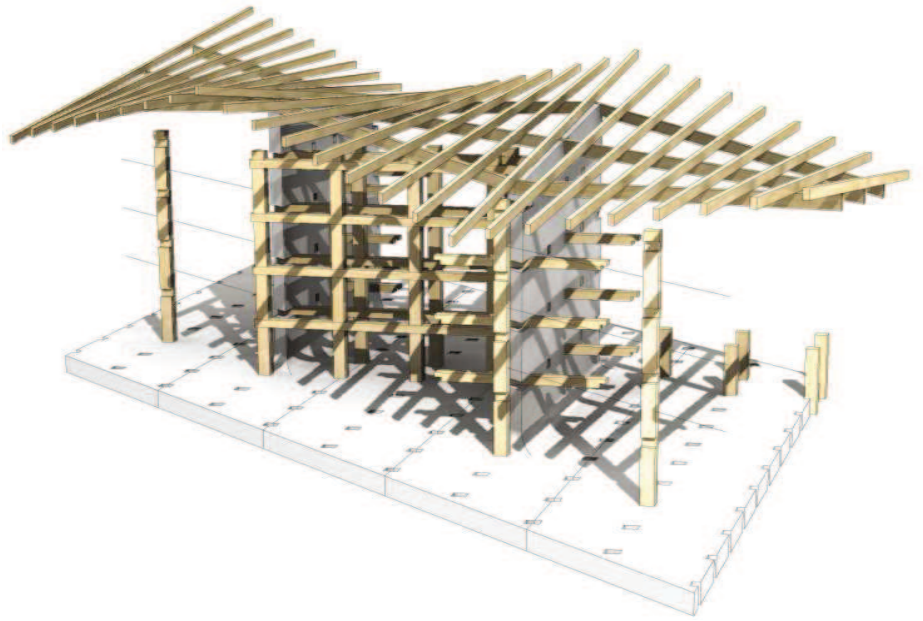


GARY DUPONT
3RD YEAR

The project takes on the subject of urban farming in Havana. These farms, Organoponicos, first appeared in the so called “special period” (1991) after the Russian economic crisis and the resulting lack of imports. Following this system small lots of urban wasteland owned by one person or a small collective turned into productive landscapes growing vegetables and sell them to the community around them. This system of production does not only provide food to people but also a sense of communal responsibility since they have to relying onto each other to help productivity.

The Plaza de la Revolucion marks a void in the city, being only used a few times a year for political speeches or concerts. The project intends to take advantage of the concepts of social reliability and responsibility related to urban farming by creating a expandable agriculture field inside of the Plaza.





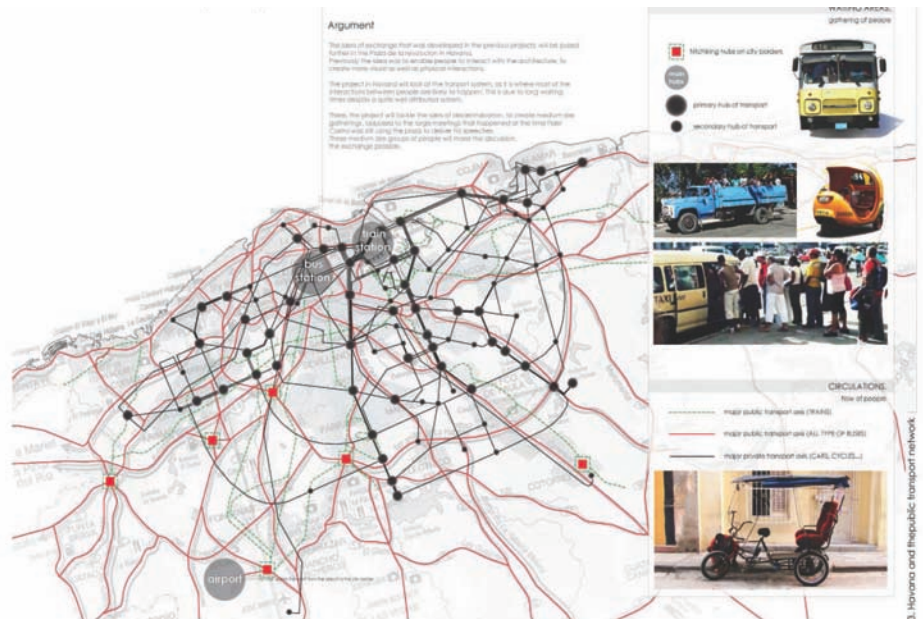
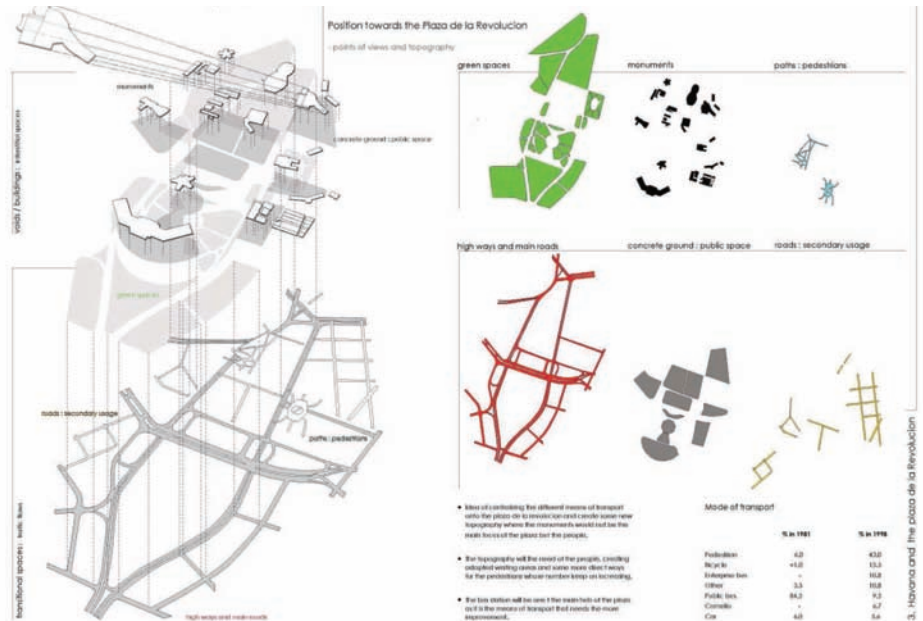
POLITICAL EXCHANGE IN TRANSPORT HUBS

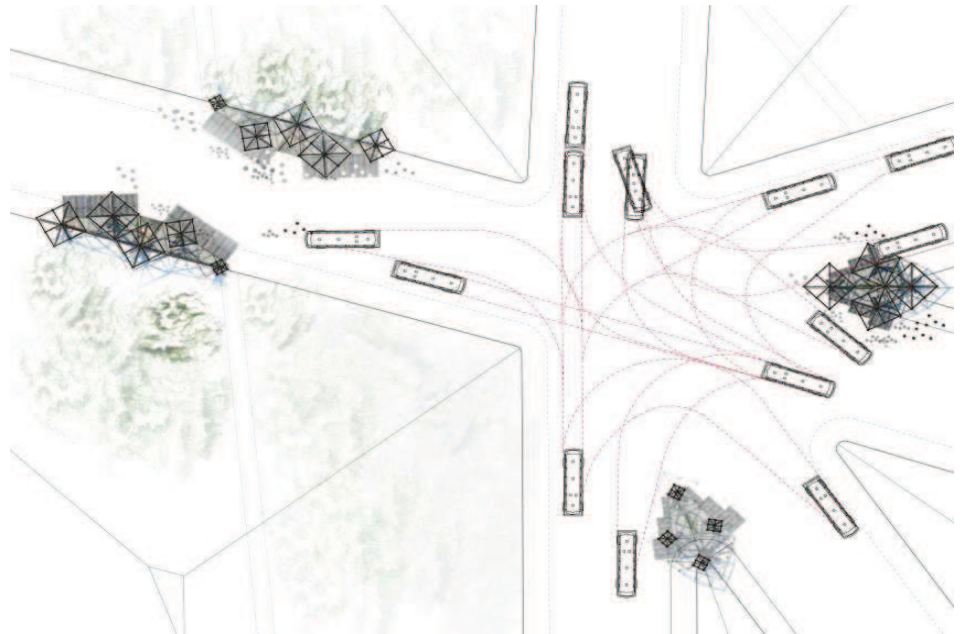
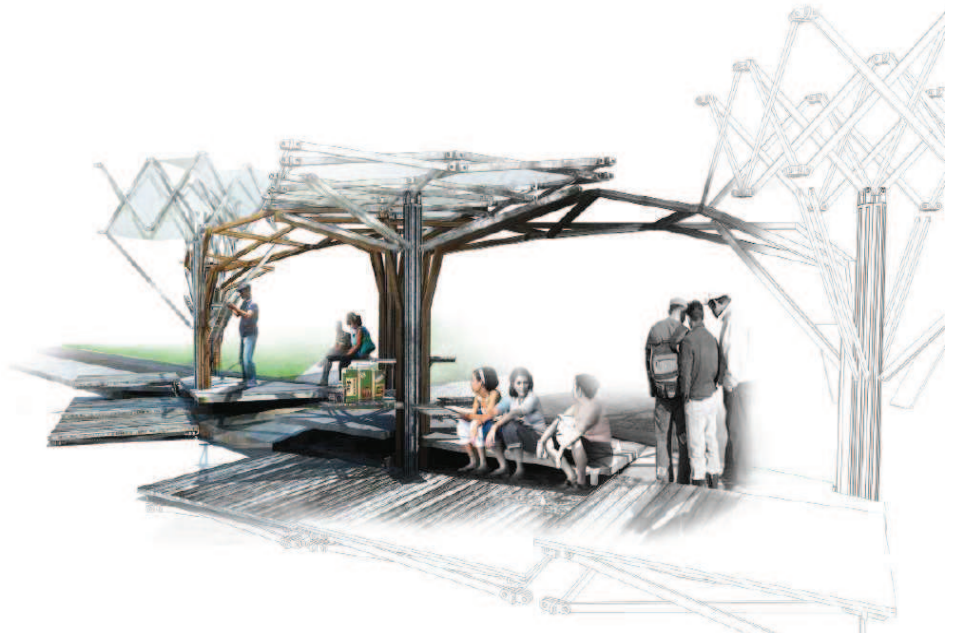


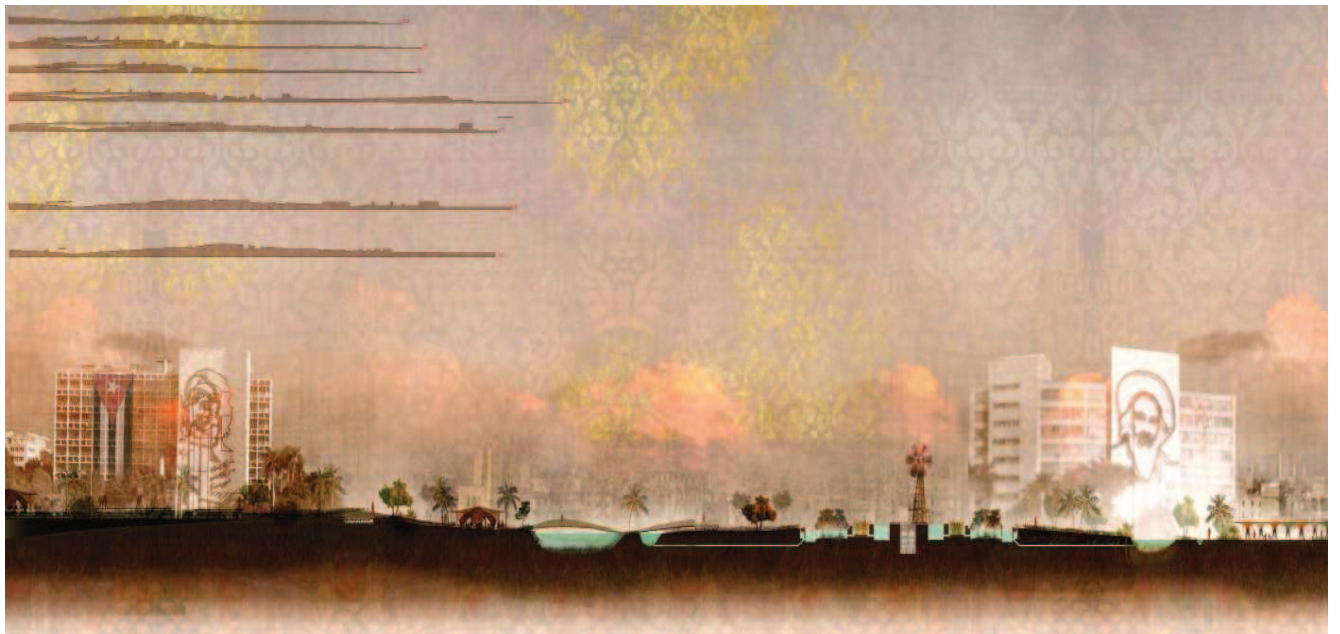
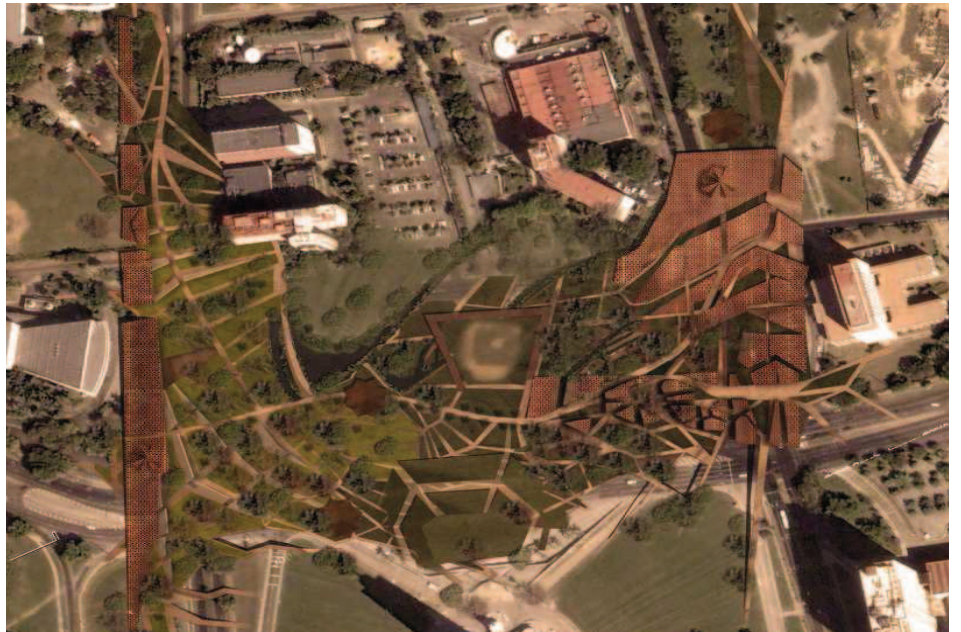
GARY DUPONT
3RD YEAR

Politics consist of social relations involving authority or power; indeed it is a process of exchange by which groups of people make collective decisions. But exchanges are not always possible, in some cases they need to be fostered through architecture. It appears that blurring the boundaries and the functions between architectural elements, like doors, walls, and facade, seems to facilitate these interactions.

Political and social interactions are more likely to happen when you have a high density of people. Encouraging points of encounter within the city will also decrease the control that the government has upon individuals, and the exchange of their ideas.



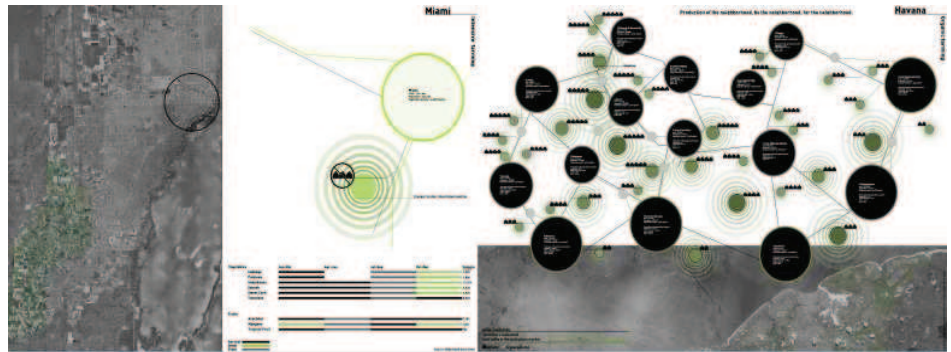


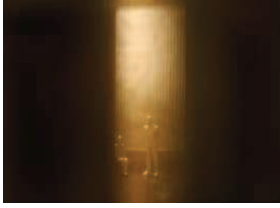


ACTIVATION BY NOMADIC URBAN AGRICULTURE

Social segregation has become a major problem in Little Havana. The high level of immigration from different Latin American countries has changed the cultural environment. Colombians, Mexicans, Nicaraguans and other immigrants are establishing their settlements in the area leaving aside the initial Cuban immigrants who inhabited the area since the 1960s. The huge gap between the different ethnic groups is causing conflict and distress. This urban agriculture proposal is addressing this problem creating a network of farms within the 3 neighbourhoods of Miami with the highest level of immigration. The idea is to provide a common activity essential to everyone's life that will mild the confrontation between cultures. The walls of segregation will be truned down on daily basis, but preserving their respective cultures. Differently to other similar proposals the activity will be nomadic appropriating different empty plots and producing for the whole community. Charity organizations, schools, property owners and neighbours will work together in a profitable activity.

YONATAN BUCHHANDLER
2ND YEAR STUDENT



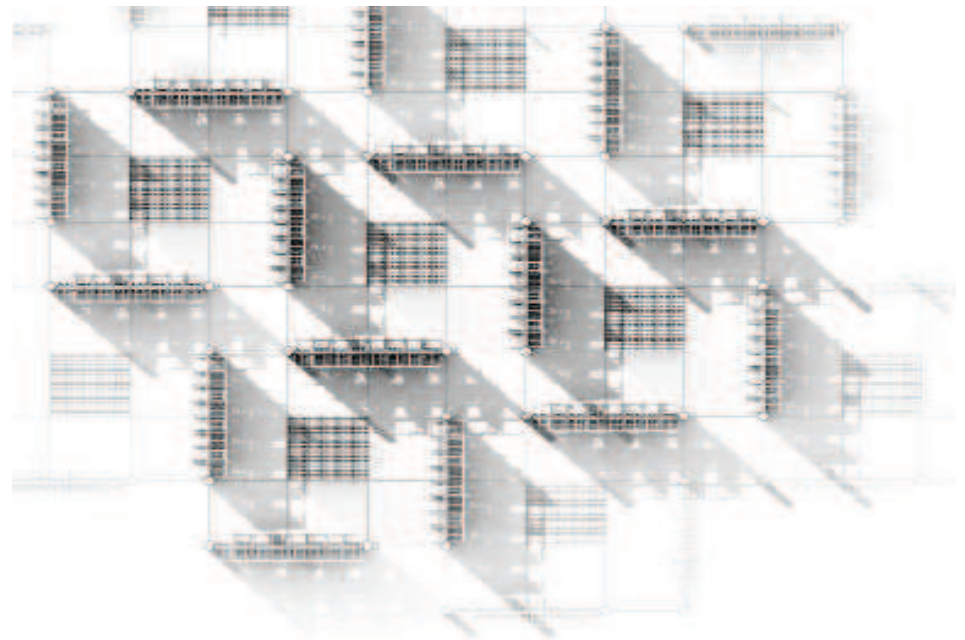


STAVROS PAPPAVASSILIOU
2ND YEAR

FOUNDING DIALOG IN *PLAZA DE LA REVOLUCION*

Dialog can mean a civilized discussion but can also mean an assertive confrontation. If a framework for free discussion (not regulated by political and financial interests) is in place then a democratic society will regulate itself by creating a feedback loop. This framework would allow for the breakdown of traditional hierarchical governance of the one or the few, so as to pass on this authority to the collective through its engagement in this constant feedback loop. The media for this discussion must be free of financial or political interests to avoid the redistribution of authority to the media itself, as well as the citizens need to be free and available to participate in the dialog as an everyday activity. Any breakdown of free dialog between citizens is the breakdown of democracy and a move towards authoritarian rule.





INTERMEDIATE UNIT 8 (2010-11)

POLITICS OF FABRICATION II

CHALLENGING POLITICAL EXPRESSION IN
LITTLE HAVANA, MIAMI.

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION, LONDON

TUTORS: NURIA ALVAREZ LOMBARDERO

FRANCISCO GONZALEZ DE CANALES



POLITICS OF FABRICATION II

Intense migration flows witnessed recently in big cities has been challenging the traditional understanding of the political organization of human living in the urban realm. The unprecedented clash of different forms-of-life due to these changing conditions has established not only a new relationship between inhabitation and the city, but also a redefinition of the key agents in political terms. Latest social unrest in Islamic countries has shown us that contemporary society concerns are not discussed in the traditional parliaments or councils anymore, but in the public spaces of the city itself.

Following this principle, Inter Unit 8 - Politics of fabrication II understands that the coexistence of diverse and conflicting forms-of-life in the contemporary city needs to be readdressed and reframed in the urban ground itself. This implies a new spatial and physical layout of enabling the presence and frictional interaction/negotiation of these forms-of-life of those who share the city. The location chosen is the city of Miami, the major entry point for Latin American immigrants in the United States. In particular, the focus of students work has been the Little Havana neighborhood, for years the epicentre of the political expression of the dominant Cuban immigrants and the most multicultural neighborhoods in the city at the present. In this area a pervading logic of city space privatization has lead to an increasing tension between individuals and groups with different cultural, social, ethnic and economical backgrounds inhabiting the neighborhood. Exploring this particular matter, students have thought about the importance of public space as the necessary space of encounter, interaction and negotiation between these different ways of living now present in the city, and recovering its political value in a contemporary Latin-American metropolis.

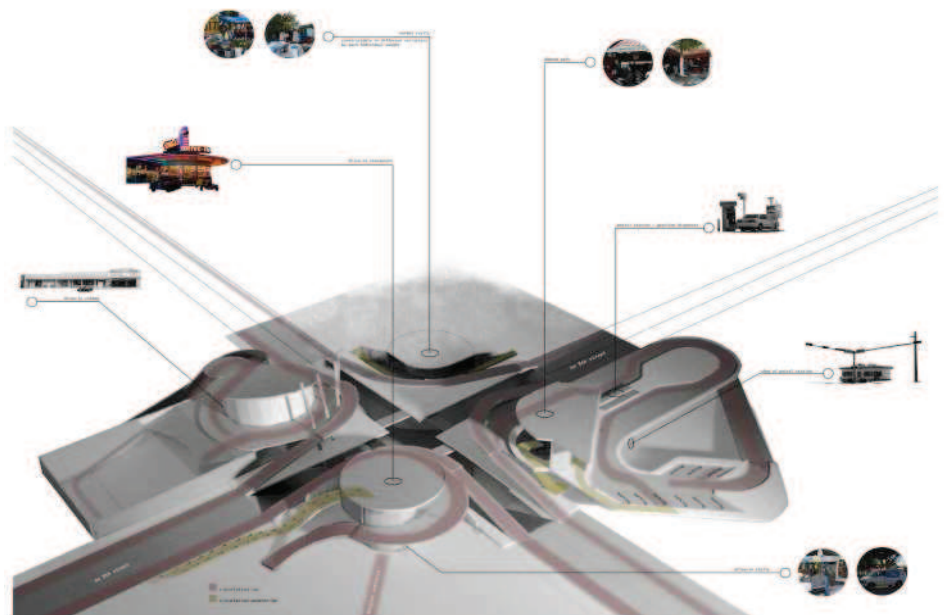
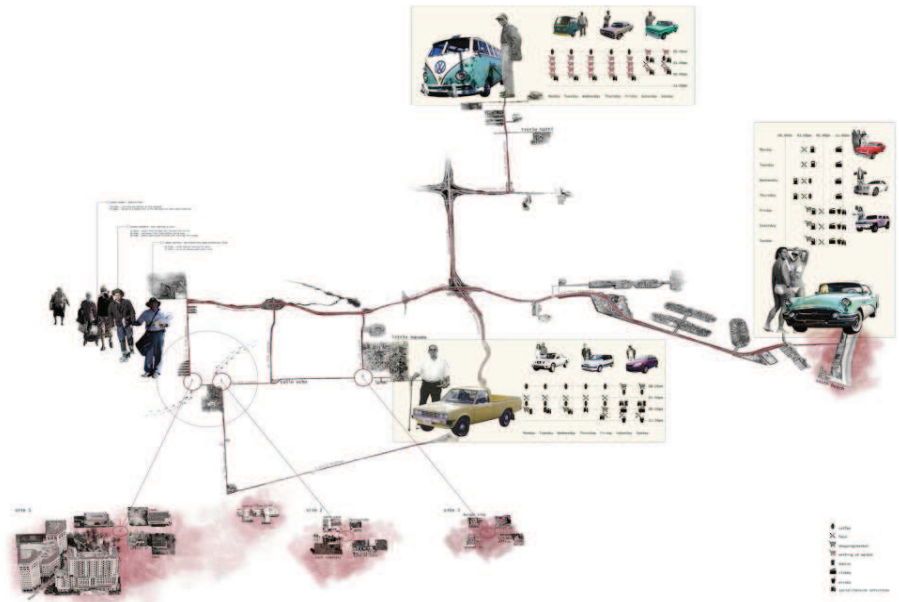
As a pedagogical strategy the unit has divided the year work in three phases. The first is to define an issue which is relevant to the inhabitants of Miami and that need to be discussed in the city. Students have addressed complex issues specifically related to the local context, including the dominance of car culture, illegal activities, urban agriculture, trans-generational and trans-cultural relations. This work has generated different understandings about how to define contemporary public spaces in Little Havana. The second is the spatial configuration where this issue can be put forward in the city itself. The third is how this issue is physically expressed by the action of people and their relation to different fabrication processes. Manifested in public and constructed as a physical material expression, these fabrication processes acquire a political value -- if we understand the political according to Hannah Arendt as action in public and preservation of plural forms-of-life through confrontation and agonism.



CLASHING CAR CULTURE AND PEDESTRIAN

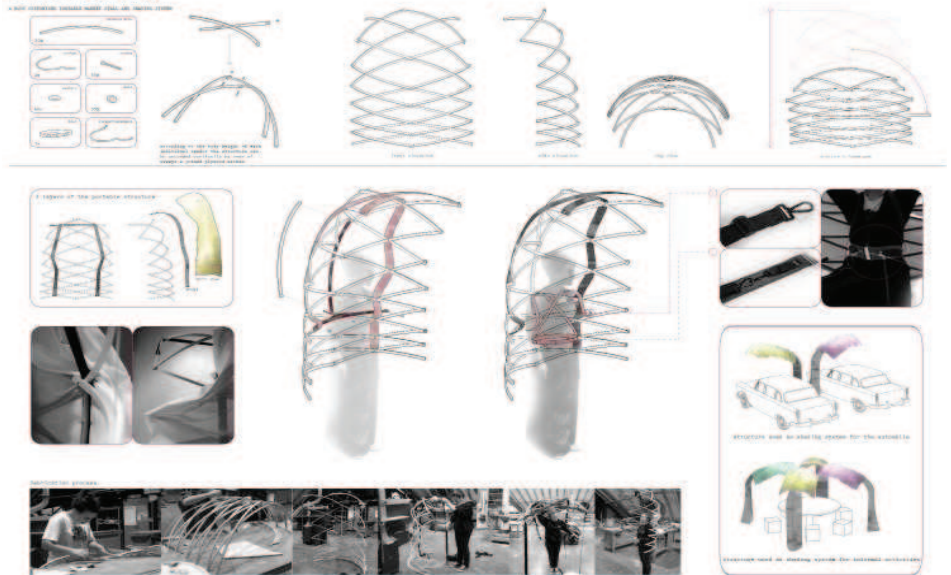
Due to the omnipresence of the car culture in Miami many programs and facilities within the city changed their appearance as well as their accessibility. Mobility has transformed the everyday life experience. Analyzing *Calle Ocho* we find the drive-throughs as one of the main features of the 'street-society' which leads to a lack of socialization and to the disappearance of the community. This intervention is creating a public space, which will give the opportunity to regenerate street life on *Calle Ocho* and achieve a cultural exchange between Cubans and Americans. A public market space will be framed by the infrastructure of a car parking and a plaza where growth and adaptation is possible over time will happen. The stalls will be fabricated by the vendors in a communal manner and are changeable to each individual's needs. During this process of fabrication the opportunity of an interaction and a cultural exchange within the community will be given.

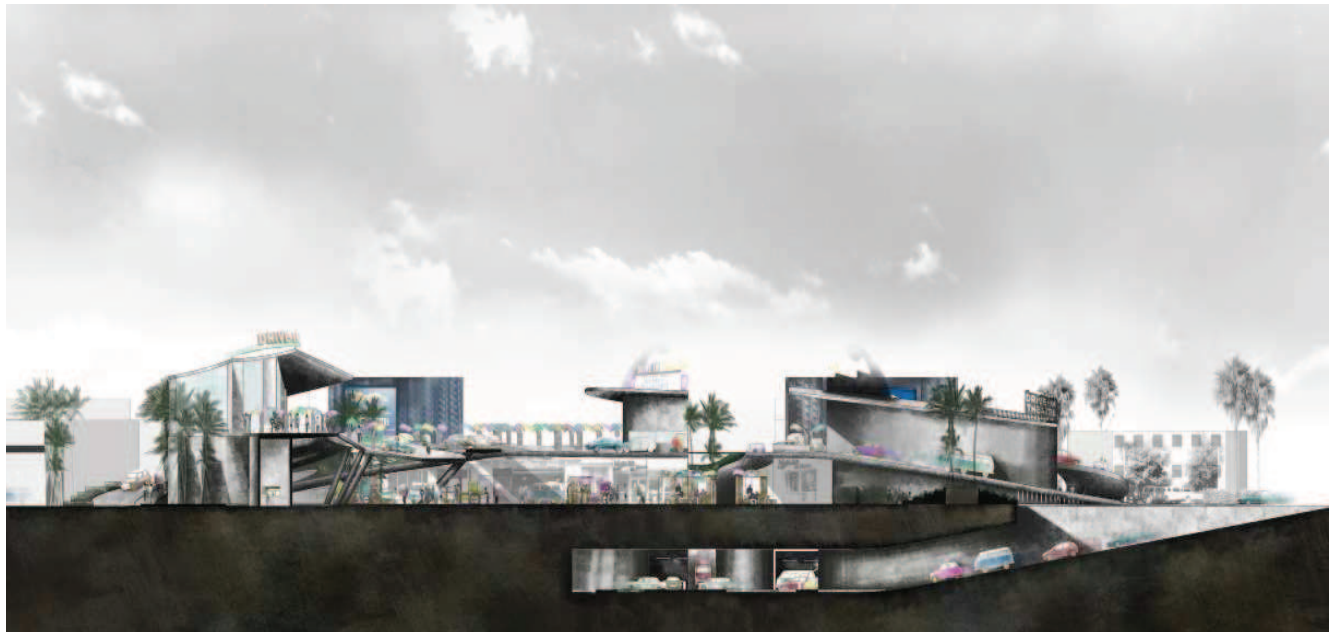
LARA YEGENOGLU
2ND YEAR STUDENT





MOBILE VENDING STRUCTURE

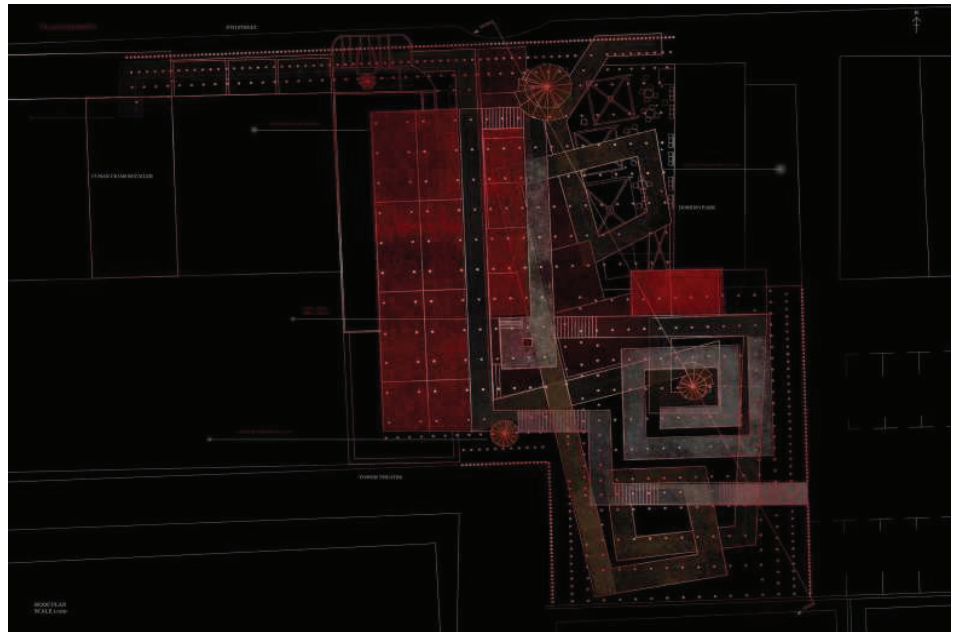




COLLIDING COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICT

Miami is a city composed of different enclosed communities separated by urban planning decisions during the last 60 years. The most evident of these differences is the contrast between tourists of Miami Beach area and Cuban Exiles of Little Havana. Despite both actors have everyday encounters on the Domino Park of Calle Ocho, either for playing or to visit the landmark, they do not communicate to each other. This repetitive situation is taken in this proposal being intensified by creating moments of transgression between the two cultures. The juxtaposition of different architectural elements in the same area, either from South Beach or Little Havana, creates uncanny situations. Therefore users of this urban device will have a combination of a slight state of confusion as well as an emotion of familiarity, what opens the barriers between both cultures. In addition these elements will be related to different programs that will transform this dead place into a continuously active public space.

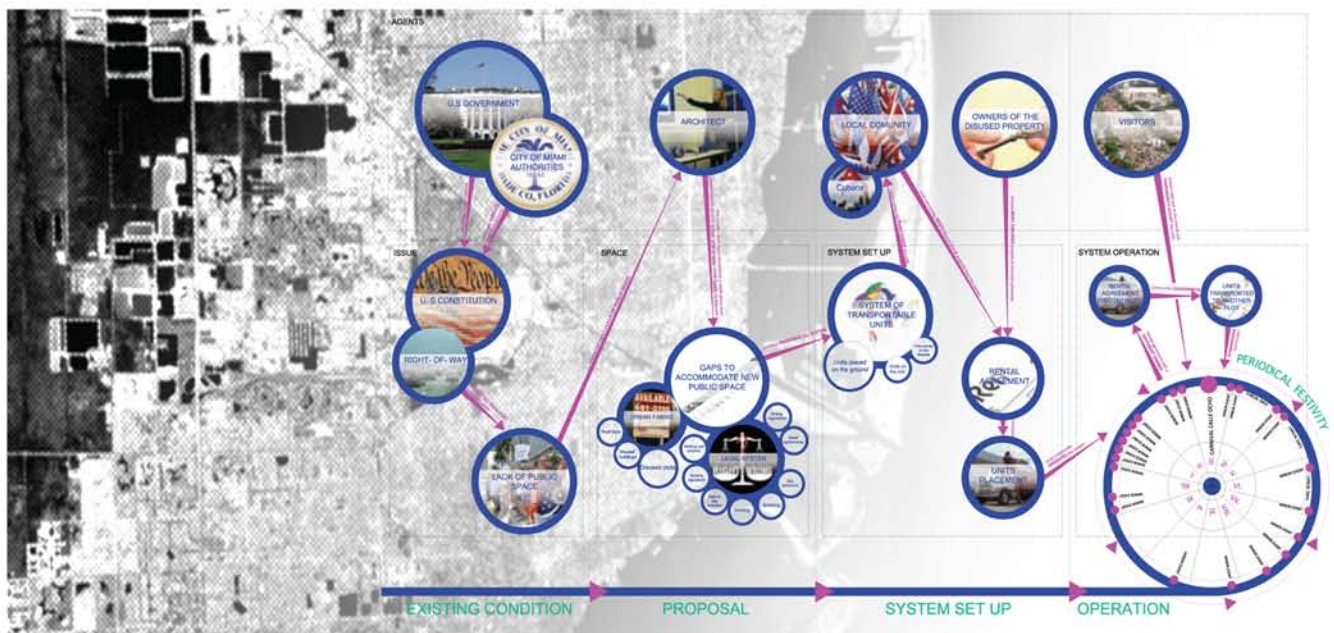
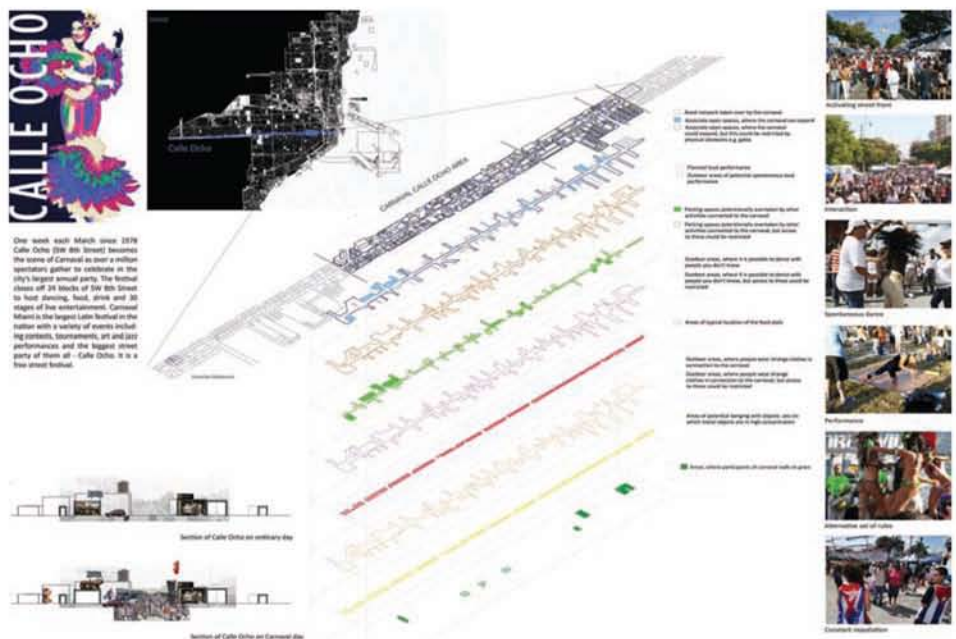
VIDHYA PUSHPANATHAN
2ND YEAR STUDENT



SUBVERTING WITH CARNIVALEQUE STRATEGIES

Calle Ocho in contrast to streets in Cuba lacks street life and public spaces. Conventional lifestyle in Miami forces programmes to occupy enclosed spaces as the street space is occupied by traffic. Life is also pre-programmed by city's authorities and their policies. The entire street space of Calle Ocho is occupied by people only on one day a year- the Carnaval day- which is the time of immediate interaction and direct democracy. Mediator of the immediate is aiming to extend the condition of the Carnaval to everyday. It is a series of structures that allow the public to reclaim space for personal interaction, discussion and participation. The structures squat temporarily on disused plots at the edge of the street and can be moved to occupy it. Their spatial organization can be adjusted severally ranging from a stage to a mask that hides away activities desired by individuals, but discouraged by the authorities.

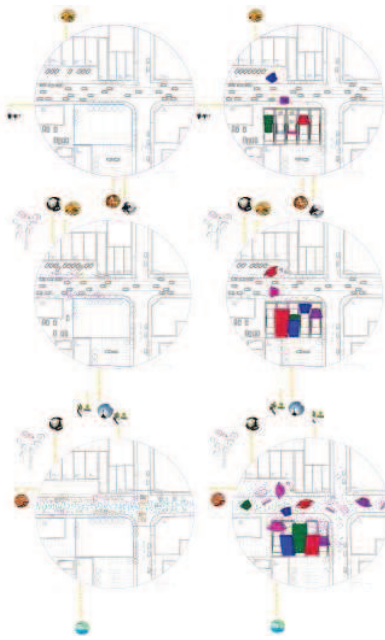
ELISKA PILNA
3RD YEAR STUDENT



EXCLUDED WITH THE EXISTING PROGRAMMATIC FABRIC
 PROPOSED DAY

EXCLUDED WITH THE EXISTING PROGRAMMATIC FABRIC
 MARKET EVENT

EXCLUDED WITH THE EXISTING PROGRAMMATIC FABRIC
 GENERAL DAY



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