RICE UNIVERSITY

The Continuous Enclave: Strategies in Bypass Urbanism

by

Viktor Ramos

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Master of Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The Continuous Enclave: Strategies in Bypass Urbanism

by

Viktor Ramos

This thesis takes a formal approach to understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by studying mechanisms of control within the West Bank. It is only through the overlapping of two separate political geographies that they are able to inhabit the same landscape. The Oslo Accords have been integral to this process of division. By defining various control regimes, the Accords have created a fragmented landscape of isolated Palestinian enclaves and Israeli settlements.

One feature of the Oslo Accords is the bypass road which links Israeli settlements to Israel, bypassing Palestinian areas in the process. These are essential to the freedom of movement for the Israeli settlers within the Occupied Territories. Extrapolating on the bypass, this thesis explores the ramifications of a continuous infrastructural network linking the fragmented landscape of Palestinian enclaves. In the process, a continuous form of urbanization has been developed to allow for the growth and expansion of the Palestinian state. Ultimately, this thesis questions the absurdity of partition strategies within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them.
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PREFACE

It is important to note the intent and scope of this document. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been written about extensively since the formation of Israel as a state (and probably prior). As such, this document is less concerned with providing a history of Israel/Palestine as, to put it simply, many others have already done so and done it better. Instead, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the ramifications of key political agreements within the conflict, leading to an architectural proposal that addresses some of the important issues. This was not pursued as a means of resolving the conflict (it is likely that this proposal creates more problems than it solves), but instead acts as one possible illustration of what the political agreements might require to operate as they were intended. Extrapolating on political agreements (in this case, the Oslo Accords) meant accepting the premise they were founded on, that of a two-state solution, despite my own apprehension about such an approach.
INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of architecture has been double: both as a means of separation and colonial control. Spatial planning and architectural practices have been integral to the division of the land, as the two opposing ideas of Palestine overlap across the very same place. Within Jerusalem and the West Bank, Israeli domination operates by creating a complex system of exclusion, one in which every piece of land is divided in two.

This partition strategy works along demographic lines, operating both visibly and invisibly. Its most visible and physical manifestations: walls and checkpoints. The walls and checkpoints have become the most direct means of segregation and control, but also act as sensors within Israel's surveillance network, registering all those that move through them. This system seeks to control through the selective opening and closing of various apertures, effectively strangling free movement between the fragmented landscape of Palestinian urban fabric.

The Oslo Accords of the 1990s are integral to this system of exclusion, providing the framework within which Israel has further expanded control of the West Bank.
OSLO ACCORDS

The Oslo Accords are a series of agreements signed in 1993 between Israeli and Palestinian leaders under the direction of the Clinton administration. They were a milestone in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as they were the first face-to-face agreement between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The accords were intended to resolve key issues in the conflict, with subsequent agreements leading to a more peaceful coexistence within Israel/Palestine. Critical to the agreements was the understanding that they would eventually lead to a two-state solution, dividing territory between Israel and a newly-formed Palestinian state. It was through the first agreements that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was created to oversee the affairs of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Essentially, the accords called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from portions of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, allowing for Palestinian rights to self-govern-ment through the creation of the Palestinian Authority. Core issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements, and final borders were to be decided within a five-year interim period after the initial agreements. Until a final status agreement was reached, the Oslo Accords divided the West Bank and Gaza Strip between the two groups.

The accords created various regimes of control, split between Israel and the
Palestinian Authority, by defining three distinct zones (*Figure 01*). The first zone, designated Area A, surrounds existing Palestinian urban fabric and falls under full Palestinian Authority control. The PA maintains full civil and security control within these areas. Immediately surrounding that is Area B, a shared control area between Israel and the PA. Within Area B, Israel retains security control while the PA manages civil matters. And encircling all of that is Area C, which retains full Israeli civil and security control (*Table 01*).

*Figure 01. Oslo Accord Zones*

The security imperatives within these zones have led to the fragmentation and isolation of Palestinian urban fabric as traversal between separate security zones is increasingly difficult due to restrictions in place by Israeli security (*Figure 02*). Under the Oslo Accords, Israel has maintained its control over key infrastructure between Palestinian-controlled areas, effectively strangling free movement of people and goods between the Palestinian urban areas. Through a variety of security measures and checkpoints, Israel's dominance over infrastructure within

*Figure 02. Fragmented Urban Fabric*
the West Bank has only increased since the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Under the Oslo Accords, the map of the Palestinian-controlled West Bank is very different from typical border designations, due to its fragmentation. Even more striking perhaps is the shrinking of its borders from the 1922 British Mandate to the present (Figure 04).

Under the Oslo Accords, Israel may have ceded control to the Palestinian Authority within Palestinian cities, but by maintaining control of areas around Palestinian enclaves, Israel can control all movement between. The occupation of the city isn’t as important as controlling its borders, as can be seen by developments in the Gaza Strip after Israel’s withdrawal. Through control of the borders around the Gaza Strip and the airspace above, Israel has been able to create a blockade.
around the Gaza Strip, bringing Gaza’s economy to grinding halt.

The West Bank has also undergone such a transformation under the Oslo Accords, through security zones, checkpoints, and physical barriers. Israeli dominance over infrastructure has been key to their security approach within the occupied territories (Figure 05 & 06).
Figure 05. West Bank Security Zones
Figure 06. West Bank Checkpoints / Separation Barrier
CORE ISSUES

The Oslo Accords were intended to act as the groundwork for future agreements. The intention of the original planners was that the core issues within the conflict would be decided within a five-year interim period, ideally ending the conflict with the signing of further accords. As of this writing, agreements on the core issues have never been reached, due to a variety of issues on both sides of the debate. However, what does remain in place are the initial agreements signed in 1993 and their resulting implications. This thesis attempts to deal with some of these core issues within the framework of the original Oslo Accords, as future negotiators would have had to. As such, some explanation of these issues is in order.

STATUS OF JERUSALEM

Perhaps the most contentious issue is the final status of Jerusalem. As the central focus of three major world religions, Jerusalem has long been mired in conflict. It remains at the center of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because both Israelis and Palestinians claim it as their legitimate capital. Israel has de facto control of Jerusalem and claims it as its unified capital. However, most UN members do not consider it the capital and house embassies in Tel Aviv. The Palestinians see Jerusalem as the capital of their future state, and have passed laws
(through the Palestinian Authority) declaring East Jerusalem as such.

Crucial to these issues is the nature of two major holy sites within the Old City, centered on the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif. Haram al-Sharif is where the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque can be found. These are very important holy sites to Islam, as the Dome of the Rock is where Muhammad is believed to have ascended to heaven. It is considered by Sunni Muslims to be the third holiest site in Islam. Both sit upon a raised platform at the southeastern edge of the Old City. Retaining walls surround and support this platform. The western retaining wall is believed to be the last remnant of the Second Temple, making it the holiest site in Judaism (most often referred to as the Western or Wailing Wall).

Due to overlapping and incompatible religious views, both the Israeli's and Palestinians want full control of the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif. In July 2000, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations took place at Camp David with the hope of finding a way to divide Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif between the two sides. All proposals to bridge and divide these sites sectionally have been rejected.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 following civil strife within the area led to what Palestinians refer to as Al-Naqba, or the Palestinian exodus of 1948. This entailed the exodus of half a million or more Palestinians who either fled or were expelled from the region. Including descendants of original refugees, this group has grown to over four million today.

Israel has opposed right of return for these refugees on several grounds,
though the most dramatic is that it would lead to the destruction of the state of Israel. This arises because the state of Israel was founded on the principle of a Jewish majority. The potential influx of some four million Palestinians would create a Palestinian majority within the state of Israel. Further exasperating the problem is the increasing population of Palestinians within the West Bank; a population that is increasing faster than Israel's Jewish population. This "demographic bomb" is likely to further strain relations between the groups.

Figure 07. Population (before Right of Return).

Figure 08. Population (after Right of Return).
ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

Since the end of the Six Day War, Israel has established new settlement communities within the West Bank which now house over 350,000 people. Many of these settlements are deep within the West Bank and secured by Israeli military, disrupting Palestinian movement, agriculture, and resources. These settlements are illegal under international law, yet continue to expand beyond the Green Line (the cease fire line established in 1949 (Figure 09)). Since 1967, Israel has seized more than 40% of West Bank lands for settlements.

Figure 09. Israeli settlements beyond the Green Line.
Planning strategies used by many of the settlements are quite suburban in nature (Figure 10). In contested territory, the planning of these settlements through low density suburban sprawl acts as an extremely effective way of annexing more territory to the state of Israel. As such, it appears that Israeli settlement strategies are concerned with taking over as much of the valuable land as possible.

Figure 10. Israeli settlements (shown Maale Adumim)

**FINAL BORDERS**

One major issue is contingent upon many of the previous ones: final borders between the two states. National security fears arise often through border arrangements and this is especially the case in such a small area. The occupation of the West Bank by Israel has provided a buffer between Israel proper and any perceived threat from an Arab alliance. But it can be argued that the occupation of the West Bank has weakened security due to insurrections from within.

**RESOURCES**

And finally, issues of shared resources have to be resolved, especially in relation to water. Israel receives much of its water from two large aquifers in the West Bank, so finding ways to equally distribute resources between the two states is paramount.
SPATIAL TACTICS

In dividing the West Bank into various control regimes, the Oslo Accords have created the need for a variety of spatial and architectural interventions. These can be seen as physical manifestations of political will, most often in the form of walls, obstacles, bypass roads, and other forms of separation.

Perhaps the most iconic of these is the wall (Figure 11). In order to secure settlements and Israeli territory, Israel has started construction of a “separation fence”, which slices through the Palestinian zones to link Israeli settlements. In the process, areas under Palestinian control are cut off further from adjoining settlements and resources. The key reason Israel cites for the separation fence is to counter bombings against Israeli civilians. Detractors of the wall argue that it is an illegal attempt by Israel to annex further Palestinian territory under the ‘guise of security.’

Figure 11a&b. Israeli “Separation Fence” / Photo (a) by Jill Granberg. Photo (b) from Activestills.org
The path of the separation fence was determined by its demographic goal: "the route was to include the most Israelis, even those in Israeli settlements, and the smallest possible number of Palestinians. Second, its path would follow territorial lines in order to achieve the de facto annexation of any possible uninhabited lands" (Misselwitz, 167).

In some cases, the wall has completely walled off Palestinian cities, such as Qalqilyah (Figure 12). This has been very problematic for Qalqilyah’s residents who no longer have access to farmland beyond the wall, nor services outside the city.

Coupled with the walls and fences, checkpoints are essential to Israel’s infrastructural control. As people and goods still need to move through the barriers, checkpoints have been placed at key areas. However, the ultimate goal of the separation fence is to bar Palestinian entry into Israel, including those with worker permits in Israel. By 2008, Israel had intended to halt all Palestinian traffic into Israel. As of this writing, Palestinians can still enter Israel through permits, though they are increasingly hard to acquire.

According to B’Tselem, in the summer of 2006, there were 528 checkpoints within the West Bank. Of these, 83 had stationed personnel, while 445 were
unmanned obstacles (*Figure 13b*). On top of these stationary checkpoints, Israel often utilizes flying checkpoints to close down roads intermittently, averaging 165 per week in the summer of 2006. These checkpoints have drastic effects on the Palestinians travelling between cities within the West Bank.

![Figure 13a&b. Huwarr checkpoint: Photo (a) by michaelramallah / Hebron Road Block: Photo (b) by Jill Granberg.](image)

Methods of exclusion extend beyond barriers to include infrastructural links solely for Israeli use. Extensive highways link (illegal) suburban settlements directly to the West Jerusalem, bypassing existing roads.

These Israeli-only highways effectively contain and divide Palestinian territories, including urban areas, farms, and grazing areas. These are most often referred to as bypass roads, as they bypass Palestinian territory by either bridging it, or tunnelling under it. And sometimes, bypass roads both bridge and tunnel, as seen near Gush Etzion outside of Jerusalem (*Figure 14*).
Figure 14. Tunnel to Gush Etzion (top). Bypass road from Gush Etzion (bottom). From a tunnel to a bridge.
Figure 15. Several spatial tactics of the occupation
PROJECT GOALS

With these many issues in mind, this thesis set out to explore the ramifications of a continuous Palestinian state set within the framework of the Oslo Accords. It was not the intention of this thesis to prescribe an architectural solution to the conflict, as it is the author's opinion that architecture-only solutions to the conflict ignore some of the underlying issues that are integral to the continuation of said conflict. Instead, this thesis posits an exploration of the architectural solutions required to make a viable Palestinian state within the Oslo Accord agreements of 1993. Through the extrapolation of existing tactics under the Accords, it was hoped this project would serve as a critique, pointing out the absurdity required by such politics of separation.

The Oslo Accords were an initial step towards a two-state solution, splitting Palestine between an Israeli state and an independent Palestinian state. With this premise in place, I wanted to address several of the core issues through my proposal. First was the right of return and the potential expansion of the new Palestinian state by some four million inhabitants. This presents some infrastructural problems as such a large influx of people will overtax cities that are already overcrowded (see Figure 16). And due to majority Israeli control of the West Bank, expansion into surrounding territory isn't an option. The development of new housing for these inhabitants could take up much of what little land the Oslo
Accords left to the Palestinian state. So a way of accommodating this influx of people while preserving as much of the land as possible is required.

For a viable Palestinian state to survive and even prosper, the continuity of urban fabric is essential. The connection of isolated Palestinian land is the second issue addressed in this proposal. Long used to dealing with Israeli infrastructural domination, a Palestinian state requires its own transportation network. Following the Israeli example (bypass roads), Palestinian transport networks need to bridge and tunnel through Israeli sovereignty in order to meet the demands of separation as put forth by the Oslo Accords.

The third issue addressed is the possible expansion and growth of Palestinian land in order to address the loss through the Oslo Accords. With the symbolic value of land within Israel and the West Bank so high, maximizing their current land is essential. But as a largely agricultural economy, land for farms, olive groves, and grazing is in dire need. As such, finding ways to meet these basic needs is fundamental to this proposal.
The site is located in East Jerusalem; it was chosen as a prototypical stretch of the West Bank. It is approximately 15 kilometers across, and 5 kilometers wide (Figure 18). At the southwest corner of the site is the Old City of Jerusalem, along with the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif. A series of disconnected Palestinian enclaves spread across the site, broken up by various Israeli settlements and the separation barrier. As a prototypical site, proposals made at this scale will then be extrapolated beyond the immediate surroundings to the West Bank itself.

Figure 17. Size comparison between the United States and the Middle East.
Figure 18. Specific site within West Bank.
THE CONTINUOUS ENCLAVE

The premise of this thesis is controversial as it amplifies the existing politics of separation to an absurd level. It takes these tactics and applies them wholesale to a Palestinian state, as if equalizing some of the power relations between the two states. In doing so, it lends these tactics a certain credibility by appropriating them for the other side. Through this process, the conflict has been put on steroids. The downward spiral of separation leads to more walls, which in turn lead to more bypasses, leading to more walls, ad infinitum. This is the legacy of the Oslo Accords as they stand now, striving to separate one piece of land into two. This is where the Continuous Enclave begins.

The Continuous Enclave appropriates both the bridge and the tunnel to accommodate its needs. As the surface is heavily controlled by the occupation, and with Israeli territory spanning between Palestinian towns and cities, methods of traversal above and below the surface are necessary. Obfuscation of certain connective networks was important to the project, as the intent was to limit Israeli control of Palestinian infrastructure as much as possible. Due to this, all road networks are below ground (at least 10m to avoid "bunker-buster" bombs), emerging to the surface only in Area A Palestinian territory. A redundancy of infrastructure was also very important in case of precision air strikes, so road networks act more like a web of various strands instead of a single easily disrupted line.
In its most visible state, the Continuous Enclave appears to be a series of bridges, leapfrogging from one Area A enclave to another (see Site Plan / Aerial View). The overall site diagram shows a different story though, as the structure moves from bridge to tunnel as it breaks the ground plane. This is necessary for the continuity of transportation networks, especially for mass transit rail lines that service the bridges.

![Figure 19. Connective Strategy](image)

The primary program explored in the Continuous Enclave is housing. With the need to accommodate an increase in population and lack of available land to do so, the housing has been interwoven with the transportation and service networks. Housing is visible when the structure emerges from below ground to bridge two enclaves. At these points, the structure is effectively tunnelling through Israeli airspace, providing a continuous form of urbanization between enclaves. Within this tunnel can be found a variety of civic elements, with public space, markets, restaurants, and parks. The extension of farming and grazing land is also evident here. By splitting apart structural tubes, large open spaces for use in grazing, farming, and other forms of agriculture have been provided.
The structure is based on several cantilevered tubes which taper as they move up, increasing the weight on the ends and decreasing it at maximum span (Figure 20). Structural moments are overbuilt to provide rigidity to the central span. By utilizing multiple structural cores, each independent from the next, distribution of loads is more easily accomplished, while providing structural redundancy in case of attack or failure.

![Figure 20. Structural tubes](image)

For the exterior skin, an ambiguous pattern was developed to break up visibility of activity within, while still allowing light to pass through from without. A perforated aluminum panel system provides for a certain obfuscation while letting sunlight enter the living units and public spaces. Skylights are also used to bring light deeper into the structure. Porosity of the skylights increases in proportion to height, making the center span the most porous, and most saturated with light (Figure 21).

![Figure 21. Skin Porosity](image)
Divided Landscape

- Israeli Continuity

- Palestinian Continuity

Separate Infrastructural Networks
ENCLAVE TO ENCLAVE

Divided Landscape

Connective Infrastructure

Housing Levels

Extended Land
Stereolithography Model (Dimensions: 15" x 5")
Resin Site Model (Dimensions: 22" x 8.5")


<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JW/is_4_56/ai_110458726/pg_1>


<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/412/op2.htm>


THE CONTINUOUS ENCLAVE:
STRATEGIES IN BYPASS URBANISM

For his final student project presented last month at Rice University, Víctor Ramos produced The Continuous Enclave: Strategies in Bypass Urbanism.

The project explores how new forms of habitable infrastructure might be extricated from a geopolitical agreement—in this case, materializing architectural forms from the legal exception of the Old Accords. The result is a fantastic example of architectural speculation: a genus receives—and possibly dismantles—a bridge used as transport links, aerial housing, and supplies an agricultural complex, all in one.

[Image: The Continuous Enclave: Strategies in Bypass Urbanism by Víctor Ramos, Rice University]

QUICK LINKS
Guardian | Gensler's Wild East
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landscape.mp3: An Interview with Mark Allen
Sparke, Reappearing: An Interview with Tom McCarthy
Space/Space: An Interview

On February 22, 2009, Geoff Manaugh of BLDG BLOG posted this thesis on his website. That post and the comments are included here, for better or worse.
While slowly defining security protocols, as the "continuous encroach" and its network of bridges cross through sovereign Israeli airspace, these structures would look like the dispersed islands of a subterranean undersea territory not under Palestinian control.

From Rames' own project description

"The thesis takes a formal approach to understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by studying mechanisms of control within the West Bank. The occupation of the West Bank has had tremendous effects on the urban fabric of the region because it operates simply. Through the conflict, new ways of managing territory have been created to multiply a single sovereign territory into many. It is only through the overlapping of two separate political geographies that they are able to steal the same landscape."

One might say that these bridges present us with the staple of geopolitical form.

"The Oslo Accords," Rames continues, "have been integral to this process of division."

By defining various control regimes, the Accords have created a fragmented landscape of occupied Palestinian enclaves and Israeli settlements. The intertwined nature of these fragments makes it impossible to isolate the two states. By connecting the fragments through a series of under and overpasses, the borders between the two states have shifted vertically.

In the following axonometric, you can see the internal layering of the site - an inhabited condition that weaves through the lower atmosphere.


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architecture

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the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be eradicated (if only they had better architecture).

Ramos instead saw the Ostal Accords as a kind of spatial resource code from which uncontrollable structural forces might be extracted.

For those of you who have read [name] New York, it's as if the Ostal Accords have been turned into a geopolitical active [name] Coning Law. This law, of course, translated spatial guidelines — for instance, enforcing cordons for buildings, leading to an area in which skyscrapers rise up like ever-narrowing magnets — from which the buildings of Manhattan would thus be shaped.

As Koyanagi himself observed, in the wake of the Zoning Law architecture would "have to cross the final Manhattan archipelago from the sometimes rock of the zoning envelope in a campaign of speculation."

In Ramos's project, that "invisible rock" consists of disputed territorial claims hovering virtually over the geography of the West Bank. The distinct new form of spatially "carved" from that rock is the bypass.

![Image from "The Architecture of the Occupied Territories" by Vito Acconci, 2013-2014](image.png)

Again, from the project description:

One feature of the Ostal Accords is the bypass road which links Israeli settlements to Jerusalem bypassing Palestinian areas in the process. These are essential to the freedom of movement for the settlers within the Occupied Territories. Extrapolating on the bypass, this thesis explores the architecture of a continuous infrastructural network linking the fragmented landscape of Palestinian enclaves. In the process, a continuous form of urbanism has been developed to allow for the growth and expansion of the Palestinian state. Ultimately, this thesis questions the potential fluidity of partition strategies within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them.

Thus creating what Ramos calls bypass urbanism, or a sub-connected state of new territories in the city.

![Image from "The Architecture of the Occupied Territories" by Vito Acconci, 2013-2014](image.png)
MAY 2008

Buildings and Books
White Houses and New York
Olympic Choreography
Quarter House
The Other Night Sky
Carnival in Light
Radio Resolutions
Inside the Tskokolash
Despair at the Citystate
The Digital Replacement of the Nation
Mountain Monuments
Botanical Oblivion
This and That
Deep in the basement of an art exhibit, an exhibition on Second Avenue in the heart of Brooklyn, a New York City, USA, fishing fleet is on display for a farewell to the city.

Art in Time

APRIL 2008

The Architecture of Art
Space is a Symphony of Turning Light Sounds
SameTime An Encounter with Daniel Orson
Smothered Ice
Isolate in the Afflatus
Central Shift
Museum to New Skyscrapers
Mixing Up, Mixing Down
Create Sound City
Ice and Gold and
Travel Times
Avant Models
Desert Valley
Geographical Shopper by David G. Rieff
Directions Out
Never-Forgotten
Architecture and the Media

The Mathematics of Preservation and the Future of Urban Ruins
Transmitting Ice from below the Antarctic Ice
The Sound of Evolution

View Full Month

MARCH 2008

Forgotten Architects
Earth Colony
Power Plant
Google Maps of Sci-Fi
Eddy Risks
The Architecture of Self-Measurement
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Landscape Futures of Penn
Below the Polar Ice
S10560
In Philadelphia
The Cave of the Poucach Pits
Wind Tunnel of Mars
The Trencher of Approach
Big Lab in Baltimore
Feeding Presidential
Complexity, Dwellings
The controlled river
Indicates
The Octagon
Angling for the Sun
On Illustrating Architecture

View Full Month

FEBRUARY 2008

The Subterranean
Water Canals of Leadville, Colorado
The Bush

[Image: The Subterranean Water Canals of Leadville by Vivian Sassen, view much larger, bottom]

There are any number of other directions such a project could go, but I'm particularly intrigued by the idea of applying the same sort of analysis to other conflict issues, wherever, all over the world.

Of course, the possibilities for this are many. Thereafter, what is it that the Berlin Wall has been a piece of architecture pulled from the dreamscapes of international political infrastructure?

In fact, I'm reminded here of Rupert Thomson's under-appreciated recent novel 'Divided Kingdom'—especially because the basic premise of that book was at least partially inspired by Ken Colhoun's own student thesis project, 'BLOCK, or The Voluntary Process of Architecture. As Kisho Kurokawa wrote:

Once, a city was divided into two parts. One part because the Good Half, the other part because the Bad Half. The inhabitants of the Bad Half began to flock to the good part, rapidly swelling into an urban exodus. If this situation had been allowed to continue for ever, the population of the Good Half would have doubled, while the Bad Half would have turned into a ghost town. After all attempts to interrupt this undeniable migration had failed, the authorities of the Good part made desperate and urgent use of architecture: they built a wall around the good part of the city, making it completely inaccessible to their subjects.

The Wall was a masterpiece.

The U.S.-Mexico border would seem an obvious place for any investigation of "aesthetic advancement" to begin, but today, the New York Times broke at the following after-effects of the Dayton Accords and the political-creative impact on the future of Bosnia, and LeBow's Woods has long explored the architectural effects of political segregation, from Panne and Beech to Israel and Europe, as well as those of war and politics that is the very source of political tensions. But what kinds of space might we yet extract from international agreements between, say, India and Pakistan over Kashmir, or Turkey and Greece over Nicosia?

It is for that reason that George Washington's White House seems to me the most interesting monument we can build today, both as a model and as a symbol of the international order.

DESIGN | ART

Gardens

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AND OTHER AREAS
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ART
Crossovers
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Design Culture Lab
Design Observer
Design: React
Drawn
Gardening in Heels
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Project 8
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Samedios
seekall.com
sataline
Shawnmany
Thames
Magazine
Transmaterial
we make money not art

PHOTOGRAPHY

Alex Macken
Constantine
David Meier

POSTOPOULIS
Even with so many precedents, it would seem, such studies have not really begun. You can see much, much larger versions of all of these images in this Pinter set.

The Continental Divide Strategy in Egypt (Museums). They are incredibly detailed and well worth exploring in full.

(Werner Raemdonk's Continental Divide was produced at the University of Nebraska by Tony Sjoman under the direction of Kevin Cahill and Evan Fisher, with additional input from John Calzador and Albert Pope.)

MIDNIGHT, FEBRUARY 22, 2009 | 82 COMMENTS

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HTML IS BOTH OKAY AND ENCOURAGED FOR LINKS.
THIS IS HOW TO INSERT LINKS. THANKS!

Jan said...

Very interesting piece, means a lot to us if it's accurate. With the way the conflict in the region is going you could almost believe that would happen.

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 2:05 AM

Bill said...

Two comments...

1) re section showing Sandstorms

2) re sandstorms: Why restrict bypass routes to the lower atmosphere when the stratosphere is available too - or underground as well as over (This seems especially obvious since there's already a network of boreal crossing routes in place in parts of this territory, although they're experienced in a more veritable, entrepreneurial idiom these days...)

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 6:04 AM

Bill said...

Megastuctures like these, while fascinating, cast enormous shadow, both figuratively and literally (as you relate to in your description of Manhattan skyscrapers).

I see the literal shadow as a method to further megapolitization and central design your structure so that certain areas never get too sun and you will have inhabited endless pop-ups, who will then need to supplement not just food and peace, but also access to resources.

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 9:49 AM

In said...

Sure, but unless the idea of bypass projects is in new or anything good about this research in general, your radical-social approach can become more aggressive.

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 11:20 AM

In said...

and by the way, these research should really give more attention to which project it is referring to - businesses in common with the projects of land use - projects, just because their building type is similar, should never mean the political ground and issue where they have grown from.

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 11:50 AM

Anonymous said...

What a horrendously slick vision!

I sincerely hope that the images are intended only to point out the absurdities of borders and attempts at defining people. It's troubling if we are expected to imagine this as some sort of viable solution to the conflict.

Should this be accepted eagerly as an analytical exercise? Or does it represent the authors total absence of critical self-judgment in pursuit of some holybrideuchi truth?

If this have one passionate and brightest envision the future, we are made up terrible.

The preference should really stop and give this student some guidance.

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 12:08 PM

Geoff Atkinson said...

Anonymous, the thesis statement above includes the line "Ultimately, this thesis..." the potential absurdity of partition strategies within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to reduce them." So when you say that you "sincerely hope..." I can feel assured that this was very much a part of the project.

And, I, wherever exactly in the "radical socialists" approach in this. Can you point it out, please?

FEBRUARY 24, 2009 12:17 PM

Anonymous said...

Even if this proposal resolve only to "question the potential absurdity of partition", the images represent an extremely dark vision. It is apparent that great care, and once I say passion, has gone into crafting this misguided glossary. This sort of sensibility blurs naturally into the fashionably slick bravado that ignores the utter

of buildings—people. Students can at times forget fundamental human needs and find themselves in situations that only Durkheim would feel comfortable in.

Projects such as this demand to question the authors' fundamental assumptions. They need to be called out for what they are.

FEBRUARY 28, 2004 12:09 PM

The way long said...

This project seems to really question the nature of architectural representation. Typically, projects create images intended to sell an idea, beautiful images that encourage you to accept the views within the project as fact. This project seems to use it very differently. Architectural representations are meant to sell a building or encourage its construction, but instead perhaps to discourage it. To make us really question what is taking place here. To recast from what it offers. Maybe its glory, but can it be any glimmer than the facts on the ground?

It is important to note that all architectural proposals are made in order to be built.

FEBRUARY 28, 2004 2:08 PM

The whole said...

Sure. If the Palestinians had money, you can be sure Israel would offer a worse one. But this... beautifully photostitched buildings has where the Palestinians can own, live, have more than three rooms in an apartment, have an easy time of it. helicopter, trains, and other such delights. Climate Change is not even taken into account. Israel is on the rise. Superstudio & The City of Secret becomes obvious. London 2003. Stacked Cathedrals. I can point to this and say, "This is the future of the church.

FEBRUARY 28, 2004 4:31 PM

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FEBRUARY 28, 2004 4:31 PM
layered curiously. The moment you transplanted this reality to the world of
sciences and economics, it looks brutal, but it is the same. Only the
enemies (Jerusalem Palestinians) have been revealed here.
FEBRUARY 25, 2009 10:42 AM

Anonymous said...

Good, you are pointing my point – it’s not about buildability or utilitarianism. It’s about the complexity, intensity and duration. There is nothing contractual about these images. What good do they do? If I am an Israeli or Palestinian, how does this overcome help? What do we do as a society from this nightmare? Should we re-construct, re-locate, re-build, re-examine, re-think, re-think, re-think...
I continue to question the dyadic suppression and the concrete decisions (motivations) of the author in arriving at these forms. I am far to question science on these grounds, as the authors own words, “This theater takes a formal approach to understanding the Israeli Palestinian conflict by studying mechanisms of control within the West Bank.”
The scheme offers a homogenously dark corner that does nothing to progress the situation or help the people who are suffering daily. That society would use the conflict to create pointless eye candy is offensive on so many levels.

--Ace (2004 10:59, 1259)

Pt. Won’t get me started on Home Depot and the big box. Forgive my disdain that is continuing to get this country from the inside out. Oh, and I adore speculating and fantasy – it is vital to keeping architecture relevant, that’s why I read your blog!
FEBRUARY 25, 2009 10:59 AM

Anonymous said...

Too many trolls posting comments on bliding blog days...

FEBRUARY 25, 2009 12:51 AM

John Coolhurst said...

Well, it’s traditionally live underneath bridges...

FEBRUARY 25, 2009 1:17 PM

Anonymous said...

the name “continuous enclose” immediately made me think of superstudio’s continuous monument as m. n. said above. if i am i think i am working on an interesting venture point out the absurd results of the undo accord. i guess what continuous enclosure lacks and what studio continuous monument really professed was a sense of the building form. superstudio really expanded the concept of the box and what it represented to philosophers like wittgenstein. they utilized the box form and manipulated it through radical repetition to create the ever-pragmatic continuous monument. what studio owner project lacks is the only between forms and enymity. he did a great job and i love the fact that he tried to tackle this issue. ultimately however, it really does look like a half built building and i am not sure why he chose that form, beyond the fact that he was obviously well trained in digital design.

--reader

FEBRUARY 25, 2009 6:16 PM

Anonymous said...

what a project! i think any notion of any architecture being only for the “good” of human needs to be dumped. some architect must’ve designed the monument too tight.

and so give you the other extreme of strange opinions, the only thing someone might have to say about the project is: “wow that guy should be put inside.” JUST for the reader’s sake! people are so emporphic, some level of weirdness thought that is enough to enforce the nature of architecture as a profession is safe.

FEBRUARY 25, 2009 11:00 PM

Steve said...

Image is fantastic, i can picture myself entering a virtual world with my game controller ready for action.
FEBRUARY 26, 2009 1:32 AM

Anonymous said...

1994 was obviously a distinct coverage, the probability of the romance wasn’t meant to be confused with its desirability. Superstudio i think qualified their speculations with a bit of every by denouncing images of dust contaminate. This critique whilst visually impressive seems to be a bit banalistic and lacking that bit of redundancy that tells you which way is going, taken on any alone no one can tell if this was meant to be decorative, iridescent, grotesque and the ambiguity of intentions is indistinguishable from ignorance of these readings – there doesn’t seem much room for benefit of the doubt, unless the thesis is meant to redress it (but then why bother with building?). In fact the eerily instrumental chemical of the scheme makes it no different from any other intentionally speculative schemes for offices or offices in China, Hamlet, Dubai, or any even scheme from cda, MVRDV etc. in then means to be a critique of architecture? No one can tell. If all it takes to critique a situation is to zoom out the ground plan from any piece of 21st century performative diagram and replace it with the latest google aerial photo of geopolitical condition is it really critique?

FEBRUARY 26, 2009 8:14 AM

One quiet said...

The only more relevant issues would have been to design a building that would solve the problem of our global economic meltdown. I find it just fascinating how people
get wrapped up so much in what it looks like and how it's rendered, they seem to lose meaning. The student makes it an effort not to orient itself as a means of solving a political problem. In the world today, this is not worthy of praise. While the notion that architecture can solve the world is not new, I wish more students had a broad enough worldview to be tackling issues like this and were using architectural concepts to approach them. The undergraduate's unattained "message" of (of course) should be praised as well, because such openness is virtually impossible to achieve once one becomes a "real architect." Are you all so old and jaded that you don't remember being in a studio?"

**Anonymous said.**

urban bypass applied at city scale

**FEBRUARY 29, 2009 1:50 PM**

**Leans said...**

I really like it. I can imagine what it would be like to live in something like this. Obviously there are lots of practical concerns, but this isn't exactly a practical proposition.

**FEBRUARY 29, 2009 5:41 AM**

**Tuam Farsaid said...**

As an idealist that is not schooled in dreams, and as an architect, I found this project highly attracting. On three levels: in the visionary level - instead of finding a real solution, it captures the problem in a fantastic maze structure, as the last years Israel has built a long concrete wall to separate territories from Jordan to model huts and such although it dramatically increased security in Israel, it created a huge damage to the fabric of Palestinian AND Israeli life in those areas, and is considered one of the most controversial projects ever built and by many people across the world is considered the brain of the civil struggle. this project, in my opinion, does exactly the same damage. Furthermore, in the architectural level - those structures proved themselves worldwide to be wrong. The amount of ecological damage such a building will create is monstrous. In the social level - would you want to live there? Could you want to live above, in the structure itself? (Although many times neglected in the academy) - who can't afford to visit the site - is it connected to the ground with huge amount of infrastructure and what about cars and other modes of transportation? I see the practical side of architecture as an en-sneaking part of it, and it's part that makes a much more fascinating than, let's say, just sculpturing. I think it's a very nice project, and I think the image demonstrates it well.

**FEBRUARY 29, 2009 2:47 AM**

**Geoff Murray said...**

It's referring to read out of print of this project such as that from Nicolai: I guess what contains the whole and what made it sympathetically constant monoreal really points was a moment looking before the building form superstructural really explored the concept of the box and what it represented to philosophers like wright's. they called the box form and manipulated it through relational repetition to create the more provocative constant monoreal what Nicolai's project lacks is that link between form and meaning, it really does look like a zara clothes building and I'm not sure why he chose that form...

Of multiculturist's point that "the deeply instrumental character of the structure is not different from any other crucial shaped speculative schemes for offices or condo in Miami, Berlin, Dubai, or any other scheme from UMA, MVRDV etc."

Meaning, in both cases, that if you take away the project's accompanying text, then all you have is a Zara clothes form in the desert - and it could be a chloes building, a 484 complex for refugees, a police checkpoint, or even a bookstore center for Comcast.

Although, as The Volta comments, "The ambiguity regarding an intended "message" (of this in) should be praised as well, because such openness is virtually impossible to achieve once one becomes a "real architect." Which shouldn't be overlooked.

But Nicolai's multiculturist present, in my opinion, totally valid critiques of the Continuous Enclave.

However, in many of these other comments, I find the idea that an image depicting architecture must be read to mitigate or that that image advocates what it depicts to be an absurdly limited approach. For instance, as anonymous venus, "If this was our youth and brightness haven the future, we are surely in trouble." But that misses drawing a picture for describing what one draws - and it overlooks the more politically important point, which is that this future is not something our "youth and brightness" seek to create, it is simply the future they are assuming. To put another way, if you design a military concentration camp at the earth pole for climate change refugees in the year A.D. 2174, it should by no means be assumed that you are hoping this future comes to pass. You are simply illustrating what it might look like.

Because nowhere has this project, the Continuous Enclave, been presented as a desirable outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it has simply been presented, at least in my understanding of the project, as a deliberately shoddy fulmination of the various legal injustices opened up by the Oslo Accords. There are spatial aggregations with those international agreements, and this project works simply to show us what those might look like. I don't think I'm exaggerating the project, as Barnes writes "Ultimately, this thesis questions the potential absurdity of partition imagined within the West Berlin and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them."
but yes, i think nikolai, in particular, is exactly right with his critique. at the end of the day, why does this thing have to look like something designed by zaha hadid? why doesn't the project interrogate its own form more deeply?

the idea, though, that we have to react to images of robotic architecture by assuming someone actually wants to see time has been stolen and is essentially a waste of time. anonymous asks: "you have so much time at your disposal that you can afford to waste decades on these 'just looking' works?" that takes this question out of context in architectural design and apply it to, say, writing, in that case, anonymous would be more forthright active at avant-garde, demanding that they get back to writing real history books, as we see only written fiction because we are self-examined, and have spare time on our hands. or as if fiction, story-telling, and imagined worlds have no practical role in helping us to understand our circumstances differently. these are "just looking" works, according to anonymous. all of myth, poetry, art, cinema, and literature has been dismissed by anonymous's absurd and vacuous remark.

but producing an image of something in so way means you are advocating what you depict. do you watch addehyde reports and walk away, stunned, thinking: why on earth does steven spielberg want us to live like that? or do you read bruce new world? why does they have such a dark vision of the future? it's not just holyo.

if that isn't how you read film and literature, then why — and this is a genuine question — why would you look at these images and think: why is the world does this guy want us to be rebels like this?

finally, then, another anonymous: so much anonymous: words that this project "offered a horrendously dark image of what nothing to progress the situation or help the people who are suffering daily" that, again, that sounds short-sighted to me.

the project, in fact, accomplishes something quite helpful — and useful, not to mention, extremely interesting — which is that it explores how political agreements and territorial treaties have, within them, uncharted possibilities that we would do well to explore. in this respect, i will agree that the results look like the opening scenes of a terry gilliam film, but that doesn't invalidate this approach elsewhere, for other, and it shouldn't be dismissed out of hand because it doesn't offer immediate, apparent relief.

february 27, 2006 10:27 am

geoff, geometrical and visual.

hear hear. thanks so much for your last comment and synthesis of the previous comments (anonymous and otherwise) as it is always heartening to be able to read and respond to images and critiques to be able to engage in discussions and debates on meanings and interpretations. that is what you seem to have been promoting in your blog since the inception. keep up the great work and stimulate us all to strive for a better design and improved environmental awareness.

february 27, 2006 9:42 am

charlie, out of work said...

hi geoff,

just wondered if you were aware from kosbaran said in an interview with charlie rose that the solution to the gaza conflict was a total re-imagining of two-dimensional borders. he argued for a complex three-dimensional form, as has been shown above.

(i would send a youtube link, but i just looked and they’re all been removed. i think it was back in 2005)

best, charlie

february 27, 2006 10:23 am

geoff, geometrical and visual.

thinks, dougs, for the comment. i don’t know that buildinglog always lines up to that promise, on the other hand (and i know many people who would say that it doesn’t ever do so) but i do hope that the site can act as a host for interesting discussions that might not occur so easily elsewhere.

charlie, i have missed that, actually. very interesting. i’ll look up. however, that also has the effect of making me even more curious to hear how lu’s commentary above, came to far or her position about this project and my interpretation of it (including the above using your "there’s absolutely nothing as common with the projects of kosbaran")

february 27, 2006 10:48 am

ou prepare ranges said...

i am aware of how / upon identifying with a logic to do limits can reveal its absurdity, it’s an artistic strategy that’s served critique quite well for the past couple of decades, aivar van lisbon do a pretty good job of speaking it for a sort of sad 90s creative 10 years. but there’s a miniscule problem to time ambiguity which opens it from being just unshaped (unnamed?) arguments, the exploration of value and from people is done in something that amounts to a combination camp and the potential association with slaves or even poltical. there’s no
conflict in this critique's ambiguity and I don't think Vlcek can get away with unmitigated renderings when you advance a project along politically potentially inflamed lines, but just seems unthought through.

We could simply ask who is building these bypasses? Is it a gush built by the Israelis or is it "the holy hope" built by Palestinians? If we can take ideologues to the starting point, why not consider something equally important? It was being built before, and it's interesting to consider the surplus value embedded in the legality of the border (why stop at empowerment) increasing that part of the agreement and to the physical condition (condition and symbolic influence) of these bypasses. I just wish this project had followed that route through before running the disjunctive algorithms which you can otherwise find in any project. Critical speculations and thoughtful ambiguity is important, but it has to have a bit of rigor otherwise architects are just playing dilettante again with a new vocabulary.

Thanks for replying Geoff, I enjoy the blog, keep it up!

FEBRUARY 27, 2009 1:13 PM

Christopher said...

I like how it references the towers that already function to separate Gaza through an economy of smuggling.

FEBRUARY 28, 2009 12:51 PM

Geoff Marquis said...

A reader named Luiz Fonseca has sent us an article of his own, that sought to "to deal with the reality of the checkpoints and the Separation Wall" between Israel and the West Bank. "My site was a fragment of the Wall in the Qalandia Checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah," Parra said. "The main concept was to create dialogues between one site and another and between military and humanist/anthropocentric use. My strategy was to use the wall as a space, and when you enter it, you will have lines for where you are going but you can go directly where you want. The project has numerous instances where you can find a site in one of either side. The view of Palestinians to Jerusalem is always as a screen as a nostalgic view representing the fragmented territory. My project doesn't have a redeployment objective, it deals with the reality of the place."

Parra said that the project specifically includes:

-Military quarters

-Commissariat Office (the permits to enter to Israeli)

-Adhesion Watch (his group works in the checkpoints as mediators between Palestinian and the Israeli Defense Forces)

-Indoor and outdoor market (the market exist around the checkpoints)

You can see images of the project here:

FEBRUARY 02, 2009 10:10 AM

Custodians said...

ok, this imaginative approach is an inherently different dilemma to be explored. Does anyone think the third sheep from the left has eyes that follow you, no matter what angle you observe the picture from?

FEBRUARY 02, 2009 4:50 PM

Anonymous said...

Take a look at this picture:

http://taylorfilms.wordpress.com/2009/10/03/1014_116.jpg

you know why those nails are there?

It's because the Israelis that live above the Palestinians in Hebron THROW THEIR GARBAGE OUT THEIR WINDOWS ON THE PALESTINIAN STREET!

So good luck with your plans.

FEBRUARY 03, 2009 2:21 AM

Luiz Fonseca said...

In the West Bank some Israeli roads are built on top of Palestinian roads. If you consider this with the Israeli occupying the top level in the old part of Hebron and the roads in the West Bank that are exclusive to Israelis you will know that the concept Vlcek are applying aren't radical, nor new, but they happened before Israeli control, and it is knowing this just like that.

If you skip the "West Bank is only for Palestinians and Jerusalem is their capital" approach, this project is helping the Palestinians. The land that remains under the dominance of the structures could be the same man land that is created under borders conflict and tensions. Both sides should have bypasses and villages, so they don't have to deal with each other.

Radical right? What's happening today?

FEBRUARY 03, 2009 7:21 AM

Anonymous said...

why PUG targets... science fiction only i guess

FEBRUARY 04, 2009 2:32 AM

Anonymous said...

new holocausts in palestine what a great idea. beautiful, inspiring project.

FEBRUARY 05, 2009 6:13 PM

Anonymous said...

LOL@ all the people who cannot bring them selves to see an architectural concept as anything more than a literal translation. Of course this will never get built. Of
course the designer knows it will never get built. As a form of art and abstraction of non-architectural ideas and concepts, architecture as a theory is as much a social commentary as is the finished structure. I think the suggestion that this occurs between the lines.

MARCH 05, 2009 12:13 AM

3 Anonymous said...

Sorry, this is not how architecture can make the world a better place in any opinion.

Locate the problem, although who knows if the issues between Palestine and Israel

Lena

March 06, 2009 12:32 AM

3 Anonymous said...

Sorry, this is not how architecture can make the world a better place in any opinion.

Locate the problem, although who knows if the issues between Palestine and Israel will ever be resolved?

Lena

March 06, 2009 12:33 AM

3 Anonymous said...

ah no – even more so that usa taxpayers would have to pay for in that welfare war isn’t and wouldn’t even exist with our tax money as it is, please no expensive ideas that would cost us even more or at least let the states or somebody else pay for it!

MARCH 13, 2009 12:19 PM

eric said...

This reminds me of Walking Through Walls...

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K900ZyyMKmA

rely on the fact that the way war is being conducted in the region is becoming increasingly independent of the existing lay of the land and especially the structures built upon it. You could say modern warfare has the very real capability of rendering even grandiose restructuring of physical space (in the mean of peace), at its most, least effective.

The whole “Walking Through Walls” discussion bears fascinating concepts and I’m curious to hear your thoughts on the military’s embrace of playing the role of “operational architect”, etc.

MARCH 14, 2009 12:24 AM

Toby said...

Hm... Geoff.

As an architect, I thought a lot about Victor Ramos project. I followed the discussion which has been going on because it made me think strongly about what exactly was being created and occupied within the occupied territories. In my architectural thesis, which dealt with the analysis of political housing units in the West Bank... You might know Professor Wes Juno from RIT University who was my thesis advisor and who taught and made me think a lot about human, social and political aspects of architecture and the built environment...

In this discussion about Ramos’ thesis I see levels of architectural design and the value of architectural analysis, in which the role of the architect’s need to find his/her own role.

Ramos’ thesis explored parts of the West Bank’s spatial situation with a design vision of how inhabitable space within two overlapping spatial contexts found in this landscape can look like.

Ramos came out with astonishing design approaches, architectural impressive, really fantastic and frustrating gesture with multi-levelled habitable spaces. As Sagi Wipichman explained, the landscape became a vertically divided space. As such Ramos created multi-levelled and multi-zoned space for housing, account traffic and agriculture. One might continue three spatial functions and produce vertically oriented buildings, bridges or other “buildings in the sky” as you wish and need.

From an aesthetic standpoint, Ramos’ architectural language is exciting which resulted out of the given legal situations which in turn was negotiated to peace processes and agreed accords. The formal aspects of the design is formed, well-articulated, professionally presented with well-detailed renderings. The atmosphere even reflects some sort of content, cool narratives. Because I studied the space in the occupied territories and the ‘sandwich-like’ spatial order in this territory I exactly know what the designer intended to do. He himself was fascinated and challenged to think about new forms of buildings within a complex given volume...

Nevertheless, Ramos’ ideas are not really new for those who actually live in the West Bank; the reality there is loaded by enemies who are forced to use empires and undergrounds as seen in Cave, the Old City of Hebron has the best example for multi layered/vertical housing situations whereas Jews live above Palestinians, who themselves build wired roofs to protect themselves from “flying” objects and acid liquids, those both people out there need to find those lives everyday in enevirons
trying to hold on to "continuity" and certainty by using nondesigned roadside and pathways designated to only one of these two peoples...

THEN, what is the point of Ramos's thesis? Only to think about JUST how to make better architecture within this grotesque spatial environment? It is guiding to see these necessary images of large scale gestures before being "better" architect...a better architect to live in, but neglect totally the human, social and political aspects... How can an architect make designs proposals for a political, contextual undefined space ignoring how her own political commitment to the context?

What is the context? Ramos tries to point out the contextual conditions separately from his design aim. The context is a conflict-place in which its counterpart are NOT of equal rights and power. This landscape is not the result of the negotiations of two equal parties trying to create the most possible space within a small two-dimensional piece of land and its value for as many people as possible who wants to have an extraordinary architecturally existing space to live in. (I agree that this is an unapparent contradiction for architects?), but this is a landscape of powerful, institutional and legalizing occupying power even another weaker but resilient and terrorizing other people. Occupancy is such an unfriendly living condition. And, this landscape is an "object" landscape where people are assigned not only to operational and occupied people but also to different states, ways, settlements, resources and the different rights.

What about the people? The Palestinians suffer disgracefully and strongly by the occupation of another nation which divided all the landscape into occupied, densely over-populated enclaves. They cannot go to A from B without a huge time delay, being afraid of being late for the mosque or even giving birth to children at the checkpoints because the guards closed down immigration nodes... On the other hand, the settlers are raising their children voluntarily or involuntarily within substandard lowland settlements. They live within a political over-dominated atmosphere, guarding and surrounding the fewly cleansed territories and their neighbours within their simple and badly built houses, sometimes leaping down from the mountain tops when the hard winters. They are both guards and prisoners in their own settlements, objectified to military tools for the political large space. In this particular context, in this form of a produced space, individuals are made fine, aggressive and manipulated for any piece of talk.

It is an essential landscape, a brutal and vicious part of a built environmental example, whereas political oppression took material and physical position built in concrete, noncontemporary sometimes temporary position but with strong territorial interests so obvious within everybody's everyday life...

The main question is in this context of power over space and territory and its spatial output, what can be the role of an architect?

Did Ramos ask this to himself? Now, by choosing the context and making a design proposal for the found situation he makes a decision. Thinking only in design term, the architect plays in the hands of one intergroup. Ramos strengthened the power that occupies and keeps these found conditions of 3-dimensional spatiality alive.

In what role of architects should be? Only because architects are able to think about inhabitable space even within complex systems, is that what our profession should do? Should architects serve only for the architects and the political authorities or to the people? (Rubin argues that the various aspects of the urban context of Simonsen and the City.)

In what role of architects should be? Only because architects are able to think about inhabitable space even within complex systems, is that what our profession should do? Should architects only serve for the architects and the political authorities or to the people? (Rubin argues that the various aspects of the urban context of Simonsen and the City.)

Maybe he should have chosen NOT to design within this context? Why architects need to design anywhere? Yes, Ramos could create another more design-passive but a politically active position by NOT putting up a design niche but a spatial analysis. This would have been more effective in terms of the role of architect and anthropological and architectural and political role. And the reason is simple, architects are able to understand spatial context even without doing a design proposal.

Ramos did NOT choose this line of spatial analysis, but used -let us say traditional design thought:- by ousting large scale, monumental "big A - Architectures", in the battlefront is almost the only to find. His statement of "ultimately, this thesis questions the potential power of particles within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them. Understand, this thesis questions the potential power of particles within the West Bank and Gaza Strip by attempting to realize them" is traced by his choice to make a design proposal. (To understand the spatial demarcations in the West Bank you could have reversed not small scale architecture such as main produced transportable caravans used in strategically positioned clusters. For that, architects are even not of use!)

I think what Ramos needs to be more than somebody who design and creates spacy and make them inhabitable just for the sake of visibility, design terms... Architectures should be much more about awareness and responsibility because spatially has many effects on human everyday life and security which not always understood by everybody. As a result, architectural design cannot be the solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Geertz explained, but a tool to strengthen and exaggerate easing circumstances. Whereas architecture can be a stenographic tool for understanding one region's political and spatial dealing... It is a great tool to express the spatial effects of the political negotiations and the power of its parties... It is also a great and potential, alternative for architectural practices!

I agree, it would be worth to spread up such opposing conflicts in their spatial dimensions... Geertz, you give some interesting account of examples of architects dealing with and turning about the connection between buildings and war zones...

If anyone is interested in analyzing the power of small scale, portable buildings in
Many greetings from Frankfurt, Germany.

Taty

MARCH 15, 2004 9:22 AM

I am extremely ambivalent about the West Bank, because it is a place where the best thinking that so far has been demonstrated.

In the ongoing mix of events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is going to be "outside the box" thinking that is going to be demonstrated. Hamas is an extremely ambivalent concept. And has been mentioned before seriously, the multi-faceted nature of Hamas is not that of a viable solution for any of the problems.

While lacking of freedom of movement is often cited as the major drawback to a viable Palestinian state, the differences of water, demographic growth considerations and interests for some 7 million refugees has no real bearing on anything that I read as being discussed or considered.

The current long term solution being seriously followed on both sides is a fantasy that the other side will just come how magically disappear. Or, they both that the extermination of the other side is.

There is some give and take on both sides, but such efforts are few and precious that many are seen as false. And some of those are actually very major actors in terms, the chief among being the water division, which is absolutely the problem.

I do not agree on the end that is is a special case. But is my thinking it is a special problem that is being too fully tossed to a few specific areas instead of a broader regional solution to a broader range of problems.

One can fight over this block or flat until the day the West Bank village, but the solution is really to be found by backing up and taking a very hard look at the entire region.

Some things are discussed but cannot be ignored.

Israel will never settle for the final step of land along the sea side.

Palestine will have to come up with some joint Arab and Israeli plan for the Temple Mount.

Palestine will be a viable country going forward.

Israel must find that its borders are adjacent to countries which are in a peace with the state of Israel a very serious state.

The conflict should be referred to the agreement of all.

The ownership and use of water for the region must be determined for any settlement.

All of that rests on an understanding that the space now occupied by literally thousands of people will have to be resettled. And if both states really want a solution then the number of people the first to be evicted in one side or another have to step up and make their contributions.

I do not know what shape the final division of space will take. I just know that the solution will be in how the space is, the end divided.

Just some thoughts on division.

http://palestineroad2peace.blogspot.com

Gary Tucker

Dear, USA

MARCH 15, 2004 10:47 PM

Johnric said.

Taty.

How can you have followed this discussion and then make this comment,

"THEN, what is the point of Rama's thesis? Only to think about JUST how to make better architecture within this grotesque spatial environment"

??

You don't even have to follow the discussion (it is mentioned in the project brief) to know that the project is not about a better place, but instead an altered reality of what's existing - in the same way that MRDY's Big City use architecture to reveal the absurdity of a consumptive society. (or, MRDY didn't design the Big City with the intention to have a built.) In that regard the Central Park focus is contextual (spatially, not formally), it's very much a spatial analysis of the situation that gets formulated through an urbanism that performs in a certain way—

hypnotic.
It's not trying to be visionary in a utopian sense as you seem to be writing (that, of course, would be very traditional!) but paints a dystopic future for the present reality. It's thinking. It's purpose is to be Portable, mass-produced, disposable, housing unit chosen up front (when?) and are not your experts' technique COMPLETELY different projects that are in no way relevant to what the Continuous Enclosure is a project is about.

If nothing else, the Continuous Enclosure is successful in its ability to create this whole discussion. (How many other essays have a comment strong this long or this hinted?) It's a project that makes you take an opinion on not only the issues brought up but on the role of architecture today.

Good week, Vic!

MARCH 19, 2009 5:51 PM

Tillie said.

Hello John,

I still question the way Victor Ramos presented his approach, because it makes the viewer being astonished by the architect's large-scale architectural gestures and representation skills more and less莫斯 by humanist issues. (Nor MTEV; they keep the focus on the structural column, formal attitude which makes the project so plausible.)

What is the point of "painting" (which he did really good) "a dystopic future for the present reality" if not to put traditional architectural skills into foreground which is about high and formal articulation of self-created mega structures? Why designing and testing a lot of small ideas and "impressive but horrible paintings" of an unbuildable bridge construction, even though Victor saw at the end, that is was absurd? Why a building at all?

And if architects are the only people who create, manageable and understandable space, you can already notice in this particular content that with every stone, every wall, every house and with even much many things like mass-produced caravans in the West Bank that there is already an absurd spatial game going on. Here, you can already find bypasses, overpasses, underpasses, bridges which transform to roads, to houses, to bridges again, there are multi-story buildings in whole streets which are nationally, religiously separated...

My point is that there are many approaches to understandability and content. Surely, one might be the way Victor Ramos did go. But there are also other approaches to understanding and explain spatial complexities which put formal aspects behind deep thoughts.

And yes, it is about the role of architecture, being more than the passive designer, while becoming more the politically active spatial author.

(See Tedious Karmann, Germany, Wohlfahrt, Ray Kasbovy, Santiago Cir congenital Paro, Ygal Wimmer, Luftwaffe, Poole Vebol)

MARCH 22, 2009 8:30 AM

Anonymous said...

Aside from the already mentioned dominoes to mega-structures, I think a lot of people have overlooked some possible benefits of them in such a conflict. While it may seem foolish to put a lot of people into an already existing structure, the sheer size and amount of content seems to be a kind of security from the aggressions of the nation-state. Indeed, straight attack on the GESA (not as "protection" social circle, not compartment). Such attacks on the whole population would be condoned by the world (Israel's most effective means of controlling GESA have been through economic sanctions and control of its borders. By working through both branches and borders, this project might reduce some of the same for the areas present in GESA.)

And on top of this, housing all housing floating in the air removes from the playing field one of Israel's current military machine: the bulldozer.

MARCH 25, 2009 9:31 PM

POST A COMMENT