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Extraterritorial-bound:
An Urban Typology of Exception

by
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ABSTRACT

Extraterritorial-bound:
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This thesis inserts a new urban typology into the city, shifting spatial, political, and programmatic boundaries by constructing a new extraterritorial ground. Extraterritoriality, the state of exception from local jurisdiction, is not yet formally manifest as an urban architectural problem. The proposed ExtraTerritorial Typology [ETT] is an urban architecture that reconfigures the boundary conditions between territorial grounds and user groups: displaced populations and local citizens. Mediating between global and local scales, the ETT relates to its urban context despite its bigness. The ETT demarcates its non-vertical boundary in relationship to the existing ground by strategically connecting to and detaching from the site topography.

The ETT accommodates a spectrum of multiscalar international programs within venues of emplacement and displacement dispersed in topographical bands across the site. As an urban scale site intervention, the project is a megaplane which interacts with the existing ground. Sometimes a surface condition, sometimes as megaobject, it is perceived from the street as a shifting architectural form. It extends from the urban context to accommodate programmatic spaces of individuation and collectivity, from transit to asylum, privatized medical treatment to public athletic stadia.
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INTRODUCTION

In the 1968, Alison Smithson stated “the time has come to approach architecture urbanistically and urbanism architecturally”. [1] The statement came at the time when Claude Parent and Paul Virilio were exploring the oblique at a massive scale through a fascination with bunker architecture. [2] The same year, Rem Koolhaas entered the AA in London, beginning an academic career that would build up his theory of Bigness, which states that concerns of site, context, and detail no longer apply to architecture of a critical Big scale. [3]

To approach architecture urbanistically, and urbanism architecturally, the wall between scale and context must be breached. This thesis project seeks to obliterate vertical, metaphorical, and territorial boundaries in search of a new typology of urban architecture. An urban architecture, which relates to context despite its bigness, but also reconsiders the meaning of context in an increasingly globalized urbanity. Amidst the current trend of ‘globalization by mobilization’, [4] as the world’s populations are increasingly suspended in transit, a new public is generated from the intermingled local and global. The city-zens of a place are no longer simply the urban population in residence, but the extraterritorial citizens-at-large.

THE EXTRATERRITORIAL

Extraterritoriality is the state of exception from local jurisdiction. An international zone is a type of extraterritoriality that is governed by international law. There exists a spatial dimension of extraterritoriality within cities today that is not yet formally manifest as an urban condition. Bound by vertical walls and political geometries in closed building typologies such as embassies and consulates, and islands such as airports and free trade zones, extraterritoriality is founded upon a disconnection from the city. As they have been previously established, these typologies exist as highly controlled closed fields.

Existing architectural manifestations of political exception are the Airport and the Camp: semi-urban typologies distinguished by controlled access and circulation, vertical walls, and a manipulation of view to the outside. Both provide venues for the collective and the individual, within a spectrum of multi-scalar spatial conditions. While the airport operates as a circuit and node network, the camp behaves as a figured field. Still, both are enclosed, apolitical spaces that operate within but outside of their immediate context. This typology could be urbanized by opening up the extraterritorial zone into a ground of exception in the city.
CASE STUDY, AIRPORT TYPOLOGY: EMBASSY, CONTROLLED CIRCULATION
OMA, DUTCH EMBASSY IN BERLIN, 2003

PROGRAM SEQUENCE ALONG CIRCULATION PATH

public—private—public
open—controlled—open
circulation path connects to public spaces
circulation and public spaces around controlled zones

PROGRAM BANDING - PUBLIC/PRIVATE

CIRCULATION PATH

VIEW SEQUENCE
CASE STUDY, CAMP TYPOLOGY: PARK, BANDED FIGURED FIELD
OMA COMPETITION ENTRY, PARC DE LA VILLETTE, 1982

CIRCULATION PATHS + PROGRAMMATIC BANDS

24HR PUBLIC HIGH-SPEED PATH  CONTROLLED LOW-SPEED PATH  CONTROL CHECKPOINTS  CIRCULATION FIGURE 8

OPEN VIEWS  OPEN FIELD FOR INTERACTION
CASE STUDY, AIRPORT TYPOLOGY: EXHIBIT SEQUENCE, SURVEILLED CIRCULATION
GLASS VIDEO GALLERY, BERNARD TSCHUMI, 1990

FIELD W/ OBSTRUCTIONS

internal visibility field

field of surveillance

circulation field

controlled [surveilled] field

INDIRECT PATH

DIRECT PATH

INTERNAL VISUAL CONES

INTERNAL VISUAL CONE

SEQUENCE OF VIEWS TO EXTERIOR

VIEW TO EXTERIOR
CASE STUDY, CAMP TYPOLOGY: MEDICAL FACILITY, CLOSED FIGURED FIELD
REHAB BASEL, HERZOG + DE MEURON, 2002

FIELD W/ DISPERSSED PROGRAM

DISPERSED PUBLIC/PRIVATE PROGRAM

CIRCULATION FIELD

CONTROLLED FIELD

internally controlled zones

VIEWS
THE ETT: EXTRATERRITORIAL TYPOLOGY

The ExtraTerritorial Typology [ETT] is an urban architecture that reconfigures the condition of extraterritorial, inserting it into the city and providing new boundary conditions between territorial grounds and user groups. It is legitimated by the intermingling of users: the population of displacement, as well as local citizens.

USERS

Social extraterritoriality applies to displaced people, both in transit and suspended, who do not belong to the place where they are – a commonality amongst tourists, business travelers, migrants, transit refugees, and asylum seekers. Their differences are of reasons for travel, legal right to a local identity, and the length of their stay. The 'sedentary nomads' [1] of global transport travel uninhibited across borders in circuits of mass transit, retaining a degree of locality despite their movement. The asylum seekers are suspended at the same nodes where the free nomads pass through. Often unable to go back to the place of their departure nor to continue on to their intended destination, they become an accumulated population in flux.

The extraterritorial ground offers a space in the city unappropriated by political boundaries providing international programs of collectivity and individuation: from public square to private residence, transit hub to medical retreat, venues for exhibition and observation. By opening up an apolitical zone in the city, both populations of displacement are accommodated along with the city public.

The scale of the project is Big – but not like a tall wall, it is a big plane. A huge horizontal exception from the dense verticality of urban fabric. The site defined is a ground of exception that becomes the urban architecture of the Megaplane.
The Big scale presents an exceptional approach to context, which at the urban scale has previously been approached by site specificity or, oppositionally, Bigness. [1] In the ETT approach, the Bigness becomes specific to the site context while also maintaining its sovereignty. The ETT performs across scales, taking the global context of extraterritoriality as its local: a differentiated field of social collectivity and individuation.

At the large scale, small shifts provide large exceptions across a great distance. The political and urban exception are manifest in a shifted ground, within city limits but outside political boundaries. Again, the analogy of the vertical wall between territory and exception is useful: a shifted ground allows a gradient transition from the urban territory to the extraterritorial ground of exception. As a public venue, the megaplane dissolves and distinguishes its own edges within the urban context, a large-scale means of controlled entry to the site.
Strategically connecting to and detaching from the existing topography, the ETT demarcates its non-vertical boundary in relationship to the existing ground. Above/below/askew take precedent over the conventional interior/exterior dichotomy.

TEMPORALITY
The temporality of its individual uses ranges from the bypass moment to prolonged stases, accommodating a broad spectrum of global and local users. Lengths of stay, from the public event to the duration of inpatient medical procedures to indefinite holding as an asylum seeker, as well as the daily passage of a citizen in local transit are accommodated in this collective facility.
The test site of the ETT is the global city of Istanbul, which hosts a diverse population of displaced people. Each year thousands of tourists visit the city seeking cultural experience, international flair, and the emerging attraction of health tourism, where a medical procedure is masked as an exotic getaway. Simultaneously, the city accommodates thousands of transit refugees from Africa and the Middle East, suspended at the gateway to the EU for various political reasons. Because Turkey does not grant refugee status to illegal migrants, they have no access to housing, medical care, and political identity.
A temporary destination for tourists, jet-setters, and the sedentary nomads of global mobility, the city also is the inadvertent detention zone for thousands of vagabonds, migrants, transit refugees, and asylum seekers. The extraterritorial typology intermingles these formerly disparate groups with the local public in an international collective of the Megaplane.

The Megaplane is not a plane but a differentiated ground, defined by a logic of strategic cuts and lifts – pushing down new public grounds and pulling up spaces of retreat. Along the connective ground, intrusions and extrusions along the surface open up new interruptions and spatial exceptions.
As a typology, the ETT accommodates international programs of transit, individuation
and collectivity within an international political zone, providing universal venues of emplacement
and displacement. As an urban scale site intervention, the project is a megaplane, which inter­
acts with the existing ground. Sometimes read as a surface condition, sometimes as megaob­
ject, it is not perceived at the street scale as a single entity, but a shifting architectural form. It ex­
tends from the urban context to provide spatial exceptions, which accommodate programmatic
spaces from the individual residence to collective bowls of participation and demonstration, from
the privatized body culture of medical treatment to the public arena of athletic stadia.
METHODOLOGY

The project intervention becomes specific to the context through a series of site analyses. A survey of topographic, demographic, and urban conditions provides an existing framework which informs the geometry of the Megaplane. The differentiated ground of the Istanbul ETT is developed from existing urban, natural, and trajectories.

The site area measures about 170,000 sm, which is approximately 1/3 the size of Parc Villette, or 3x the Yokohama Terminal.

The natural topography, which rises to the northwest corner of the site suggests a longitudinal banding.
Prominent street lines extended through the site divide it into roughly twenty large city blocks, and apply a grid cross-grain to the bands.

Proximity to medical, residential, cultural, and transit infrastructures informs the figural placement of program.
By selecting strategic points of connection across the site, a zigzagging framework emerges across which program is mapped as an accumulation of time based on the user's length of stay. This suggests movement patterns which inform the massing of figures and textures within the megaplane.

The bands are shifted and thickened within a sectional spatial field extending from the subterranean depth of the subway to the height of the local built fabric.
The bands are shifted and thickened within a sectional spatial field extending from the subterranean depth of the subway to the height of the local built fabric.

The tilted strips construct a continuous path from subway to terrace. Geometric adjacencies and datum lines facilitate circulation cross-site trajectories.
The megabands emerge as programmatic strips constructing grounds for the figures and textures of the ETT. They are distinguished from subterranean to raised: transit band, nomad band, body culture band, world band, and refuge band.

Lodged within the strips are significant programmatic figures and surface textures: intercontinental subway platform, spectacle stadium, surgical hotel, public bath, urban camp, world consulate, and temporary asylum housing.

The bands take on individual identities within the broader typology, and perform as public venues through specific architectural experimentations. The ETT is defined at the building scale by the continuous ground and thickened surface of the Megaplane. Experiential views of the multi-scalar venues inserted in and lifted from the shifting plane provide glimpses into the architectural elements which offer an exception to conventional notions of ground, surface, and boundary.
THE NOMAD BAND

The nomad band stretches from the subterranean subway platform to the spectacle stadium, providing a crenelated surface texture which serves as a public infrastructure for temporary occupation and use: the urban camp. A stacking of transit infrastructures provides multiple scales of access to and circulation within the site.
LAYERED TRANSIT

SPECTACLE STADIUM
THE BODY CULTURE BAND

The body culture band accommodates the medical complex of public bath and private surgery hotel in a layering of planes into which embedded pools created a deep, yet transparent surface.
MULTI-LAYERED PUBLIC SPACE

DEEP SURFACE
THE WORLD BAND

The world band dips strategically to provide access to the medical building, and again to construct a public amphitheatre which steps down below the lifted volume of the world consulate and political convention center, creating a shared continuous atrium space between the public and political zones of exhibition.

CONTINUOUS ATRIUM
THE REFUGE BAND

The refuge band lifts and fans to provide a terraced decking for temporary asylum residences from which observation rooms are punched upward and downward, providing venues for directed, displaced surveillance.
HABITABLE SURFACE

TErracing

DIRECTIONAL HOUSING

stargazer's retreat

collective asylum

ground surveyor's retreat

public ground

OBSERVATION ROOMS
These architectural investigations are reinterpretations of existing social, political, and architectural boundaries, which resonate with the human condition of extraterritoriality, a symptom of globalization and political turmoil. As an urban design intervention, the ETT has architectural consequences related to edge, circulation, and inhabitation.

EDGE
An urban intervention of this vast scale challenges conventional notions of edge, or limit, in relation to the site. As previously stated, the ExtraTerritorial Typology, suggests a new interpretation of context and site analysis. The border, which exists territorially in the distinction of an apolitical zone, is defined and erased formally by the architectural manifestation of the built project. The bands, which demarcate the site boundary as well as the programmatic zones, also act as connective grounds across the site territory. Therefore, entrance to the site is allowed where the Megaplane behaves as a ground continuing from the public street beyond, and the limit or boundary expressed where it is suspended above, sunk below, or thickened into Megaobject. The 'edge' is understood in the experience of the architecture and the relationship to it’s immediate context. Furthermore, the extraterritorial becomes an amorphous field within the city that is bound not by political borders, but by the spatial interaction of figure and ground.
Another consequence to be considered is the scalar juxtaposition between the urban fabric and the ETT footprint. The local street grid fragments the built context into small urban blocks which due to the tightly packed buildings, are read in plan as unified building footprints. These combined footprints are comparable in scale to the figures of the built venues within the ETT. Therefore, despite a scalar leap from a fine urban grain to the broad bands of the ETT, there is continuity through the massing of built elements on and off site.

The scalar continuity breaks down in the circulation patterns from the immediate context through the ETT site. As the scale broadens, pedestrian circulation is released onto the public ground of the ETT and no longer restricted to the street grid. As the urban fabric opens up to the larger geometry of the ETT, organic movement patterns emerge across the site. Vehicular traffic circulates around the site border, and is channeled into a single cross-site trajectory, following from the largest street that intersects the site. This transverse path circulates at street level, cuts below, and floats above, creating a woven layering of transit. The broader longitudinal and transverse circulation patterns across the site are preserved in this multimodal movement circuit.
INHABITATION

The inhabitation of the ETT occurs as a fluctuating distribution of crowds and individuals across the figured field site condition. Mediating between the large scale of public ground and the finer textures of the temporary housing units and the urban camp, the congregation of users occurs in the spaces of intersection between various trajectories. This intermingling of diverse programs and architectural geometries stages confrontations between formerly disparate user groups, dissolving spatial and social territoriality. The swarming circulation patterns that emerge create an ebb-and-flow temporal activity across the ETT. The site inhabitation, therefore, is manifest in the interplay between built and crowd intensities.
As an urban scale site intervention, the project is a megaplane, which interacts with the existing ground. Sometimes read as a surface condition, sometimes as megaobject, it is not perceived at the street scale as a single entity, but a shifting architectural form. It extends from the urban context to provide spatial exceptions, which accommodate programmatic spaces from the individual residence to collective bowls of participation and demonstration, from the privatized body culture of medical treatment to the public arena of athletic stadia.
The Megaplane is not a plane but a differentiated ground, defined by a logic of strategic cuts and lifts – pushing down new public grounds and pulling up spaces of retreat. Performing at multiple scales, the banded field is differentiated by shifting grounds and surface treatments.
CONCLUSION

Throughout the development of this project, the constant underlying theme has been the exception. The extraterritorial is a sociopolitical exception translated into urban space in the ETT. The architectural techniques which facilitate the form of this are exceptional approaches to conventional notions of ground, surface, habitable space, and physical boundaries. The vastness of the intervention presents a Big exception to the dense urban fabric and the undulating horizontality of the megaplane is an exception to the verticality of the built context.

Extraterritorial-bound, then, presents a manipulation of territory, boundary, and context in order to construct an urban architecture which exceeds these limits. The typology proposed is a platform for interaction between architectural monumentality and transient urbanism. An architecture not simply of form, but developed from the forces which shape its exception: global, local, contextual, political, social, ideological and experiential.

In the 1968, Alison Smithson stated "the time has come to approach architecture urbanistically and urbanism architecturally". My proposal is that the time has come to approach urban architecture extraterritorially.
SOURCES


