DELAYED OBJECT: Havana’s Post-Mercado
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This thesis seeks to produce space resistant to hegemonic ordering, as a means to reconcile co-existing histories and ideologies in Havana. The architectural proposal is a co-occupied retail field, hung above the datum of existing fabric. The field is both ground to the department store above and canopy to the market below. While the department store produces a space of endless, universal flows.
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Havana’s past has fixed the city to an architecture of colonnades, lovely but aged songs lingering in the thick, warm air and a weathered palette of colors. Its future is also fixed. A city suspended in time, post-revolution Havana suggests a return to the Batista days of Caribbean Las Vegas, with an American ruling class and vacation-packaged nostalgia. But rather than existing according to the binary code of the classic and grotesque, Havana has the ability to produce another kind of spatial condition. This condition could resemble the heterotopia Michel Foucault described — a singular, real space, which juxtaposes different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other.

This thesis seeks to produce space resistant to hegemonic ordering, as a means to reconcile co-existing histories and ideologies in Havana. A Post-Mercado site is one that allows seemingly incompatible economic systems, which produce objects of necessity and objects of luxury. Raul Castro’s Economic Guidelines, issued this past November, will create a new scale of local wholesale and co-op distribution to supply the burgeoning, privatized industry. At the same time, the reforms will affect the large economic scale of foreign investment and retailers. The presence of both economic scales, results in a territory of resistance. The former requires the development of new territory within the existing colonial city fabric, while the latter requires a registration of a discrete new ground.

The architectural proposal is a co-occupied retail field, hung above the datum of existing fabric. The field is both ground to the department store above and canopy to the market below. While the department store produces a space of endless, universal flows. The market resists homogenous coalescence through the local order of fabric. Co-habitation uses simultaneity as a means to resist totalizing, singular structures, while producing new territories for occupying the city and exchanging material objects.
HAVANA'S BUILDING FABRIC

Havana has been managing growth within the city through small scale operations of renovation and restoration. Larger master plans proposing to deflate the block through large scale venacular cuts out, have never reached the implementation stage.
MODEL STUDY

building fabric modeled in plaster
Centralized Market - Les Halles -
the market maintains the street
Department Store - Au Bon Marche
the market internalizes the street, disorientates shopper
Street Market - The Arcades - the market is the street
MODEL STUDY

building fabric modeled in plaster, resin, acrylic
MODEL STUDY

building fabric modeled in paper, acrylic
OCCUPATION OF GROUND

Symbiotic lift

canopy on Obispo street

the modern dwelling built on the colonial factory receives ocean views and breezes and has minimal visibility from the street

the modern building uses piloti to free the ground plane and accelerate air flow in Cubas hot, humid climate
TERRITORIALIZATION OF GROUND

universal grid according to Laws of the Indies 1573 with ideal block size

grid begins at Plaza de Armas - the entry to Havana
restoration

historical market/plaza

current markets

site

central district

historical shopping streets
SITE MAP
NEW TERRITORY

due to the state of disrepair, some buildings will be removed to open up spaces for a new city market.
Rendering of market below
department store plan 62" not to scale
Rendering of department store above
PROGRAM

Points of contact and exchange differ between the department store level – smooth spatial flow – and the market level – aggregated field.
section a_ not to scale
Rendering of department store above
section b not to scale
Rendering of market exterior
MODEL STUDY
modelled in plaster, resin, acrylic