



ARCHITECTURE BEYOND ARCHITECTS
CATALONIA IN VENICE



A collection of white circles and hexagons scattered across a yellow background. The shapes are distributed across the entire frame, with a higher density in the lower-left and upper-right areas. The text is centered horizontally and partially overlaid by the shapes.

CURATED BY: **JAUME PRAT, JELENA PROKOPLJEVIĆ & ISAKI LACUESTA**

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INTERIOR DESIGN
Jaume Prat, Jelena Prokopljević,
Isaki Lacuesta

COLLABORATOR
Montserrat Farrés (competition phase)

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Toormix

FURNITURE DESIGN
Biennale Chair by Josep Ferrando.
Taulacreu reception table by vora
arquitectura (Pere Buil and Toni Riba)

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION
Museu d'Art Contemporani de
Barcelona (MACBA)

EXHIBITION COORDINATION
Carlota Gómez

COORDINATION IN VENICE
Tamara Andruszkiewicz

EXHIBITION MOUNTING
ART% (Favio Monza, Jordi, Eduard and
Pau Segura)

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANTS
Carmela Torró and Oriol Palou

DIRECTION OF INSTALLATION FILMS
AND WEB DOCUMENTARY
Isaki Lacuesta, Jaume Prat, Jelena
Prokopljević

AUDIOVISUAL COORDINATION
Albert Coma

AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION
La Termita Films

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION
Isa Campo

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Aitor Martos

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Ainara Martos

EDITING
Lluís Rico, Isaki Lacuesta, Sergi Dies

DIRECT SOUND
Amanda Villavieja

DIRECT SOUND SECOND UNIT
Agost Alustiza

SOUND EDITING
Alejandro Castillo, Amanda Villavieja

CAMERA
Isaki Lacuesta

COLOR GRADING
Albert Costa

WEB DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMING
Albert Coma

360° PHOTOS
Jelena Prokopljević

CAN BATLLÓ ARCHIVE IMAGES
Natxo Medina

TRANSLATIONS
Tiffany Carter, Tiziana Camerani

WEB DOCUMENTARY TRANSLATIONS
Pablo Harguindey

SUBTITLES
Memi March

TRANSLATION REVIEWS
Hara Kraan, Pep Sanchez

COMMUNICATION
Labóh. Miriam Giordano, Silvia Pujalte,
Giovanna Tissi - The Link PR

PUBLIC RELATIONS
Mahala. Mahala Alzamora.
Alexandra Mitjans

INTRODUCTION

Jaume Prat, Isaki Lacuesta, Jelena Prokopljević

Aftermath could accurately be described as the formal result of a series of lines of reflection crossed and recrossed, folded over themselves, rested and momentarily pacified in such a way that they entail taking visitors in the opposite direction: an initial image that is stripped down, expanded and amplified. It's like when you take a zoetrope¹ and spin it very fast and then wait for the coefficient of friction to do its job. You are watching a finished film that slows down gradually, becoming fragmented and enabling you to recognize the different frames that make up the sequence, it enables you to perceive that each frame is a complete scene. In the end you see only a motionless device: the magician has revealed her trick to discover that this act does not erase the magic.

It isn't that we wanted to meld cinema and architecture. You cannot meld two arts that are ultimately more alike than they might seem. We sought to use this combination, if it is a combination, to explain some issues that were of interest to us, with the explanation making sense on its own, independently from the thing being explained. And we had to fit all of this into a national pavilion.

We worked by conversing and writing, and not always directly about the topic—actually, rarely. We talked about architecture and film, and about music—lots of music—and books and more books².

Isaki taught us to love Joaquim Jordà.

Josep Lluís and Josep Maria Sert and Douglas Sirk³. Jujol. Jean Nouvel. Mass Studies. Abbas Kiarostami. David Harvey. Enric Miralles and Isabel Coixet and the Berlinale and Marc Recha. Perejaume. Victor Erice and Via Laietana (yes, Via Laietana). Olot and RCR Arquitectes' Espai Barberí where we got acquainted with Isaki. Herzberger. GATCPAC. David Foster Wallace. Jordi Gas. Lou Reed, Damon Albarn, John Frusciante and the Space Cowboys. Joy Division. Kiko Veneno and Camarón. The Talking Heads⁴. The National. Haustor, Rowland S. Howard. La Banda Trapera del Río. Abel Gance. Michael Jackson. Those great filmmakers the Eames. There is a piece of all of them and many others at the pavilion.

Architecture is alive, and animate is how it must be explained. No handsome babies smelling of milk; we wanted lived-in

1 There is a stunning zoetrope at the Filmoteca and I will say no more.

2 There's the culinary capital and all. The pig's ear is a hit, but really it's full of cholesterol and only two of us like it.

3 Pure phonetics: Sert and Sirk, like Kahn and Kant, because disciplinary categories are grafted on the tips of our tongues.

4 [...] *Cars have run on gasoline. Where, where have they gone? Now, it's nothin' but flowers. There was a factory. Now there are mountains and rivers. (You got it, you got it)* [...]

The lyrics are by David Byrne, but they could be by Batlle i Roig if... Take it as a manifesto.

buildings with scars and disillusionments and weaknesses. Sometimes they have lost a little of their sheen accumulating stories. Some of them are happy. That is what we sought.

We are happy when we have company, when we are celebrating and do so with light and color and joy. This is why the Atlàntida Performing Arts Center is decorated on Sundays. It had to be public architecture: architecture for everyone, the architecture we have created and paid for, architecture that is a collective triumph when it is successful—architecture that can feel like it's ours, a refuge, a second home. A celebration. The place you go to to enjoy yourself. Some of them smell good and everything. They are places that mean something to many people. They are places that can be visited by a hypothetical interested Biennale visitor.

In fact, this is how you celebrate a nation, with the architecture that joins us together and makes us who we are. We like the main squares and markets, streets, boulevards, bars with terraces and promenades. We like the city and we like landscapes that aren't too audacious, labored and adapted but matured—landscapes that remind you of an piece of clothing you darn since you don't want to throw or give it away because it's part of you. We like people above all.

The architectural works we are exhibiting are a representation of this. They show this sustained, growing, updated, revised and expanded sensibility, adapted to new building programs or revitalizing existing ones. These works join the best of Catalan architecture. At Can Batlló you can have a beer. Maybe it's not a bad idea for the customers themselves to build the bar. And what's more, they make the beer themselves.

We had experienced the Biennale. We visited each exhibition dazzled, excited and without much money. Our visits were short and intense, jaunts where you glance over everything without being able to focus on much. Perusal speeds are fast. In the best of cases, the message is captured by the skin, so the first look is important.

We wanted a disorganized, complex perspective. A shock that would shortly be clarified and disentangled. We wanted whoever wanted to, would be able to spend three hours in the pavilion. The glass makes it possible to survey the pavilion in its entirety⁵. It breaks the spectator-plus-screen-duality, which cancels out the space. We have left the images floating like phantasmas. And we didn't want to respect any conventions in the accessory elements: we used many materials and many colors. Anyway, it won't be very conspicuous. We wanted to define a circuit: you get to the end and turn around and take a different course, looking at the images from behind. There are no drop scenes. We wanted to produce all of the material⁶ by ourselves. We don't like it when you arrive at the venue and find photographs (in three-by-two-meter format, of course) that you have

5 Thanks again for the help and enthusiasm of the sponsors, and especially the faith of Ferran Figuerola. Working with him has been a privilege.

6 Which leads us to mention the team. The best thing we can say about them is that the final result would have been different if any of them had been different people. *altra persona*.

already seen a thousand times on the Internet, on the architects' websites, and in specialized publications—always vacant, hey! Everything you will see is new—new and made expressly for the exhibition.

We also had our own selfish motives. We are very interested in investigating, and on many levels: investigating the social question, looking closely at the life behind the buildings, investigating ways of explaining architecture, investigating ways to reach a wide audience, creating a story—the stories of inhabitants and passersby, learning about everyday life when the cameras have left and there is no thirst for information... when the novelty has worn off. We didn't make too many plans. We wanted to learn, discover, follow stories, exchange stories, get excited, develop our project, enjoy the broad variety of anecdotes of experiences and the enthusiasm of the architects who designed the buildings, to take them there and laugh with them. Some even complained that we hadn't made them work enough. But this round is ours.

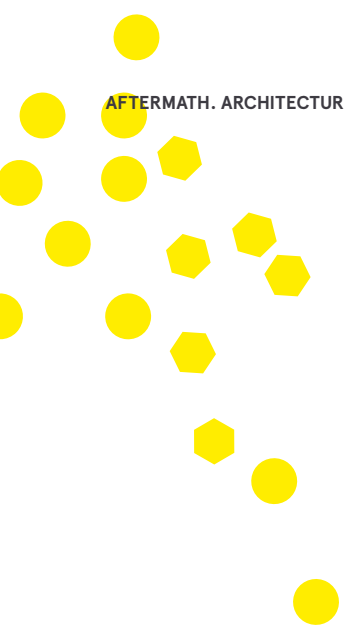
We wanted to experience ways of narrating, filming, moving the camera and following people. We sought to work on multiplicity—of screens, viewpoints and voices—to play with active visitors who, prevented from seeing the whole, have to rely on their relative position, on their movement. They must choose. They have to get impatient. They must see themselves reflected at some point, literally and metaphorically. We wanted to play with that feeling of strangeness you get when you alternate your gaze between the frame and the picture, between inside and outside.

Aftermath is all of this at once and, hopefully, what can be discovered and added to (or in the worst of cases, subtracted from) this interpretation. It depends on you.

ARCHITECTURE

AS AN ART

OF MOVEMENT



ON EXHAUSTING BUILDINGS

To start we wanted to visit each of the works and film them day and night—we wanted to record them at all hours, as if Monet had partnered with Lumière to record the changes of light and in the lives of residents around Rouen Cathedral; we wanted to capture every corner, to exhaust the spaces as Perec did in a Parisian square.

We wanted, ultimately, for the buildings to get fed up and leave before we did.

And if they didn't leave (they are stubborn, buildings), we at least wanted to see the sun rise and set, have dinner there, walk through, listen to the tramontane winds and rustling, use the restrooms, sing and take note of the course of every reverberation and spend enough time to discover forms. Analogies, or autosuggestions: to speculate, for example, that the gold tones of the roof of the Atlantida music school issue from the color you get when you melt a thousand saxophones and a thousand trumpets.

What we would actually like is to find a perspective in each of the works that the architects had not yet discovered and be able to offer it as a sign of gratitude: to present them with an unnoticed crack in their own work.

You know. Self-deception can be an engine of self-exigency, a bottomless fount of inspiration.

A COUNTERMODEL CÉLÈBRE: LE CORBUSIER AND IANNIS XENAKIS

One of the first referents to emerge in the imaginary of relationships between film and architecture was the Philips Pavilion designed by Le Corbusier and Xenakis for Expo 58 in Brussels. Documents from the time show that Le Corbusier was especially interested in the screenings because they served to clear and transform an architectural space that he wasn't actually satisfied with. In other words, Le Corbusier tapped into film to create a trompe-l'œil. And he gave Xenakis carte blanche to turn the visual deception into "electronic poetry" by screening a dreamlike, mythical and mythological film that would broaden the horizons of the walls it was to be projected onto.

Le Corbusier and Xenakis' referent was useful to us as a countermodel because we sought to do just the opposite from them. Rather than eliminating or distorting the original space of the pavilion, our premise was to integrate ourselves into it, to design a projection and lighting system that modified the inside of the building but left the space, structure and characteristic materials of the boathouse, which (as we like to recall) is also used to store damaged gondolas, recognizable, because projection screens do broaden horizons, but they also too suspiciously resemble the walls. We didn't want a compartmentalized pavilion. We sought for the spectator to be able to grasp fragments

of different works, see them in perspective (anticipating the expected dimensions of the pavilion) and put them together without losing sight of the building. In contrast to the 1950s, we now live surrounded by displays (the image of the urban multitude concentrating on their cell phones, as if everyone would prefer to be somewhere else, with other people, and never where they are, is proverbial), a superabundance that instead of intensifying the unique and irreproducible experience of here and now (which is the form of experience *Aftermath* aspires to invite us to) detaches us from it.

Hence, as always (in parallel and interlinked with the pursuit of material solutions) we asked ourselves questions of a conceptual nature about how to use architecture and film today—from the start because classic film screenings in exhibition settings nearly always seem very frustrating to us, as if the traditional screen cried out for a seat for the dilettante flâneurs and asked them to clock in at the scheduled time, enter and leave the factory with labor discipline, coinciding with the beginning and end set at the box office of the theatre of our obligations. For *Aftermath*, however, we sought to make each visitor the final editor, deciding herself on the duration, extension and depth of the experience; to let the tracking shots guide the footsteps of the visitors themselves. As Dan Graham (the filmmaker and architect who has curiously not been claimed by either of the two professions as one of their own) showed us, any creative discipline exercised conscientiously leads the practitioner to question the principles that seem intrinsic to it: to seek the essence in the limits themselves, in the ululated word and in the typography of the verse that now seems like a drawing, graphic art, in the volume of the painting that escapes the canvas and points toward touch and sculpture, of the sculpture that makes us wonder whether we should call it a building. It's a symptom of the times that so many architects have spoken of "flows," "li-

quids" and "gaseous" matter and have insisted on reminding us that the functions of buildings are not irreversible but mutable because the age of determinisms has now been periclitated. In one of the interviews we recorded for *Aftermath*, architect Enric Batlle told us that some years ago he had undergone a metamorphosis in his understanding of architecture and that he continues to investigate how works that consist of flows should be captured and conveyed. For works of this nature (the Llobregat rehabilitation is one such case: people, water, nature in movement), Batlle found the classic photographs "without people, or including people only to give an idea of scale" invalid and inadequate. Ultimately, if architecture has heretofore not been included more often in the category of arts of movement, it has been due to a common error of perspective: wanting to entrust itself to the point of view of the marble, column and floor plan rather than trusting in the soles of feet.

"the works we filmed are superimposed on the visitor but also on the pavilion building in Venice"

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE GLASS

Today's architectural discourse is symptomatic of this change in mentality, when so many architects insist on blurring the dichotomies of mass/void, opacity/transparency and interior/exterior: buildings that are themselves passages.

We have responded to these concerns by projecting onto glass—phantasmagoria, of course, but also matter and transit: making the desire to see a film (building) inside and out, from both sides, literal; to touch it and for the form to be another thing, translation, interpretation, a delay in glass as Marcel Duchamp would say. And simultaneously visitors can see themselves reflected, like when Francis Bacon framed his paintings with glass panes in front so spectators could see themselves within the strokes of the painted body. The works we filmed for *Aftermath* are superimposed on the visitor but also on the pavilion building in Venice that houses the exhibition. And so the bricks of the gondola boathouse are mirrored in the bricks of the food distribution center (NUA's building in Campclar), in the Flexbrick Archikubik used for the parking garage in Montpellier and in the brick reused by the LaCol cooperative in the old Can Batlló factory complex. It's an ode to brick on brick, a game of spot

the seven differences, mise en abyme. In Spanish parlance, the expression “cultura del tocho” (culture of brick) has become a synonym for speculation. It is time to attribute the lack of culture to the corresponding developers and restore the dignity of the poor, versatile and chameleonic bricks.

In materializing this pavilion (where glass becomes so prominent), the involvement of Cricursa, a Granollers company specializing in curved glass which has received fourteen Pritzker Architecture Prizes for some of its most emblematic collaborations, was indispensable. Cricursa’s contribution enabled us to design the building’s interior thinking about how we wanted to project things there and deliberately film for this design, choosing the form and properties (degree of reflection and refraction, safety features and texture) of each piece of glass as when a painter picks out the canvas he needs. A filmmaker’s dream is to build a custom cinema. And while we were sketching the floor plans and elevations for the pavilion, we imagined what it would be like with the lights on, while nothing was being projected, and our experience as curators led us to a distinguished precedent: the Mies van der Rohe pavilion for the Werkbund Exhibition of the glass industry (1927), built entirely from the most advanced glass.

We are aware that for some commentators (often professionals in the recycling of platitudes) social work and cutting-edge technology still have to be opposites. For us, conversely, projecting the films of Can Batlló and SDA Campclar on glass associated in the collective imaginary with iconic works by Koolhaas, Foster and Nouvel seems not only not to be playing with paradoxes but an exercise in naturalness and hope: our letter to the monarchy.

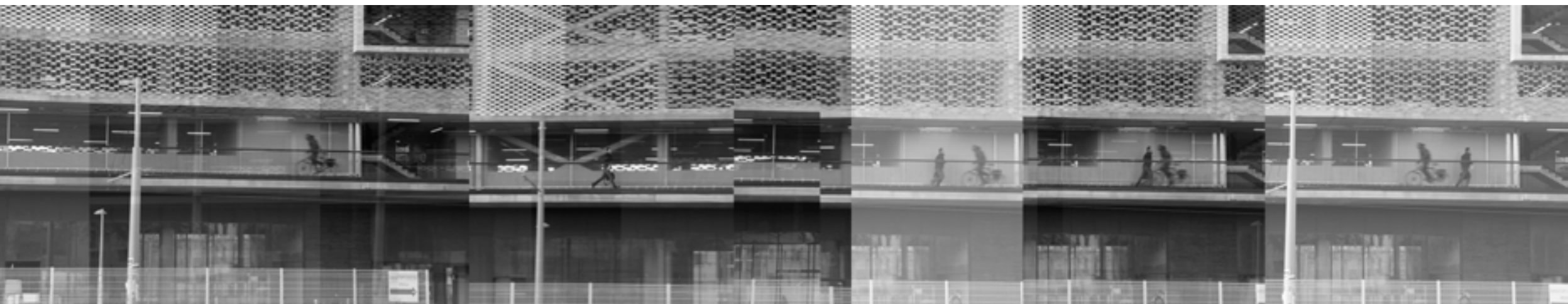
MULTI-SCREEN PROJECTION/SOUND TRACKING

The multiple screens allowed us to play with the inside and outside of the selected works simultaneously and to show their relationship and share the general plans and details—to attack the sixth side of the pentagons. When it comes to studying the history of multi-screen projection, it’s nice that the Holy Trinity is made up by Abel Gance, Andy Warhol and La Monte Young, who were considered, respectively and primarily, a filmmaker, a visual artist and a musician. Interestingly, none of them is cited very much in architecture. The same but in reverse happens with the work of the Eames, which logically should occupy a very prominent place in any history of cinema. If architecture has disregarded its classification as an art of movement, film has been equally negligent when it comes to seeing its potential as an art of space.



Napoleon in Polyvision by Abel Gance (1927)

So we used the multiple screens and speakers of *Aftermath* to play with the Kuleshov Effect, spreading it out in space and not just time. Friends of Resnais’ said, in jest, that he was capable of setting up a tracking shot with two fixed shots. We wanted to take the joke at face value and make it literal through the relationship between the visitor on the move, the multi-screen projections and the mixing of the speakers with images and sounds from the different works, placing them in dialogue with each other. In this catalog you will find a conversation with sound engineer Amanda Villavieja, who explains her preference for spaces that let you listen to the sounds beyond them (if desired)—buildings without earplugs. Using the same criteria, enjoying acoustic perspectives in depth, we designed the sound montage for the pavilion.



A DECALOGUE IN FIVE POINTS, WHICH IN THE END ARE SIX

When it came to filming the works for *Aftermath*, our commandments were so condensed that there were only six points (which in the end, after much discussion between the three curators, we rounded up to seven):

- Break away from the dominant style in catalog images and architecture journals. Avoid empty spaces and settings composed by interior designers for the occasion. Bring neither actors nor models to the shoot. Accept actors and models on set only when they are there for reasons of force majeure (for example in the hypothetical case of finding actors and models in line at the food distribution center to pick up food, then yes, they should be filmed as a symptom of what’s going on in the country). Individuals, people, faces and hands and feet, doing things—and only when everyone has left should the contrast of the empty space be taken advantage of.

- Avoid any point of view that is not accessible to the works’ inhabitants, i.e., to all those people who can’t fly, don’t have x-ray eyes and are unable to walk through walls. Above all, do not film from helicopters or drones (we corroborated this thesis the day they showed us the available budget). Avoid hot air balloons, especially for the works where an overhead shot is most tempting, as is the case with the Atlántida Performing Arts Center and the Llobregat River, works for which aviation would allow us to easily explain the relationships and dimensions of complex spaces. Seek an alternative way of making these works understandable by creating paths through the installation (linear and multi-screen).

- Do not correct the vertical perspectives in post-production. Computers need not do what people’s eyes and brains are capable of.

- Allow ourselves to be surprised by the works.

- Do not conceal errors—not even our own.

- Have fun filming. In the end, it’s most likely they will never again let us curate a pavilion at the Venice Biennale. So we allowed ourselves private jokes, like for example finding which secret framing made one of the selected works (the least expected, of course) resemble a Coderch, which called up an Aravena in drag, which hid a corner of Núñez and Navarro (with prison bars, naturally), which had a Barragán, a Piranesi, a Jacques Tati, monsieur architect. Improbable enough hybridizations, yes, but each building contains so many others within that we amused ourselves like this, playing with all of them.

Lastly, we added a seventh point that summarizes all of the above text:

- It mustn’t resemble a rendering even coincidentally.¹

¹ For those like myself who are not architects, a rendering is what those in the trade call the 3D computer image allowing you to see what the work will look like prior to building it. For someone in the film world, it might seem like the rendering is the equivalent of the script. But it isn’t. You don’t need to be particularly astute to see that it is in fact usually the equivalent of the trailer—a product to sell. In verse: “cosas dice este loco / ay no ha dicho una mentira / pero una verdad tampoco” (this crazy guy says things / oh, he hasn’t told a lie / but not a truth either).

A MOMENT IN A LITTLE WHILE, IN CONCLUSION

One of the thousand things I learned spending time with architects is the expression “moment zero,” when the work (as a lawyer would say) has been given a sentencing hearing. In *Aftermath* we paid special attention to everything that happens when the work has been in operation for a few moments “after” and/or “beyond the architects.”

Consequently, now we must assume that the pavilion will actually only start in a little while, when we have finished writing these lines, and all of the previous—and subsequent—text is pure rhetoric. *Aftermath* will start when we leave.

Right now.

In the meantime, the works remain where they were: each at its own pace, moving, being transformed.

We aren’t there anymore.



**THE ARCHITECTURE OF FLOATING
BONES: SOLIDITY,
TRANSPARENCY, ANCHORING
AND URBAN SCALE**

A conversation with
Josep Lluís Mateo



“I *still have yet to create my best work,”* says Josep Lluís Mateo. At its helm during the most celebrated period of the journal *Quaderns d’arquitectura i urbanisme*, the architect ended his tenure as editor to focus on building a number of works ranging from adapting the streets of Ullastret, a small town in Baix Empordà, to convention centers measuring thousands of square meters and housing—a lot of housing—built in different countries. Josep Lluís Mateo has always structured his work around public space, and he wished to explain the relationship of a project with its urban, human and natural surroundings.

Jaume Prat: Throughout your career, your projects have always tailored the building to the place, the city, regardless of the building program or developer... You always systematically take a twofold approach to the project. This is in fact what *Aftermath* is about; how these kinds of projects are dealt with, and how projects that could turn out very differently if they only responded to the program, end up taking a very particular shape because of this attitude.

Jelena Prokopljević: What interests us is this added point, this extra provided by the project itself that permits its anchorage to the place. Your projects differ widely in content and context. We are interested in how you approach them.

Josep Lluís Mateo: The issue of how you plan encompasses a number of things. One element is use: who the building is intended for and why it needs to be built is essential for me and for many other people. But it is not everything, of course. One might believe projects to be more abstract and generic, with their own rules, but I am more from the tradition that understands that the project depends on the dialogue it establishes with its exterior among other issues related to the site. We live in a built world. When we undertake an intervention we are inevitably interacting with many others. The existence of a blank slate, to operate in a vacuum, in the desert, is very difficult in the contemporary world. Imagining yourself in the middle of the desert is not the same as having a blank slate before you. It means imagining the traces of a thousand stories that will also influence you. So in my work I have this feeling of arriving at a place that needs to be completed and, eventually, improved. Buildings often do not do this. Before architecture everything is possible; after architecture, not so much. There is reality. I know of many cases of wonderful places where architecture has appeared and destroyed them in a dramatic way. We operate in a vacuum, in a relative vacuum. We begin in a place that is a building site, we put something there, and a magical operation transforms what exists in a virtually inevitable way. This inevitability of architecture can be positive when architecture becomes the new nature, like a mountain which is by definition not a human work.

But as we said, buildings also have content. And it is very important. There is content that is more abstract and more generic. But when you look a little more closely, each subject has special requirements for domesticity, use, stay, distance, proximity... and then there is the specificity in front of you, which is the client. We must always find concert, not just with the physical reality that surrounds us but with the social reality, the economic reality and so on, synthesizing ideas in the built fabric. This also leads to a certain fragmentation, a profusion of arguments.

What interests me is finding myself in situations, confronting problems that I don't a priori know the response to. The adventure of finding the solution, the answer, is the interest and strength of the project. One path is divergence: seeking to respond to different stimuli—to the different motivations behind each project—in different ways.

Jelena Prokopljević: It would be interesting if you could flesh out how you seek these responses.

Josep Lluís Mateo: We could discuss specific projects. One case is the Filmoteca de Catalunya (can we include the English translation?), where the setting's complexity was obvious. We were working in an old, very dense, decaying city, full of fragments and problems, socially marginal, with spaces that formed part of our historical imaginary—not the monumental but the social imaginary. I saw that the result of the contemporary architecture produced in the area around the site was a true disgrace; there was a naïveté of the functional product, or the modern product. There was also the argument for a building with cinema as its central theme. Cinema is an illusion of light. Besides the hard relationship of concrete and walls with the exterior, inside there are many courtyards and a lot of light: downwards into the darkness, upwards towards the light. I was interested in this story of light as an architectural argument applied to the cinema.

The other major argument specific to architecture is the material. We build; we solidify ideas, situations. We make solid what in other fields is gas—ideas, words, abstractions...

Jelena Prokopljević: Ultimately it is liquid!

Josep Lluís Mateo: Yes, there is the philosophy of fluidity, which sometimes puts us in a difficult situation. The work of the architect is to make what is fluid solid, to turn aspirations, dreams and human needs into something physical that has substance, that can be touched, that is firm. We intervene using the most abstract and scientific knowledge of science and matter, and the most epithelial knowledge of the senses towards matter: thicknesses, temperatures, light—everything that affects all of our actions.

Jaume Prat: In your work, the interest in structure as an element that becomes a building appears in a seminal project that you did not build, the "Maag Areal-Tower." How would you connect this with your project strategies?

Josep Lluís Mateo: This corresponds to a period ten or fifteen years ago, facing a situation wherein much of the surrounding architecture that interested me insisted on skin as an argument. The deepest is the skin, said Deleuze. In a metaphorical and philosopho-poetic way it was so in many cases: in many buildings, usually of an extreme standardization and vulgarity, the architecture was only in the skin.

A bit weary of this narrative and little interested in or able to follow this idea, I tried to transform it in the likeness of primitive invertebrate animals lacking differentiated bones and skin—the bones themselves are the skin. The "Maag Areal" is a tower that was very important, seminal in this respect. We were unable to build it owing to many reasons and complexities, but this idea lived on in the Filmoteca and in an office building in Paris' Boulogne-Billancourt commune, and it has had a certain trajectory. I used it to see if it was possible to establish a project whose internal logics would be strong enough to form its shape and connect it with the world. For the Filmoteca, I imagined all of the neighboring buildings as adjacent walls and that these walls, half dilapidated, broken, stripped of stucco, exposed only bones. When we were undertaking archeological excavations, the first thing we found were skeletons of corpses—what was left of history. The Filmoteca was designed as a pure expression of the structure, of the bones.



Film
de Catal

ARCA
HES
ABRACION
EROSION

CARGA

CITY

RECORDER

Jelena Prokopljević: Between bones and uses, Hertzberger, who perceived a building as structure not so much in the physical as the metaphysical sense, comes to mind. It is a framework for possible uses, offering maximum flexibility. How do you see the whole idea of flexibility required by users? How do you react to a building that is no longer “yours”?

Josep Lluís Mateo: Buildings go their own way. You accompany them for a time and they have to live their lives. Hertzberger is a bit of a follower of Louis Kahn and of the “servant” and “served” spaces. This kind of systematic and structural rigidity, of bones, might be the most flexible in terms of use. There are interesting paradoxes. That an apparently very severe architecture can be the most vital, and that it sometimes might not be possible to do anything within a much more dynamic and organic work, is contradictory. The subject of use is very complicated. The architect must clearly understand himself as fulfilling a service role. But it must be a bit abstract. The precise definition of use in architecture is usually a spectacular disaster. There is a point at which architecture must leave room for the space, for the user.

We must give freedom to the use. Accompany it if it’s possible, and if it isn’t, grant freedom for the space to be used attractively.

Isaki Lacuesta: Something that I find very interesting about the Filmoteca is how the outdoor paving continues inside the building.

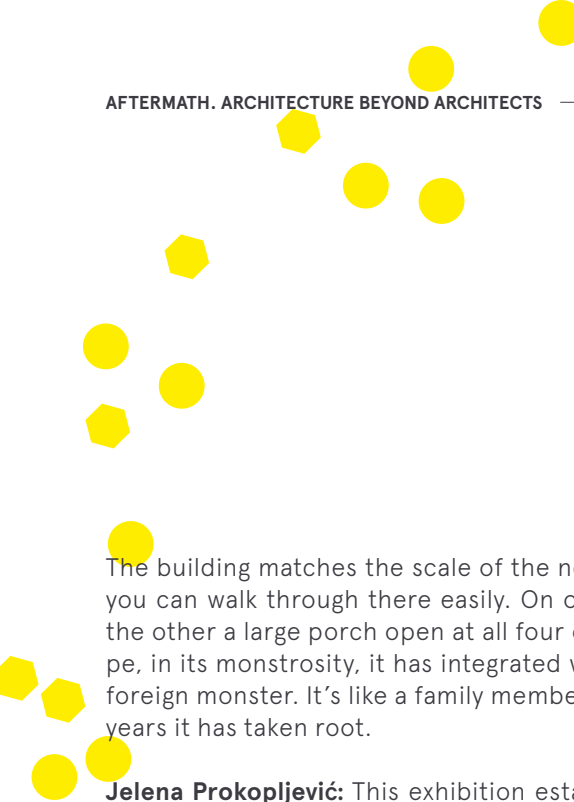
Josep Lluís Mateo: There is a mythological idea that has always interested me a lot. Daedalus was the first architect. He built the Labyrinth of Crete, a massive system of walls. It is the first notion of the architect working with gravity. Icarus was his son, and fed up with being rooted to earth in this way, he sought to fly, to overcome the limits of gravity. The relationship between gravity as a problem and the desire to fly falls within the logic of the builder. Earth pulls us and at the same time we yearn to break free from it and float above the world.

Hence the buildings we make very often seek to fly, to free from the Earth. The building can be a mountain, a sort of a castle that rises above, or it can be something that floats. I tend to try to create the latter. In the contemporary world, where the earth is more crowded, we should let it pass through. The building should not be another obstacle standing in the way. With the Filmoteca we sought to prioritize the square in front of it. The square crosses through the building and continues to the small street we created behind it. That is to say, in this sense it is clearly a public building. You are in an indoor space that resembles an outdoor space. I find the matter heavy. I am more interested in buoyancy than in density or stability. I am interested in transparency, but not in the classic sense of the word referring to glass. I am more interested in the ephemeral than in the timeless and immaterial solidity of things. I have always sought to accentuate the most immaterial conditions. Light, reflection...

Jaume Prat: I remember that when we were working on the competition for the Filmoteca you proposed the possibility for open air cinema. This is being done now. And the films are shown where you proposed them to be shown.

Josep Lluís Mateo: We tried to make a fixed screen that could be unfurled, but it was very expensive. It was one of the ideas for the building’s conception. The cinema had to be there. The building closes off the square but didn’t have a balcony for officials to come out on like historic buildings. The building was for showing films. I wanted to revive cinema on the square...

One thing I like is that it is a building that arrived there like a UFO but which has integrated well into its environment and with its users and with its world. The director of the Filmoteca told me some time ago that they had done an Italian neorealist film series and when they screened Mamma Roma all of the prostitutes came to see it. For him that was an achievement!



The building matches the scale of the neighborhood and now you can walk through there easily. On one side is the bar, on the other a large porch open at all four corners, and as a shape, in its monstrosity, it has integrated well. I don't see it as a foreign monster. It's like a family member. I think that over the years it has taken root.

Jelena Prokopljević: This exhibition establishes the hypothesis of the active user. We believe that architecture has shifted away from the ideology of the Modern Movement to educate and transform society and build machines. How do you view the current relationship between user and architect?

Josep Lluís Mateo: I work from a premise that might not be the most politically correct nowadays. Let me explain. Buildings serve for something and for someone. Some are a pure representation of power, pure collective will. But typically architecture has a need for interaction. It serves. Obviously, users must be able to express themselves. They are interlocutors in this story. They are not passive subjects. And therefore there must be some interaction. But I also believe in my profession. I think an architect is different from someone who is not an architect. Taken to its limit, the desire to participate

would negate this. I do not believe that participation should define the result. Participation can herald things and define issues, but there is someone who formalizes the story—someone with or without an academic qualification. And this is our role. To allow the resulting built world, the final synthesis, to be a pure object of participation is an error, and moreover it's impossible. Someone, in the end, will decide how to synthesize. And this someone is the architect, regardless of what he or she has studied. This someone does what we do. To abandon this role is suicidal on our part, and it isn't merely suicidal but also stupid, because someone else will do it. So to leave everything up to a sort of generic participation seems to me demagogic and impossible, because sometimes I think the person who says this is actually saying something else: that he will make the synthesis. It is covert authoritarianism.

"An architect is different from someone who is not an architect. Taken to its limit, the desire to participate is demagoguery."



ARCHITECTS DESIGNING QUESTIONS

Ethel Baraona Pohl, César Reyes Nájera

“The city has no connection with the countryside because it contains in itself everything that pleases its inhabitants. It is certainly the most beautiful city in the world, because all its inhabitants, at every moment of their existence, move towards the single goal of possessing the most beautiful house.”

Upon reading this quote, one could easily imagine any real estate advertisement from 10 years ago, or even a conversation in an architects’ forum in the 2000s. But no, it is the description of the “City of Splendid Houses,” the eleventh city of Superstudio’s *Twelve Ideal Cities* [1971].



Photograph by Anna Alejo

What has changed since then, in the last eight years? Since 2008, the year when the financial crisis marked a turning point for the economy but also directly within the field of architecture because of the relationship between the economic crisis and the real estate bubble (in Spain's case especially), economic, political, social and cultural values have been deeply affected. From that moment, architecture as a profession has begun to reinterpret itself.

As a result of this tumultuous time, the word 'participation' began to resonate constantly in every meeting of architects, be it at a conference or architecture school or over an informal coffee. It resonates so much that one begins to think, fearfully, that it will suffer the same fate as the word 'sustainability' a few years ago: become worn out and lifeless and get tucked away in a drawer. But despite this, perhaps we can still be optimistic about participation, take a step back and try to approach again, with perspective and different insights, to understand what

is happening in Barcelona—among many other places—so that participatory processes with a very long history behind them can regain their relevance in the present.

The citizens' movements that emerged in 2011, led by 15M, that sought to take back the right to housing (as PAH has been very successful at)¹ and also to reclaim the right to the city have newly kickstarted discussion about the role of the architect at this point in time. Above all, these movements have served for recovering the value of collective work and forums for exchanging ideas and knowledge. In this context, architects have returned to ways of approaching the practice of architecture that had been lost in the years of economic growth; they begin by asking themselves, as citizens, what they would like the city they live in to be like, how to strengthen the relationships between different stakeholders, and then they use their professional skills to contribute with open—and, yes, participatory—ideas and projects to shape the city. It is as Constant dreamed over 50 years ago, seeking to create "*another city for another life*."²

At this point, it is also worth clearly discussing what Markus Miessen calls "the nightmare of participation" when he mentions that both historically and in terms of political agency "participation is often read through romantic notions of negotiation, inclusion, and democratic decision-making. However, it is precisely this often-unquestioned mode of inclusion (used by politicians as never-ending campaigns for retail politics) that

1 The Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH) is an association and social movement for the right to adequate housing that emerged in February 2009 in Barcelona and is now present throughout Spain. See: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>

2 Constant, *La Nueva Babilonia*, GGMinima, Gustavo Gili, 2009.

3 Miessen, Markus, *La Pesadilla de la Participación*, dpr-barcelona, 2014.

does not produce significant results, as criticality is challenged by the concept of the majority.” This leads us to ask ourselves how we can avoid this sometimes superficial consensus and have discussions based on productive conflict or dissent. How can we prevent participation from being used as a way to gain legitimacy when it is simply evading a responsibility by passing decision-making to citizens?

What happened in the years from 2008 to 2011 with an explosion in bottom-up⁴ projects, often grounded in collaborative and volunteering processes, and mostly acting in the public space, was very important for discussing the role of the architect today and how it can adapt to a new landscape. But the question is, what comes next? Far from a criticism of concepts like tactical urbanism and DIY trends, it is important to highlight that the emergence of this type of projects has served as a sharp wake-up call about a basic problem and has been a catalyst for an infinite number of spontaneous solutions that have laid the groundwork for a new, ever more needed change. We have witnessed—and in many cases participated in—a constant quest of strategic processes that can provide a response to the question of how to address the real changes in the built environment. But now it is time to go further.

⁴ The emerging urbanism or “bottom-up planning” is different from urban planning in that it is largely based on citizen participation as an important point in “constructing” the city. To expand the concept and see some examples, visit: <http://www.laciudadviva.org/blogs/?p=9651>



Perhaps the only way, or one of the few ways, to turn participation into an engine of real change is through practices that work on the small scale, at the neighborhood rather than the city level, where knowing the name of your neighbor is more important than the frantic race for growth. Under this approach, the traditional forms of resistance change and are more effective when they are propagated by resonance, from one friend to another, from one home to another, as the Invisible Committee explains⁵, thereby promoting long-term projects that have a real impact on people’s daily lives.

⁵ The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection*, melusina [sic], 2009.

“Knowing the name of your neighbor is more important than the frantic race for growth”



A good example of this are the projects currently being developed in the Sants neighborhood of Barcelona, where a number of groups of architects (among them LaCol) work together with labor rights, access to housing and urbanism cooperatives (La Ciutat Invisible, La Borda and Raons Públiques, respectively) and in particular with institutions (schools and libraries) and existing neighborhood associations to achieve urban, economic and quality of life improvements. Over several years this collective work has succeeded in reviving abandoned industrial spaces like Can Batlló by implementing new uses for these spaces like auditoriums, libraries, schools, a cooperative housing project and more recently even a cooperative to promote civic and social economy initiatives, the Coòpolis project, which is still in progress.

It is important to stress that these projects work only with the active participation of all parties (which as we have seen are many), leaving behind egos and leaderships more typical of the 20th century. They are processes in which the architects are just another player within a cross-disciplinary and dynamic group. Thus in closing we could like to recall the words of Nicholas Negroponte in the late 1960s⁶, "Architects design the question, not the response."

⁶ Carlo Ratti, Matthew Claudel (eds.), *Open Source Architecture*, Einaudi, 2014.

A conversation between Josep Ferrando and
Pere Buil and Toni Riba of vora arquitectura

THE PROJECT AND TECHNOLOGY

STANDARD SIZES,
FREEDOM OF DESIGN
AND LESSONS FROM
MANUFACTURERS



Josep Ferrando



Pere Buil and Toni Riba

One of the important issues in bringing the exhibition to life and underlying the concept of the pavilion (for Catalonia at the 2016 Venice Biennale) is the presence of current Catalan technology and the use of products from local companies that blur the boundaries between what is unique and what is standard.

The pieces of furniture that complement the exhibition were designed by architect Josep Ferrando, who together with Figueras International Seating created the Biennale Chair, designed over the course of the previous edition of the Venice Biennale of Architecture, and by vora arquitectura, an architecture studio formed by Pere Buil and Toni Riba, which provided and adapted the design of the Taula Creu specifically for the exhibition. We talked with them about the uses of technology in their design process, which are at the same time representative of the current work of this generation of young Catalan architects.

Jelena Prokopljević: I am very interested in the relationship between technology and the image a building conveys, in how this image relates to a specific historical context to fit into or superimpose itself on its physical and social environment.

Pere Buil: Showing the process and building methods in the appearance of buildings is an obsession we seem to share with many architects of our generation.

Josep Ferrando: I think it is something we discovered outside the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB). We discovered it and began to build that way by looking at other works of architecture.

Jaume Prat: To contextualize the conversation, we are talking about a time when ETSAB was the standard of reference.

Josep Ferrando: And not just in Barcelona—it was an international standard of reference. We had very strong professors, many of whom are no longer there...

Pere Buil: It is a question of our time, which is in the air... The sensibility has changed, perhaps because the financial crisis happened, there is a need to express austerity...

Josep Ferrando: I think that there is a gradual trend towards being more substantive with what you do. The older you get, the less you know. Every time you discover something new, including when it is through manufacturers and builders, you are more sincere in what you try to do. It's going further and further back, becoming more didactic—not in general but towards yourself.

Toni Riba: On a social level, people feel closer to architecture that can be understood in a more direct way. Architecture that has a hermetic image with respect to its function is alienated from today's sensibility.

Pere Buil: Rawness of finishing is a trend that has become fashionable, reflecting a reaction to excessive frivolity.

Jelena Prokopljević: Of the skin—of the superfinishing.

Pere Buil: Combined with the crisis this has brought a taste for the cheap, for humble materials...

Jelena Prokopljević: Could it perhaps have do with the fact that with the crisis there has been more rehabilitation than new construction, and the nature of the commissions has changed?

Josep Ferrando: The type of commission we see at present is increasingly to intervene in what exists and to make smaller and smaller projects. There is intensity at every turn. It isn't easy to enter competitions for thousands of square meters with big budgets. So all of a sudden you make a small, intense piece that reinvents what you are doing with small funds and brings to the fore materials and processes that were concealed before, and it is a lesson. Even rehabilitation would not have been done in the same way ten years ago. What was done before could be called rehabilitation. Now none of us would call an intervention in an old work a rehabilitation. We would call it re-inhabiting, reprogramming... recycling. But none of us would say now that we must rehabilitate a place. In general, rehabilitation has to do with the technique you use to repair an existing space. And what we do is not repairing. It's transforming.

Toni Riba: Today when we talk about transforming, everyone understands that it refers to transforming what exists, that it isn't what happened fifteen years ago, when transforming meant to erase and redo, organizing and simplifying.

Jaume Prat: Are there projects that could be seminal examples in this regard?

Pere Buil and Josep Ferrando: Lacaton & Vassal's Palais de Tokyo could be one.

Jaume Prat: The Palais de Tokyo leads me to the second question I wanted to ask you because it's very deceptive, often using materials produced expressly for the work that have the appearance of being recycled and aged. How much of a style is there in what we are doing now?

**"What we do is not repairing.
It's transforming."**



Casa Tàpies by Josep Antoni Coderch, 1960. Photograph: F. Català-Roca. Photo courtesy of the Coderch Archive.

Everyone: A lot.

Josep Ferrando: How much style was there in the people who made skins, and how much inventiveness? You could say that Coderch's Casa Tàpies is a skin. And it's fantastic. It isn't designed as a skin, but it has one. To call Casa Tàpies a skin is to denigrate it. This became a style afterwards. There are people who have more substance and do things with a story and there are people who do them for the sake of appearance.

Pere Buil: There is an article by Ignacio Paricio where he talked about technological advances that started as avant-garde proposals and ended up becoming fashion, for example when Le Corbusier put in ribbon windows, he would separate the structure and the façade so they could be continuous. Still today we find many buildings with the structure in the plane of the façade which use a metal sheet to give the appearance of a continuous horizontal window. We needn't be disparaging saying everyone follows a trend. But it is something that is in the air and many of us do it.

Toni Riba: It's taking an architectural grammar and adapting it to your way of doing things. There is a language and there is a trend. On the other hand, there is a pendulum effect as in everything, of course. We have gone from one extreme to the other. And it may be excessive here as it was before in the opposite extreme.

Josep Ferrando: I think it's a situation of here and now. We can't be thinking that we are doing things that haven't been done in other places. When you travel around South America, they've been doing it for years. Now, for example, housing cooperatives are beginning to appear here. It seems to be an invention yet it's been around since the 1960s. I find it excessive to think that there are things that only happen here. Everyone has their situation. If we had a Swiss guy looking at us today, he'd be wondering why we don't paint the brick walls!

Pere Buil: There are people who have been doing the things being done now for thirty years. It's as if there were a bottom current beneath a sparkling surface and at some point it emerges. Now there is probably another bottom current that is doing other things and will emerge in a few years.

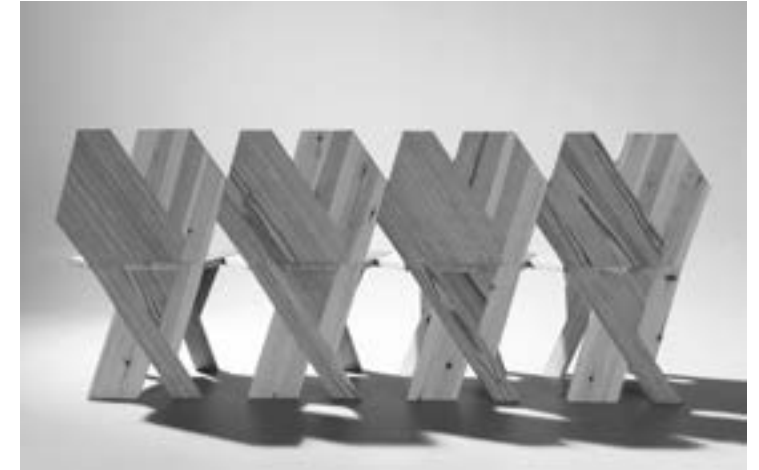
Regarding the image of technology and getting into the furniture, there is sometimes the danger of technology branding you with an image of modernity that winds up being the excuse for the final image of a project, technical and technological ostentation. We are running a bit counter to this...



Casa Tàpies by Josep Antoni Coderch, 1960. Photograph: F. Català- Roca. Photo courtesy of the Coderch Archive.

Josep Ferrando: I agree. I wanted to use only wood and wood-working to make the Biennale Chair. I proposed using a single material for it, working from the idea of the industrial artisan, working on the assembly. The chair is made from 8 x 2.5 cm planks. And its shape is not arbitrary—it is cut in angles—multiples of eight degrees—so as not to waste material and to enable different types of aggregation, both between the pieces themselves and by combining the chairs to form benches. When Figueras International Seating commissioned me to make the chair, they were the customers, looking for what they needed. At that time they had received a commission to furnish an evangelical church in Brazil. So they requested a chair that would suit churches of any religion. This entailed making a pew chair: Catholic churches have pews, and evangelical churches have chairs, for example. So it had to be a chair that could be a pew. Actually, the people at Figueras International Seating weren't entirely sure what they were looking for. They weren't looking for a different image, but they were aware that it wouldn't be a conventional chair.

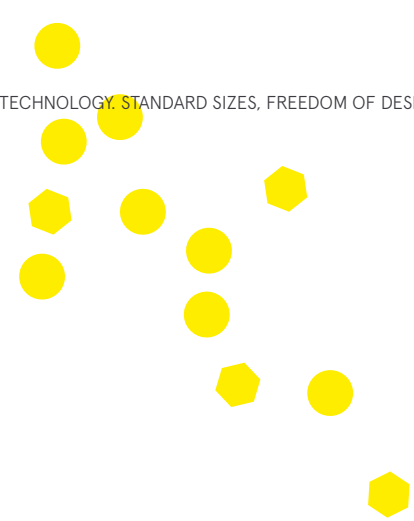
Toni Riba: In terms of furniture, the relationship with the manufacturer is very interesting. They always know more than you, and there is a huge learning curve. Now we have to go talk to the carpenter about producing the Taula Creu, and it's an extremely interesting phase because it's when we will see how it



can materialize. The Taula Creu sprang from a desire to make a table without legs at the corners. Legs at the corners create problems because of the tremendous span that covers the table. The cross is the leg, and it aims to express the supporting structure, which is very powerful. The original design was a work table that was to distinguish a small space.

Jaume Prat: There used to be standard sizes for everything. If you didn't adhere to them, you wasted material. Now there are manufacturers like Cosentino that do not use standard sizing. The standard size means programming a computer that makes the piece you want without wasting material. Our shared education has instilled the idea of a standard in us. What is your reaction to this?





Josep Ferrando: It depends on the material. When we get to the point where the machine that is cutting in one way is able to cut in many different ways for the same price, we will be moving towards a break with the need for everything to be standard. But as long as it is cheaper for machines to cut to specific measurements, our trains of thought and chains of production will continue to be etched with the standard measurements we have to work with.

Toni Riba: Technology also adapts to the times. Back when the architecture of skin was prized, technology adapted. It's a two-sided coin. The idea of material that can be uniquely adapted to unimaginable extremes goes hand in hand with this type of architecture. High tech and low tech were already being discussed when we were at university. Low tech was the standard, technology based on optimization, on available resources...

Pere Buil: Nowadays numerical control is low tech.

Jaume Prat: Do you push technology by using building elements for functions other than those for which they were originally intended? Is this something you have incorporated into your way of thinking?

Toni Riba: There is a certain attraction toward perverting what is to be done. It shows ingenuity. The point is understanding the material and the process of building with it very well. Then you can add another twist. It isn't something sought, but it is an attitude.

Pere Buil: Culturally, it might also be a sort of resistance to the serialization of technology.

Josep Ferrando: You have to understand the material. It isn't that you pervert it thereafter but that you find that there is another specific way of using it that suits you better. For me there is no pursuit of that per se. It happens in the process of becoming familiar with the technique and material.

Toni Riba: That can also be applied to spaces. Now we are trying out crossing spaces that can be something more. Spatially you can also end up making certain deviations that teach you new things. It's an attitude...



BIENNALE CHAIR Josep Ferrando architect

The base concept for the Biennale Chair envisioned wood as the sole material while designing a pattern distanced from classical geometry, lacking joints and fasteners made from other materials. Specifically, two types of wood from sustainable forests, Scots pine and longleaf pine, were used. Together, combining their different colors, grains and textures, they lend the piece dynamism and volume. Moreover, the design reflects a fractal system that reproduces its basic structure at larger and smaller scales with proportions that function equally well in single units and when multiple chairs are combined.

Twenty slats 8 cm wide and with a standard thickness of 2.5 cm are used to make each chair, cut to different heights and joined at multiples of 8 degree angles. The slats are joined by zigzag finger joints, which inspired the project. The seat and back, both made from 8 slats, are assembled with wood joints, and the chair stands on 2 legs, each made with 2 slats. When the Biennale Chairs are arranged together as benches, the legs create a framework that resembles the branches of trees.

ARCHITECT
Josep Ferrando
www.josepferrando.com

PROJECT YEAR
2014

CLIENT
Figueras International Seating

COLLABORATORS
Pau Borràs (Design Figueras Center)
and Adrià Ruiz

PHOTOS
Francesc Arnó



TAULA CREU vora. architecture in process

The Taula Creu –the cross table– responds to a wish to create a gathering space around it. It is an adaptation of an existing original design for the pavilion at the Venice Biennale. At the pavilion it will serve as a display desk that can be reached from all directions. It measures 360 x 120 x 72 cm, making it suitable for subsequent use as a conference table.

It is an expressive and abstract suspended wooden surface.

Suspended: It is supported by two legs in the shape of a cross pulled back from the perimeter; it does not have legs at the corners.

Expressive: The shape and materiality express its constituent structure. The joints and change in material between panels and structural bar sections are visible.

Abstract: Two crosses on a plane. They support the table and are expressed on its surface.

Single material: All wood. Variants of pine and maple. Subtle variation in color and texture.

Direct construction: Wood joinery with no metallic joints. The table can be disassembled into its defining elements (top and legs), held together with threaded pins.

CLIENT
Catalonia Pavilion for the Venice
Biennale 2016

DESIGN AND EXECUTION
2015–2016

DESIGN
vora arquitectura
(Pere Buil and Toni Riba)
www.vora.cat

COLLABORATORS
Barrington Lambert, Charles Dujardin

PRODUCED BY
Buit Taller (www.buit.es)

MODEL PHOTOGRAPHS
Charles Dujardin



**CORRIDOR OF LIFE,
BREATHABLE SKIN,
TRANSPARENT OPACITY,
LOCAL SENSIBILITY:**

Jelena Prokopljević,
Jaume Prat

EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATIVE
ARCHITECTURE



What the projects included in the Catalan Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2016 share is having created a place—a place that improves users' lives and the conditions of the area where they have been introduced. They are works based on new ways of understanding the territory with a distinctly public ethos that exceed the requirements of their nominal programs. Clearly they are not the only works that share these characteristics; over the option for a wider selection we preferred to focus on concepts, strategies, materials and uses to explain a way of making architecture that we consider representative of the current state of Catalan architecture.

The architecture we have analyzed at the exhibition has been built over the last ten years in different locations in Catalonia and France. They are works made with the aim of overcoming the economic crisis, which has had a devastating effect on the general view of the construction industry. The seven works evidence changed sensibilities towards the ways of imagining

and building spaces. The works are varied: a hospital, an inter-municipal green corridor, a theatre and a music conservatory, housing for seniors, a parking garage, a food distribution center and a factory complex transformed into an activity center self-managed by its users.

We understand that to find successful solutions and provide responses to the complex and changing needs of today's society, the technical and artistic knowledge of the architect is no longer enough. Responses are increasingly created with an eye toward users or with their direct participation, formulating spaces that are open to reappropriation and redefinition based on how they are used. Architectural intervention becomes an open system, a point in the present continuous we live in, that no longer aims to educate and transform society but to learn from it and draw attention to its needs, qualities and concerns.

The works we have chosen are of a markedly urban nature: they are spaces that connect not just different social groups but also different types of physical and historical environments. Thanks to these characteristics, it would be difficult for them to be appropriated by individual economic powers or used as emblematic spaces, all-embracing and economically profitable outside of their physical and social context.

We have studied these examples through how they operate day by day—recording activities, itineraries, densities and flows; the vistas from inside and outside, the sounds and silences, the temperatures and smells—to convey a cross-disciplinary message: that ultimately use explains the project and is its final judgment. The projects we are showing have improved the relationships inherent to their environments and have activated and connected spaces and people.

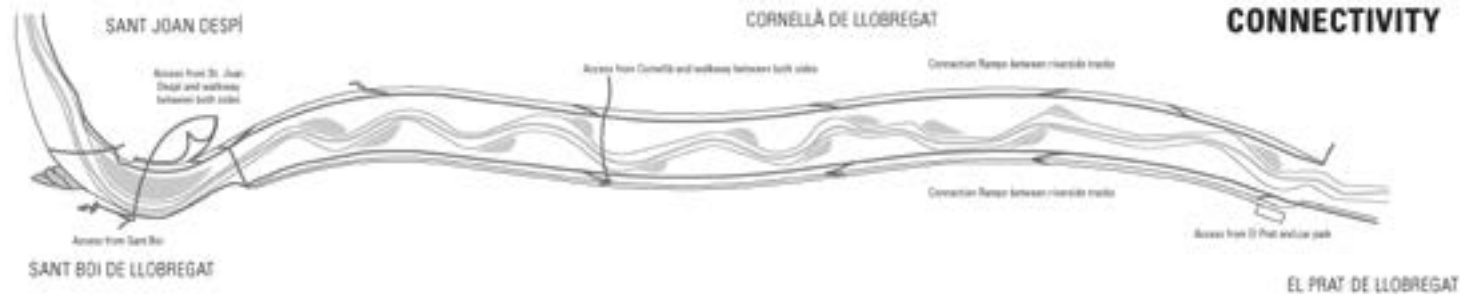
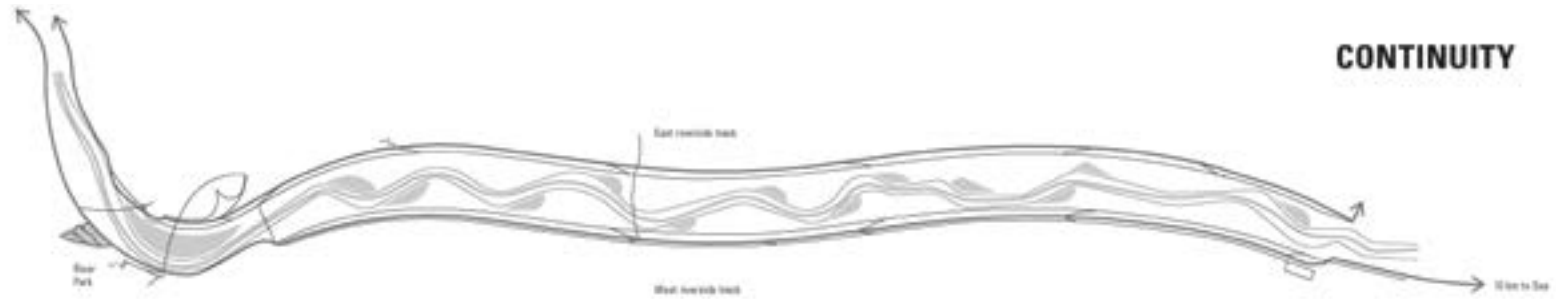
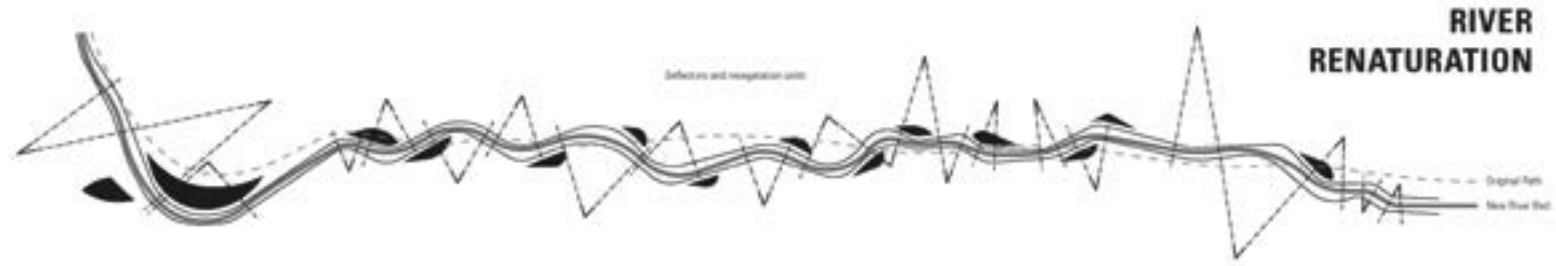
LLOBREGAT

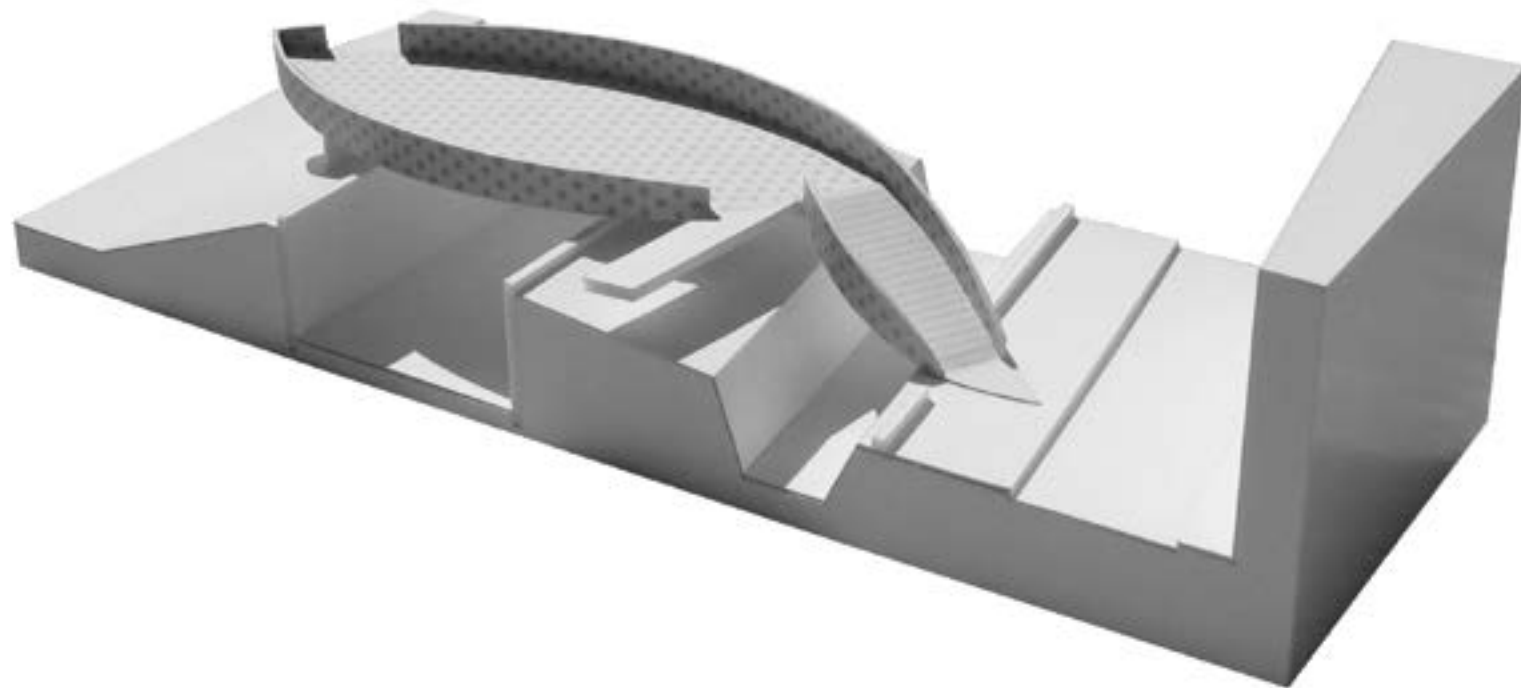
The commission called for environmental recovery actions to use the river as ecological infrastructure for the city. The strategies used initially included actions such as slowing down the water's course, removing waste and invasive vegetation and replanting native vegetation. The intervention was complemented by the creation of two longitudinal paths, one on each side of the river, and cross connections linking the intervention to the six adjoining towns were built with a minimal budget per square meter, giving them natural access to the sea and allowing for broad public and social use. Optimal connectivity dictated where pedestrian bridges were built and how the tunnels under the TGV tracks were integrated.

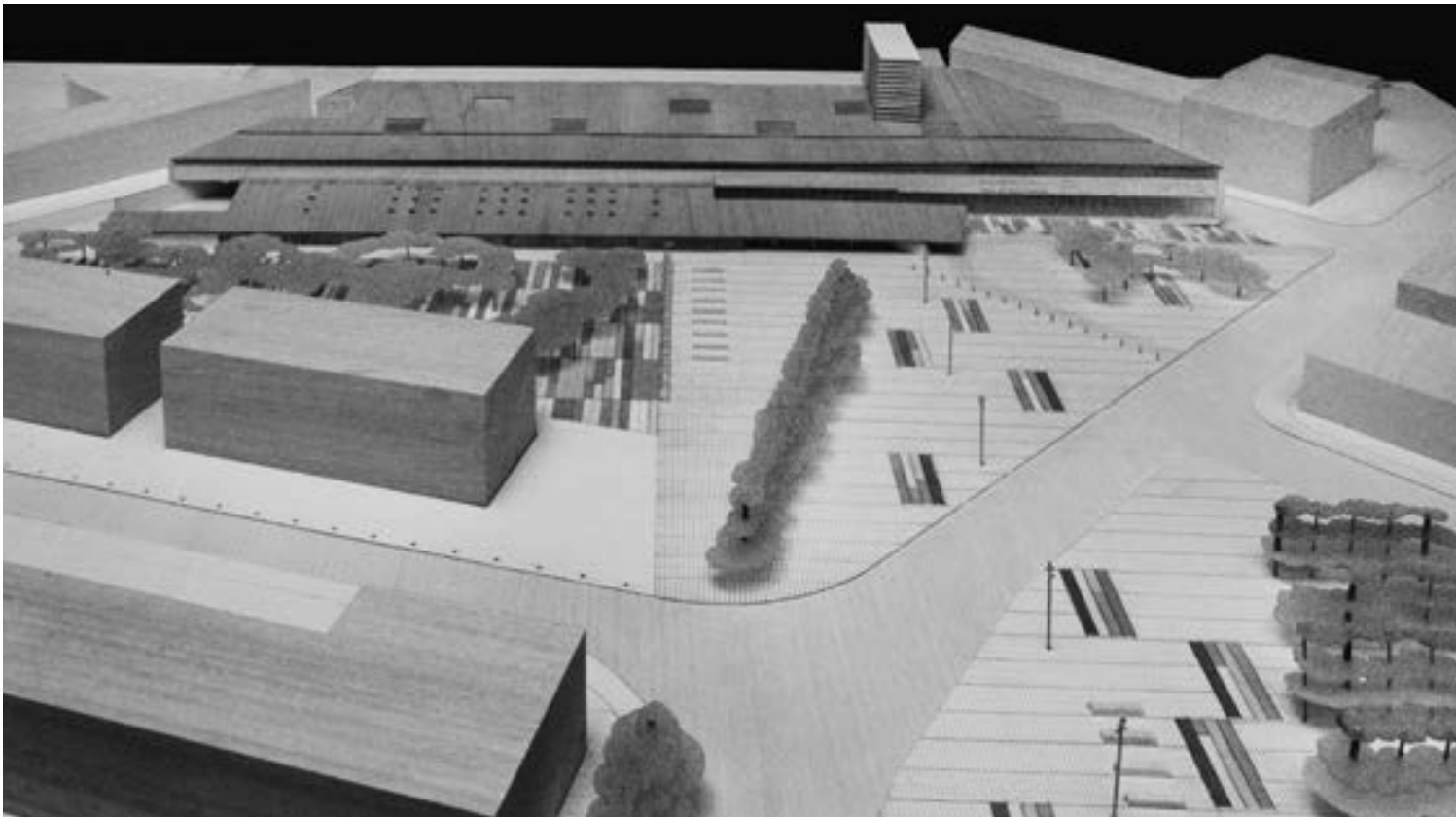
It is a wide-ranging project spatially and temporally: it stretches over more than 150 hectares and was executed in different phases. The following factors were considered in determining the limits of the architectural intervention: What is a designed space? What is the optimal level of design detail for a public space? How should its boundaries be marked in a gradual and imperceptible way? What is the role of lighting when it can alter the ecosystem of the public space?



The result is a continuous park, a work that plays with the movement of air and water, recovering the meanders of the river and balancing new and native vegetation. The effort of the design as a whole to “unlearn” has facilitated numerous uses for recreation and sports, peri-urban gardens and even the reappearance of small flocks of sheep. The architects considered the recovery of a river as urban as the Llobregat for fishing one of the successes in creating a productive urban space. Transformed from an abandoned and run-down suburban area, the Llobregat River has become Barcelona’s western backbone, the initial part of the green network of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area.





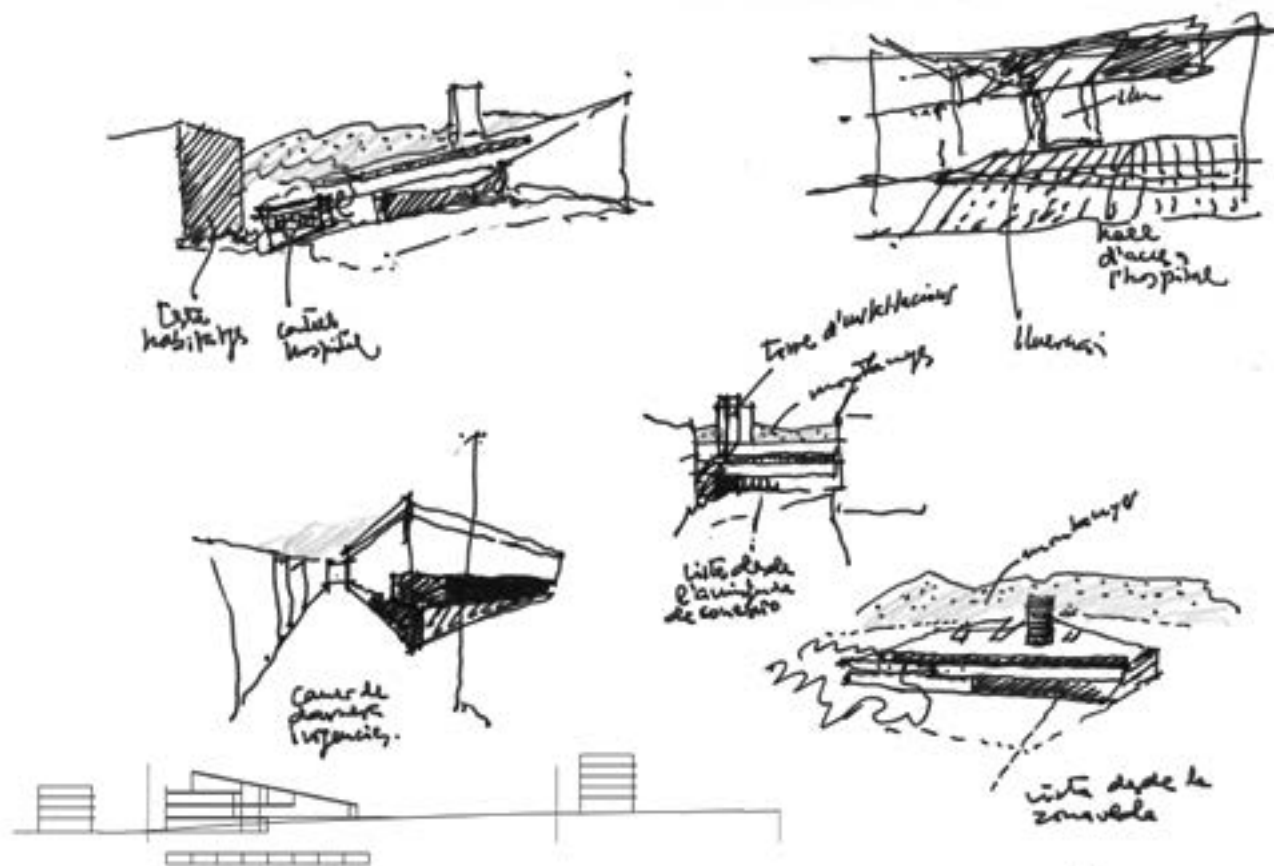


CERDANYA

The cross-border hospital represented an architectural, legal and social challenge since it needed to provide service to the communities of a region split in two by a state border: it was necessary to build a point of encounter between the Catalan and French health care systems. The result is a shared hospital, a compact refuge tucked under a large roof, closed to the dominant winds and open to the city and the sun.

Functionality is organized according to the premise of creating pleasant spaces that do not subscribe to the typical visual imaginary of hospitals, that do not smell like a hospital and that at the same time offer a perfect machine that saves time moving from place to place and minimizes distances traveled. Emphasis has been placed on creating a healing space at every turn: through the calm it conveys and through its proximity and human scale despite being a very large hospital. The rooms, patient hallways and waiting rooms are open to the landscape: the ribbon windows frame the soothing view of the Pyrenees and the fields surrounding Puigcerdà. Patients tend to raise their beds to take in the landscape.

The architects took advantage of the natural slope of the land to mitigate the landscape impact of the building's large volume. The hospital is a markedly horizontal building nestled under a large roof. It isn't fully clear how many floors it has. The ventilation system tower stands out as the single vertical element, a landmark located on the axis of the street that leads to the center of Puigcerdà. The lateral façades separate into volumes that engage in dialogue with the town's silhouette. In short, the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital integrates the natural and urban spaces while unifying the two social, health care and labor systems.



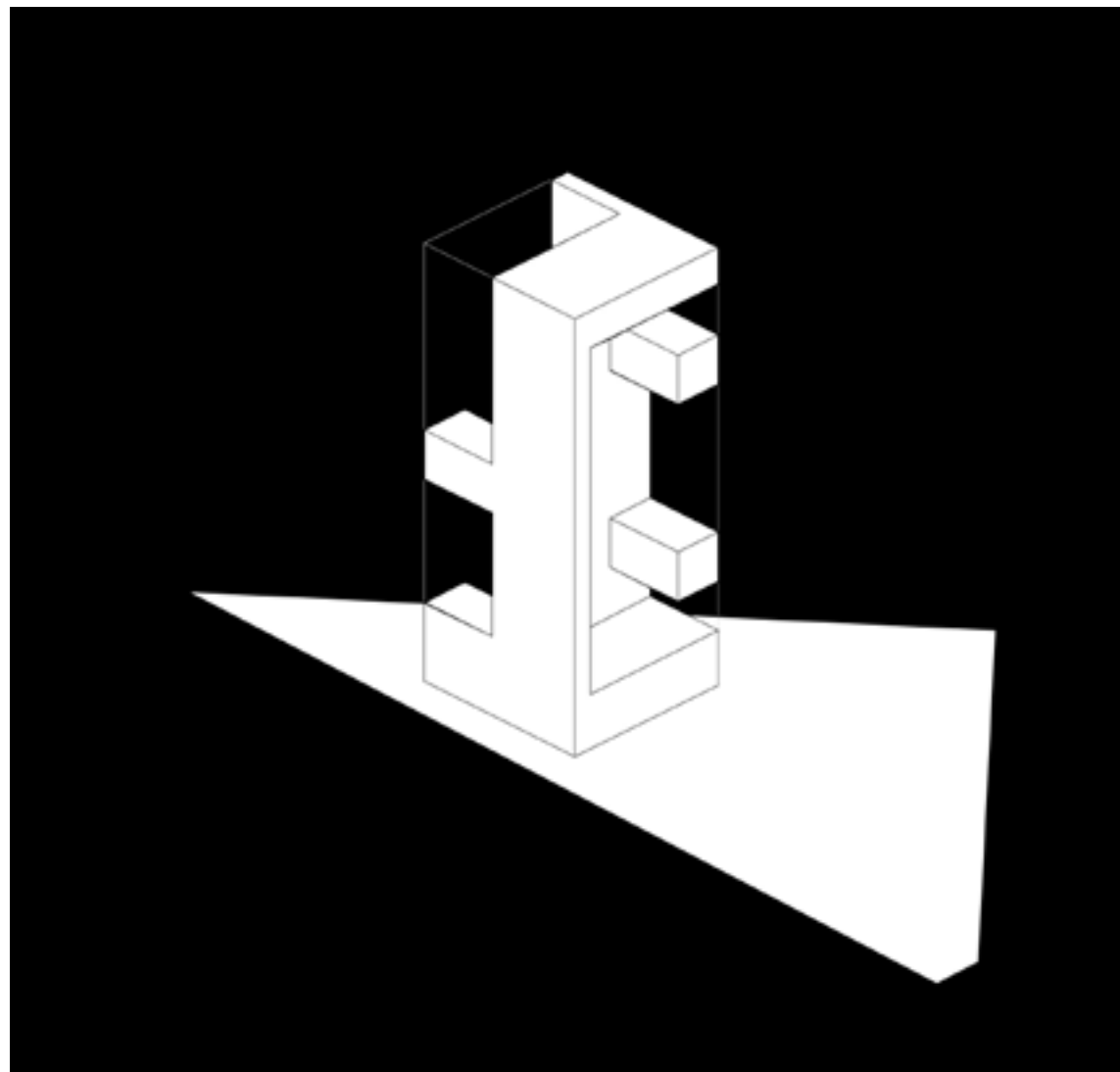
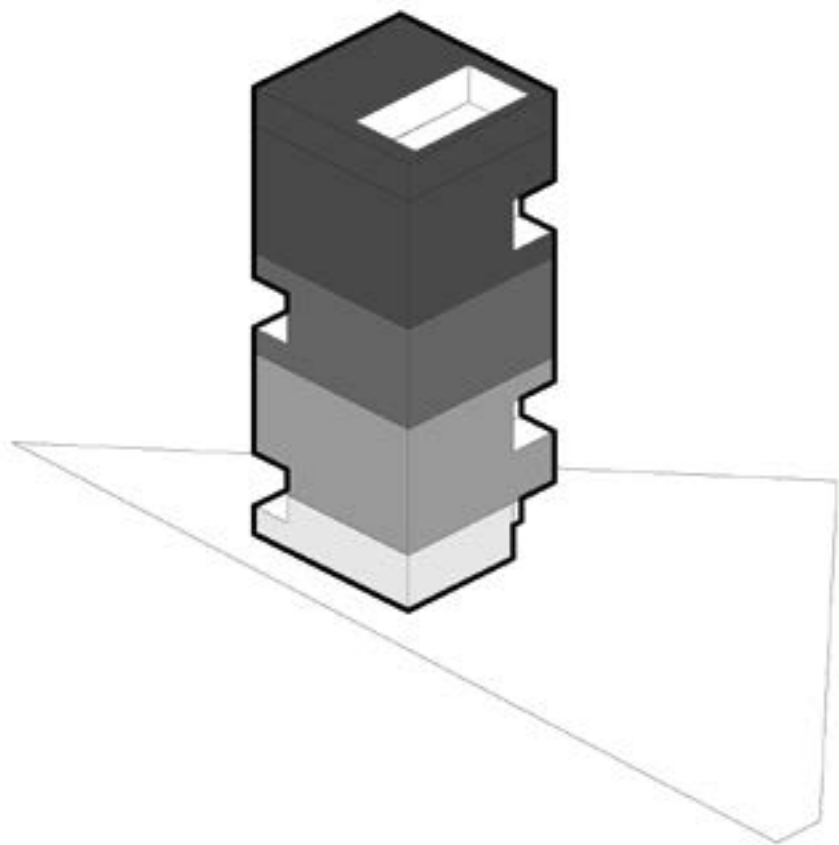
~~PROSPERITÀ~~ PRESPECTIVES PUIGCERDÀ

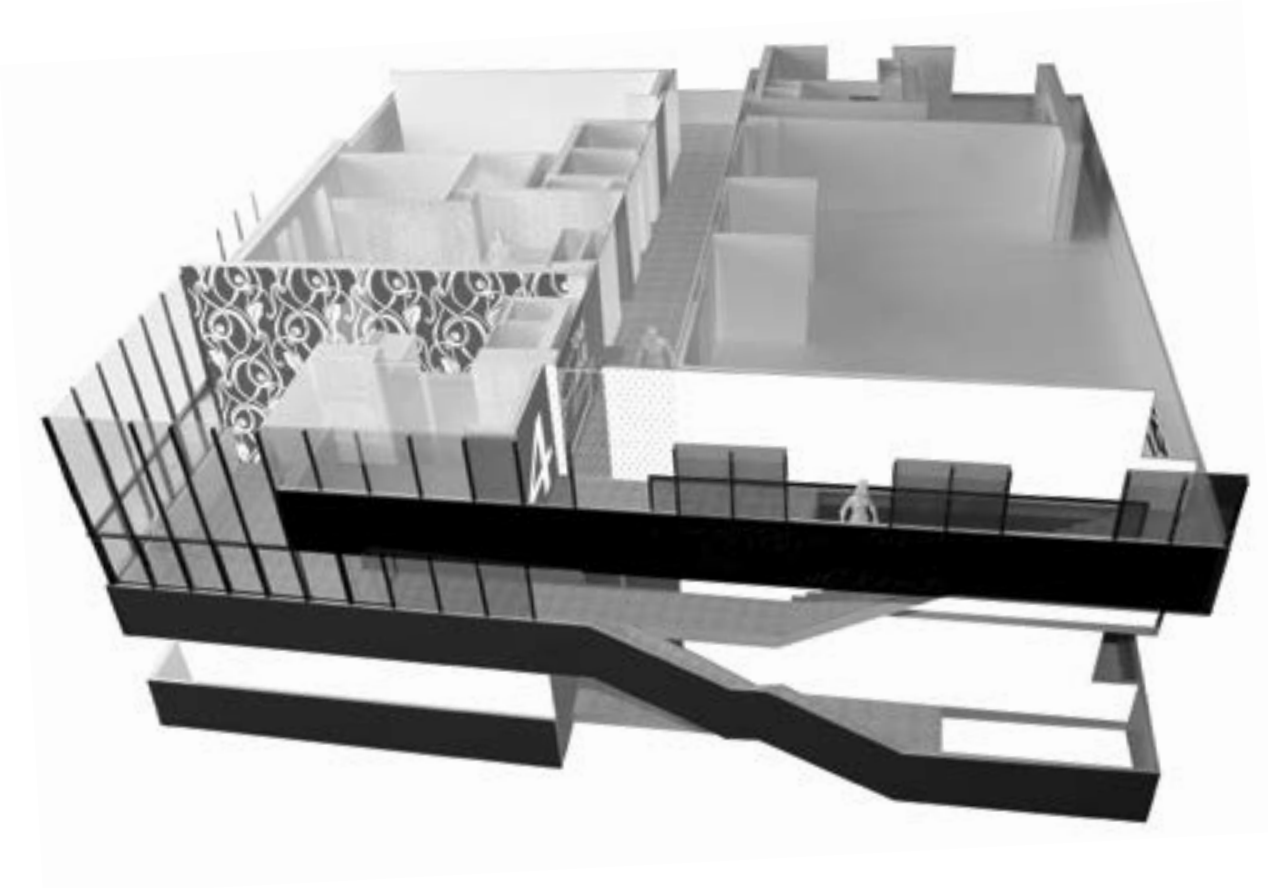
TORRE JÚLIA

This assisted living facility for seniors, christened Torre Júlia by the architects in reference to Via Júlia, Nou Barris' main street, is a visual reference in the landscape of Barcelona's ring roads. Its shape, materials and visual language as well as its position belie its internal function. This is why local residents often ask if it is a hotel or an office building and have no idea of the daily life it contains.

What Torre Júlia does reveal is a desire to visually integrate its internal content with the landscape of the city and the mountains that flank Barcelona. The stairways and hallways that run along the façades and the two-story common areas and rooftop garden share stunning views over the city and were the main reason for erecting a seventeen-story building instead of occupying the land in width.

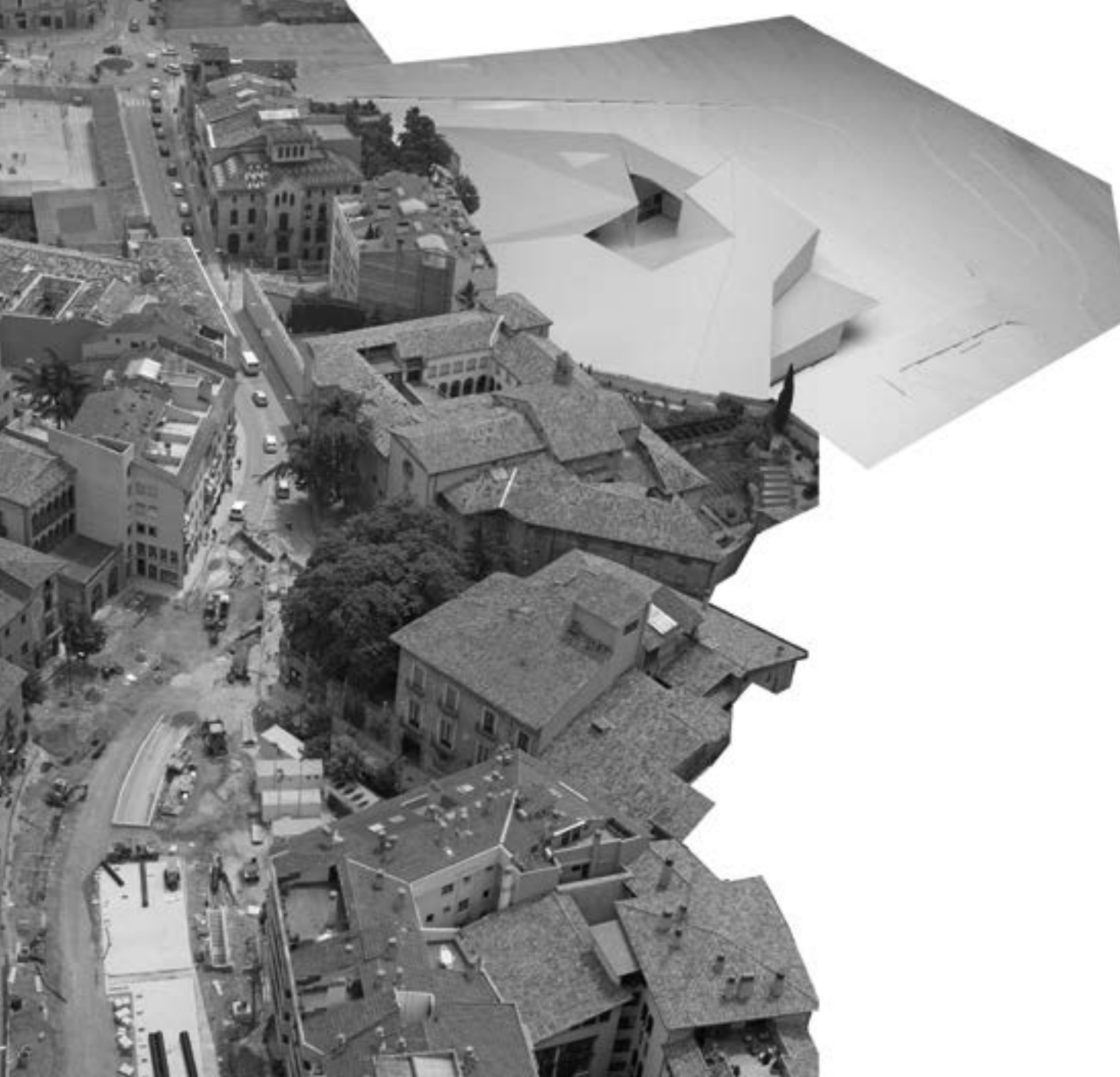






There are two main apartment types, corner apartments and central apartments, all of them with large openings, generous sunshine and little noise, permeable (to the extent desired) to the views of the interior communal areas. They were in fact designed to invite and facilitate the expansion of interior space and the integration of communal spaces, so numerous intermediate space arrangements were created. Some floors with a happy bond between residents have made use of this possibility and small communities have developed. On Sundays the west façade becomes like stands overlooking the adjacent C.F. Montañesa soccer stadium.

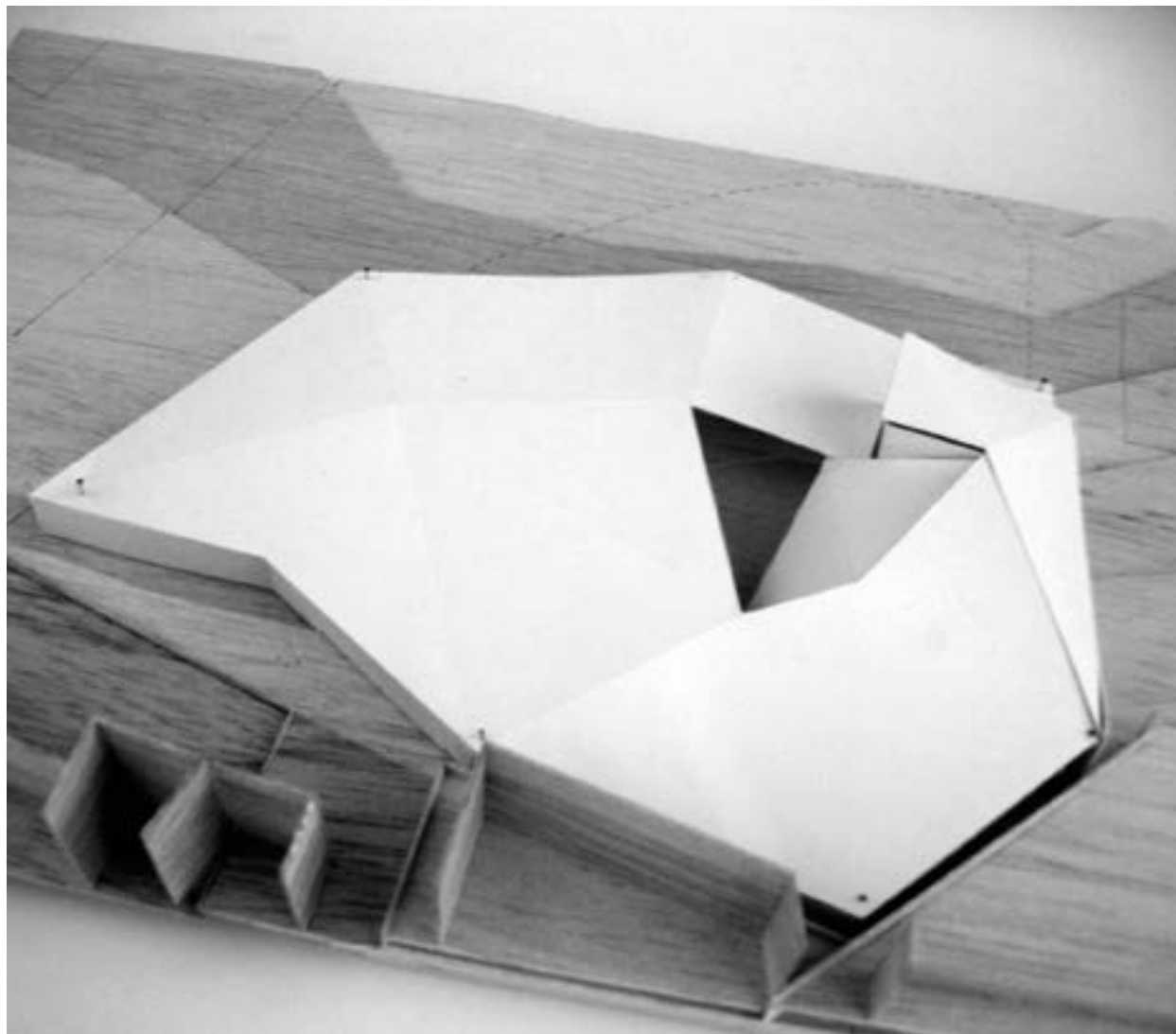
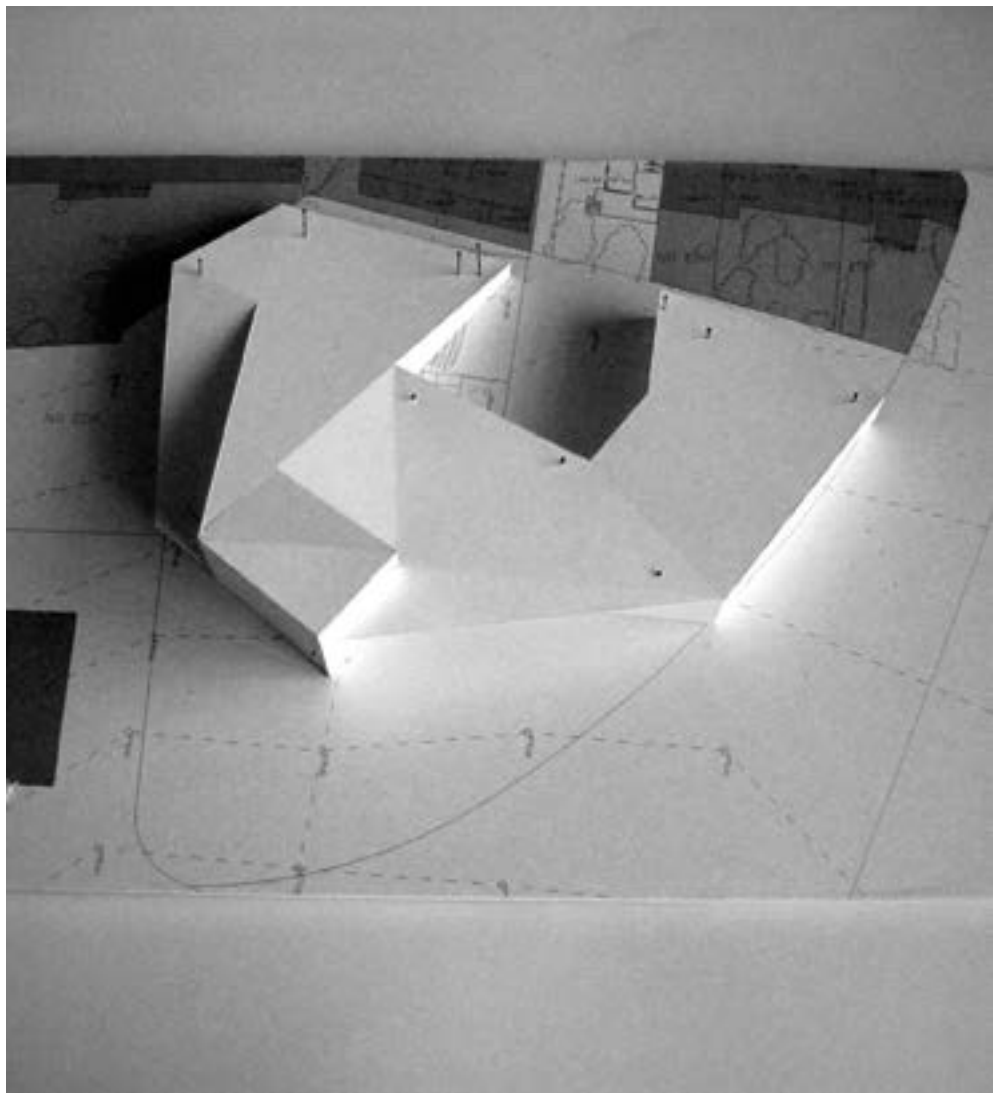
The building was originally conceived as housing for young people and it was defined in a competition for young architects. In effect, despite the change in building program, Torre Júlia was the first work by the architects to be built and it evidences a conviction that the daily lives of the elderly are not so different from the lives of the young. Drawing on the key to creating intertwined microcommunities, they developed a series of graphic strategies for colors, motifs and logos. While they are very pleased with the concept and novelty, residents feel the lack of a number of elements that would make their lives more comfortable such as seating in the common areas, blinds on the windows and functional facilities. Despite being apparently minor things and having been included in the architectural project, they were left out by the insensitivity of the construction process.

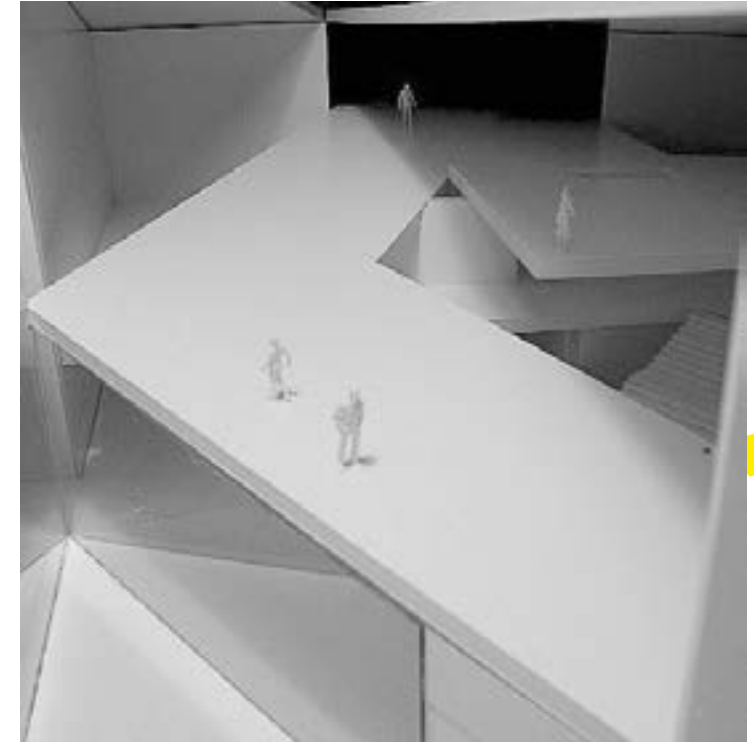
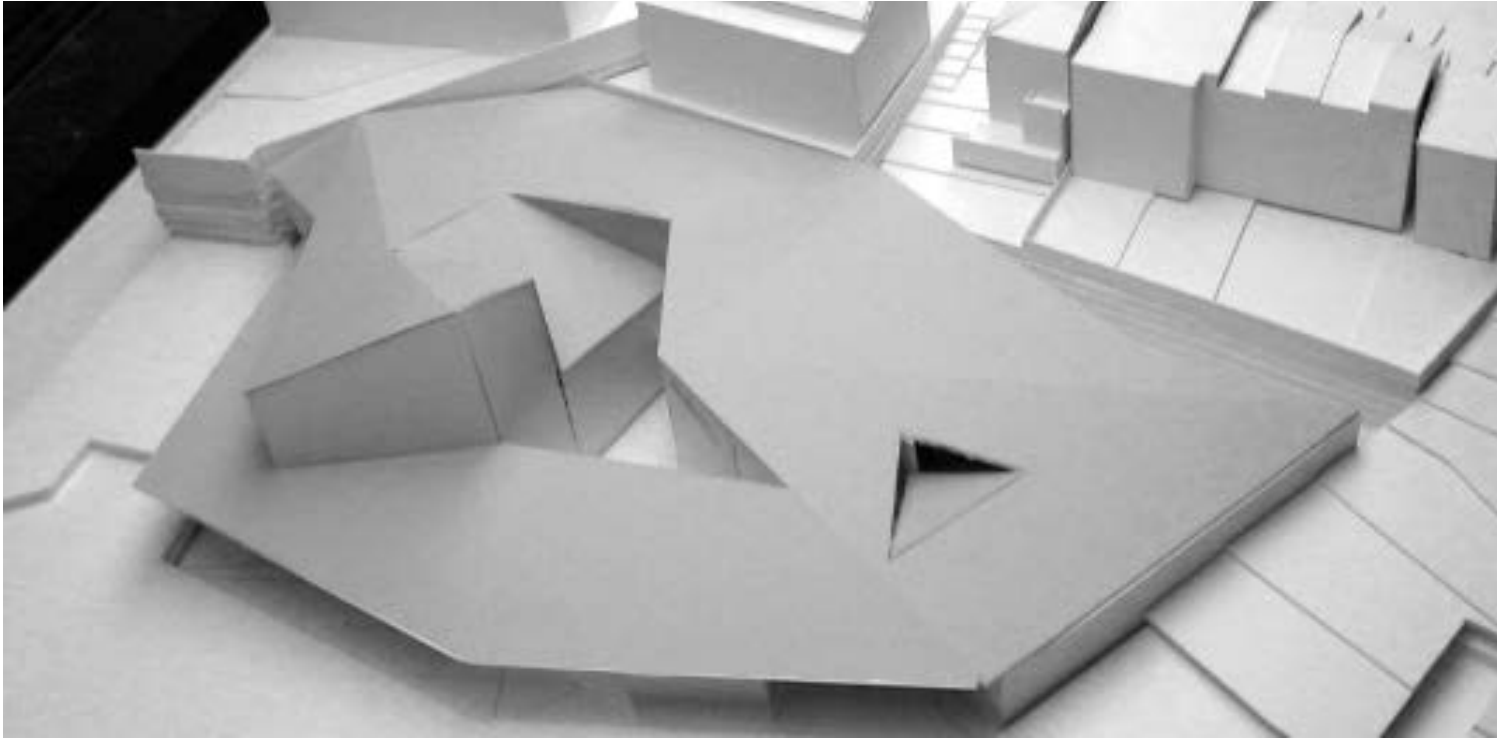


L'ATLÀNTIDA

The Atlàntida Performing Arts Center is more than a building; it is a compact complex bundled under a single roof housing three mixed-use venues (theatre and auditorium) and a conservatory with specific spaces for accommodating people of all ages and levels of musical proficiency (from amateurs to professionals). The center was created in relation to the scale of the historic center of the city of Vic, and it is located on the section of the property that abuts the urban fabric. It also maintains the continuity of the open space of the part bordering the river. The key to the project lies in unifying a complex program, contradictory in some respects, under a covering and around the public space created to structure the site. The accessways, distributed around all sides according to needs, converge on an interior street and in a square at the entrance area.

The inside of the complex is divided into the following public areas: the halls on different levels follow the course of the internal street and are permeable to the gaze of pedestrians. An underground square hosts open-air concerts and can be seen from the hallways of the music school. At the same time, the interior maintains the mystique of the labyrinth of theatre operations and the simplicity of movement for visitors. The elements and acoustic conditions that were limitations for the





design in many respects were incorporated at a conceptual level in the design of both the theatres and the school classrooms. However, no space is hermetic and so some sound wafts through, calling attention to the richness of the center's content.

The great value of the Atlàntida Performing Arts Center is its formal and conceptual link with the physical and social context of the city of Vic. With some 42,000 inhabitants, nearly 3% (an exceptional figure) are conservatory students. The main hall of

the theatre fills up weekly. It is a large building whose volumetrics are sensitive to the environment, mirroring the heights of nearby buildings and becoming more horizontal towards the open space. A focal point of the urban area, the performing arts center blends in with the blocks of the old quarter. Subtle references like the local topography painted on the ceiling of the main hall of the theatre and the gold color of the exterior cladding that invokes the paintings in the cathedral by Josep Maria Sert make a direct link with the popular imaginary.

SAINT ROCH

A nine-story parking garage located at the edge of the train station, its structure and finishing permeable to the view, air and even the rain and fluttering leaves of autumn: according to its architects it is an organoleptic building integrated in an urban area that is still in the process of being defined on the basis of the material bond with the bricks and roof tiles of the city of Montpellier. The parking garage fulfills a much more sophisticated function than would be imagined for an 850-car parking garage, and it offers new urban connections for all users.

The project has become a key element for structuring and expanding the existing pedestrian areas between Place de la Comédie and the Saint-Roch train station. The parking garage is found in a strategic position in the middle of a rail landscape located in the city center, and it complements the multinodality of the train station. The Saint-Roch parking garage has a north-south orientation with a prominent façade overlooking the train tracks and at the same time borders the infrastructure of the Pont de Sète, which serves as a connection between the station and the building's vehicle entrance. The building resolves a highly complex urban situation and acts at different scales: on the metropolitan, urban and human levels.

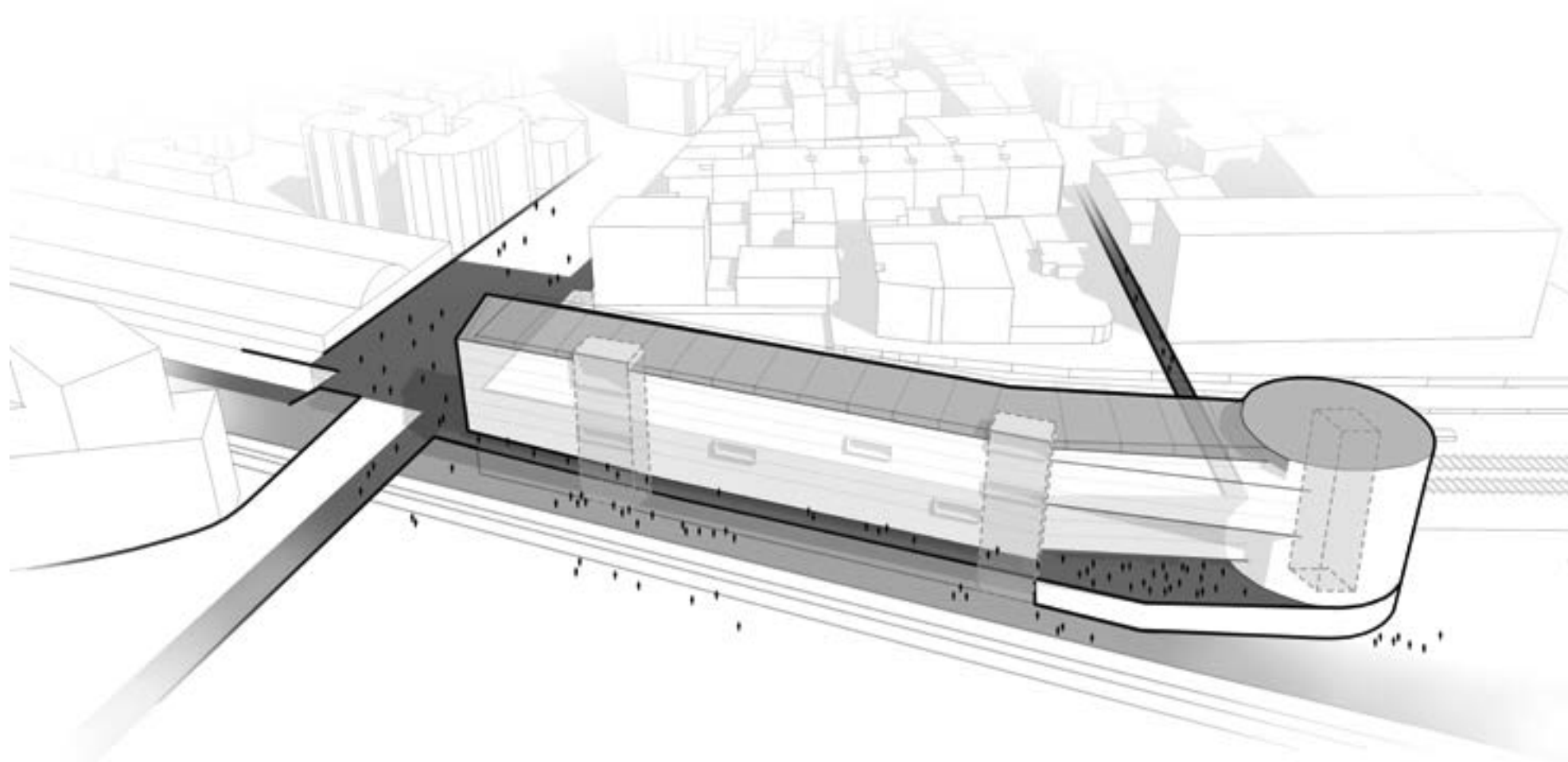
In essence, the parking garage is designed not for 850 cars but for the minimum of 850 people occupying them. Publicly used corridors (specifically the private space included) are incorporated at the height of the Pont de Sète. The building can be crossed through diagonally, and it will be even easier to do so when the proposed footbridge over the train tracks is built. The platform level is reserved for businesses, and the roof space, with its green pergola—a spectacular vantage point overlooking the city—is to host public events.

Usages et multimodalité

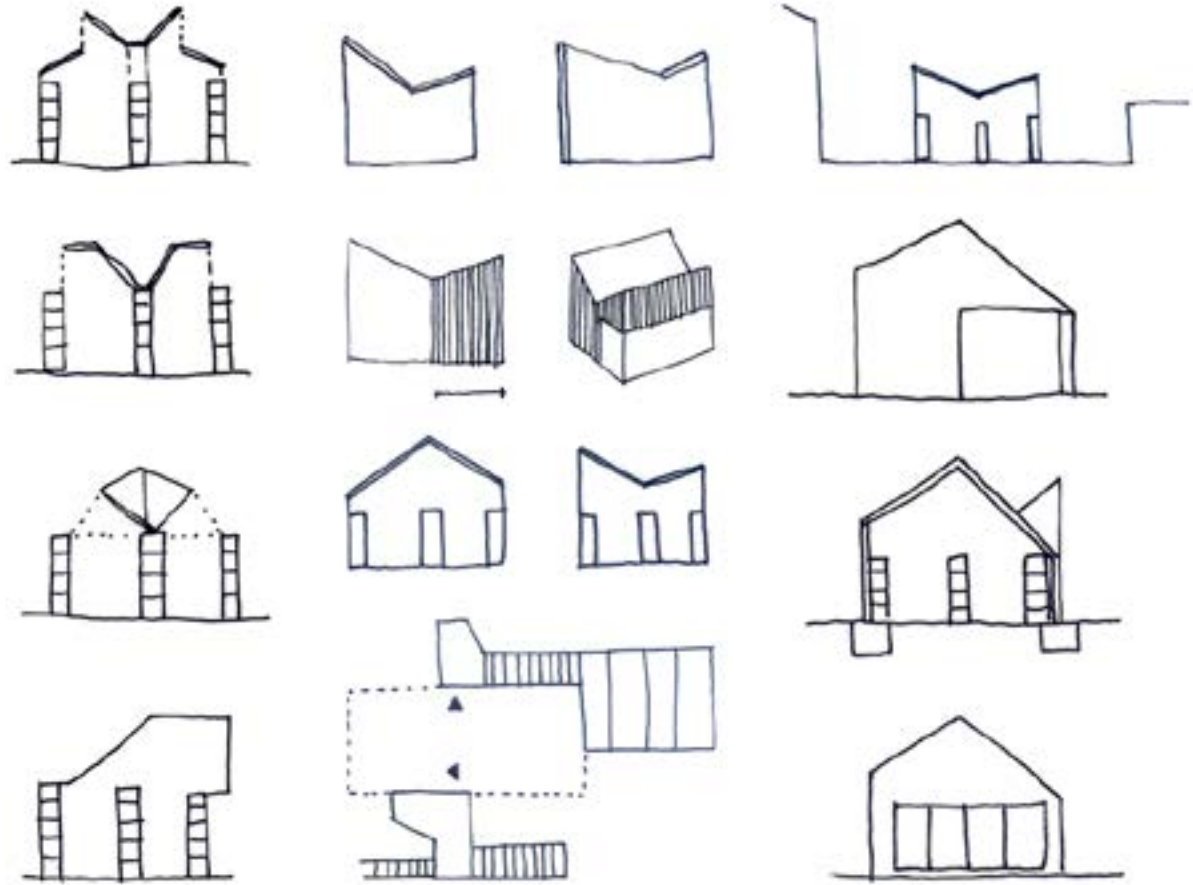
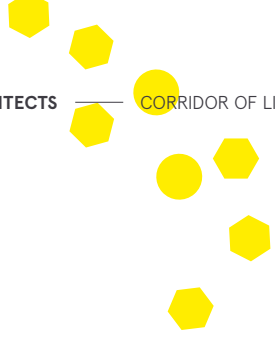


The Saint-Roch building sees its anchoring in the present as a variable that opens possibilities rather than closing them. It shows us that both before an architectural work exists and after it is created there is imagination—reuse, recycling and efficiency have very subtle physical components that can only be manipulated with sensitivity to possible needs. The architectural work's relativity was taken into account within the project, and elements enabling the building to someday be converted into housing, offices or commercial and multipurpose spaces were defined and built.





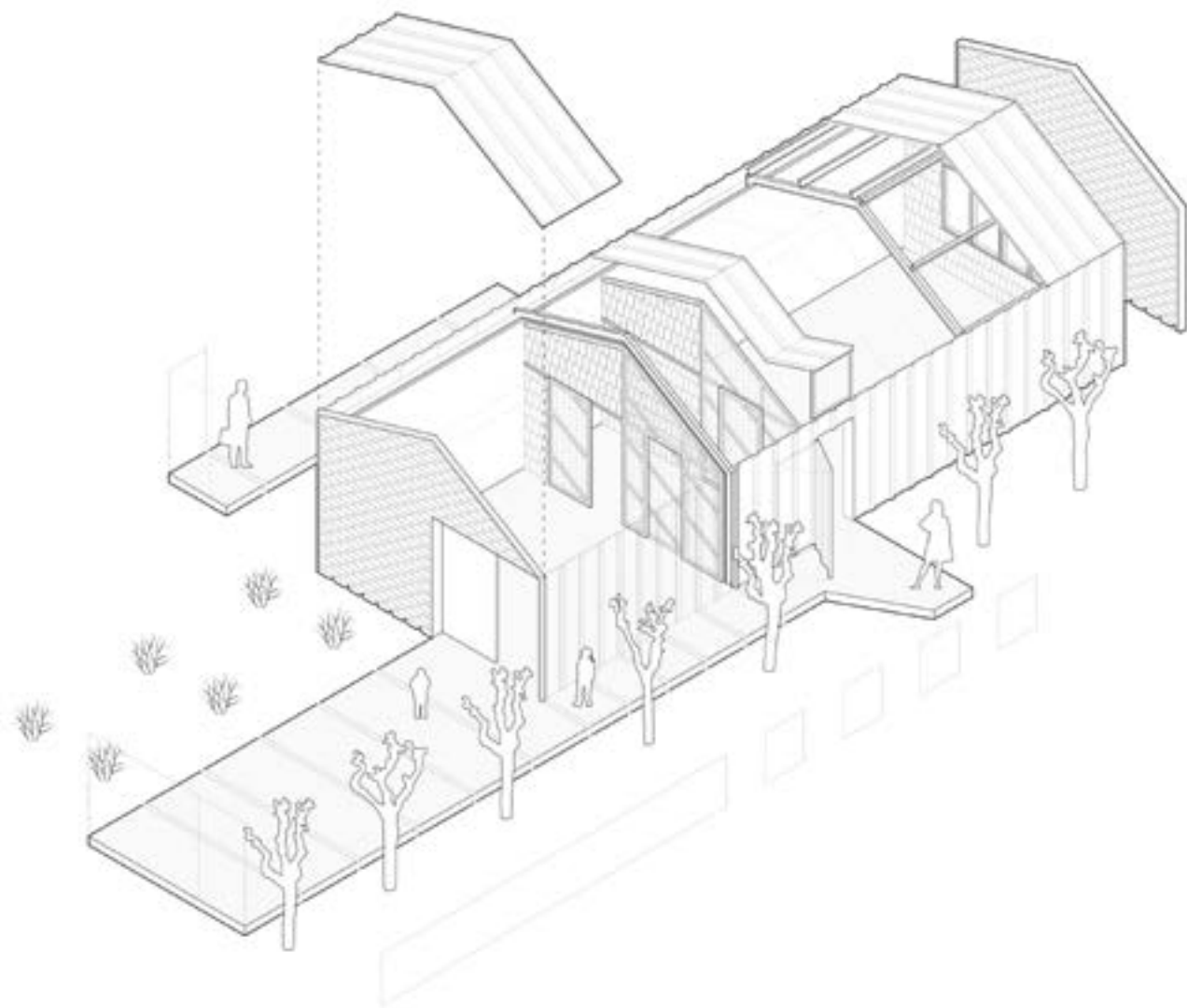




SDA CAMPCLAR

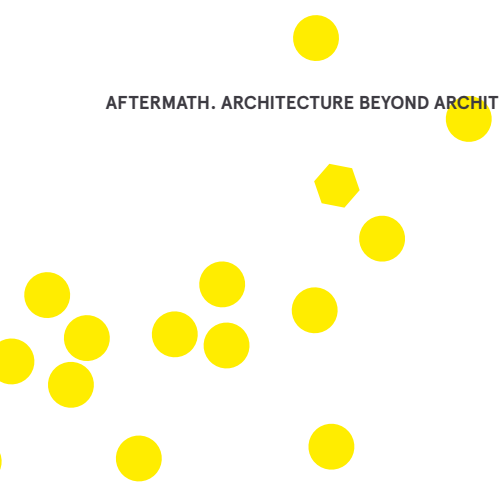
The food distribution center of the Campclar neighborhood is a building measuring just over 80 square meters that has addressed a number of sometimes conflicting needs. It was built next to the parish church, which it discreetly pays formal tribute to, in a neighborhood where 70% of inhabitants are immigrants and people living in precarious situations. It operates in a simple fashion: people go at certain hours as if they were going to the supermarket, and they are provided with the food they need from Caritas donations. Before the center was built, food distribution took place in the halls and walkways of the church itself, but this took away space from the church's daily activities so the basic commission explicitly requested a proper space for helping the needy.





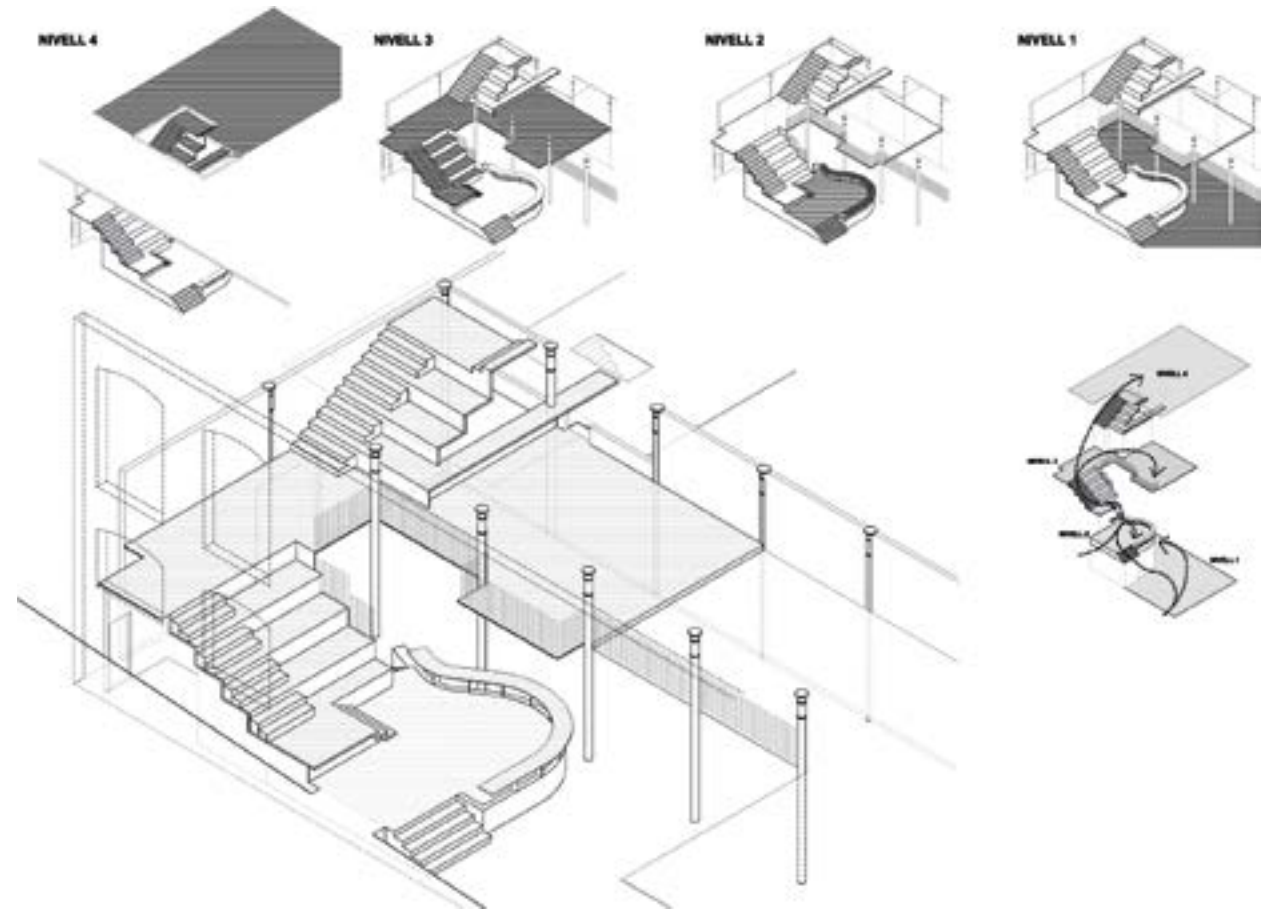


The project was developed and built in three months with close help from center volunteers, both in defining needs and in the final stages of construction. Despite needing to be a closed “bunker” in the heart of a conflictive neighborhood, the building offers the possibility for a double trajectory—lengthwise for provisions and crosswise for users—and allows light and air to enter through the two opposite façades. The context of the neighborhood, created during the industrial boom, dictated the aesthetics of the metal structure of prefabricated panels, which was also justified by the need for quick construction and energetic efficiency. The ceramic lattice façades are the traditional reference, the point that most directly relates to the materiality of the adjacent buildings.



CAN BATLLÓ

More than an intervention in a particular place, Can Batlló is a symbol in present-day Barcelona of a new way of interacting between users, architects and government. It is also a manifesto of participatory architecture and self-managed construction, which are only understood through their process and through economic and regulatory difficulties. Covering an 8-hectare area, Can Batlló was one of the main metropolitan factories in the city of Barcelona. In the late 1970s, the land, still privately owned, was reclassified as an area for public facilities, a scheme that never came to pass for a number of reasons.





The center is the result of a lengthy protest struggle for a public space which concluded on 11 June 2011 when local residents jubilantly entered the site. That moment sparked a process of dialogue between users and architects from the LaCol cooperative to define the center's future activities, its most immediate needs and how to get the space and means to make them a reality. The first actions were centered on opening an internal street connecting Carrer de la Constitució and Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, and this gave the interior of the complex great permeability. This street, christened Carrer del Bloc Onze, structures movement through the complex. The most visible action was probably the reappropriation and redefinition of Bloc Onze—one of many old factory buildings—for a variety of social activities. Today it houses the Biblioteca Popular (Popular Library), a meeting and assembly hall, a climbing wall self-built using materials found on site, a bar with a small stage and different rooms for activities.

The design, often minimal and conceptually open, is influenced by self-building and the reuse of materials and spaces from the old industrial complex. A few years on, the center is organized through assembly processes and ongoing dialogue among users, and future projects that are already underway include



social cooperative housing buildings (La Borda), a self-managed school (Escola Arcàdia) and the return of the productive fabric in the form of small manufacturers and offices. Can Batlló is a complex project that raises many questions about the role and function of the architect in a public work: whether you must necessarily define solutions or if you can discuss and develop them with users, the need for flexibility in the project both in terms of form and materials and systems, the need for professional dialogue with the government as a basis for continuous review and relaxing urban planning regulations and techniques.

IN SOUND PERSPECTIVE

A Conversation with Amanda Villavieja



Amanda Villavieja has been in charge of the direct sound on over forty films between documentaries and fictional films. She knows the sounds of a mine seven hundred meters deep, a military aviation academy, an abandoned village in Soria and the Dead Sea. She could distinguish between a Peruvian rainforest and a central African jungle with her eyes closed. She has worked in spaces expressly designed to favor sophisticated acoustics like the Gran Teatre del Liceu and in shantytowns seemingly improvised from cardboard boxes and soft drink cans through the work of their inhabitants. All too often Villavieja, the daughter of an architect, has found herself in locations chosen for their iconic beauty, selected for the camera, but with deplorable acoustics: sounds don't come out in catalogs.

Amanda Villavieja recorded the sound for *Aftermath* and we wanted to take advantage of her experience to talk about sound and have her explain what the seven works at the pavilion sound like.

THE TASTE OF A LISTENER

"The shapes of buildings often do not reveal at first glance what is most localized, changing and intangible thing: the sound that surrounds them. Sound, which is perceived, can suddenly become a horizon."

TORRE JÚLIA

"Torre Júlia is the building with the most marked separation between interior and exterior. It's an extreme example of how you can shield a building in a hostile context, in this case using plasterboard. It is surrounded by the constant traffic of cars, a low sound, which most people living there likely neither perceive or are bothered by. Inside the building, almost by contrast, there is a lot of silence when you close doors and windows.

On one floor of Torre Júlia there is a group of residents who tend to leave the doors to their apartments open, thus allowing the spaces to be contaminated with the sounds of their respective lives—domestic music, but also a way of feeling cared for.

There is not much echo inside except in some common areas with high ceilings and windows that reverberate too much to have a good conversation. The apartments also sound different depending on which side of the building they are located on. I remember that I went to record at all four façades to listen to the differences. When you decide to choose an apartment, just as you look to see if the orientation of the light suits you, here you should also consider whether you are looking out on one part of the city or another.

"From the Saint-Roch parking terrace, everything becomes a long sound shot"

The building sounds different on holidays, when the traffic hours change and if, for example, there is a soccer match at the C.F. Montañesa soccer stadium right next door, which can be heard with the windows open."

MONTPELLIER. SAINT-ROCH PARKING GARAGE

"Acoustically, what was most surprising to me was the Montpellier parking garage—an open building designed by the architects to be permeable to external factors like the weather and changes in light. What is surprising is that the pursuit of a visually organic shape also reveals a new structure, the sound structure, equally changing, organic and fascinating.

If you stand in the middle of the parking garage and close your eyes, you hear the trains arriving on one side and the city trams on the other, with very different acoustic marks. You locate the city as if you were charting it on a map. And if you go up to the top floor, the parking terrace, suddenly it becomes an extensive sound shot with the added bells of the different churches, the muffled cries from the streets that reach the top floor and the constant din of the low-pitched sounds of the city. If it were a closed space all of this would not happen. As Walter Ruttmann would say, it's a city symphony."

L'ATLÀNTIDA. VIC

The interiors of the Atlàntida are fascinating. I remember that while we were walking through it the architects were talking about whether the insulation between the rehearsal rooms and hallways was lacking or if it was OK... It seems to me that the requirement for them to let the sound travel a little bit, without double doors, is a great success.

Walking through the halls of the music school is like touring this space in a sound tracking shot, changing tune to the beat of your steps.

The theatre is another story. It's a space designed as an auditorium, with very specific acoustic rules and laws that must be respected. As the architect Josep Llinàs explained, you can work with absorbent materials using shapes that to visitors might seem ornamental, and no one even suspects that they are placed precisely to enhance the acoustics sought."

CAN BATLLÓ

"At the outset, the predominant sound at Can Batlló is that of buildings under construction (there are many nearby) added to the sound of cars owing to the proximity of Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes and other streets with traffic. But when you go, for example, over to the gardens or the dog off-leash area, it's like a small island within the city: Gran Via remains present, but you are less aware of it.

But what is most distinct and evocative for me is the microcosm that has been created thanks to the opening of the pedestrian street that runs through Can Batlló, which skirts Bloc Onze and

its main entrance leading to the bar. This street takes us back down to a more human scale where conversations, voices that trail off, footsteps and the sounds of bicycles and skates coincide. The sound exemplifies a pedestrian area befitting people and it is a pleasant setting. This gives the space character since the sound of Can Batlló's Bloc Onze is not particularly interesting as an atmosphere. The bar area has very high ceilings and quickly fills with the typical hubbub. Conversely, more isolated sound microclimates are created in the auditorium and the library. The upstairs, however, I find interesting. There are a number of concurrent activities, and if you stand in the center, in the hallway, you can hear the activities ongoing simultaneously; you can notice them without them drowning each other out. This is something I like, being able to place the space in perspective."

CERDANYA CROSS-BORDER HOSPITAL PUIGCERDÀ

"With the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital, I'm not sure if it's a strictly acoustic question or if it's related to taking certain cues from the architecture and environment... But it's a peculiar case because despite having some of the characteristics of the usual sound for a hospital—the constant low-pitched background hum of air-conditioning appliances heard throughout the facility—there is a pronounced separation between the reception areas and corridors with respect to the patient rooms. The rooms are well insulated and allow those sharing a floor not to hear each other from one room to the next.

It is also curious that despite visually invoking a certain idea of peace associated with nature, the natural sounds of Puigcerdà have very little presence even outside, where you hear a sort of low drone from distant roads and from time to time a bird or flock of sheep, far away and muffled. When leaving, the main change is visual and olfactory. To find what we mean by bucolic sound you have to move away from the hospital a bit."

LLOBREGAT REHABILITATION

"The rehabilitation of the Llobregat River is an attempt to open a path to nature in the middle of the urban world. It's an area that I inevitably find more suggestive visually because it's impossible to escape from the background sound of cars. The highways and trains are present at different depths.

And this path leads to the sea, which gives you a very pronounced sense of a sound tourroute. I don't think the space shies away from its location. You take a walk there and you know there are highways because you see and hear them. And you hear planes. It was amusing when we recorded the Llobregat one Sunday in Cornellà: we saw the river, the trees and the sunset, but more than the birds what we heard was the chanting of fans at the soccer stadium."

SDA CAMPCLAR

"One of the requirements of the building program was for the building to be isolated to prevent robberies in a neighborhood considered potentially conflictive. Because of this, when the SDA is closed it has a sound of its own, a very perceptible background whirl of refrigerators, for preserving the food, of course. But the building opens easily on all four sides, and it is very interesting how the sounds from outside reach it. Depending on which side of the building you open, different sounds come at you, and you can titrate them. What most commonly reaches the food distribution center are loud conversations, many sounds from the children playing in the interior courtyard of the block of apartments which is opposite the main façade and from the bus stop, which is also just outside the door, and a curb that you hear when the bus crosses it. And there are many planes, so frequent and low flying that they can only be assumed because of the nearby Reus Airport.

In contrast, the rear façade overlooks a small garden with trees and there are many birds. If you close your eyes and no cars drive by, it's not hard to imagine that you're in the forest."

BOOMERANG



ENVIRONMENTAL REHABILITATION OF THE LLOBREGAT RIVER

BATLLE | ROIG Arquitectes
(Enric Batlle i Joan Roig)

ARCHITECTS

Batlle i Roig Arquitectes
(Enric Batlle and Joan Roig)

COLLABORATORS

Xavier Ramoneda, Iván Sánchez, Mario Suñer (architects); Tyspa-Tecnoma (engineering)

PROJECT SPAN

2007 - 2015

CONSTRUCTION

2008 - 2016

DEVELOPER

Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona
Ajuntament de Sant Boi de Llobregat
Ajuntament de Sant Vicenç dels Horts

AREA

154 ha (6 km)

LOCATION

Sant Boi de Llobregat, Sant Vicenç dels Horts, Sant Joan Despí, Cornellà, El Prat de Llobregat (Catalonia)



Rivers flow naturally: water, air... and, when civilization arrives, circulation. Roads and railroads had asphyxiated the Llobregat River, so it was an empty, insalubrious and degraded island.



The water is progressively cleaner. Its flow has created artificial meanders, and all the invasive vegetation has been cleaner. Now fishing is possible again. The Llobregat River is, once again, a clean and nice area.



*From the age of the dinosaurs
Cars have run on gasoline
Where, where have they gone?
Now, it's nothin' but flowers
There was a factory
Now there are mountains and rivers
(You got it, you got it)
We caught a rattlesnake
Now we got somethin' for dinner
(We've got it, we've got it)
There was a shoppin' mall
Now it's all covered with flowers
You got it, you got it
If this is paradise
I wish I had a lawnmower
You've got it, you've got it*

(Nothing But) Flowers, Talking Heads



Once towns get some resources, they build suitable areas to stay: benches, tables... The citizens are aware that they themselves must keep it clean: the Llobregat River belongs to all of us.





Sheep have come back to the river bed. They control the undergrowth and drink its water. People who live close to the river can eat again what the river produces. They have achieved return to a productive economy.



Enric is more and more interested in water. He is interested in the natural processes of his team. The nature makes the rest. He cannot design: there is no money to do it. Sometimes he makes up orders. Architecture is, for him, the creation of a place.





Light off. People rush before the darkness come. The Llobregat river is alive: its ecosystem goes to sleep and wakes up everyday. It is an urban landscape.

CERDANVA CROSS-BORDER HOSPITAL



BRULLET-PINEDA ARQUITECTES, SLP.
(Manuel Brullet Tenas, Alfonso de Luna
Colldefors, Albert de Pineda Álvarez)

ARCHITECTS
BRULLET-PINEDA ARQUITECTES, SLP.
(Manuel Brullet Tenas, Alfonso de Luna
Colldefors, Albert de Pineda Álvarez)

COLLABORATORS
Marcial Novo Mazuelos,
Jaume Piñol Font

PROJECT SPAN
2007

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED
2012

DEVELOPER
Generalitat de Catalunya,
Servei Català de la Salut

AREA
19.106.40 m²

LOCATION
Puigcerdà (Catalonia)



The hospital belongs to la Cerdanya: fields, roads, little forests. Mountains. Puigcerdà, which is quite close, doesn't belong to this environment. The nature survives.



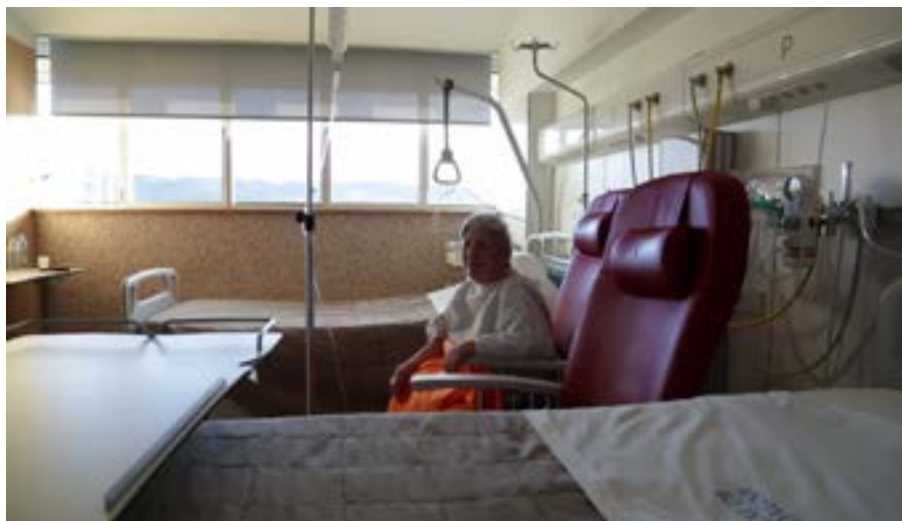
A zinc roof along the mountains. The material falls vertically and shapes the façades. The tower is made of wood. Almost nothing else. One material, one plane, a shadow line two meters above the ground. The rest, landscape.



Asymmetry. Light. Land that becomes wall. Light at the end. The landscape comes in the building.



Islands. The light, furniture, a pavement that changes, a table. And the environment: trees, sun, snow and people passing become the frame of the painting.



A window under the roof. Air, mountains.
Remember where are you from and
where are you going.



Manuel Brullet



Albert de Pineda



Alfonso de Luna



Manuel Brullet, Albert de Pineda and Alfonso de Luna cross the buildings they treat. Thinking about it is the easiest way to understand the effort made in this project.







*When they got him to the hospital
his pulse was gone they thought
that he was dead
His guts were pouring from his wounds
onto the floor they thought that he was dead
Not until years later would
the hospital do to him what she could not, what
she could not
"Where were you, you didn't come
to see me"
Andy said, "I think I died, why didn't
you come to see me"
Andy said, "it hurt so much, they took blood from
my hand"
I believe there's got to be some retribution*

I believe, Lou Reed & John Cale



TORRE JÚLIA

ASSISTED HOUSING

FOR SENIORS



Pau Vidal, Sergi Pons,
Ricard Galiana

ARCHITECTS
Pau Vidal, Sergi Pons, Ricard Galiana

COLLABORATORS
Gioia Guidazzi, Diana Sajdova

PROJECT YEAR
2004

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED
2011

DEVELOPER
Patronat Municipal de l'Habitatge
de Barcelona (PMHB)

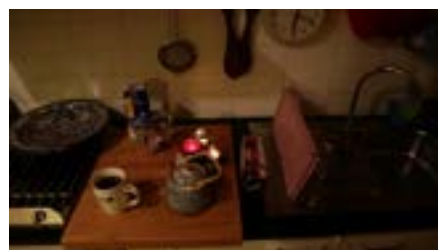
AREA
8,391 m²

LOCATION
Barcelona (Catalonia)

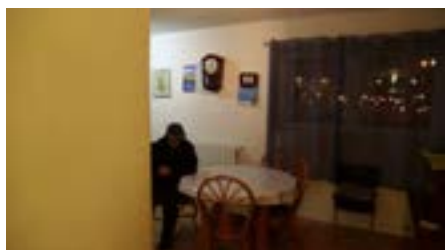


This Barcelona doesn't appear in the postcards. The panoramic taken from Torre Júlia allows comparing the building with the urbanism around: This architecture is a representation of the 'banlieue' architecture from the 60's and 80's.

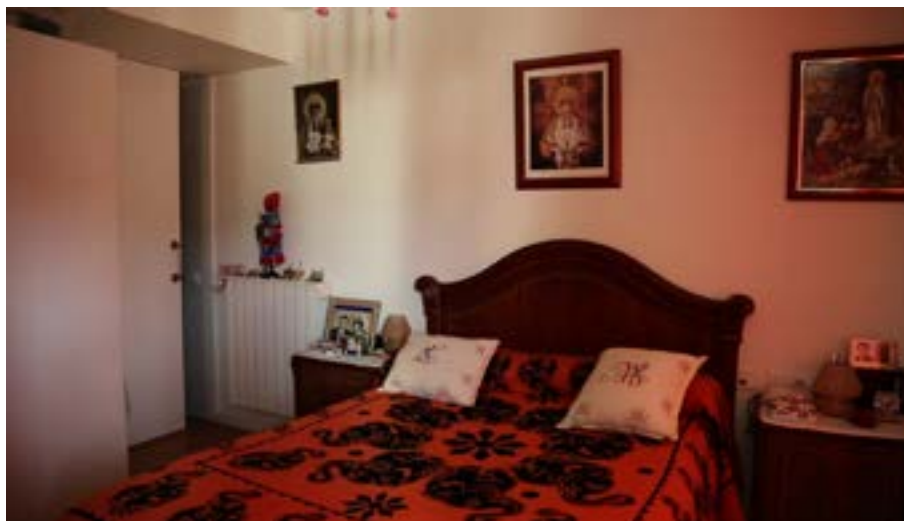




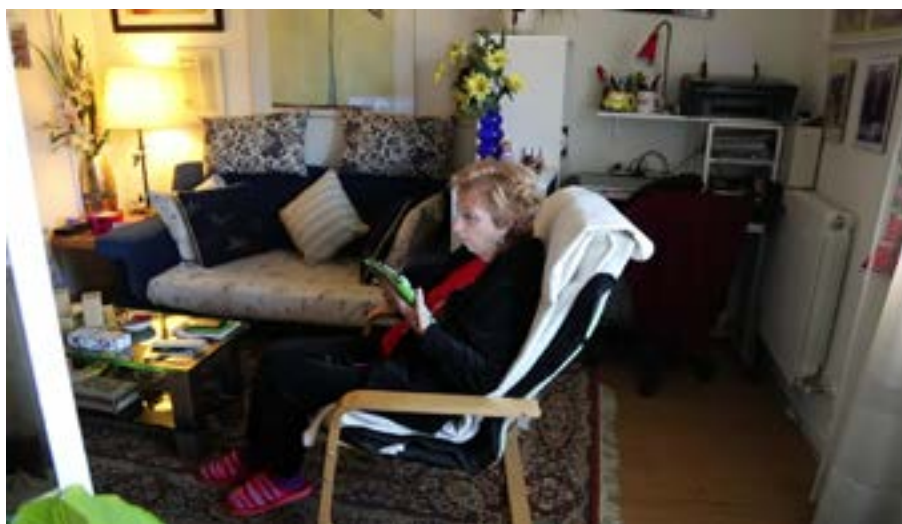
Flats are the mirror of their owner. Teodoro and Pilar's home is full of memories from Africa and South America, where they lived.



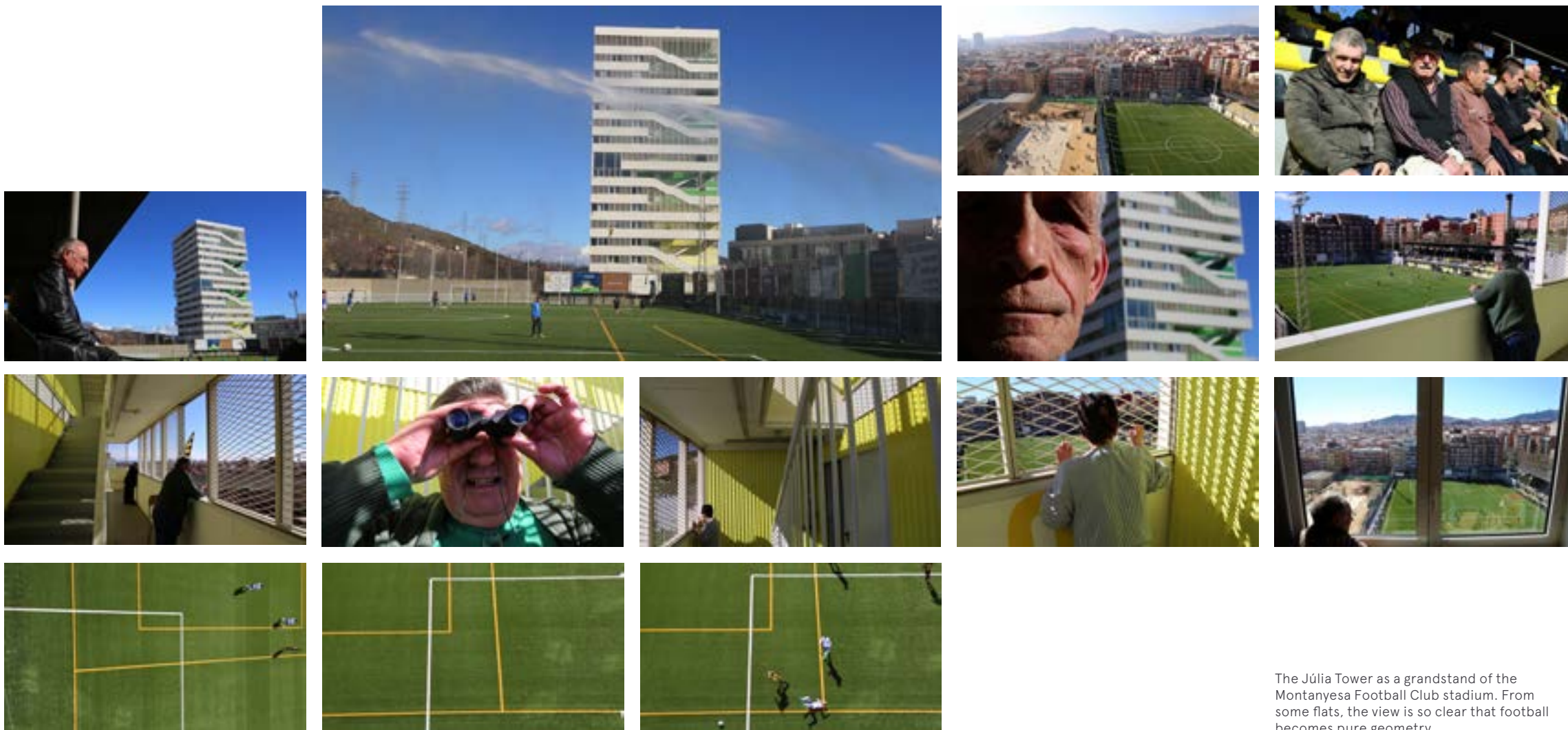
Miguel settled with no belongings and he has decorated the flat with furniture and recycled objects.



Mr. Vicenç's flat, placed in a top floor, is a lookout where you can see all Barcelona.



Details of Mrs. Milagros flat.

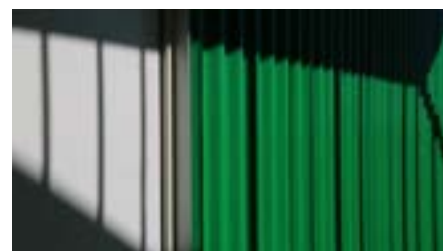


The Júlia Tower as a grandstand of the Montanyesa Football Club stadium. From some flats, the view is so clear that football becomes pure geometry.





Architects Ricard, Sergi and Pau go back to the Júlia Tower. They meet Gemma Rosa, the director, and Soledad and Rosa, representatives of neighbors. They want to know what is the best and the worst of the building.





Community. Trinidad, Luisa and Marisa, who live on the 12th floor, spend much time out and it is easy to find them together in common spaces. According to the architects, "there are public spaces to emulate a village square".





Torre Júlia is not a residence. However, it offers specific assistance services to those residents who need it.



ATLÁNTIDA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Josep Llinàs, Josep Llobet,
Pedro Ayesta, Laia Vives



ARCHITECTS

Josep Llinàs, Josep Llobet,
Pedro Ayesta, Laia Vives

COLLABORATORS

Jorge Martín, Iván Andrés,
Andrea Tissino, Philipp Gasteiger,
Fermín Garrote, Iñaki Arbelaiz,
Petra Pferdmenges,
Natzarena Manenti, Aina Solé

PROJECT YEAR

2004

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED

2010

DEVELOPER

FCC Construcción

AREA

10,500 m²

LOCATION

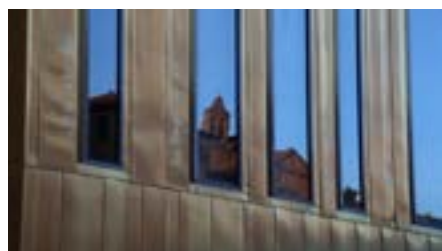
Vic (Catalonia)



The building protects itself against other buildings' backs: they are too close.



The Atlàntida is an interior world. It has a street which goes through it and connects two different parts of the city. All the accesses are there. The street becomes square when necessary. The building breathes through it. In Vic you can cross a theater by cycle.



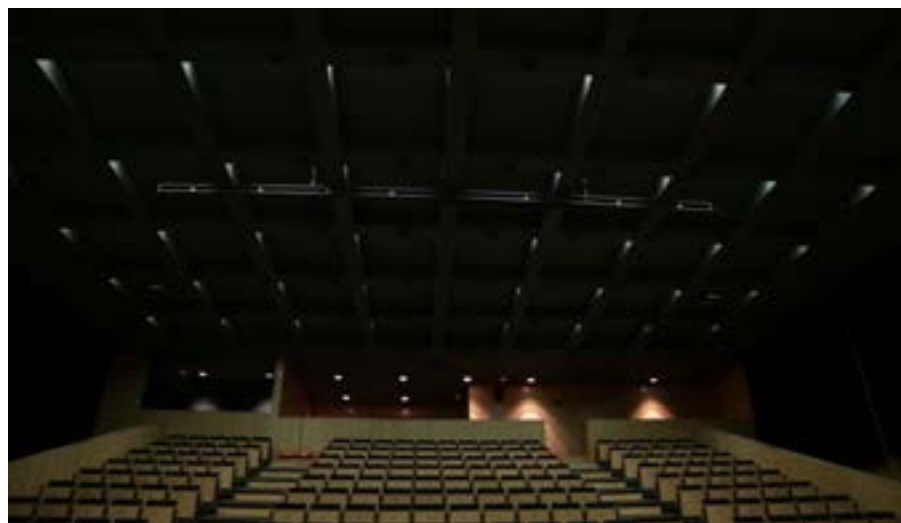
In the first third of the 20th century, Josep Maria Sert painted the frescoes in the Cathedral of Vic by order of Bishop Torras i Bages, who contracted him on the advice of Gaudí. Sert painted in grisaille, red and gold. Josep Llobet recommended following this color palette at the Atlàntida. The end result fuses the two works.



The building is like an instrument: the sound is amplified, refined, structured and left to be heard appropriately modulated. Just like the instruments the children learn to play at the conservatory: many timbres, many materials, many techniques. Container and content are one and the same.



Some of the conservatory's rooms can be defined as a hybrid of an auditorium and a classroom: a classroom where concerts can be held or an auditorium where you can have class. Such spaces allow many students to sing together. Students, activities and movement give the space meaning.



"An imperfect room that serves for everything." The team of architects opted for a second multipurpose room, and they sacrificed acoustic perfection for a mobile orchestra, a stage that can be disassembled in seven minutes, a space that serves as easily for a banquet as for a concert or a play.



The room is smaller than it seems. It harbors spectators using materials as cold as cement. The proscenium arch separates two worlds: the stage, with its enormous height and gridiron, and that of the public, with controlled views, measured steps and the omnipresent colors of the cathedral's frescoes.



Josep Llinàs, Josep Llobet, Pedro Ayesta and Laia Vives designed the building. Josep Llobet, who died a few years ago, lived to see its success. His three colleagues remember him fondly. The Atlàntida is a good way to honor him.



Paths are never straight. Going anywhere is a stroll and a chance to interact. At the conservatory the rooms are sealed but not very much: sounds of instruments. The vestibule of the theatre is a prolongation of the street. Inside and outside are blurred. People pass each other on different levels. Every corner is a square.



Children. Babies. Music classes begin at birth. The theatre is largely sustained by people who studied at the conservatory. And they continue to sow the seeds.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION CENTER CAMPOLAR



NUA Architectures
(Maria Rius, Arnau Tiñena,
Ferran Tiñena)

ARCHITECTS
NUA Arquitectures
(Maria Rius, Arnau Tiñena,
Ferran Tiñena)

PROJECT YEAR
Setembre 2014

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED
Desembre 2014

DEVELOPER
Caritas Diocese and Santa Tecla parish
church of Campclar

AREA
82.50 m²

LOCATION
Tarragona (Catalonia)



The low frequency sounds of the planes flying to Reus are constant. The Campclar food distribution service (SDA) is separated from the adjacent sea by one of the most important industrial estates in Catalonia: chimneys, trucks. The center of the city is far, far away. Too far. Pedestrian access is not possible. Housing blocks, long, narrow and tall prisms rising up from the archways at street level. Behind every window, a story. A lot of life on the street. The vegetation grows exuberantly with little need to do anything. Luckily.



The Santa Tecla parish church is at the southwestern tip of the neighborhood, now complemented by a number of municipal facilities that contribute to local life. The center is at one end. The parish church is a modest building with exposed brick and coarse finishes. The SDA is a nod to it. The building encapsulates the history of the neighborhood: long sides continuing a covering that alludes to the industry next door. The smaller faces of the building, the façade that faces the neighborhood, made from the same brick as the parish church, which needs every square meter to assist residents. That's why the building is there.



The open doors act almost like vertical skylights. There is also light from above that glides across smooth surfaces painted in two colors: It should look like it's finished. Different textures, continuous paving. The shelves. Outside, unpainted brick, green sheet metal. No trees were cut down.



*I wasn't born so much as I fell out
Nobody seemed to notice me
We had a hedge back home in the suburbs
Over which I never could see*

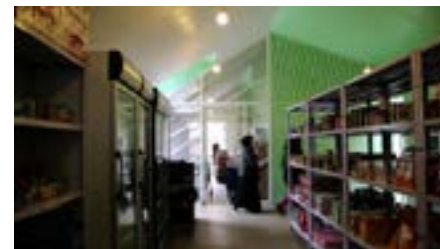
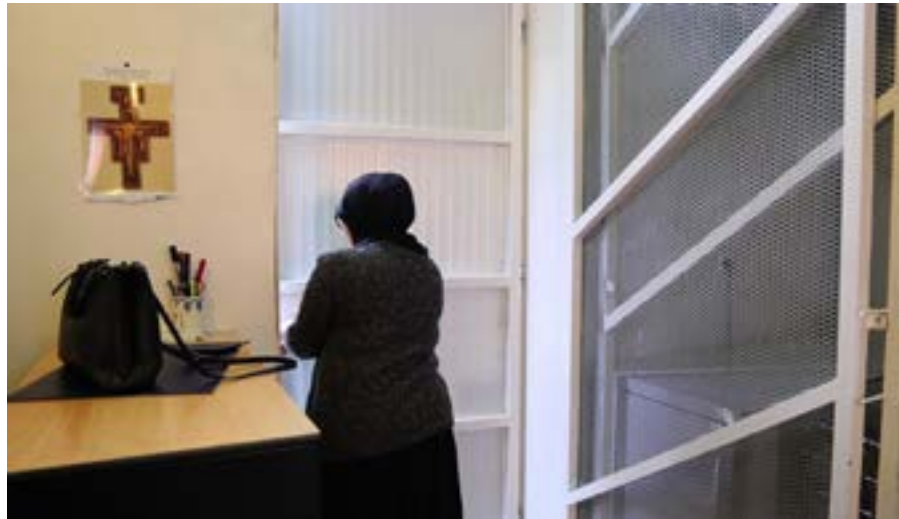
*I heard the people who lived on the ceiling
Scream and fight most scarily
Hearing that noise was my first ever feeling
That's how it's been all around me*

*I'm all lost in the supermarket
I can no longer shop happily
I came in here for that special offer
A guaranteed personality*

Lost in the Supermarket, The Clash



Volunteers keep the building operating: they open it, they manage it. They go over the books. They register, help and above all accompany people.



It is important to know who has the keys to the building. Someone who needs help can also help. The original meaning of the word religion is to bind fast. The SDA is a community no matter what or how.





If every building has its guardian angel, the SDA's is Paquita. Helping is her life. She doesn't have a cell phone or much free time. Giving herself, having a smile for everyone, she is happy.



Maria Rius, Arnau Tiñena and Ferran Tiñena designed and built the building in three months. Finishing and opening it became a party. After all of the effort, all that's left is a smile.

SAINT-ROCH PARKING GARAGE

ARCHIKUBIK
(Marc Chalamanch, Miquel
Lacasta, Carmen Santana)

ARCHITECTS
ARCHIKUBIK (Marc Chalamanch,
Miquel Lacasta, Carmen Santana)

COLLABORATORS
Daniel de Castro, Romain Parent,
Diego Lima, Camille Roux (architects);
Agence Franck Boutté consultants
(environmental engineering); PER
INGENIERIE (engineering and work
execution); Atelier Rouch (acoustic
engineering); Factors del Paisatge
(landscaper)

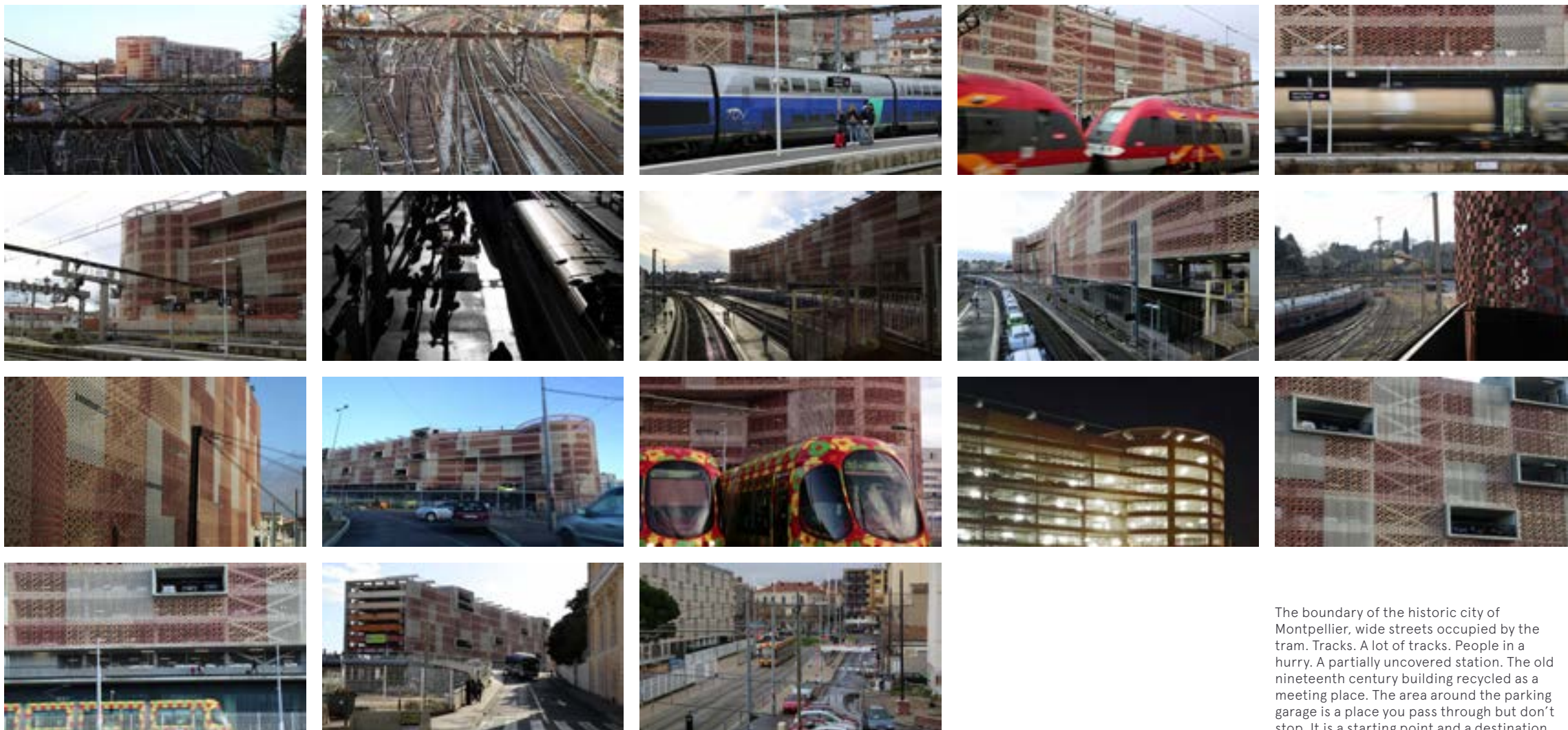
PROJECT YEAR
2012

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED
2015

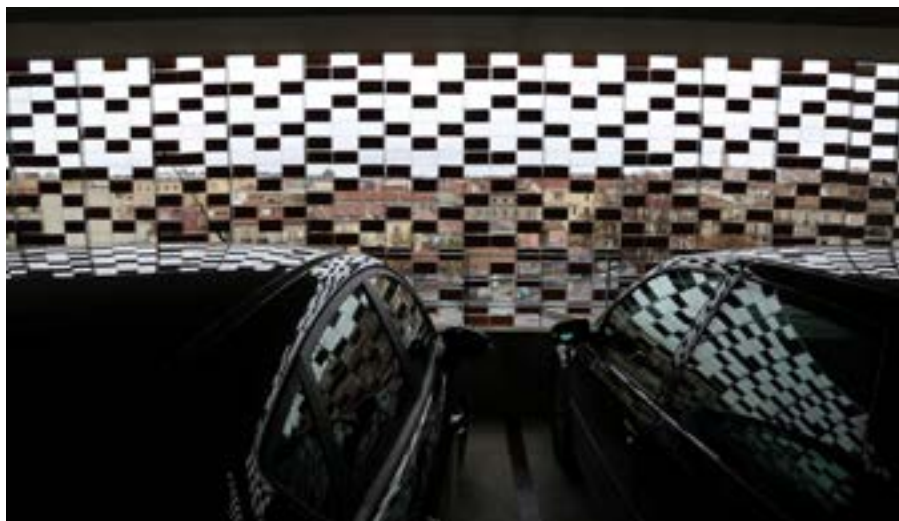
PROMOTOR
SERM

AREA
26,790 m²

LOCATION
Montpellier (France)



The boundary of the historic city of Montpellier, wide streets occupied by the tram. Tracks. A lot of tracks. People in a hurry. A partially uncovered station. The old nineteenth century building recycled as a meeting place. The area around the parking garage is a place you pass through but don't stop. It is a starting point and a destination.





"It is not a building made for cars but one made for people," state the architects of Archikubik. "People cross through it, seek, work there." It's an anthropocentric parking garage. The heights of the ceiling, the interior streets and the treatment of the light ennoble people.



*All the majesty of a city landscape
All the soaring days in our lives
All the concrete dreams
in my mind's eye
All the joy I see
Thru these architect's eyes*

Thru these architect's eyes, David Bowie



Carmen Santana

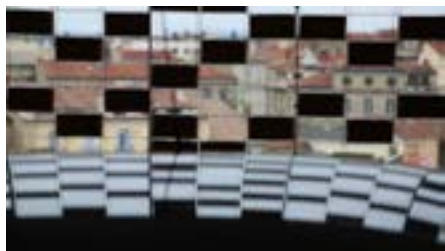


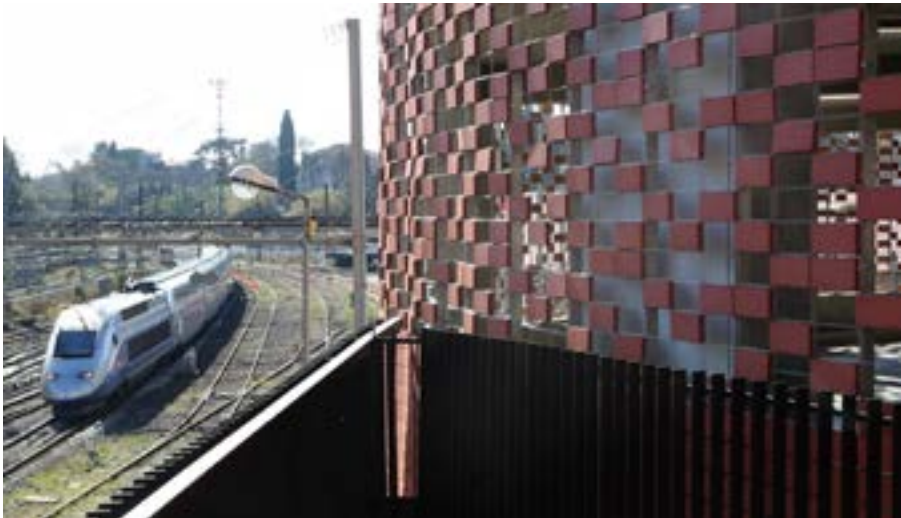
Marc Chalamanch



Miquel Lacasta



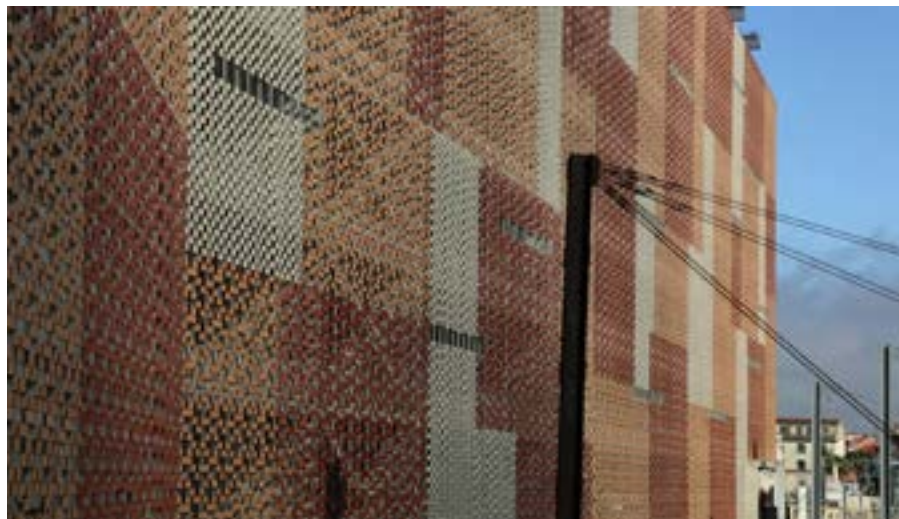




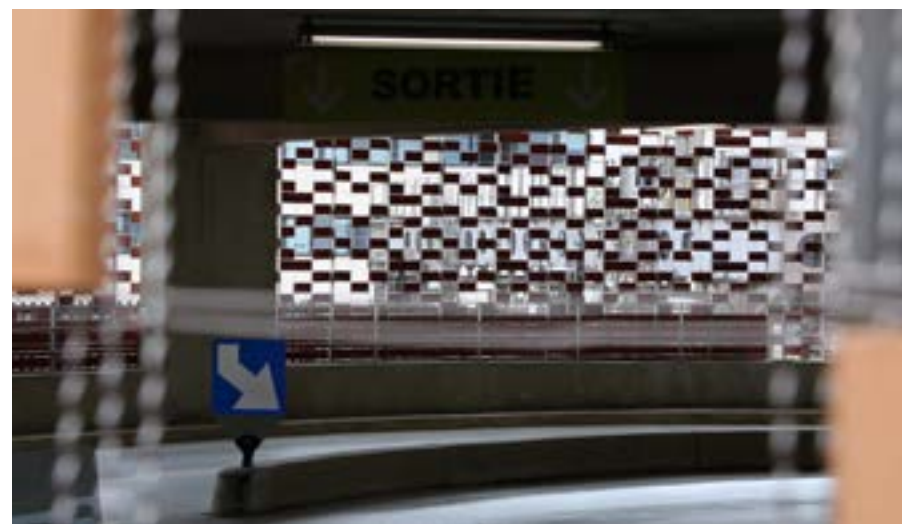
Stopped. Going by at a certain speed.
Passengers, cargo, the associated human
traffic. Reflections. The scale and nature of
the parking garage are constantly affected by
the presence of these mobile objects and the
stories associated with them.



The train tracks, the construction fences, the trams, the catenaries: the building is expressed fully inserted in its setting. It engages in dialogue and acts as a background for the station. It positivizes and, in a nutshell, ennobles an urban situation that could be described as chaotic as it stands as the first link in a powerful urban transformation.



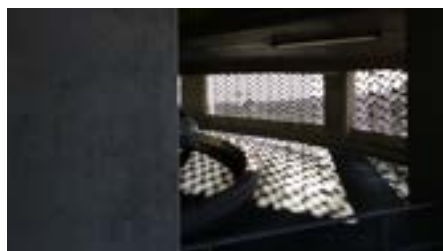
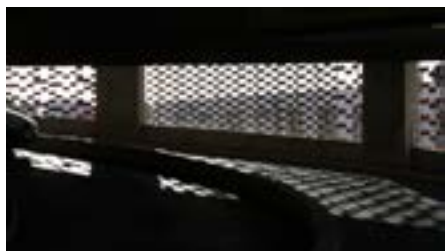
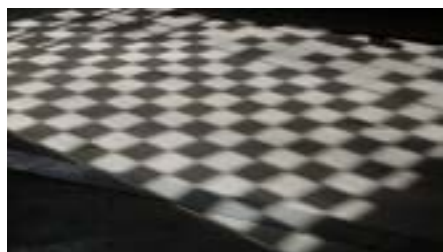
The parking garage is thoughtful. It reacts to its surroundings. It uses cantilevers to project, contains streets, changes with the light. its perception is especially sensitive to the relative position of the spectator. The building proposes and arranges the environment, reacts to and improves it.





There are cars in the parking garage. Here they function inside like the train does outside: they change the scale of the building and its perception. Their movements, their reflections transform views, reflections, lights. The cars give the building a certain transitory beauty.







CAN BATLLÓ

Comunitat Can Batlló,
LaCol – cooperativa
d'arquitectes

ARCHITECTS
Comunitat Can Batlló,
LaCol – cooperativa d'arquitectes

PROJECT DATE
11 June de 2011 – local residents entered
the site

CONSTRUCTION COMPLETED
Under construction

DEVELOPER
Can Batlló user community

AREA
5,000 m² indoor area and 5,000 m²
outdoor area

LOCATION
Barcelona (Catalonia)



Can Batlló was a complex of many hectares behind a fence. A reserve of land where protected buildings were being speculated with (oh, inappropriate). An area of opportunity for the Sants neighborhood that residents had historically reclaimed for themselves.



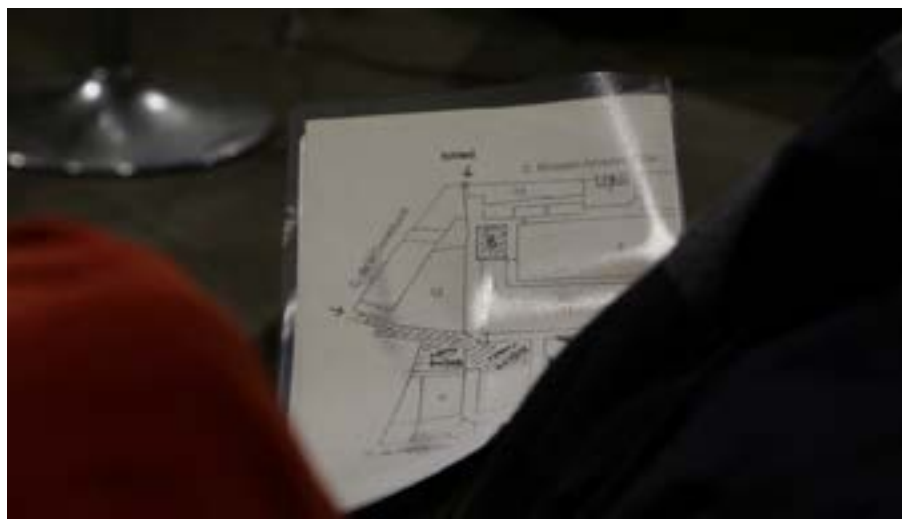
The first space to be self-managed by residents was Bloc 11, very close to Carretera de La Bordeta. There the projects the neighborhood needs were developed and decided on by residents in an assembly: a meeting place, a space for activities, a rehearsal space, an auditorium, a library...



Can Batlló still has one of the workshops it was split into when the textile industry was lost: a workshop for artistic metalworking. A reminder of an industry-generating complex that fed much of the neighborhood. It has coexisted until now when it is to be vacated, at peace with the new activities defined by local residents.



The design and management of the spaces was decided on by assembly. A delegation from the collective made up by residents and architects from the LaCol cooperative, working together, explained the process, history and future of this initiative. LaCol is represented by architects Lali Daví and Pol Massoni and the Can Batlló collective by Mia Caritg, Enric Jara, Joan Bardella, Noe Valero and Ernesto Chacón.



*There is power in a factory, power in the land
Power in the hands of a worker
But it all amounts to nothing if together we
don't stand
There is power in a union
Now the lessons of the past were all learned
with workers blood
The mistakes of the bosses we must pay for
From the cities and the farmlands to
trenches full of mud
War has always been the bosses way, sir
The union forever defending our rights
Down with the blackleg, all workers unite
With our brothers and our sisters from many
far off lands
There is power in a union*

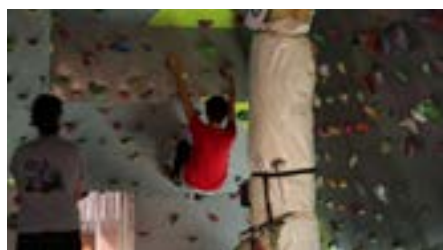
There is Power in a Union, Billy Bragg



With the complex's walls torn down, Carrer 11 de Juny (for the day local residents took over Can Batlló) has become the backbone of the operation and one of the most active hubs of neighborhood life. Existing and new establishments are arranged around it. The La Borda housing cooperative and apartment buildings designed by the Municipal Housing Authority will be run by residents who will give the complex over to the city once and for all.



The bar is the heart of and entrance to Bloc 11 on Carrer 11 de juny. It has a stage that leads to the upper floor and connects with everything: the library, the auditorium... Self-managed like everything else, run by volunteers, beer is now brewed in house in a Can Batlló space.





The workshop is a training activity and at the same time a resource because the collective can conduct the works to improve and expand the entire complex. The welding workshop is one of the connections between the current activities and Can Batlló's past: doing is also educating.



The dog off-leash area is a meeting place for locals. Its size and positioning give it its quality: its seemingly banal function has done nothing but confirm that any excuse for a new meeting point is a good one. And everyone is delighted.







la Biennale di Venezia

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