



la Biennale di Venezia

15. Mostra
Internazionale
di Architettura

Biennale Architettura 2016

Exhibition

66.

INCREMENTAL URBANISM
AS A WAY TO DEAL WITH VIOLENCE
IN THE MEGALOPOLIS.

THE WORK OF TATIANA BILBAO,
ROZANA MONTIEL, DEREK DELLEKAMP,
AND ALEJANDRO HERNÁNDEZ
IN MEXICO.

This group of architects from Mexico is dealing with two of the most pressing issues of today: on the one hand they are dealing with violence and insecurity associated with poverty, inequalities, corruption, and the drug cartels; on the other they are trying to operate in the crowded front of a megalopolis—that is, a city with more than twenty million inhabitants, which will become all too common throughout the world in the years to come.

Their intervention can be seen in the intersection between violence and overcrowding, in an empty site that is neither private (subject to immediate development) nor has yet been accorded the status of a public park. This uncertain territory may be very familiar to most of the cities in underdeveloped countries: a leftover or remainder that has not yet been swallowed up by the city, a no man's land that is a dangerous, disputed territory but that at the same time has the capacity (or potential) to bring together the people of the community. They propose a strategy to procure this piece of land and claim it as a public good for the city. To do so, they propose to start with the most obvious operation, which is consequently also the easiest to implement: to take advantage of its emptiness and use it as a connection (shortcut) within a densely occupied urban footprint. If the void can be transformed from a site of fear and danger into a safe place through use, then other services and urban amenities may be added over time. We might think of this strategy as incremental urbanism.



Tatiana Bilbao Estudio, Rozana Montiel Estudio de Arquitectura, Dellekamp Arquitectos, Alejandro Hernández,
Walk the Line. Illuminated path in Parque Corrales, Miravalle, Mexico City, Mexico, 2016.
Photomontage on Google Earth image

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CONFRONTING THE POWER OF

It says here that there is a growing gap between rich and poor...

THE BATTLE Situation



Once William Morris said: "the most grinding poverty is a trifling evil compared with the inequality of classes." And in a lecture from 1884 titled *How We Live and How We Might Live*, he pointed out that in spite of the "terrible sound" the word revolution has in most people's ears, being understood as "the change of the basis of society", it was still something to look for.

Almost forty years later, Le Corbusier thought that we could avoid revolution by means of architecture.

From 1910 to 1921, Mexico had its own Revolution - a social and political movement which also had architectural consequences. In his participation in the 1933 lectures at the Mexican Architects Association, architect Juan Legarreta, then 31 years old, laconically said:

"A people living in huts and round shacks cannot speak [of] architecture. We will make houses for the people. Esthetes and rhetoricians - may they all drop dead! - can then have their discussions!"

For Legarreta as for Morris, in contrast to Le Corbusier, architecture was not a way of avoiding revolution but a part of it.

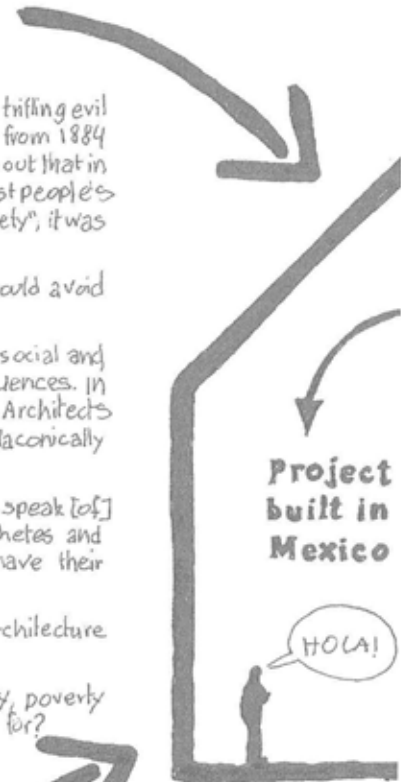
More than 120 years after Morris' remarks on inequality, poverty and revolution, where and what does architecture stand for?

How can we break the chain that goes from poverty to inequality, from inequality to violence, from violence to impunity?



a testimony of people that actually walk their talk.

The brief asks for people to walk their talk...



Project built in Mexico



\$ (1/2 BUDGET)

several frontiers that need to be expanded

Expanding frontiers implies giving the same to Mexico and Venice.

THE FRONTS

MICRO-BATTLES

... we will
BUILD our talk!



THE FRONT Installation

A group of people arrives more or less organized to a site, probably on the border of a big city. Some of them already know each other; others do not. They settle in a place where there is almost nothing. There are no deeds; they cannot ask for any kind of credit, they really do not care if the site has an owner. They build their projects as they can.

Someone will probably charge a fee to "help them" get electricity, water, sewage. They negotiate to become part of a system that has already left them out. They will keep on building by themselves, or with the aid of social organizations. Sooner or later, public institutions will arrive to finish the work.

Maybe someday an architect will also show up. If they are lucky their projects might improve; and perhaps the streets and squares if they have any.

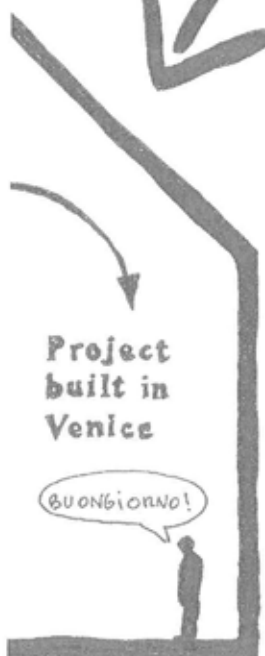
How can people living like that, making their own projects, speak [of] architecture? And How can we come afterwards, with our discussions yet without the esthetic or rhetorical overcharge?

"So What Test":

So what!?

We will build a twofold operation:

- 1/ Building and adding to operations already occurring on a Mexican frontline.
- 2/ Letting you know, in Venice, that the frontline is not [always] where you [already] are.



Project built in Venice

BUONGIORNO!



(1/2 EURO)

The Biennale should create
ARCHITECTURAL ADDED VALUE
for all involved.

introduce a broader notion of gain: design as added value



Yes, we know
Sir...
But there are
ways around it!!