SOUNDSCAPING

Integrating urban contrasts, community development, and social action through music in the community San Agustín (Caracas, Venezuela)

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.ABSTRACT

This project presents three buildings that seek to break the boundaries between urban spaces and informal settlements taking advantage of city limits, natural landmarks, the cultural features of the intervened community, and the philosophy of the Venezuelan System of Orchestras, a successful music education-based development program implemented in Venezuela since 1975. The buildings designed as the foundation of this project simultaneously serve both public and private purposes. On the private side, the structures are developed around two key activities of an intervened urban limit—music and nature—proposing landmarks of pure form with independent use: music performance/rehearsal rooms and green houses. The distribution of the resulting buildings stems from the reinterpretation of the residential spaces located in their immediate surroundings, thereby mimicking their aesthetics and achieving more coherent and harmonious visuals and spaces for the city and the community. In terms of the public side, which lies at the center of this proposal, the project introduces spaces for outdoor entertainment that adapt to the restricted-use structures and facilitate the integration between the city and the community of San Agustín. This provides new circulation routes that improve the fluidity of the existing ones, serving as a catalyst for stronger and more vibrant community dynamics. Some of these elements include amphitheaters and spaces designed for music performance and events, walkways, stairways, squares and garden that control the unstructured growth of the intervened community, San Agustín South, in west Caracas. Social cohesion, urban integration and community development are three of the key concepts guiding this study and design process.

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.INTRODUCTION

Hierarchical societies are commonly characterized, among other things, by their marked social differentiation and profound disparities in wealth distribution. This inequality patterns can also be verified in significant urban gaps, which separate populations based on their position in the social ladder and define highly divisive geographies, particularly when inter-class conflict, violence and/or political tensions are present in the mix (García-Guadilla, 2003).

These characteristics are pertinent to describe the current sociopolitical context of Venezuela, once kno14wn as one of the most prosperous and political stable countries in Latin America. The lack of trust toward traditional democracy and the corruption of the oil-based political and economic model, widely used by the government for forty years to build social consensus, gradually increased poverty, inequality and civil unrest (Urbaneja, 1992; Kornblith, 1998; López-Maya, 2006). As the end of the 1990s was approaching, anti-system political alternatives became more visible and attractive to the population as these movements waved the flag of social justice and promised to build a government entirely focused on those in need.

Such alternatives gained political traction, became legitimate players, and then reached power. Supported by a period of great fiscal prosperity, the government of Hugo Chávez, president of Venezuela between 1999 and 2013, significantly increased social investments and welfare programs as he concurrently built a socialist political program that sought to empower disenfranchised groups (López-Maya, 2006). In spite of these efforts, most of which can be attributed to the need to gain supporters in the establishment of a radical populistic regime, studies and official figures show that little progress has been made in achieving sustainable development over the last 20 years (UCAB, 2017). This became more evident since 2013, when the policies and radicalization processes promoted by the successor of Hugo Chávez, Nicolás Maduro, induced one of the worst economic and sociopolitical crises the country has ever seen in its contemporary history (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018).

In light of this, the stark differences appreciated in the most populated urban areas of the country, plagued by disorganized squatter settlements since the 1950s, has accentuated over the chavista period to levels that are hard to measure. This trend has generated contrasts in the typology of housing and their location across Venezuela.

Caracas, the capital, is one of the cities with the most pronounced social inequality in the country, housing some of the largest slums in Latin America, which form hard geographical barriers between low-, middle- and upper-class groups (García-Guadilla, 2003). This has resulted in the steady development of encapsulated areas that are only familiar to their inhabitants and which remain separated from the rest of the city. The majority of these slums may then fall under the category of "bubble urbanization" processes. Using different terms, they are areas that mushroomed by the margins of predominant urban centers, essentially known for their precarious living conditions—high insecurity, difficult access, scarcity of basic services, among others.

This project focuses on San Agustín South, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Caracas. It was chosen for this project due to its particular char-

acteristics. First of all, it is an area with strong limits and scarce public spaces. It limits to the north with the most important highway and river of the city, to the west with residential and office areas, to the south with a middle-class neighborhood, and to the east with the Botanical Garden of Caracas. Second, it is an area with a prolific cultural history as a large part of its original inhabitants had strong musical roots and formed world-renowned performers. And third, San Agustín has the first cableway transportation system—the Metrocable—in the country for areas with strongly accentuated topography, since normal public transport was not available to the community.

As described, San Agustín South presents itself with a number of important issues that merit attention—the lack of public spaces for leisure activities and significant access difficulties—most of which have been addressed through relatively successful solutions, including the construction of the Metrocable. However, these public infrastructure works do not look beyond tackling concrete challenges, ignoring more comprehensive developments that could further integrate the slum with other parts of Caracas.
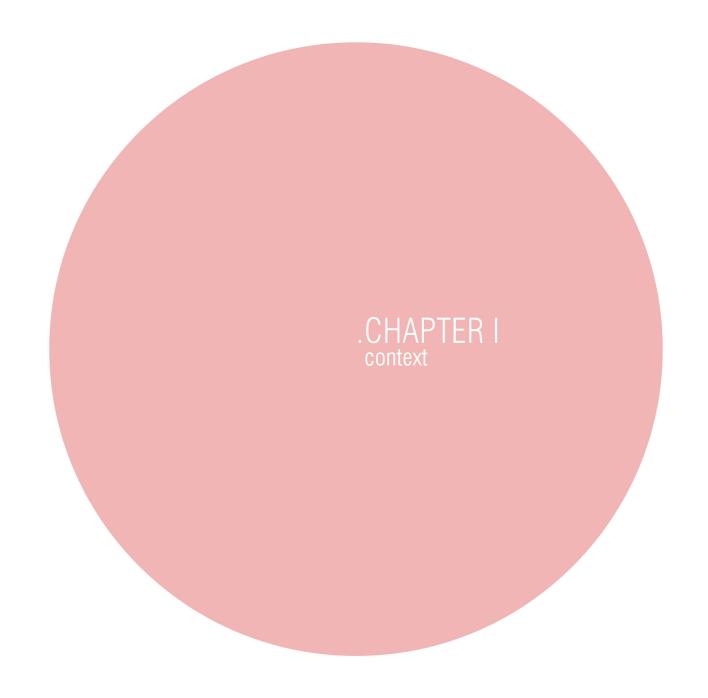
It is argued in this project that there are not sufficient incentives to develop initiatives that break existing urban limits, affecting the ability for the creation of spaces where citizens integrate and become part of a more holistic urban narrative.

Taking into consideration the previous idea, it is possible to outline the main objective of this project—that is, creating a connection between the city and segregated areas by 'breaking the bubble.' In order to achieve this, detailed research was conducted to better understand the characteristics that stood out in the area, including its (1) strong music history, (2) accentuated topography, (3) few leisure spaces, and (4) strong limits, as mentioned already. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to identify a tool that would encourage social integration and cohesion through the combination of culture and architecture.

Such tool was inspired by the philosophy and achievements of the Venezuelan System of Orchestras and Choirs. This initiative, also known as El Sistema, was conceived in 1975 by the Venezuelan economist and musician José Antonio Abreu to systematize the instruction and the col-

lective and individual practice of music through symphonic orchestras and choirs, as instruments of social organization and humanistic development. This pedagogical, artistic and social model, which has achieved notorious relevance throughout the world, constitutes the social program with the greatest impact in Venezuelan democracy.

For this project, creating a space for social inclusion and urban unification in this particular context—where a high sense of belonging trumps individualism and where inhabitants from the city and the slum integrate through cultural activities and increase their quality of life—requires fracturing a permeable limit, essentially located eastbound by the Botanical Garden of Caracas. This course of action presents a proposal that demonstrates that social barriers can be broken through culture, proposing a performance arts complex that organically connects with its surroundings, creates a space for music education and entertainment, and provides the community with a public space for other activities that promote integration, solidarity, cohesion and social change.

.CHAPTER I
context

.THE CITY
CARACAS - VENEZUELA

.TOPOGRAPHY AND WEATHER CONSIDER-ATIONS

Caracas, officially called Santiago de León de Caracas, is the capital city of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the main administrative, financial, political, commercial and cultural center of the country. It is located in the central-northern coastal area of the country, 15 kilometers from the coast of the Caribbean Sea and is situated within a mountainous valley at an approximate altitude of 900 meters above sea level. The valley is relatively small and quite irregular. The city has an area of 845 square kilometers and the altitude varies between 870 and 1,443 meters above sea level in the urban area. The highest point is the Naiguatá Peak, with 2,765 meters, followed by Oriental Peak (2,640 meters), Galindo (2600 meters), Las Llaves (2,480 meters), Occidental Peak (2478 meters), Goering (2460 meters), El Ávila Hill or Humboldt Peak (2,159 meters), and Santa Rosa (2,150 meters).

The Guaire River is the most important body of water in Caracas, which flows through the entire capital and drains into the Tuy River, which is also fed by the El Valle and San Pedro rivers, adding to numerous watercourses that descend from El Ávila. La Mariposa and Camatagua dams provide water to the city.

The Caracas valley is a seismic zone. It is located very close to the limit of two tectonic plates, the Caribbean and the South American. The telluric movements in the city are characterized by a high rate of microsismicity (events of magnitude less than 3 degrees on the Richter scale) and events of intermediate magnitude (between 3 and 5 degrees).
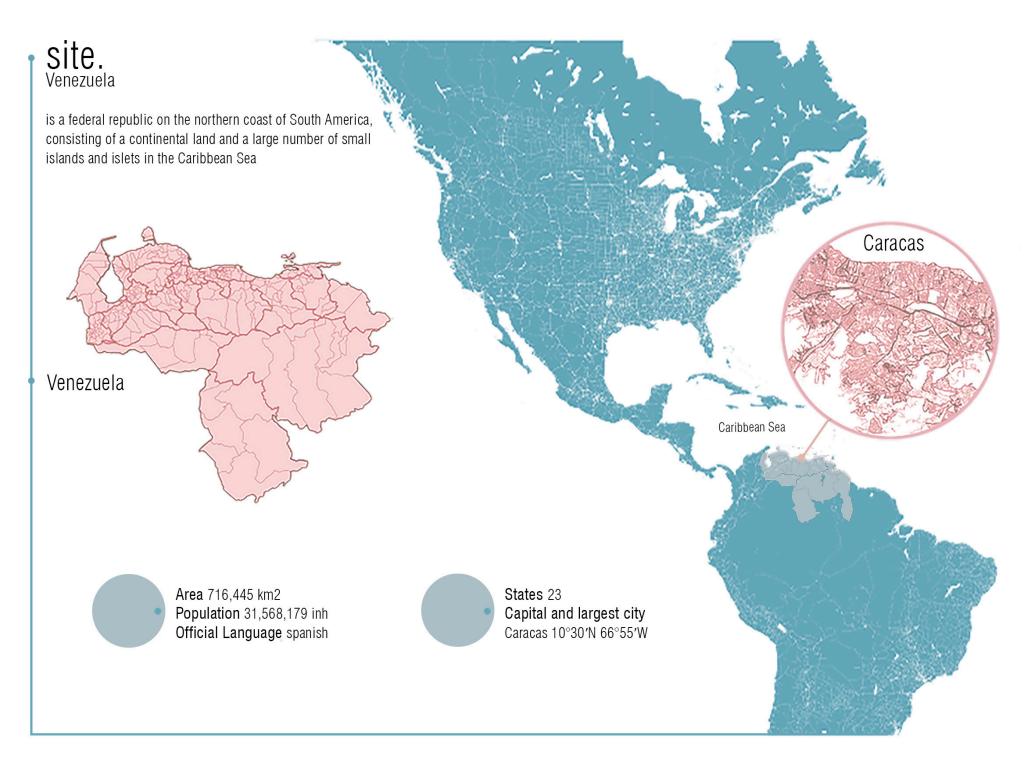
Climatic conditions and natural vegetation on this site are diverse and fluctuating. Temperatures are lower with the increase of elevation, and rainfall and humidity are high on hills that face eastward toward the dominant winds. The decisive climatic feature in the valley is elevation. The temperature intervals are about 7° to 33°C and the annual average is about 21°C. Annual precipitation reaches approximately 800 millimeters every year. There is a rainy season from May through November, which represents more than four fifths of total annual precipitation, which results in humid weather. Opposed to this is the dry season, from December until April, characterized by clear skies and cool temperatures.

Generally, the highest mountains, especially in the north, have a thick cloud cover at the top. In them, there is an abundant vegetation that remains green all year.

Socioeconomic profile of the city

Social class divisions are quite acute in Caracas, similar to other parts of South America, which is reflected on the different types of occupation of residential areas. In Venezuela, members of the higher class achieved their wealth and status through land ownership and more recently through industry, commerce and urban real estate. The middle class has developed to a large extent thanks to the country's oil wealth and the European immigration of the 1940s and 1950s. The most disadvantaged groups, comprised of workers, servants and unemployed individuals, occupy hillside slums

site.
Venezuela

is a federal republic on the northern coast of South America,
consisting of a continental land and a large number of small
islands and islets in the Caribbean Sea

Venezuela

Caracas

Caribbean Sea

Area 716,445 km2
Population 31,568,179 inh
Official Language spanish

States 23
Capital and largest city
Caracas 10°30'N 66°55'W

that dominate the city surroundings from west to south.

Urbanism: The beginning of change

In 1870, the most noteworthy urban changes of Caracas started under President Antonio Guzmán Blanco. He was actively trying to make Caracas an imitation of the French capital, transitioning the look of buildings from a Spanish colonial aesthetic to one of French influence. Many avenues were built and some streets were extended to encourage city growth—Caracas reached a population of approximately 56,000 by 1881. The inauguration of Caracas-La Guaira railway was celebrated with a ceremony in 1883. It crossed the strong coastal mountain range and connected the capital of the country with one of the most important ports in the Caribbean. At the beginning of the 20th century, the first urban real estate development in Caracas, designed for the upper class, was built in the suburb of El Paraíso. Shortly thereafter, to the west, in Catia, the development of a social housing project for the middle class began.

Around 1936, after the death of General Juan Vicente Gómez, who had led a strong-handed dictatorship for 27 years, the country experienced a new era of prosperity based on oil extraction. City growth was even greater. In the downtown area of Caracas, the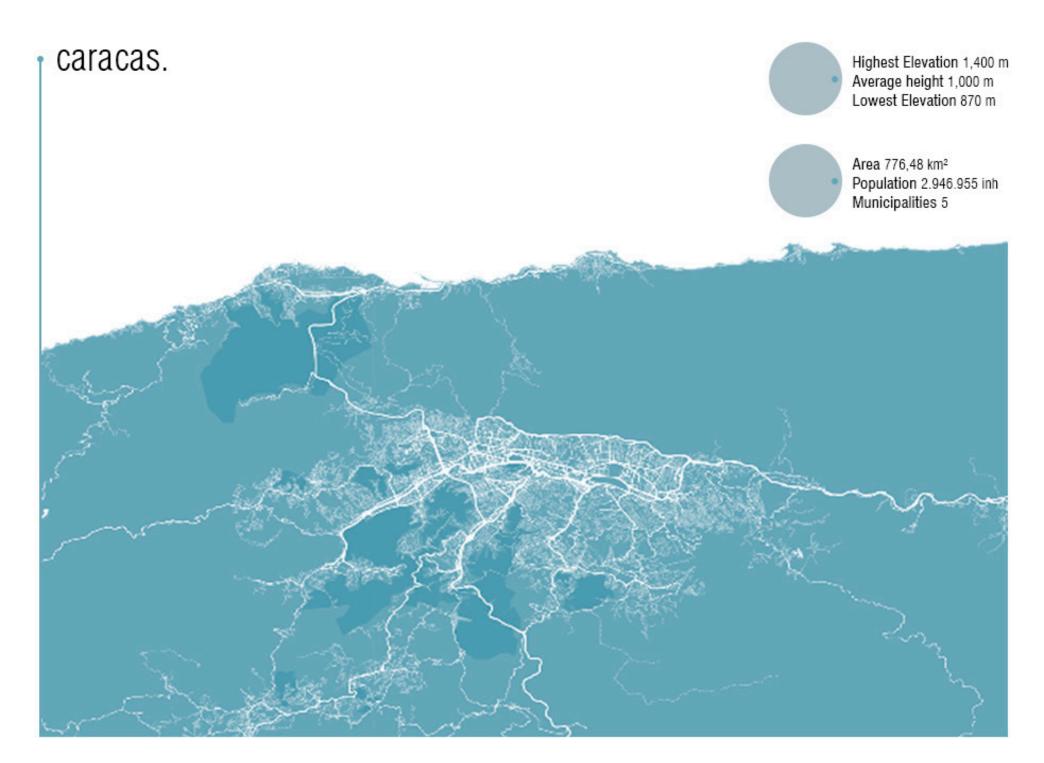 El Silencio district was transformed into a huge housing complex for middle-income individuals. These transformations, programmed in 1939, together with a Regulatory Plan for Caracas, was the first work of great magnitude in the country. It marked the beginning of the modern architectural era of the city. In addition, the population of the city doubled, going from almost 200,000 in 1936 to 500,000 in 1950, with a metropolitan population of approximately 700,000.

Between 1952 and 1957, Venezuela was ruled by another military dictator, Marcos Pérez Jiménez, who was part of the military board that previously governed Venezuela (1950-1952). General Pérez Jiménez focused his attention on the modernization of Caracas: the slums were almost eliminated and replaced by colorful high-rise social housing projects, and large highways were built to connect Caracas with the coast and with the countryside. The infrastructure improved considerably. The change in the appearance of Caracas was abrupt and overwhelming. The old city began to disappear as commercial and governmental buildings were built at a feverish pace in the valley.

At the same time, many slums emerged virtually overnight in some of the mountains of the city, while immigrants from rural areas sought employment and improved living conditions in the capital. In the beginning, slums were characterized by shelters built with waste materials and by overcrowded and unhealthy conditions. Over the years, many slums were transformed into working-class communities with cement or brick houses lining the paved streets. However, water pipes, sewers and other services lacked—and still do—in many areas. In addition to these difficulties, the poor population of Caracas has been susceptible to shortages of commodities and price fluctuations, and slums on the steepest slopes have been particularly vulnerable to natural disas-

caracas.

Highest Elevation 1,400 m
Average height 1,000 m
Lowest Elevation 870 m

Area 776,48 km²
Population 2.946.955 inh
Municipalities 5

ters (e.g., the Caracas earthquake in 1967 and the flashfloods and mudslides of 1999, both of which killed thousands in the metropolitan area).

The population of Caracas grew rapidly from the 1950s until the 1970s, when about 1.7 million people occupied the city proper and around 500,000 more occupied the urban edge. This trend then slowed down, in part because of the government's actions to limit city growth. Around 2 million people lived in Caracas at the beginning of the 21st century and now close to 3 million people do so.

In spite of its deficiencies and complexities, Caracas has remained a dominant power in Venezuela's daily life, continuing to the primary urban center of the country. At one point in history it was considered one of the most developed urban centers in Latin America due to its active commercial areas, high-rise office and apartment buildings, and large-scale highways. Today, given the current crisis, Caracas is also an example of disorganized and destructive urbanization processes. The lack of investment in infrastructure, the majority of which has not been updated since the last 1950s, also represents a problem for an ever-growing urban center of this magnitude.

Setting an alternative theoretical background

This section seeks to provide an explanation of social stratification and urban segregation in the city of Caracas. It is supported on the most recent and comprehensive research carried out in these areas with a specific architecture angle. For that, a study of Newton Rauseo (2012), professor from Universidad Central de Venezuela, is utilized a guiding principle throughout the chapter.

In Rauseo's (2012) view, the city as a physical structure is a socially constructed space that is produced and reproduced according to the characteristics of the human life forms and determined historical moments. In the course of its history, society has been producing the physical space of social concentration, that is, the city, which serves as a seat for the particular ways of life that develop dynamically in each time in a given territory. The city is the seat of the production of social, economic, political and cultural spaces of the population settled therein.

Another premise that could be proposed, as per Rauseo (2012), is that each social group is based in an urban territory according to its position and socioeconomic and cultural expectations, imprinting character and identity in the global context of the city. Then, these forms contain the mark of the social relationships that made it possible in time, conforming them as differentiated urban social spaces. Hypothetically, it is considered that in these relationships the most powerful social actors impose and shape the physical morphology with the characteristics of life forms—the nonphysical morphology—that are necessary to their group interests.

In Venezuela, since the Spanish conquest and colonization, the feudal and capitalist systems have been determinant in the production of space in cities. These are the result of the institutional, individual and collective action

of people formed as agents and/or social actors (state, private and community) that have an impact on (and a conception of) reality—that is, agents and social actors that manage the territories where their cultural manifestations will materialize according to social values and sense of belonging.

The impact of the oil economy in Venezuela, born towards the first quarter of the 20th century, caused three phenomena in human settlements: one, oil camps established by foreign oil companies were used for housing their foreign and national employees in areas close to the exploitation of hydrocarbons; and the other two: residential areas (with the production of an official housing market) and poor neighborhoods (that house the families that do not have access to that market) appeared in large cities, captured the benefits stemming from oil revenues, and promoted tertiary services activities (Rauseo, 2012).

In modern Venezuela, urban growth is closely related to the exodus of the population from the countryside to the city. Around the beginning of the 1950s "(…) the rural family emigrates in full in search of subsistence" (Brito, 1975: p. 557). The migration patterns of the Venezuelan province were not only verified in large population movements, but also in transformations of the social, economic and cultural spaces, including traditions, customs and habits, they brought to the fore.

The family ties of these groups led them to maintain close relationships with their regions of origin, linked by consanguinity, friendship, etc. These relationships very often involved economic dependence, even at the level of sole sustenance, of family members living in medium or small population centers and even more in rural areas, of those who resided and worked in large cities.

An expression of this dynamic were the frequent trips made to those places of origin, which caused massive influxes during vacation or holiday periods. These characteristics (migrations, travel and economic dependence) also occurred with foreigners belonging to this social group, who quantitatively represented a considerable mass of millions of people, if we factor in the migrations throughout the 20th century from Europe (mainly from Spain, Portugal and Italy) and Latin America (mainly from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and the Dominican Republic).

This is not exclusive of low-income segments of the population, but also of the middle class, although to a lesser extent. Rapid urban growth was then produced by a particular phenomenon: migrations from the province (and from abroad), to build a tangible urban reality that is materialized in ideas, economic activities, services, urbanizations, neighborhoods, housing, infrastructure, equipment, etc.

As time went by, the city saw the emergence of new and complex phenomena that planning, urban design, and architecture did not address effectively. These are areas that due to their morphological conditions are recognized as special within a series of everyday situations. As it is the case of the urban growth towards the valley of Caracas during the 20th century, this one covered not only the central

zones of Caracas, but also extended to the peripheral ones and to the territory of the Miranda state[1].

In the opinion of Rauseo (2012) in Venezuela—and in Caracas in particular—social groups have acquired a clear distinction by the socio-economic position they occupy in society and this is strongly determined by the place or role they perform historically in the social production system. Therefore, the identification of the form of production of the city and its architecture as a social fact are crucial to detect with greater precision the characteristics of the morphology of the physical space. In the city, physical space is produced to be consumed in a way that is particular to specific social groups.

The growing demand for housing in the urban market of the 20th century promoted the phenomenon of rising prices and the concentration of land ownership. The rapid growth produced the scarcity of large lots of urbanizable land, which determined the obligatory use of those that were out of the market.

The purchase of land became the most propitious alternative to invest the savings of large and medium investors; and even small savers were encouraged to allocate their capital to the real estate purchase as the easiest and fastest mechanism to duplicate their value.

.THE COMMUNITY SOCIETY AND THE SELF-PRODUCTION OF ITS HABITAT

A large percentage of the Venezuelan urban population, directly and individually, produces not only their homes but also their habitat in the city. Parallel to the phenomenon of private production of neighborhoods in Caracas in the first decades of the 20th century, another urban growth dynamic could be noticed—in this case, the extension of downtown areas toward its southern limits through the development of human settlements called barrios, which served and continue to serve as residence to low-income populations and migrant communities with limited access to products of the formal housing market. This behavior, as Rauseo (2012) affirms, continued the 18th century colonial tradition of locating the poor in

the periphery of the city.

In this context, community societies emerge. They are defined, as per Rauseo's (2012) reflections, as groups with little socio-economic relative power, limited specialization and division of labor, frequent ties of kinship, relative social stratification, minimal social mobility, and clings to traditional values, that are governed by non-formal customs.

Poverty has also existed in Venezuelan cities. The conquest and colonization of the territory as a Spanish colony introduced a system of spatial segregation that shaped cities to be as we know them. Rauseo (2012) argues that aboriginal cultures were not subject to social stratification until colonization process came into existence, for which poverty is a product of this historical process.

As indicated earlier, informal settlements served as dwelling spaces for migrants coming essentially from rural areas and even

[1] It is important to indicate that Caracas covers the so-called capital district and a portion of the Miranda state. Under this conglomerate of areas, five municipalities coexist.

small towns, for which it is possible to affirm that peasants were the mass producers of slums—at least in their initial stages—in Venezuelan cities, and more prominently in Caracas. This transition turned them, as well, into urban workers. San Agustín, the settlement under intervention in this project, represented one of the areas that hosted these migrant populations, particularly during the 1926-1935 period.

The materialization of a way of life in these dwellings, refer to as "the culture of the slums" by Rauseo (2012), is the culture of the community society. On this, some authors offer their approaches. "On the one hand, culture is a product of society that encompasses the set of knowledge, codes, practices, systems of representation and values, symbols and myths that are imposed on individuals. On the other hand, in each group and society, culture corresponds to a creative movement in all domains of social life. It is generated in the material transformations, but at the same time it exerts its action on them" (Chombart de Lauwe, 1981: 221).

Given the situation of poverty in which they arrived in the city, working peasants produced their habitat with a pattern or culture of construction coming from their own environment. This is how "the inhabitants of the slums are, in the first place, who, driven by the modernizing current, changed their traditional way of subsistence in the countryside, by their participation in the capitalist productive activity in the urban distribution of the state oil income" (Ontiveros, 1999: 26).

The lowest layer of the low-income groups—the fixed non-salaried workers who had no option to buy property for not having the means and those who moved to Caracas attracted by urban progress—make up the so-called community society. This society, needless to say, was not small.

The organization of the people in these slums emerges as a spontaneous activity to face daily constraints and limitations. Another way to materialize their organizational forms is through the self-production of housing, both in the initial stages of the rancho (humble housing typical of the slums) and the consolidation of the house.

Although people have great potential to perform an active and positive role within society and in the city, as they have shown in the process of building their own habitat, such attribute has not been sufficiently capitalized on. This has occurred in many instances due to the lack of maturity and awareness of these people about their position within society, and their objectives and goals within the city.

In spite of the determined characteristics of the slum phenomenon in Caracas, we cannot generalize about it in such a way that slum residents are considered a homogeneous social sector of society. It is the heterogeneity that provides this sector with a particular type of wealth, which is expressed in cultural diversity and multiples strengths that can enrich and advance community life.

It can be said that many slums in the city have acquired a particular identity due to the dominance of their traditions, customs and routines. Even the same poor sector of the city can be made up of different slums with different traditions, culture s and routines. The very no-

menclature that they acquire as a slum draws, in its process of conformation over time, a social connotation that gives it identity. "The slum is the concretion of the capacities and anonymous creations of those who inhabit it, in the incessant search to make a place for themselves in the city. However, the growing and systematic segregation to which it has been subjected has resulted in multiple shortcomings, which deserve, urgently, to be examined and resolved. The slum shows us, dialectically, particularities and cultural diversities, contradictions and creations (...) (Rosas, 2004: 124).

.THE PHYSICAL-SPATIAL MORPHOLOGY

Neighborhoods

The Venezuelan city during the 20th century has been characterized by the construction of two basic products: urban objects (slums and neighborhoods), and architectural objects (villas, houses, ranchos and other buildings). The pressures derived from urban population growth at an inter-annual 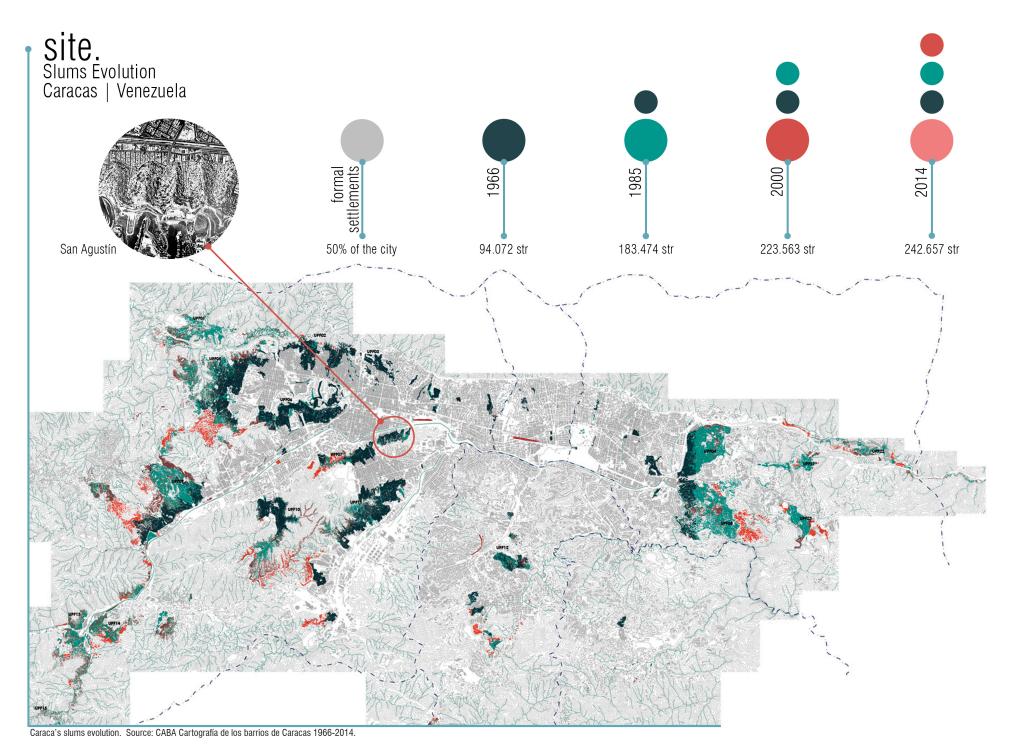rate of 9.5% in Caracas at the beginning of the 20th century derived into formal (neighborhoods) and non-formal (slums) urban development activity (Quintero, 1967: 67).

It is then acceptable to affirm that with the emergence of modernity in Caracas, it is not housing that created its own demands, but rather population growth that produced the demand for housing, with a response offered by the real estate market: housing in developments.

The extension of Caracas through the development of new housing developments began south and east of the city center, depending on the ownership of the land dedicated to agriculture. These developments hosted families with very similar conditions, which would allow them to share common perceptions around social status in line with their aspirations. Neighborhoods then became some sort of 'ghettos': settlements for equals in terms of income, taste, values, consumption behaviors and even personal traits. This accentuated the social, economic and cultural differences among city dwellers.

Slums

Slum residents have been so active in the experience of physical production that their habitats are equivalent to their own heritage. There is a clear identification between themselves and their environment. Slums produced by the communities themselves, as non-formal settlements to give a seat to their residential buildings, lack sufficient infrastructure in terms of roads, transportation, sanitary and electrical services, and community equipment. They constitute the main phenomenon that channels the growing demand for housing in Venezuelan cities by groups without stable or sufficient income. As in their training for urban employment, vital needs lead this group to learn by doing, in concrete practice, while building its habitat. In this regard, Losada (1969) indicates that "[m]en confront nature and adapt the resources and forces of nature to the satisfaction of tehir needs. In this process, men modify nature and, in doing so, it gives them greater capacity to deepen and expand their mastery over nature and, therefore, to modify themselves" (Losada, 1969: 29).

site.
Slums Evolution
Caracas | Venezuela

San Agustín

formal settlements

50% of the city

1966

94.072 str

1985

183.474 str

2000

223.563 str

2014

242.657 str

Caraca's slums evolution. Source: CABA Cartografía de los barrios de Caracas 1966-2014.

The housing market does not appear in modern Venezuela as a homogeneous issue. While residential solutions could be offered to medium- and high-income groups, capable of accessing real estate trades due to their purchasing power, those in a less favorable position has to solve their housing needs by buying small plots of land or illegally occupying city spaces.

In this regard, it is important to consider the geographical characteristics of slum and their location due to the socioeconomic repercussions they contain. Poor people settled in Caracas on vacant public or private lands with little resistance on their occupation, including in spaces waiting for interventions of the real estate market. These lands generally constituted vast lots in virgin hills with steep slopes and, therefore, with problems of accessibility, geological risks and abundant vegetation. They also tend to be located on the edge of rivers and streams with serious risk of flooding and landslides. For many years, these characteristics explained why such spaced were discarded by real estate developers and builders—the

investment to make them livable was just too high. Slum residents, urged by the need for habitat, defied such circumstances and decided to produce their homes and then the necessary urban infrastructure to locate their families within the city.

The formal development of neighborhoods and the informal growth of slums brings us closer to a process of morphological evolution of the city with great disproportions. Such disparities encompass uses and activities, transportation, infrastructure, basic services, communal equipment and roads, most of which are clearly delineated in the neighborhood, but not in the slum.

Up to this point, it is already clear that the slums are spontaneous settlements that contradict formal schemes of society and particularly city urbanization. They are non-formal forms of dynamic development that obey their own geographical, social, economic, political, cultural and physical (urban and architectural) characteristics, which differentiate them from the rest of the city (and, many times, among

themselves).

.THE SITE: SAN AGUSTÍN

The ownership of the land in San Agustín was, at the beginning of the establishment of neighborhoods and slums, was private and intended to be fragmented in smaller lots for future residential development. Shortly thereafter, with the urbanizing action, road interventions and urban renewal led by the state, the process of transferring private property to the public began.

The oil-based economy prompted migrations from the closest areas to Caracas—that is, the Tuy and Barlovento valleys of the Miranda state. This urbanization process promoted population dispersion, resulting in the establishment of center-periphery neighborhoods and, in turn, favoring the increasing use of vehicles. The population rose from 92,212 in 1920 to 135,253 in 1926 (Brito, 1974) and the dynamics of the population increase were characterized by a double action—the traditional low increase by vegetative growth and

sudden population increase due to migration flows—both of which impact the population qualitatively and quantitively, particularly in peripheral settlements. The impact of the new oil-based economy meant that the conditions were in place for the acceleration of urbanization and the spontaneous growth of of Caracas, which will determine its socioeconomic and cultural conditions.

As Rauseo (2012) discusses it, the appearance of the San Agustín in the central part of Caracas could respond to the need of perpetuating administrative and segregation patterns within the city, so that the most prominent political and social groups had the ability to effectively exert power over the entirety of the urban space.

The urbanization of the territory that would later result in the establishment of San Agustín, materializes with the spontaneous human settlements in an area known as the Mamón hill.

The San Agustín parish was created alongside the Sucre parish, another administrative area or political division of Caracas. It originated in the eastern area of the Santa Rosalía parish, dismembered on its surface from the north by the East Street 6 and a straight line into Quebrada Honda. It had the South 7 and South 9 avenues as west boundaries. To the south, the division started in Roca Tarpeya by the high rows of the hills until the top of La Charneca, whose descending line to Quebrada Honda forms its eastern boundary.

According to the 2001 census, San Agustín had a population of 40,840 inhabitants (INE, 2018), which represented 2.2% of the total population of the Capital District and an increase of 2,313 inhabitants (6%) in relation to the 1990 census, with a annual growth rate of 0.5%. This population is based on 11,122 homes, which represented 2.3% of the total District. The San Agustín parish has an area of approximately 121.65 hectares (calculation made digitally on aerial photo taken to scale for its measurement).

San Agustín consolidated morpholog-

ically as an urban sector towards the 1950s. Then came the periods of physical transformation, which in the late 1950s and the 1960s focused on road infrastructure. In the 1970s, the process was deepened by presidential decrees on urban renewal. After that, the importance of the San Agustín parish in this context, not only of the central part of Caracas but also of its metropolitan area, is represented by the urban icons contained in its territory, which include the Parque Central, an office and residential complex comprised of the tallest high-rises in the country; the Teresa Carreño Cultural Complex, the most important theater in the city; and an axis of prominent museums and other theaters.

On the other hand, the parish possesses a range of patrimonial icons: the Nuevo Circo bullring; El Helicoide, a structure meant to house a shopping mall; Los Caobos Park, the Cruz Diez museum, the Alba Hotel (former Caracas Hilton), and the Marín neighborhood, for being the musical center of the city.

In Caracas, there were no official plan-

ning references that established any criteria and/or typological guidelines for the design of neighborhoods. In San Agustín South, the slum component of San Agustín, expansion responded to a simpler principle: taking advantage of political junctures (or, in other terms, political offerings to build "working-class neighborhoods" and occupying problematic lots of land that could not be developed by the real estate or construction industries, normally difficult to access due to their proximity to the Guaire river. For the Caracas socio-historical system, the design conception of urbanization locates the more disadvantaged groups around the periphery of the city.

The role of the natural geographical medium in the establishment of urban settlements

The physical characteristics of the initial settlements of Caracas conditioned the subsequent structural evolution of roadways. The initial developments of the most affluent section of San Agustín (in the northern part of the neighborhood, with a population predominantly of low-middle and middle class) were

Limits of the parish San Agustín in Caracas center, 1936.
Source: Aerial photos Inst. Geog. National Simon Bolívar, facilitated by Infodoc, SEU, EACRV, FAU, UCV.

conceived to accommodate the use of private automobiles. On the contrary, in the case of the poorest section of the neighborhood, San Agustín South, roads were designed to accommodate collective or public means of transportation.

The hills of San Agustín South and its topographic relief as a natural barrier probably had a strong influence on the shape and spatial organization of the blocks. The need to adapt to the sinuosity of the valley—particularly in the point of contact between the flat surface of the land and the abrupt change of the relief with a greater slope—resulted in blocks with a variety of shapes and sizes.

Many of the communal services in the area (education, health, recreation, religion and security), appeared improvised within housing buildings to resolve demands and social struggles of the community.

San Agustín South introduces a clear precedent in terms of the production of slums in the hills of Caracas. "All of these slums have been populated, firstly, with families who, lacking guarantees of survival in the countryside, moved to the capital in search of a better life (Quintero, 2006: 12). It is difficult to establish exactly the population base of the slums of San Agustín South, due to the heterogeneity of their residents, the diversity of their origin, and the drivers that caused their settlement in the area (family relationships or friendship among residents, family growth, lack of income for rent, disputes between families or neighbors, etc.). The largest population came mainly from the Tuy valleys (Santa Lucía, Ocumare, Cúa, Charallave, Santa Teresa, etc.) and from the Barlovento region (Curiepe, San José, Río Chico, Higuerote, Tacarigua, Birongo, Suapire, etc.) of the Miranda state. Residents also came, although in smaller proportion, from the island of Margarita, other provinces of Venezuela, and abroad. However, afro-descendants were the group with the strongest presence since the 1940s, particularly in regard to the cultivation of their cultural heritage. "From Barlovento (...) we received contingents of blacks, descendants of African slaves with an unimaginable ancestral wealth. They populated San Agustín South with music and magic" (Quintero, 2006: 13).

The slums of San Agustín South, as non-formal settlements, do not comply with the orthodox conceptions of the urbanization process. They did not respond to a project previously prepared by architects, urban planners and engineers, or any conventional urban planning professional. Neither is the materialization of ideas, desires, empirical drawings of the owners of the land.

The slums of San Agustín South are located in a natural geographical context that is relatively easy to recognize, mainly because of its predominant relief, characterized by small colluvial valleys (popularly called "coves"). The area is surrounded by hills with steep slopes that run towards these colluvial valleys everywhere, except for the north, in which they open towards the Guaire river and the greater valley of Caracas.

The only hydrographic front of the districts of San Agustín South is the Guaire river.

1936   1945   1956

Evolution of the urbanization and growth of the parish in time. Source: Aerial photos Inst. Geog. National Simon Bolívar, facilitated by Infodoc, SEU, EACRV, FAU, UCV.

The other water flows come down from the hills only during rain, towards the colluvial valleys, causing natural disasters. The Guaire river was one of the most important resources for the economy of the neighborhoods of San Agustín.

The vegetation was very abundant in the hills of San Agustín South. This acted as a great attraction for the population that settled in them. More importantly, though, was the use of vegetation to identify slum sections or areas. "Why is the sub-slum Manguito so named? Because there was a mango tree nearby. And the sub-slum Mamón? Because there were mamoncillo trees. And the sub-slum Ceiba? Because there was a ceiba tree around. And the Charneca? Because there was a charneca tree that was sought after for its wood (Ontiveros, 1985: 138). Natural elements were adopted by the residents to define space identity and its different themes.

The external social space

The external social space in San Agustín South has connotations that go be-yond mere morphological physical-spatial dimensions (typology, size or form). Social and cultural character are clearly embedded in the memory of the population, which makes it a common factor to their identity as urban people, as citizens and as a collective. In fact, streets possess a didactic capacity capable of penetrating the entire population—men and women, from children to the elderly, from the illiterate to the intellectual. On the street you play and you learn.
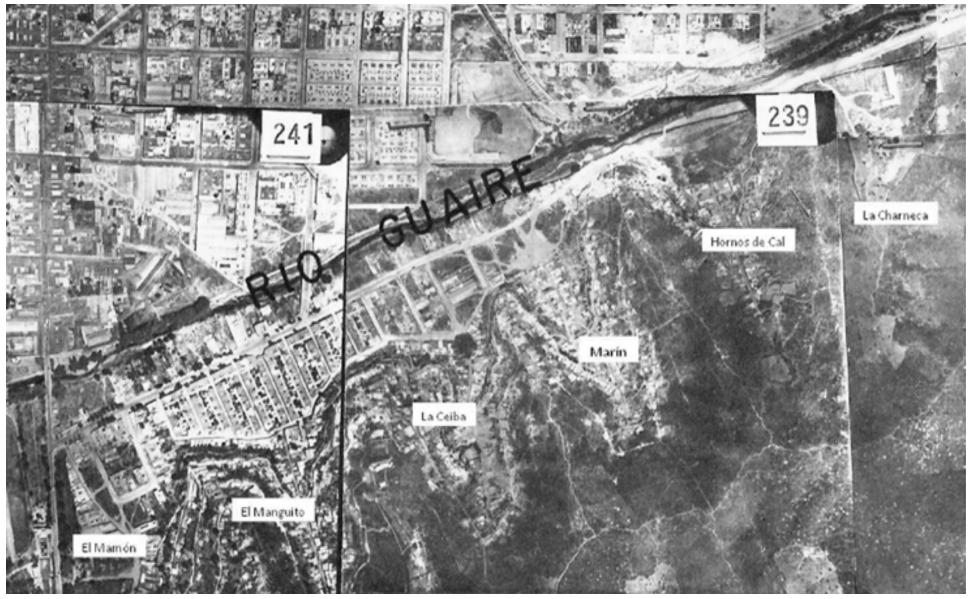
In San Agustín South, external roads are not only places of circulation, of collective transport or of informal work. They are also sociability spaces where the community gives "free rein" to their expressions of civic coexistence. This may allow us to affirm with Rauseo (2012) that, to some extent, the lack of social space inside the homes is compensated by people interactions in streets, passages, alleys, sidewalks and staircases. Community recreational activities are carried out daily without any mediating organization. They are spontaneous and superposed to formal events that may planned by community or extra-communi-ty organizations.

The external pedestrian space of circulation: sidewalks, passage, sidewalks and staircases

The hills of San Agustín South have a peculiarity in terms of pedestrian paths: slum initials were drawn on the main rows and topographic slopes in all their extension. This was done so that, later, slum areas could be clearly identified. The top of the rows became references for the population to delimit the hills surrounding the lower part of their settlements, thereby determining six micro slums: El Mamón, El Manguito, La Ceiba, Marín, Hornos de Cal and La Charneca. In slums, sidewalks are popularly called "streets," althrough they are exclusively for pedestrian traffic.

The external pedestrian spaces, like the streets and any external space adjacent to households, are the base of social interactions among residents. On the streets, it is common to see people gather around sidewalks and staircases. They grab chairs from their homes to sit outside and engage in long conversations,

Names of the slums in San Agustin. Source: Aerial photos Inst. Geog. National Simon Bolívar, facilitated by Infodoc, SEU, EACRV, FAU, UCV.

watch children play games, etc. The need for squares and open public spaces is notorious in society, regardless of social class.

External spaces serve a symbolic and informative function for citizens, giving identity to events and shaping history and people's conceptions of the world. In the slums of San Agustín South there was—and that continues to be case—a lack of spaces for leisure and social encounter, as known in more formal urban settings. Hence, the community uses external spaces of accessibility to cover their cultural, recreational and sociability needs. providing and consolidating in them the security that these activities favor due to their open .

In the upper part of the slum, the situation changes radically. Blocks, by adapting to the topography of the hills, have no relation with the shapes and sizes of those developed in the neighborhoods of northern San Agustín. In the hills, external spaces adapt to sloping topography and form blocks of more organic geometric shapes, which change

with the dynamics of the growth process and the interior divisions of the slum.

Another characteristic of slums, unlike neighborhoods, is the development of unique buildings—that is, there is no structure built with a prototype. Each house is unique: its architecture is not repeated, both in its internal spatial organization and in the composition of facades and other components, which could be similar but not the same to other households.

Activities

The population of San Agustín South recognizes the importance of leisure and incorporates it in their daily lives. Leisure is channeled by residents through people's interactions in external spaces—in streets, corners, staircases, sidewalks—but also in buildings enabled by the neighbors for it.

The artistic prowess contained within its limits, particularly music, is one of the most interesting traits of the San Agustín

South's population. In general, music is an activity that brings together the population of all slums to share the joys of life. "The man who lives in the countryside will express, through music, his contact with nature (...) that is, a rural music (...) Likewise, men who live in the city, and especially those of the popular sectors, have identified themselves with a more urban music that sings to the bustle, to the traffic, to the couple (...) to abandonment, to the malandro, to the corner (...) "(Ontiveros, 1985: 401).

In the slums of San Agustín South, people sing to freedom, love, enjoyment, acceptance, conformism, resignation, rage, death, and other significant things. Given the diversity of origins that converge in San Agustín South, many different genres are present is everyday cultural expressions—salsa, gaita, aguinaldos (or carols), samba, rock or rap—along with a variety of poetry, narratives and instruments.

Music is a common patrimonial factor to be found in San Agustín South. In this

site.
Ground Uses
Caracas | Venezuela

aereal view of Sa San Agustín (south)

commerce
- local retail trade
- offices
- non-manufacturing industry
- manufacturing industry

industry

communal services
- cementery
- cultural
- police

parks and recreation
- unifamily housing
- multifamily housing
- housing in informal settlements

residential
- single family homes
- multifamily housing
- housing in informal settlements

settlement, many important musical groups were created. Rafael Quintero (2006) affirms that "San Agustín is music, because dozens of groups have been formed there. Many musicians from the area have been part of other groups, both Venezuelan and foreign: three in the Venezuelan ensemble Trabuco (a kind of Creole All Star), three in the Colombian "Niche" band, two in an Indian orchestra in New York, and one with Eumir Deodato of Brazil. Usually, in the Oscar D'León orchestra there is always—at least—one representative from Marín. Among them, the experimental folkloric group called Madera stands out. It is an example and model of the social and cultural function of a community artistic group.

Madera reinstituted committed music and created a free school for children, Maderita. All of their important decisions were made in an assembly. Their main scenarios were schools, high schools, universities. However, this did not push them away from presenting performances of high quality, in every way out that they had to" (Quintero, 2016: 14).

Madera is one of the most conspicuous representatives in Venezuela of popular fusion urban music. The band resulted from the need to merge the musical history of the area in one articulated manifestation: "Its origins lie in the interpretation of the music of the coast, Cuban music from the 1940s and salsa (...) This fusion combines the past, the present and the future. It also makes us think that the emergence of Madera was about making sense of an expression of popular culture, so it could rebuild the musical memory of the slum and create connections with other slums of Caracas" (Ontiveros, 1985: 409).

But the most important part of any popular expression, is that the habitat—a household and the urban slum where it is planted—expresses people's feelings and their sociability: their customs, traditions, wills, values, origins, beliefs, knowledge, struggles, behaviors, ideas, inventions, skills, intuitions, calamities, and violence.

The meaning of the artistic culture in San Agustín

One of the particularities of the San Agustín parish is its cultural artistic roots, provided fundamentally by the population that lives in its various slums. Consequently, we are talking about a construct known as popular culture. The population that settled in San Agustín, far from losing sight of its origins, planted the seats of several artistic forms and other cultural manifestations expressed mainly in music and the performing arts. Residents developed culture and traditions linked to their ancestral beliefs and other content stemming from city life. As a result, new artistic forms originated, especially when considering the different fusions that took place in this environment.

San Agustín's slums represent a historic milestone of 20th-century Caracas in the field of urban artistic culture with a traditional and popular accent. This also includes popular manifestations of religious and pagan beliefs that have been cultivated since the beginning of the slum's existence by people

who imported them from their places of origin. Religious beliefs are very present in the communities of San Agustín South, which is clearly manifested by the places that altars and saints occupy inside households and other external spaces (staircases, sidewalks, etc.).

In general terms, San Agustín's traditions, customs, cultural roots, artistic manifestations, citizen struggles, organizational capacity, popular characters, urbanization processes, streets, and emblematic buildings are essential components of its urbanism and represent a morphological and patrimonial landmark of the city.

In the slums of San Agustín, music is a very important identity trait. However, within all of them, Marín stands out for its music traditions. In this regard, many musical groups were created and provided a space to those who needed to express themselves artistically. These bands were also essential to disseminate the culture of the slum across the city.

Musical culture in San Agustín. Source: https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/267477-viaje-san-agustin-barrio-cultural-caracas

Musical culture in San Agustín. Source: https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/267477-viaje-san-agustin-barrio-cultural-caracas

.CONNECTING THE DOTS

In light of the theoretical components offered in the previous sub-sections, the project hereby presented seeks capitalizes on the socially-constructed identity of the community and the value of its artistic expressions to build bridges between the slum and the city. As a response to the great polarization and territorialization of conflict in Caracas as a result of current political struggles, bridging the gaps between slums and mainstream urban life—and, more specifically, between the cultures of two critical social subjects—is of extreme importance to promote peace, social cohesion and urban integration.

Musicians in Metrocable. Source: https://cronicassinfiltro.wordpress.com/2016/11/22/san-agustin-el-ritmo-del-cambio/
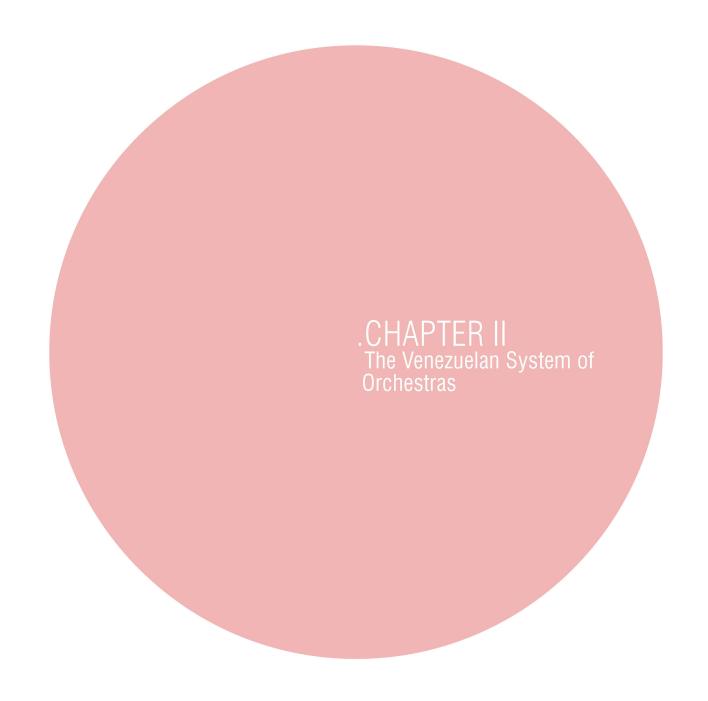

Musicians in Metrocable. Source: https://cronicassinfiltro.wordpress.com/2016/11/22/san-agustin-el-ritmo-del-cambio/

Streets in San Agustín. Source: https://www.ludantia.org/la-escalera-de-la-quinta-calle

Streets in San Agustín. Source: https://www.ludantia.org/la-escalera-de-la-quinta-calle

.CHAPTER II
The Venezuelan System of Orchestras

The Venezuelan System of Orchestras—commonly known as El Sistema or "the system" for its translation to English—is one of the longest and most successful social projects ever implemented by the Venezuelan state. This statement may be often confusing for those external observers who are exposed to it for the very first time, since the initiative itself may be traditionally understood as a cultural endeavor, and not so much as a tool for sustainable development.

Back in 1975, José Antonio Abreu, a Venezuelan economist and musician born in the Andean state of Táchira, called for the first rehearsal of a national youth ensemble, which was intended to meet at a parking lot of a downtown neighborhood in Caracas. Given the lack of positions available for local musicians in Venezuelan orchestras, most of which were taken for foreigners, the idea of Abreu started attracting skeptical individual, who did not ful-

ly grasp the intention of these events but were pleased about the possibility to play. Abreu promised the students who showed up for the first rehearsal—about 11 to 12, as per some historiographic accounts—that they would become members of the most important orchestra of the country. This comment, not taken too seriously by the first cohort of Abreu disciples, represented the very roots of a movement that would formalize the collective practice of music as an avenue for training internationally renowned artists, democratizing the access to the arts, strengthening of citizen values, and promoting social development (IADB, 2007; Govias, 2010; Mora-Brito, 2011).

Today, after 43 years of existence, El Sistema has created a vast network of music education services that provide training to more than 900,000 children through 1,680 children and youth orchestras, 166 folk groups, 1,390 choirs, 1,983 initiation ensembles, and a cadre of 10,000 teachers distributed across every state of Venezuela. Approximately 75% of the program beneficiaries live under the international poverty line and inhabit remote areas,

normally small cities or towns located far from major urban centers (Fundamusical Simón Bolívar, 2018). Another important feature of El Sistema is that it covers a variety of key populations, including children and youth with special needs and chronic diseases, indigenous groups, and inmates.

The key question, then, is to understand how this program, which started with a strict focus on music and a dozen or so of musicians, derived in an internationally renowned program whose practices and philosophy are being replicated in more than 50 countries, and which has given birth to an education and social development movement that is changing the lives of millions of children and youth around the world (Tunstall and Booth, 2017).

.BUILDING ARTISTIC VIRTUE AND SOCIAL DE-VELOPMENT—THE INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION OF EL SISTEMA

Abreu was convinced that his incipient efforts around the orchestra he had just formed would pay great dividends. The Juan José Lan-

daeta Orchestra, as it was called at the time, made its first debut in Caracas in 1975 and then headed to the International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1976, where it won the first prize of the competition. This bold move caught the attention of politicians and cultural managers in Venezuela who were wondering about the origin and trajectory of these musicians (Borzacchini, 2004). It was somewhat surprising that a small group of young performers, who were not affiliated to any official institution, would be capable of achieving such important goals in such a short time. This caught the attention of president Carlos Andrés Peréz and his administration.

At first, the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela—as it was called after 1976—represented a privately-funded initiative. Abreu was able to garner enough support from the government to fund the Orchestra's first tours, but then managed to turn the program into a fully state-sponsored project. The Fundación del Estado para la Orquesta Juvenil de Venezuela—or the State Foundation for the Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, FEONJV—provided

José Antoni Abreu Source: http://www.eluniversal.com/suplementos/3814/jose-antonio-abreu-maestro-maestros

José Antonio Abreu and part of the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Source: https://www.panorama.com.ve/curiosidades/Hace-79-anos-nacio-el-maestro-Jose-Antonio-Abreu-20180507-0016.html

the ensemble with a solid institutional and funding platform, which later ensured a steady budgetary and programmatic expansion. In 1996 the organization changed its name to the Fundación del Estado para el Sistema Nacional de Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela—or the State Foundation of the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela, FESNOJIV—and then, in 2011, to the Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar—or the Simón Bolívar Music Foundation, FMSB (Borzacchini, 2004; Mora-Brito, 2011). From a dozen of students, the program had 300 registered beneficiaries toward the end of 1976 and almost 1 million in 2018.

As the program evolved, it was always somewhat difficult for the Venezuelan state to find the right jurisdiction to manage this foundation. For Abreu, it was absolutely clear that the program could not be administered by the Ministry of Culture, but rather by public institutions directly associated with national planning and development. The reason was simple, although not entirely straightforward for policy-makers in Venezuela: Abreu and his follow-

ers had decided to develop a music education methodology that posited the collective practice of music as a means to learn the execution of an instrument, later discovering that this approach would achieve highly desirable results in other spheres. While children and youth were practicing in the orchestra with other fellow students, this experience would provide them with a safe place to study and play, strengthen or reinforce their work ethics, build intra-community solidarity, understand the value of coordination, and find inspiration in beauty. When the personal situation of these children, the majority of which came from rather humble backgrounds, is factored in, the results are even more powerful.

As the effects of El Sistema were systematically measured, Abreu and his team were more aware of the outcomes they were achieving in the mid to long term. Children and youth that came regularly to the program's training center—also known as núcleos—would do better and stay longer at school, stay away from drug consumption and organized crime, increase their self-esteem, and congregate

their families and communities around music. On a parallel track, El Sistema was also proving very successful in further advancing the talent of individuals who would later become world-class performers. While is some cases program beneficiaries would not to follow a career in music, taking with them some of the intangible benefits promoted by El Sistema, others would continue growing in the artistic scene and receiving the support they needed to excel in their occupation. Qualifying students would then start their progression towards the top of the pyramid, joining the best orchestras of in country, usually headquartered in Caracas.

These orchestras, managed directly by FSMB or its institutional predecessors, were the breeding grounds for internationally renowned musicians such as Gustavo Dudamel, Christian Vásquez, Diego Matheuz, Jhoanna Sierralta, Francisco Payare and Edicson Ruiz, among many others, who have gained praise and notoriety on the most revered stages of the world. Thus, it was also demonstrated that the program could instill artistic prowess in those who had an innate talent or decided

to pursue a profession in music performance. The involvement of other classic music stars as sponsors of El Sistema—e.g., Simon Rattle, Claudio Abaddo, Yo-Yo Ma, Giuseppe Sinopoli, just to mention a few—increased its visibility and captured the attention of music teachers, arts managers and foreign governments alike.

.BEYOND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

Beyond these factors, there is one in particular that makes this program even more interesting and noteworthy. Venezuelan democracy was always recognized for being stable and robust, particularly between 1960 and 1983, but then spiraled into a severe governance crisis that promoted different—and at times draconian—stabilization policies and policies. The traditional bipartisan system, characterized by the distribution of oil revenue as a mechanism to achieve social consensus, reached its full demise in 1998, exerting tremendous socioeconomic and political pressures on the population and giving way to the emergence of left-wing movements that promised profound changes in the direction of the

José Antoni Abreu Source: http://www.eluniversal.com/suplementos/3814/jose-antonio-abreu-maestro-maestros

José Antonio Abreu and part of the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Source: https://www.panorama.com.ve/curiosidades/Hace-79-anos-nacio-el-maestro-Jose-Antonio-Abreu-20180507-0016.html

country. In the middle of this complex dynamic, public resource contracted and expanded based on governmental mismanagement or macroeconomic conditions, mostly responding to the fluctuation of oil prices and policy frameworks applied by the state to tackle inflation, poverty and inequality (López-Maya, 2006).

In this context, El Sistema remained strong and continued growing at a sustained rate, enduring major political and funding crises, and providing music education services to its beneficiaries without major disruptions. This does not mean that the program was entirely exempt from the impact of economic factors—as it saw its budget reduced in multiple occasions—, but it kept moving forward in spite of the difficult circumstances it faced. The program has survived eight presidential administrations and has kept itself fairly removed from any given political ideology, a trait that some studies identified as one of the foundations of its great success (Mora-Brito, 2011). Other success factors, as explained by Mora-Brito (2011) include commitment to its organiza-

tional mission, the use of various adaptation mechanisms, a strong central leadership, and highly flexible planning instruments.

Because of the program's ability to place itself above political conflict and to phase a highly fluctuating reality with creative and ad-hoc solutions, El Sistema has circumvented the difficulties and instability of the Venezuelan context and congregated people with different views under the same roof. This does not mean, by any standard, that El Sistema was completely exonerated from the conflict that ensued with the chavista and madurista periods of Venezuelan politics. While the program is a strong beacon of hope for the country, a pocket of bureaucratic efficiency, and a highly respected institution, it has been under tremendous pressure to lead public demonstrations in support of the current government, which has placed the program and its leadership in a very difficult position. While over 85% of El Sistema´s funding comes from official sources, the program's leadership has always insisted that this initiative belongs to the state and not a particular administration. However, pressures

continue; and even more so after the passing of José Antonio Abreu in April of 2018.

.CONNECTING THE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE AS CATALYSTS OF SOCIAL COHESION

Banking on the value of El Sistema as the quintessential model of social consensus and cohesion in Venezuela, the project presented in this study seeks to build stronger integration between urban centers and peripheral areas—specifically San Agustín South—through the development of a performing arts center.

El Sistema has been particularly skillful in bridging the gap between the so-called "highbrow culture" and the general population, promoting a true and legitimate democratization of the arts. By providing access to music in every corner of the country, the arts have become a public good that have the intrinsic capacity of elevating collective morale, creating a sense of community, and inspiring beauty. Music has also been used as a tool to eliminate political and social differences and bring together segments of the population that continue to be divided by geo-

graphical (and, in some case, ideological) barriers.

That said, the structure presented in this project seeks to serve as a meeting point for pluralism and peaceful coexistence, which is clearly depicted in the representation of three buildings that seek to break the boundaries between urban spaces and informal settlements taking advantage of city limits, natural landmarks, the cultural features of the intervened community, and the philosophy of the Venezuelan System of Orchestras.

The project also connects important public spaces of the city—the Botanical Garden of Caracas, the Universidad Central de Venezuela, and even the Parque Los Caobos, the Centro de Acción Social por la Música (the main theater and pedagogical center of El Sistema), and the Teresa Carreño Cultural Complex—with a highly isolated area such a San Agustín south. In this spirit of El Sistema, the project brings the arts closer to those who can benefit from it the most and breaks urban limits that separate two worlds living under the rubric of the same city.

José Antoni Abreu Source: http://www.eluniversal.com/suplementos/3814/jose-antonio-abreu-maestro-maestros

José Antonio Abreu and part of the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Source: https://www.panorama.com.ve/curiosidades/Hace-79-anos-nacio-el-maestro-Jose-Antonio-Abreu-20180507-0016.html

.CHAPTER III
social architecture

.EXPANDING ON THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL COHESION

.URBAN SEGREGATION AND INEQUALITY

In recent decades, there has been a great global concern over the impact of poverty, exclusion and inequality, focusing the attention of multilateral organizations, governments and other public institutions on the need to achieve better social welfare and sustainable development patterns. These problems have manifested themselves forcefully in regions like Latin America and the Caribbean, where low income and employment rates affect the population at large. This also creates disparities in access to services, education, security, technology, public spaces and other factors. Even though policies implemented over the last few years have improved the overall quality of life of citizens, the gap between the rich and the poor—also represented as an urban divide—remains alarmingly wide.

In some cities, policies applied to address these problems are usually based on unidirectional perspectives around the economic, political and social issues, obviating the role of the communities as drivers of their own devel-

opment. Cases like this occur in political environments where citizen participation appears more as a theoretical approach than a regular practice. This situation causes the adaptation of the population to the inclusion systems promoted by governments and not the opposite (Cuellar, 2010; Montaner and Muxí, 2012).

To understand some factors that can cause inequality in cities, UN Habitat and the CAF (2014) often discuss the impacts of so-called "geographies of inequality," thereby exposing policies that deepen the urban divide and translating this definition into a more tangible and identifiable city term: exclusionary zoning—that is, for example, the provision of public goods and services in a selective manner, the application of regressive local taxes, the differentiated assignment of housing, and social and politically exclusionary approaches toward disadvantaged groups. (Figure 1)

From this concept of geography, it can be appreciated how physical spaces play a fundamental role for building equalities in cities. The space becomes an actor by itself that gen-

erates results that affect production and consumption, and also alters flows and relations (UN Habitat, 2014), a role that implies citizen participation and requires the recognition of individuals and communities as a center of every intervention. This statement also accepts the contributions of architecture and urbanism as areas of state action that are inextricably linked to people's quality of life (CAF, 2010; Montaner and Muxí, 2012).

SPACE

Creates expanded reproduction conditions of wealth for some and conditions of permanent reproduction of poverty for others

Establish or reaffirm a tacit social division
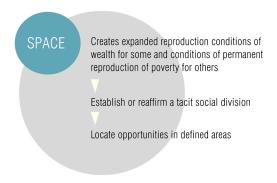
Locate opportunities in defined areas

Figure 1: Geography of Inequality. Source: UN Habitat (2014)

After explaining this social panorama and clarifying the role of architecture and urbanism in the solution of major development problems, it is worth asking: Is there a concept that encompasses all mechanisms to address these "geographies of inequality"?

Social cohesion is a term commonly used in public policies, and planning and governmental efforts. Despite its ambiguity, since its meaning varies according to the context in which it is elicited, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) published its definition in "Social cohesion: Inclusion and sense of belonging in Latin America and the Caribbean" (2007). Then, as per this report, "[s]ocial cohesion is defined as the dialectic between instituted mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion and the responses, perceptions and dispositions of citizenship in the way it operates" (ECLAC, 2007).

This concept involves key words and expressions such as integration, inclusion, innovation and social dynamics, citizen rights, sense of belonging, and citizen participation, all of which are part of the action against social inequality.

The geographies of inequality can be addressed through these four areas that define social cohesion, from which more specific actions emerge in the category of mechanisms to

SOCIAL COHESION

Responses and perceptions of citizens

SOCIAL CAPITAL
Collection of social agents
Capacity for collective action and group work

SOCIAL ETHICS
Values system
Morals of individuals
Solidarity levels

Mechanisms

SOCIAL INCLUSION
Promotes systems of social integration
Self-determination of the factors involved

SOCIAL INTEGRATION
System that promotes equal opportunities

Figure 2: Scheme of the semantic universe of Social Cohesion. Information taken from ECLAC (2007)

positively increase the responses and perceptions of citizens. UN Habitat (2014) defines an "urban action framework" as a way of focusing public policies towards these four aspects, directly involving architecture and urbanism as promoters of social cohesion to reduce the aforementioned problems. (Figure 3)

The areas of spatial connection and public spaces themselves are ways of materializing mechanisms of inclusion. Therefore, architects and/or urbanists can design social integration initiatives to bolster social cohesion in communities and, in turn, reduce the impact of the geography of inequality.

These mechanisms, together with active citizen participation, can generate an increase in citizen's perceptions, responses and dispositions, eventually creating a greater sense of belonging, activation of social dynamics, and promotion of citizen rights. "Urban planning does not guarantee full citizen integration, (...) but it does create conditions that considerably facilitate citizen integration, or on the contrary they are factors of marginalization"

(Borja, 2013)

.SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Before the industrial revolution, the practices of self-management and self-construction were the main ways people were provided with housing. With the technical developments and the growth of the economy, these practices were left to the most disadvantaged people and gradually disappeared from the formal procedures of the economy and the city. With the urban expansion of the last five decades, the phenomenon of informal housing and informal settlements has grown significantly. In Latin America more than 75% of the population lived in cities in 2001 and it was estimated that more than 30% (128 million people) of the urban population of the continent was living in conditions defined by the United Nations for human settlements as informal settlements (UNCHS, 2003: 14). The figures will increase in the future when new urban populations require housing, public services and social protection.

Informal settlements not only comprise a large portion of Latin American cities, but are also a dynamic part of them, in physical, social and cultural terms. Romero, Mesías and others (2004) explain how the production of these settlements is in the hands of the people, in what they call "social production of habitat," and that far from being a problem, it can be considered a legitimate alternative (Romero, Mesías et al., 2004: 29).

This is also the most widespread form used in Latin America to access urban and housing services. Fiori and Brandao (2010) argue that "[u]rban informality is inextricably woven into the city as a whole—in all scales and levels—and can also be seen as another way of being in the city and build it" (Fiori and Brandao, 2010: 188). Informal settlements can also be seen as innovative and creative: "Today we recognize the innovative genius of low-income households, which take advantage of specific cultural opportunities to survive and improve their living conditions" (AlSayyad, 1993: 5).

.THE COMMUNAL MEANING OF PUBLIC SPACE

PERFORMANCE
AREA

1. Spatial connection: The improvement of spatial connection establi-
shes a link between land use and accessibility, eliminates the mismatch
between residential and working areas, and reduces the fracture that
divide informal and consolidated areas.

2. Social cohesion/public space: Various experiences show that public
space is an instrument to create cohesion and encourage the develop-
ment of social capital. It also helps to consolidate an identity and sense
of belonging, as well as facilitating coexistence and the development of
community solidarity. The policies to increase the quantity and quality of
public spaces translate into an improvement in the quality of life of citi-
zens and, in the medium term, in the creation of a sense of respect
towards common goods.

3. Capacities (Access to employment)

4. Institutional coordination (Synergy between local and national

Figure 3: Scheme of the Performance Area. Information taken from ECLAC (2007)

Public spaces in informal settlements consist of the outer-most perimeter that surrounds homes and to which people living in the area have daily access. It is a family space, full of meaning for the community, with symbolic value for a few; a place where the characteristics, norms and values of specific social groups are recognized. Due to its size and scale, these public spaces allow people to meet each other face to face and carry out actions guided by affection, mutual commitment and recreation.

The main public spaces of informal settlements are streets and parks or courts. Streets can become stairs, adapting to the steep topography that we find in many settlements. Parks include courts—or sports facilities—, other recreational areas and, sometimes, paved spaces and greenery. The large paved areas found in other parts of the city—known as squares, inherited from the colonial era—do not exist in these settlements. The square "has been subject to aesthetic inspiration and controversy since its inception [...] It also provides a physical, social and metaphorical space for the public debate on governance, cultural iden-

tity and citizenship" (Low, 2000: 32-33).

The street is the basic unit of public space in any settlement. Streets are used to connect, to carry out commercial activities, and also to channel most social and cultural expressions: "Through streets, urban life flows in neighborhoods; through them runs love, hatred, happiness, sadness and all the forces that move the lives of the people of the neighborhood" (Low, 2000: 6). Streets work in close relationship with the domestic and commercial covered spaces. They are also the extension of people's homes. The border between the open/closed spaces or between the exterior/interior is a thin line. In functional terms, they are oriented towards recreation, but their use and meaning go much further. As with the streets, they have social and cultural uses. Another important characteristic of the open/public spots in informal settlements is the existence of other spaces that do not conform to the criterion of public urban spaces but that, due to their use and importance, are very close to it.

Public spaces in this context tend to

be used more intensively and exhibit more significant dynamics than those in high-class residential environments. In addition, they are widely characterized by recreation: "Passive recreation typical of formal city landscapes is not a priority in informal contexts" (Beardsley and Werthmann, 2008: 33). However, perhaps the most important feature of these spaces is their close relationship with the people who live around them.

At an urban and architectural level, each society has incorporated the use of technology and particular development processes to denote its evolution. As societies become more complex, with the city as a milestone that defines them and around which individuals fulfill their different social functions, an urban process is generated as a way to respond to the need for social organization. In this context, architecture is a manifestation of the economic, political, social and cultural imperatives that predominate in a given time, with the ability to influence the identity of individuals.

Venezuela shows very changing social

scenarios and architecture does not escape this dynamic environment. Reality configures a different map of controversies and problems present in the communities, which broadens the panorama of demands. Settlements appear as a structure of urban regeneration that establish other logics of organizing and living collectively. In those spaces, it is possible to rethink the construction of the city and create new urban paradigms.

Alejandro Haiek from Lab.Pro.Fab, believes that the self-organization of settlement residents is synonymous with the construction of a new state. He indicated that ''[d]emocracy based on the model of political representation is exhausted. Betting on the transformation of the structure of the pyramidal hierarchical state and creating a new system of horizontal power, articulated by multiple local organizations that are capable of managing their own environment, are the challenges of today's society". (Haiek, 2016, https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/224221-arquitectura-social-venezuela-premiada-bienal)

Concurrently, Gabriel Visconti from Aga Estudio has indicated that an architect should not give up his status as a citizen. "The role of the architect must change the vision of the expert to that of the citizen and joint common problems. Cross-technical expertise with popular knowledge, hybridizing knowledge and experiences as instruments for social empowerment. Architecture is not an end in itself, but a support for processes that go beyond infrastructure" (Visconti, 2016, https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/224221-arquitectura-social-venezuela-premiada-bienal)

Emphasizing the previous points, it is clear that architecture is not only about creating spaces with defined uses for specific users. It also has the power to create changes in society. Beyond transforming material aspects, architecture is able to transform the customs and views of human beings. It has the power to break barriers and limits imposed by the same society within a common space

.PROJECT REFERENCES

In general, when we refer to interventions in informal settlements, the development of architectural projects revolves around the specific needs of its residents. The city is not really involved in these activities: it only includes the community in particular, generating more division between the life of the city and the settlement itself. Some examples are presented in the following sections to illustrate how public infrastructure—or architectural work—has impacted informal settlements or is originated to serve it exclusively.

In the presentation of cases that follows, this study references projects that, on one hand, are created to serve specific community needs and, on the other, seek to break the barrier between settlement and city. The structures proposed as part of project—the study itself—are based on the second type of intervention.

.CASE 1:
INTERVENTIONS FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

.Multiprogram Ship / Vertical system of sports and cultural platforms

Architect: LAB.PRO.FAB | Alejandro Haiek Coll
Location: Lomas de Urdaneta, Catia, Caracas, Venezuela
Photography: Iwan Baan | LAB.PRO.FAB
Year: 2007
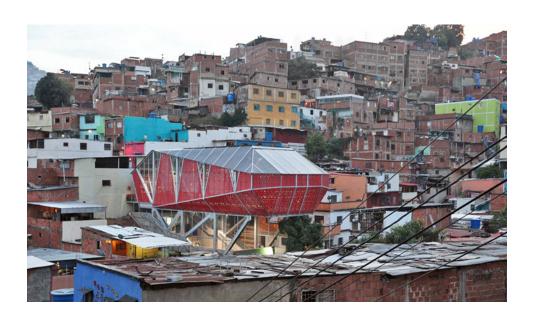
This urban device emerges as an autonomous socio-productive infrastructure, promoted by the community with the support of the local government. It consolidates a network of cultural, sports and welfare spaces in the popular sectors of Caracas. As if it were a microsurgery, this element is part of the protocols of active participation and physical rehabilitation in self-built areas, with the help of the Communal Councils. [1]

These legally constituted neighborhood cells have the territorial power to map, discuss, evaluate, diagnose and prioritize the problems and needs of the neighborhood, and channel public resources from the results of the collective discussion.

The structure extends through three levels of platforms, which house multiple programs. The first level, of direct contact with the street, is for medical and assistance services; the second, connected to the staircase, is a facility for multiple uses; and the third is a raised court for sports activities.

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[1] Communal Councils represent the smallest unit of popular power as per the participatory democracy model defined by Hugo Chávez after 2006 (López-Maya, 2006).

.PROJECT REFERENCES

.Factory of Culture: Grotão

Architect: Urban-Think Tank
Location: Paraisópolis, São Paulo, Brazil
Status: Expected Completion 2016
Year: 2009-Ongoing

When social infrastructure is well designed has the prospective to not only bring main services and opportunities to underprivileged areas, but also act as a dominant promoter for future urban progress. Paraisópolis is located in southwest São Paulo, next to Morumbi, one of the richest areas in the city. Nearly 80,000 people now live on the region in a dense, informal settlement covering less than one square kilometer.

While they were interviewing the community, U-TT learned of a local music association expecting to construct a new rehearsal and performance center. They developed a proposal that would transform an unreachable void within the dense fabric into a productive and vibrant community center.

The architects of Urban Think Tank said: "The design centers on a music and dance school in the lower zone, which stacks diverse programs to maximize site potential. These include an open theater, performance hall, practice and rehearsal spaces, studios, and classrooms.

The other key component is a new terraced landscape, which in addition to stabilizing the sloped terrain and preventing further erosion, will transform Grotão into a natural arena, encouraging diverse community participation, and re-establishing connections through the site to the wider neighborhood. In this way, the project will expand cultural programs into the community, while forming a new network that serves youth from all levels of society. The municipal government soon signed on to the project, and planned new social housing facilities nearby for residents currently living precariously on the site. Construction began in 2014 and is estimated to be completed by the end of 2016".

Grass

Grass Pavers

Agriculture

.1100 Multifunctional Ceiba

Arquitects: AGA ESTUDIO: Gabriel Visconti, Ana Morales, Laura Di Benedetto, Rolando Campos and PICO: Stevenson Piña, Marcos Coronel Location: Canaima Neighborhood - Los Frailes Catia Caracas. Venezuela.
Year: 2015

The 1100 project system is based on articulated methodologies of organization, design, construction and management, of permanent open participation, adjusting to the needs, demands and organic capacities of the Canaima and Los Frailes communities in Catia, one of the largest slums and informal settlements in Caracas.

Los Frailes de Catia had a sizeable piece of unoccupied land in the center of the area. This space was kept empty by residents themselves for over twenty years to build a collectively-owned structure. The terrain is quite uneven, suggesting the configuration of several squares in a plot that already has the characteristics of multiple terraces. The construction improves the precarious infrastructures of services, access to houses, and walkways weakened by heavy use.

La Ceiba is a multipurpose space for recreational and formative activities, built in common agreement between the residents of the Canaima and Los Frailes communities.

.PROJECT REFERENCES

.Metro Cable San Agustín

Architects: Urban-Think Tank
Location: San Agustín, Caracas, Venezuela
Year: 2010

Informal settlements in Caracas present particular challenges for the execution of transport infrastructure works, caused mainly by the mountainous terrain and the forms of occupation and ownership of these spaces. As an intelligent and efficient option, the implementation of a cable car system was considered to allow the movement of people with difficulties in accessing the main transportation network of the city.

The cableway has a length of 2.1 km and uses a funicular system with a capacity of 8 passengers per cabin. The total capacity of the system is estimated at approximately 1,200 people per hour in each direction.

The five stations of the Metro Cable system have a series of fundamental basic components in common, namely: platform levels, access ramps, well-defined circulation patterns, and materials and structural elements. However, due to corruption during the construction process, the project did not result as originally planned. Each station should have additional configuration and functions. The objective was to include cultural and social spaces as well as administrative offices. The construction of public spaces, a vertical gym, a supermarket and a nursery were also planned.

.PROJECT REFERENCES

.CASE 2:
INTERVENTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY + THE CITY

This is the opposite case to the previous ones, this intervention in Medellín shows that it is possible to integrate the neighborhood community with the city, thanks to the development and implementation of buildings and urban interventions that promote the social integration of all the inhabitants of the city.

.Medellín: Architecture and urban planning as tools for social development

In the 1990s, Medellín was one of the most dangerous cities in the world due to the violence caused by the activities of drug cartels and the conflicts between communist and paramilitary guerrillas.

Thanks to the joint and comprehensive work between planners, urban designers and politicians, Medellín took a big step forward to rescue areas of the city that had previously been ignored. The city became a laboratory of innovation and urban transformation as a result of sustained planning processes, inclusive policy design processes, and successful schemes of institutional innovation.

Traditionally, urban development projects in Colombia focused on finding concrete solutions to physical problems. Medellín opted this time for a new strategy to use architecture and urbanism as a tool for social development and integration.

To this day, the perception of the safety of its residents is no longer the same as before, the urban and social development of the city is remarkable, the number of violent incidents has decreased, and unemployment rates have plummeted. The results are visible not only in the physical changes of the city but also in the functional and social transformations it has suffered, where a change of attitude and pride on the part of its inhabitants is verified.

The urban development of Medellín responded to a comprehensive strategy seeking solutions to mobility, governance and education, along with the recovery of public spaces and green areas. The objective of this strategy was to recover the poorest sectors of the city that until recently were dominated by armed groups.

The first Integral Urban Project was carried out in the northeast of the city, with the aim of improving the mobility of residents. It consisted in the execution of a Metro Cable and the urban development around the metro stations, such as the Parque Biblioteca España. The Metro Cable emerged as a key and necessary element to connect the popular settlements located on the slopes of the city with the metro network in the lower valley, near the river. This reduced the travel time from more than an hour to just ten minutes, benefiting more than 134,000 people. When dealing with projects that involve uneven lands, the topography of Medellín had to be better understood to provide urban solutions, since it required extreme alternatives to solve problems of space and mobility. (Medellin: Modelo de Transformación Urbana: https://issuu.com/urbameafit/docs/medell__n_modelo_de_transformaci__n)

Another mobility project that deserves attention is the network of public and free escalators placed in the most inclined parts of the Commune 13. The staircase, 384 meters long, is divided into six routes connecting the commune with one of the metro stations of Medellín. (Medellin: Modelo de Transformación Urbana: https://issuu.com/urbameafit/docs/medell__n_modelo_de_transformaci__n)

In spite of this progress, the challenges of the city are too complex to have them solved in a short period of time. The development process of the metropolitan area of Medellín continues to advance in a new and positive direction. Thus, this city set a successful precedent in the urban development of large cities in emerging countries. Architecture has not only transformed Medellín but has also changed the ways of practicing architecture, thereby encouraging the designing of public spaces with a more people-focused approach.

.PROJECT REFERENCES

.Incremental Housing Strategy in India

Architects: Filipe Balestra & Sara Göransson
Location: Netaji Nagar, Pune, India
Year: 2009

Architects Filipe Balestra and Göransson Sara have developed a strategy to develop informal settlements in permanent urban districts through a process of gradual improvement of existing housing instead of demolition and reconstruction.

Developed in Bombay, India, the incremental Housing Strategy is designed to allow districts to develop and improve organically without displacing or uprooting communities.

A pilot project will be carried out in Pune, India, but the architects believe that the strategy could be implemented in any country with similar urban conditions.
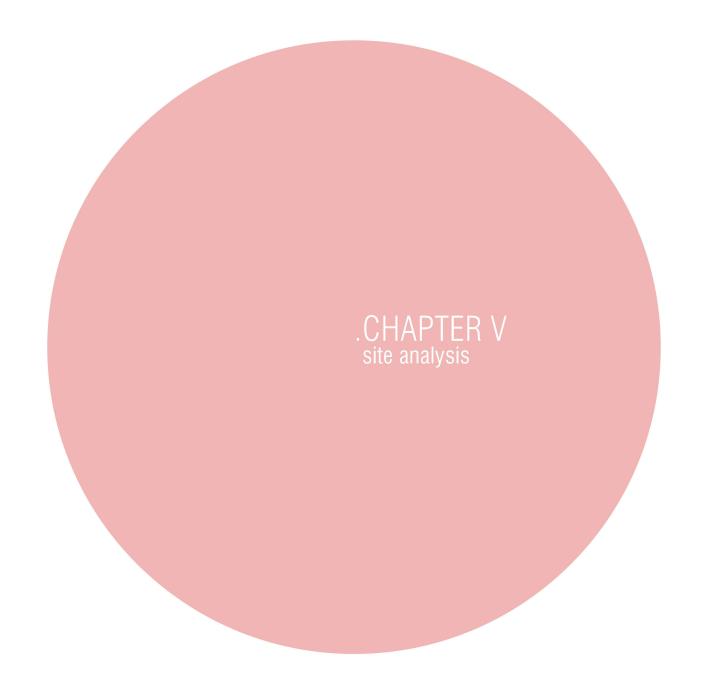
The architects have developed three types of housing consisting of simple porticos that allow subsequent expansion.

The strategy strengthens the informal economy, and aims to accelerate the legalization of low-income housing. The communities are asked to commit to the construction process to personalize each house, that is, each family will paint the house the color they want.

.CHAPTER V
site analysis

.GENERAL LIMITS
SAN AGUSTÍN
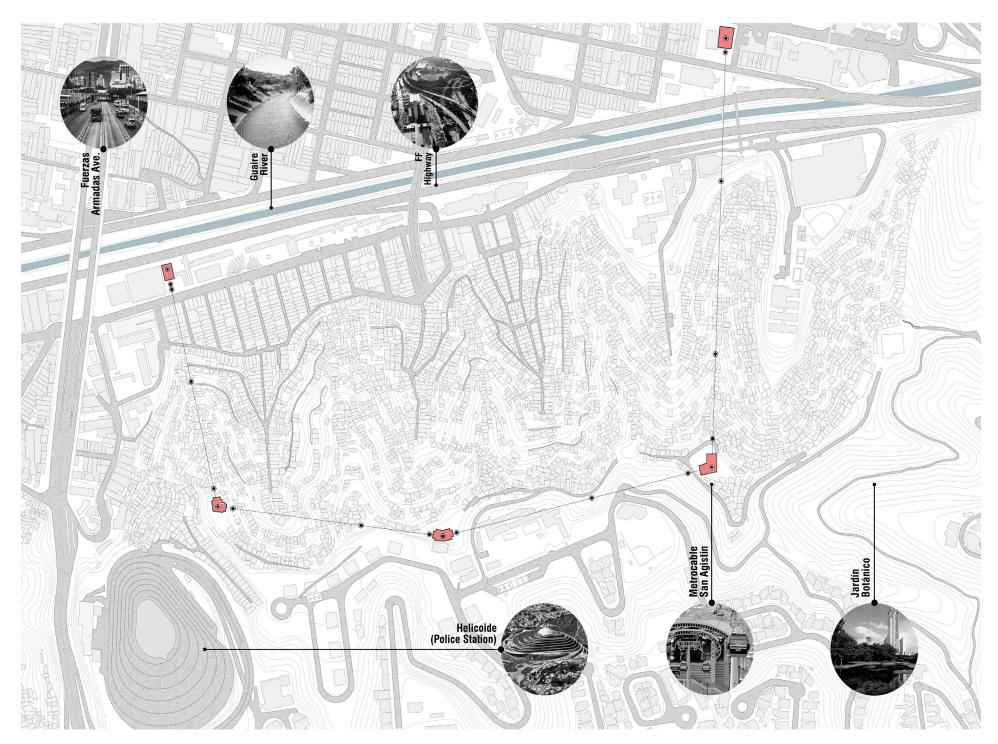
San Agustín is a neighborhood that is defined by strong limits:

To the north is the Francisco Fajardo Highway and The Guaire River, then to the East it limits with the Botanical Garden, to the west with the Armed Forces Avenue and to the South with Las Acacias neirbohood, El Helicoide (Police Station) and the Metrocable stations.

All these conditions generate a contained zone, excluding the area from the rest of the daily activities of the city.

José Antoni Abreu Source: http://www.eluniversal.com/suplementos/3814/jose-antonio-abreu-maestro-maestros

Fuerzas
Armadas Ave.

Guaire
River

FF
Highway

Metrocable
San Agistín

Jardín
Botánico

Helicoide
(Police Station)
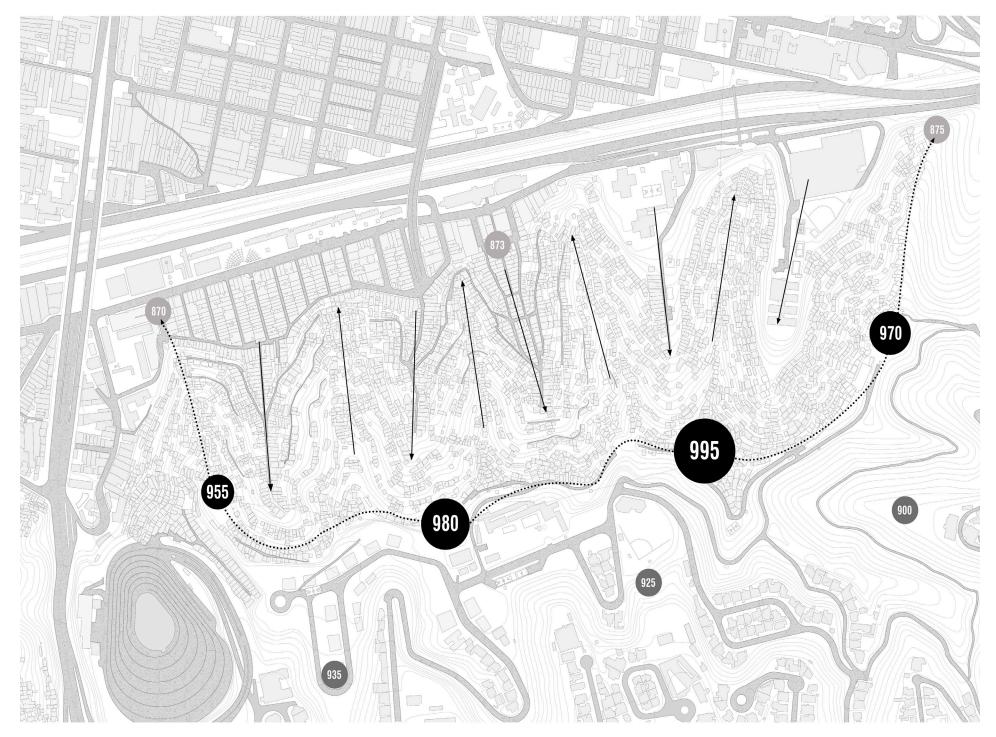
.SITE HEIGHTS
SAN AGUSTÍN

The heights of the site vary between 870 and 995 above sea level. Locating Metrocable's transportation system stations on the highest peaks in the area.

Source: https://www.google.com/maps
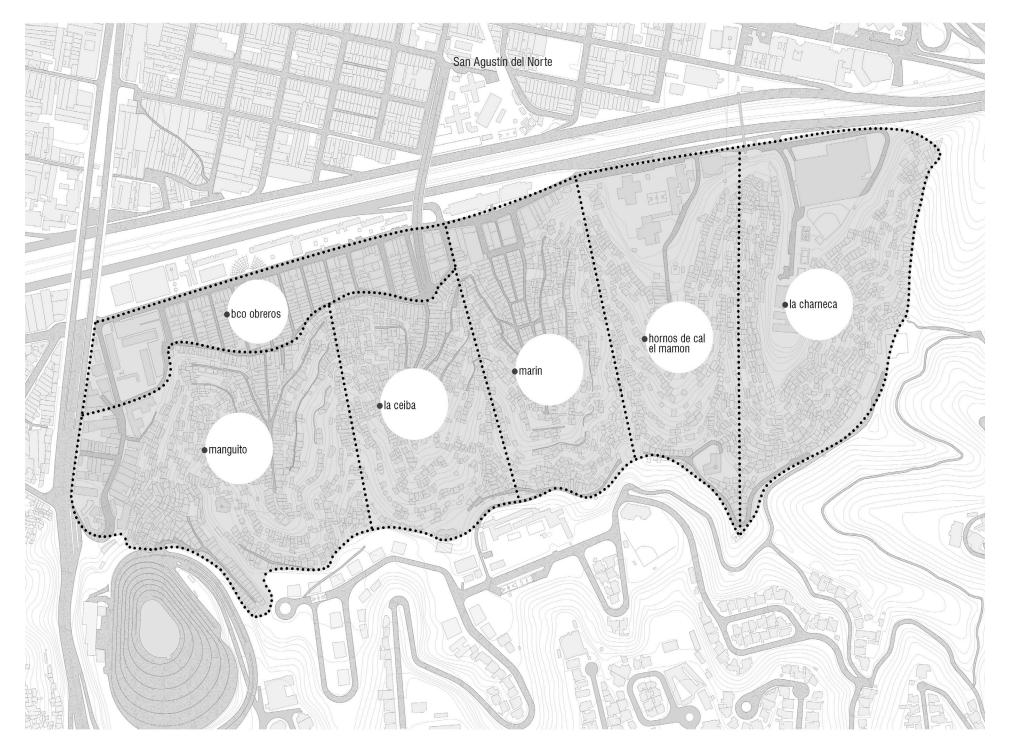
.SLUMS
SAN AGUSTÍN

Among the main developments are San Agustín del Norte, San Agustín del Sur, El Conde and neighborhoods or popular areas such as Hornos de Cal, La Charneca, El Mamón, El Manguito, Marín, Televisora, La Ceiba, El Dorado, Roca Tarpeya, among others.

Source: https://www.google.com/maps

San Agustín del Norte

bco obreros

la charneca

hornos de cal
el mamon

marin

la ceiba

manguito
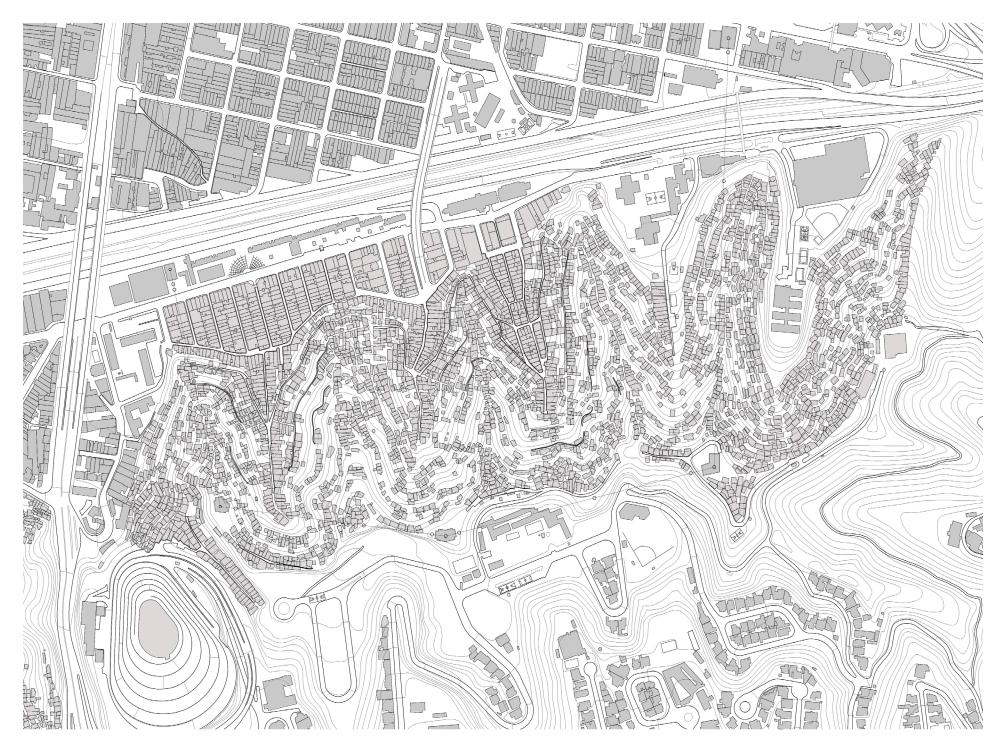
.DENSITY
SAN AGUSTÍN

As the slopes of the terrain increase, the density decreases and the formal urban layout becomes much more organic, this is due to the fact that the areas with these very rugged conditions are the least attractive for the construction of regular urbanizations.

Sarelital view of San Agustín Source: https://www.google.com/maps

.MASTERPLAN
SAN AGUSTÍN

It was concluded through the analysis, that San Agustín is an encapsulated zone within the city, it is a civilization with particular caracerísticas that do not have direct realization with its immediate surroundings.

It has an accentuated topography that creates a series of urban consequences: the network of roads goes from formal streets to only stairs and paths, making it impossible for any vehicle to travel, apart, the homes are becoming much more austere as the slope begins to appear, they go from being multifamily to single-family, then, the urban organization begins to develop in a more organic and disorderly manner and public spaces and buildings of other uses begin to disappear as the slope ascends. One of the specific solutions that was carried out for the transport problem was the construction of the Metrocable system, generating a flow of traffic throughout the entire neighborhood.

Despite the strong musical heritage of the neighborhood, it has few spaces dedicated to culture that do not meet current demand, such as: La Alameda Theater, La Alameda Cultural House and La Ceiba Cultural Center.

After a detailed study of the history and boundaries of the neighborhood by means of sections (A-A', B-B', C-C', D-D', E-E', F-F', G-G', H-H'), it is proposed in the masterplan, to intervene the East boundary where the neighborhood meets the Botanical Garden, which would be the most permeable and ideal area. The idea is to create a crack in the limit that allows the city to be filtered to the neighborhood and the neighborhood to the city in a controlled manner, where the inhabitants of the neighborhood have direct contact with another immediate environment different from the usual one and where the rest of the The city is attracted to visit, in order to create a connection through the culture where the city and the neighborhood are integrated to create positive social changes in the long term.

In order to achieve the project, it was necessary to eliminate a series of informal housing units in the limit, where later, in other delimited study areas of the same neighborhood, they were relocated near existing communication routes and other routes that are proposed to reconnect the intervened zones.
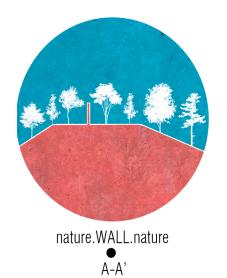
The most important objective of the proposal is that this idea can be applied to other limits in areas that meet conditions similar to the current one.

space with visuals

entries and exits

possible spaces to intervene

spaces without slope

internal vegetation

cultural centers

buildings with higher density

implantation of new housing

intervened houses

buildings to intervene

metrocable system

housing to intervene

walking trails

stairs

possible connections

formal roads

sports courts

wall

.MASTERPLAN
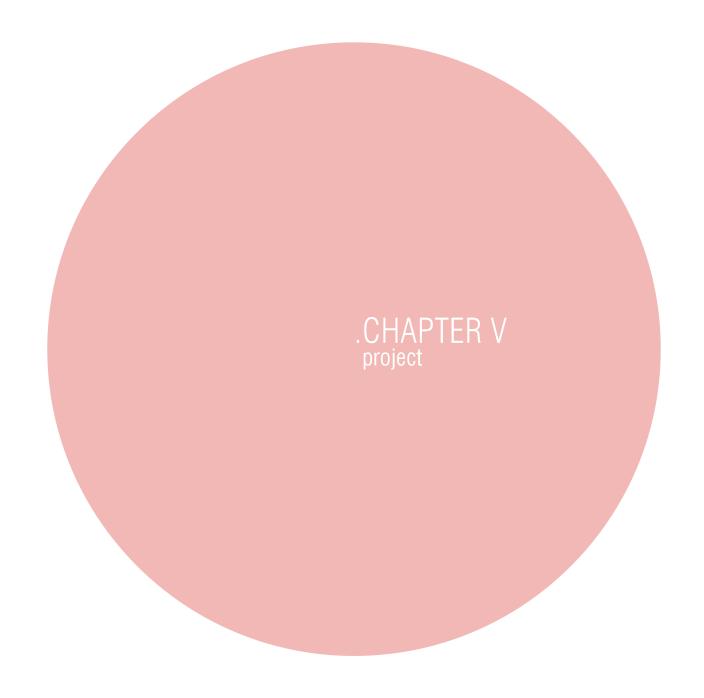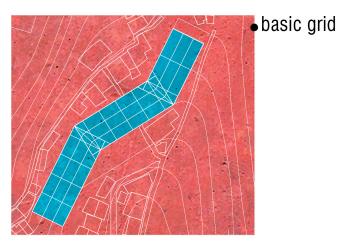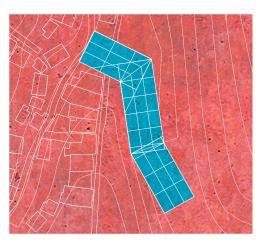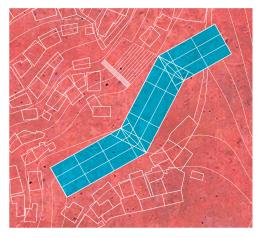### SAN AGUSTÍN

site.LIMITS

nature.WALL.nature
●
A-A'

nature.WALL.house
●
B-B'

nature.WALL.stairs.house
●
C-C'

nature.HOUSE.nature.house
●
D-D'

nature.STAIRS.slum
●
E-E'

nature.TOPOGRAPHY.street.slum
●
F-F'

neighborhood.NATURE.stairs.slum
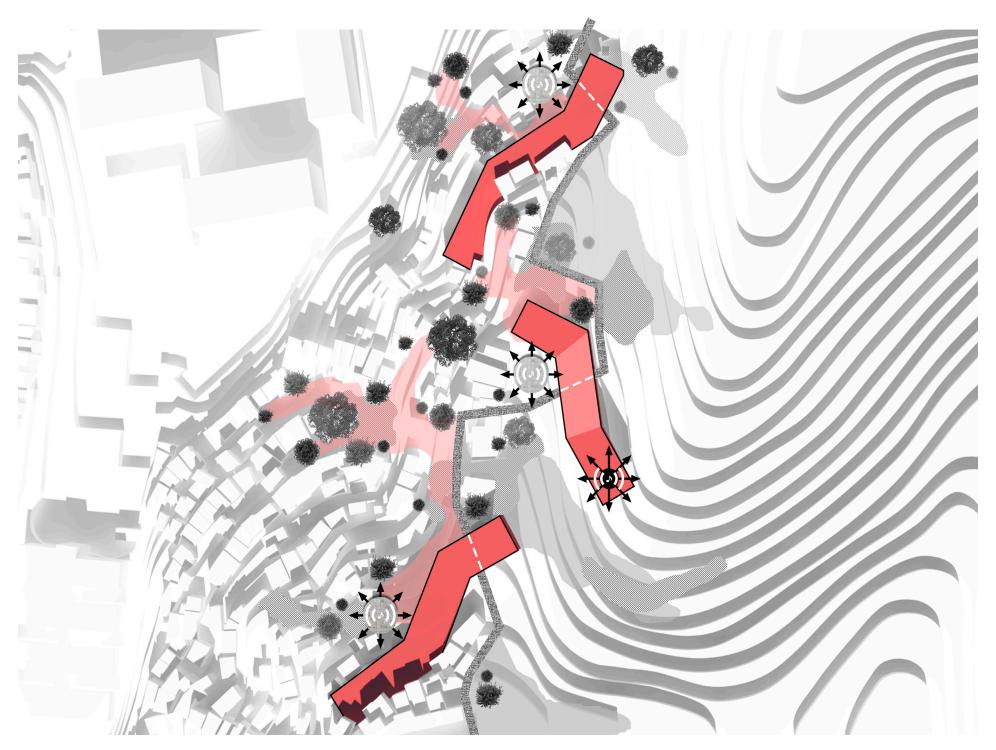●
G-G'

slum.street.TOPOGRAPHY.street.slu
●
H-H'

.CHAPTER V
project

.ORIGIN
THE CONCEPT

The idea is based on creating series of nterventions that break the boundary between the San Agustín Slum and the Botanical Garden. It was decided to propose three separated elements so that they did not generate a greater barrier and could be equipped with the quantity of uses required for the development of the musical activity and green houses, continuing the paths that already exist with public spaces.

For this project, creating a space for social inclusion and urban unification in this particular context—where a high sense of belonging trumps individualism and where inhabitants from the city and the slum integrate through cultural activities and increase their quality of life—requires fracturing a permeable limit, essentially located eastbound by the Botanical Garden of Caracas. This course of action presents a proposal that demonstrates that social barriers can be broken through culture, proposing a performance arts complex that organically connects with its surroundings, creates a space for music education and entertainment, and provides the community with a public space for other activities that promote integration, solidarity, cohesion and social change.

●basic grid

. CONCEPTUAL SHAPE

.origin

.footprint

.shape

.adaptable **typologies**

.join

.grouping

.dominant shapes

.CONCEPTUAL SHAPE

.origin

.footprint

.shape

.adaptable **typologies**

broken limits.

.join

.grouping

.dominant shapes

.THE PROJECT

.heritage of the population

project landmarks and nodes

.music identity

musical spaces and rehearsal rooms

.presence of green areas

.san agustin

.lack of public space

public greenhouses

germination

squares, terraces and amphitheaters

.AXONOMETRY

.music

.greenhouse

instruments and stands storage/restrooms

wood winds rehearsal room

brass rehearsal room

greenhouse

greenhouse

classroom/r

percussion rehearsal room

greenhouse

greenhouse

restrooms

meeting romm

cafeteria

general rehearsal hall/strings rehearsal room

.uses

.node

.public space

amphitheater/square/gardens

gardens

individual spaces of musical rehearsal

outdoor stage

main node

acuatic plants

regenerated house

amphitheater/square/gardens

public square

individual spaces of musical rehearsal

.nodes + public spaces

.circulation

vertical main circulation

horizontal main circulation

circulation intersections

.circulation

.public

.private

the private

the public

context

.public / private

.DRAWINGS

TOP VIEW

.BUILDING #1
 THE HIGHEST

.**General rehearsal room / strigns**
 Maximum users amount: 80 people

.**(2) Greenhouses**
 Plants germination

.**Cafeteria**
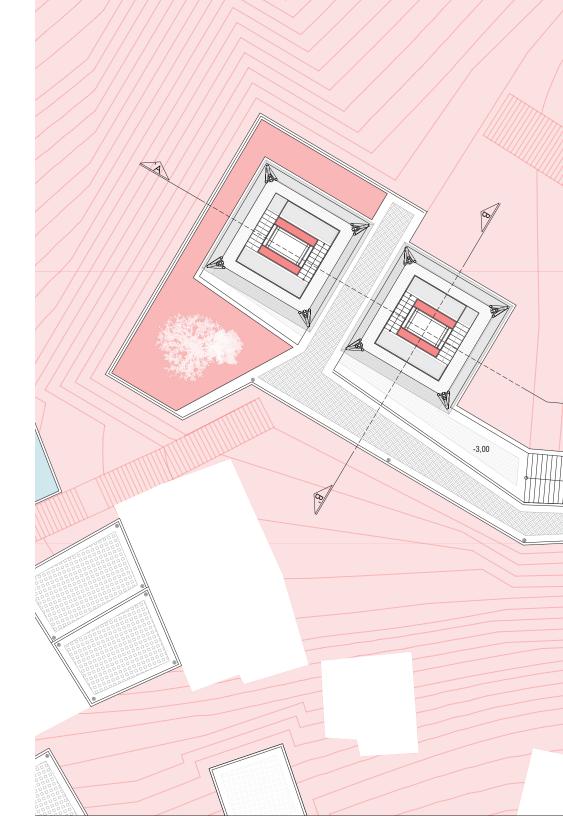
.**Meeting room**
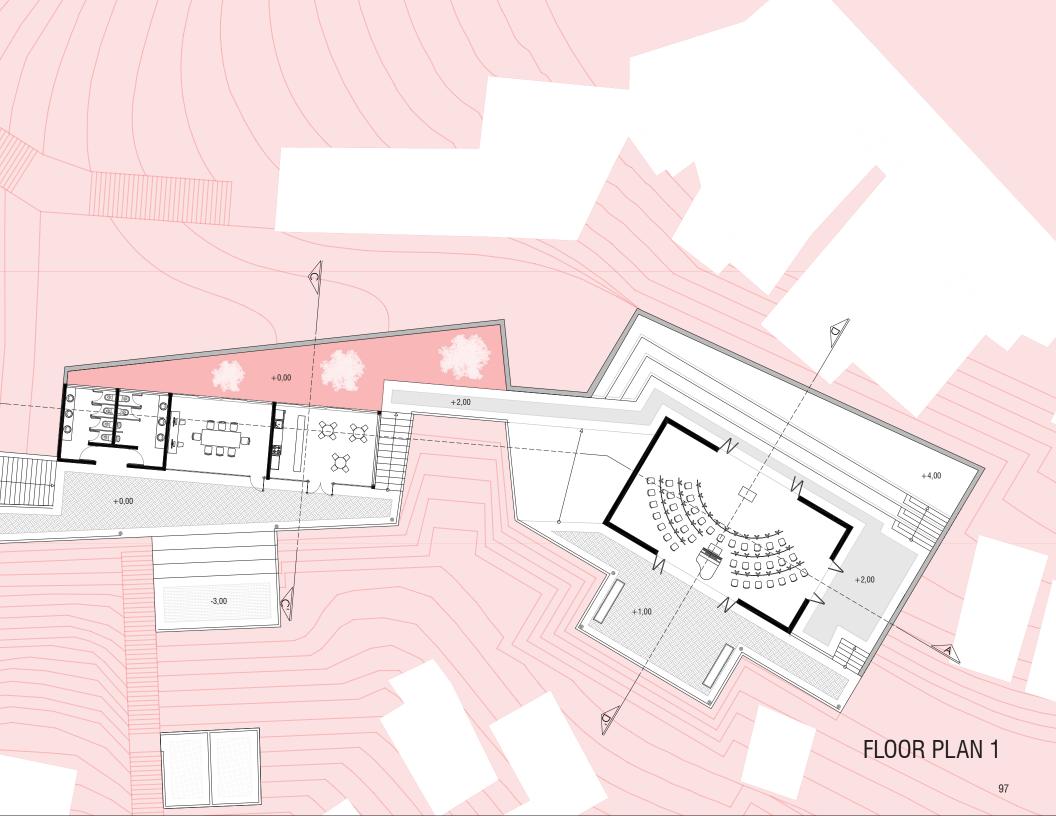
.**Public space**
 Walking trails
 Green areas
 Amphitheaters
 Squares
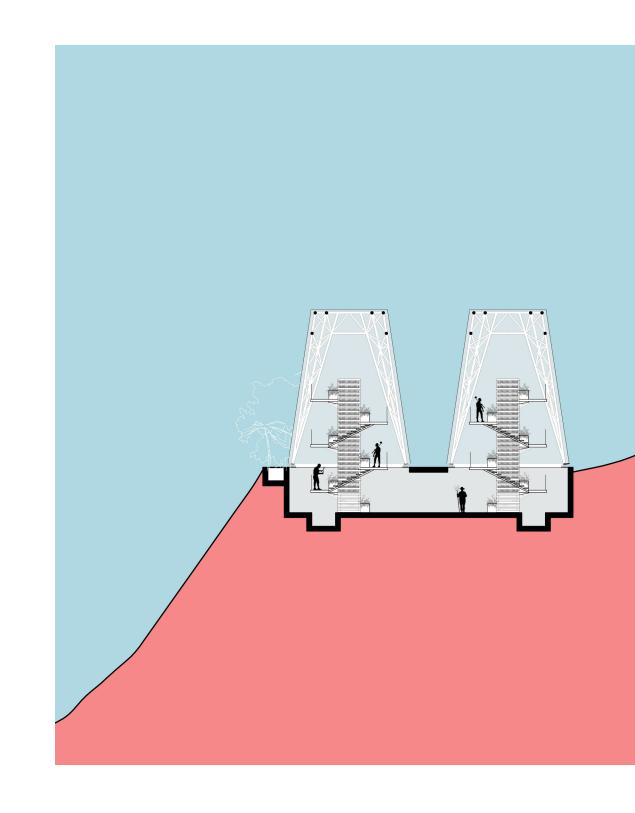
.**Restrooms**
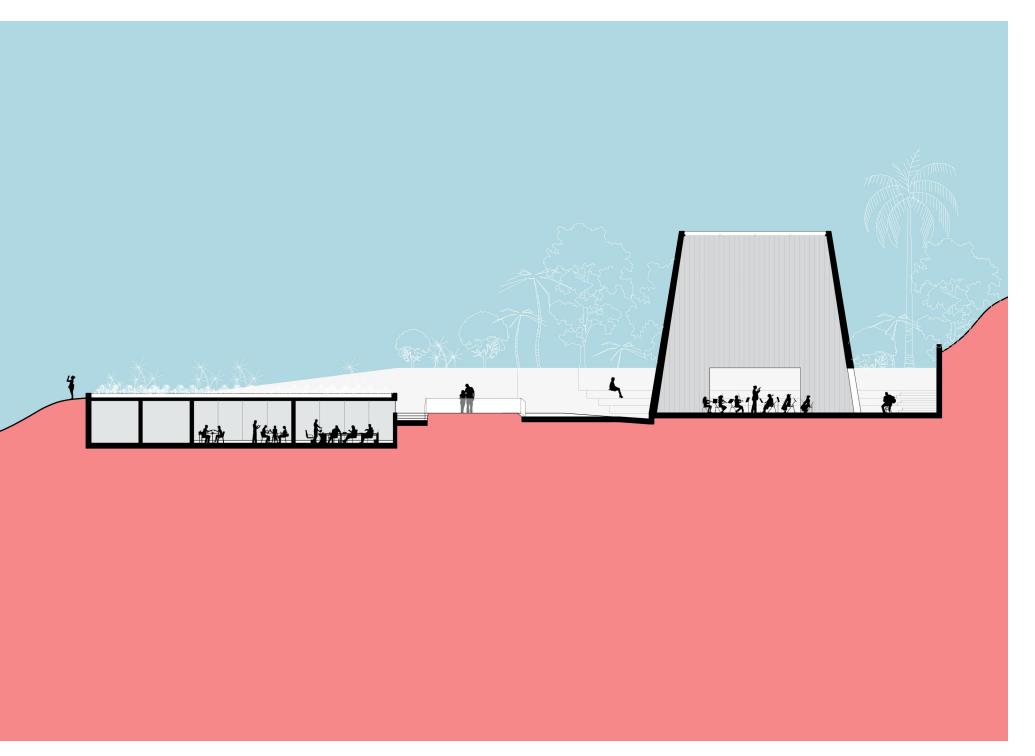
.**Instruments / stands storage**

-3,00

+0,00

+2,00

+4,00

+0,00

+2,00

-3,00

+1,00

FLOOR PLAN 1

97

.longitudinal section

.cross sections

SECTION A-A'

SECTION B-B'

SECTION C-C'

.BUILDING #2
 THE MEDIUM
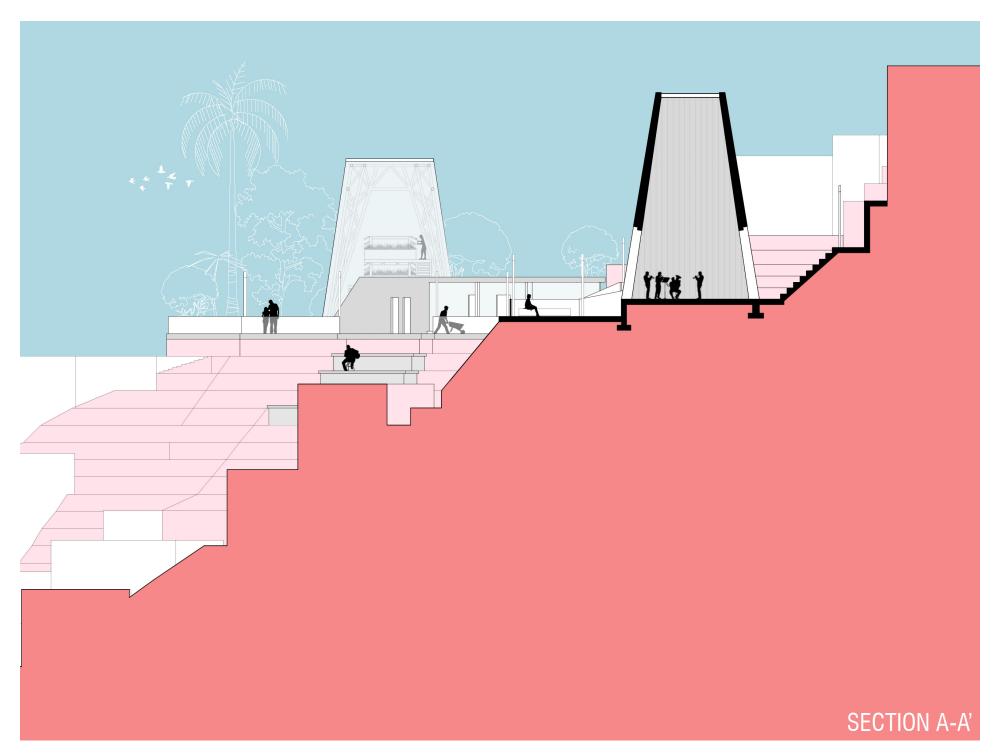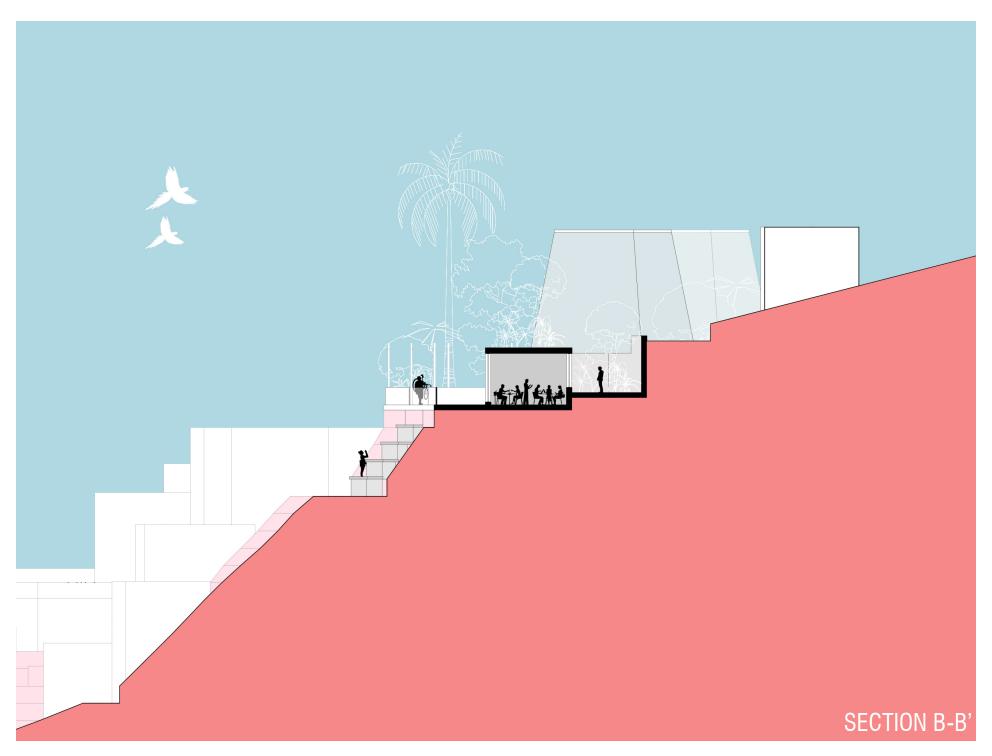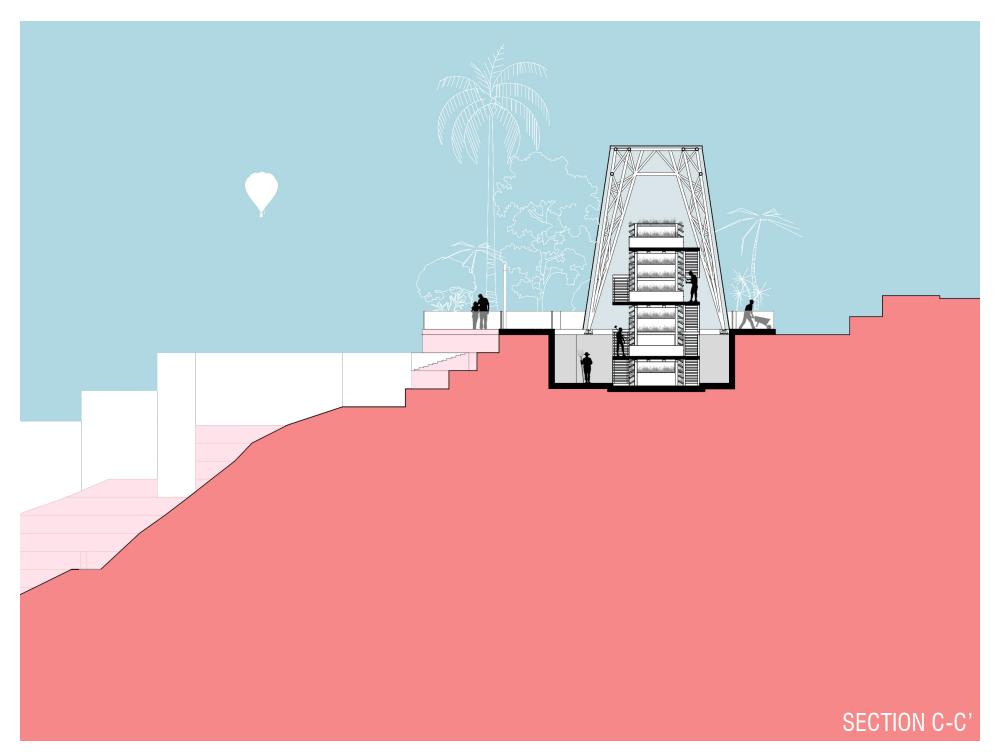
.**Percussion rehearsal room**
 Maximum users amount: 20 people

.**Greenhouse**
 Plants germination
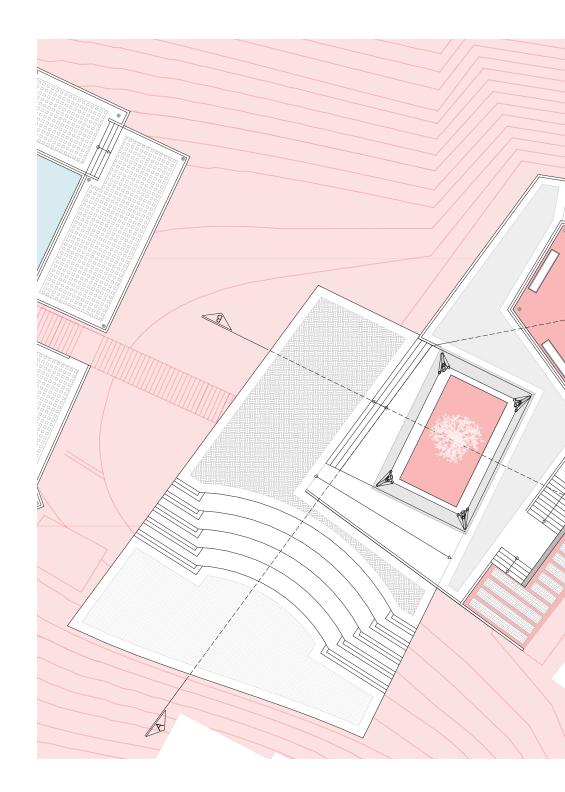
.**Classroom**
 Musical theory classes
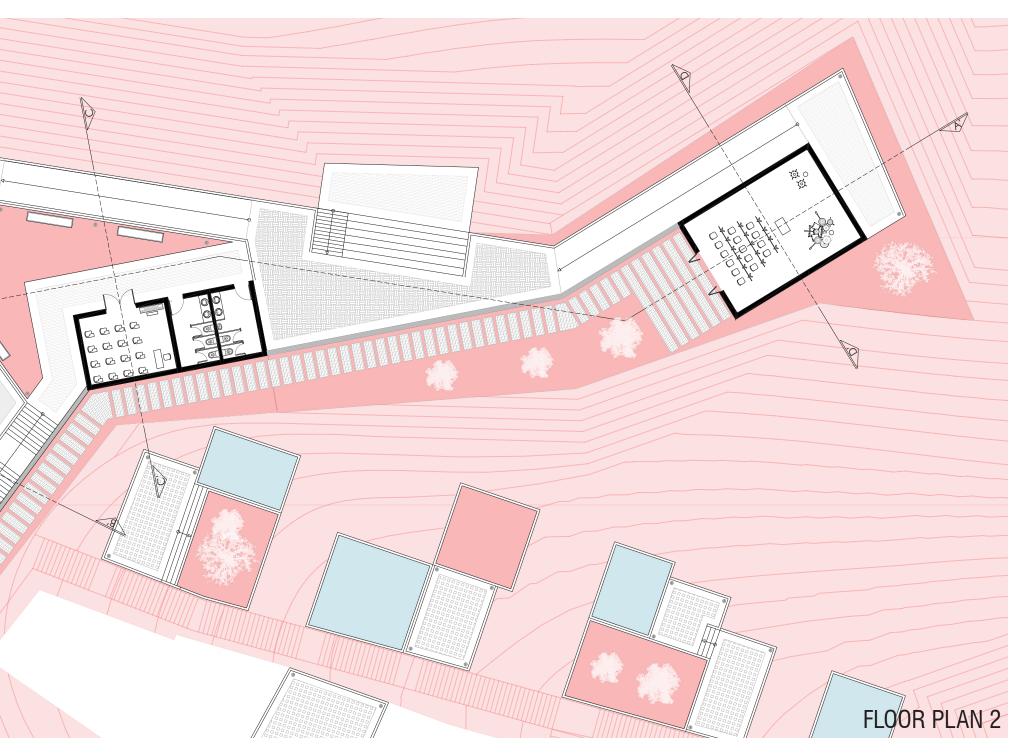
.**Public space**
 Walking trails
 Green areas
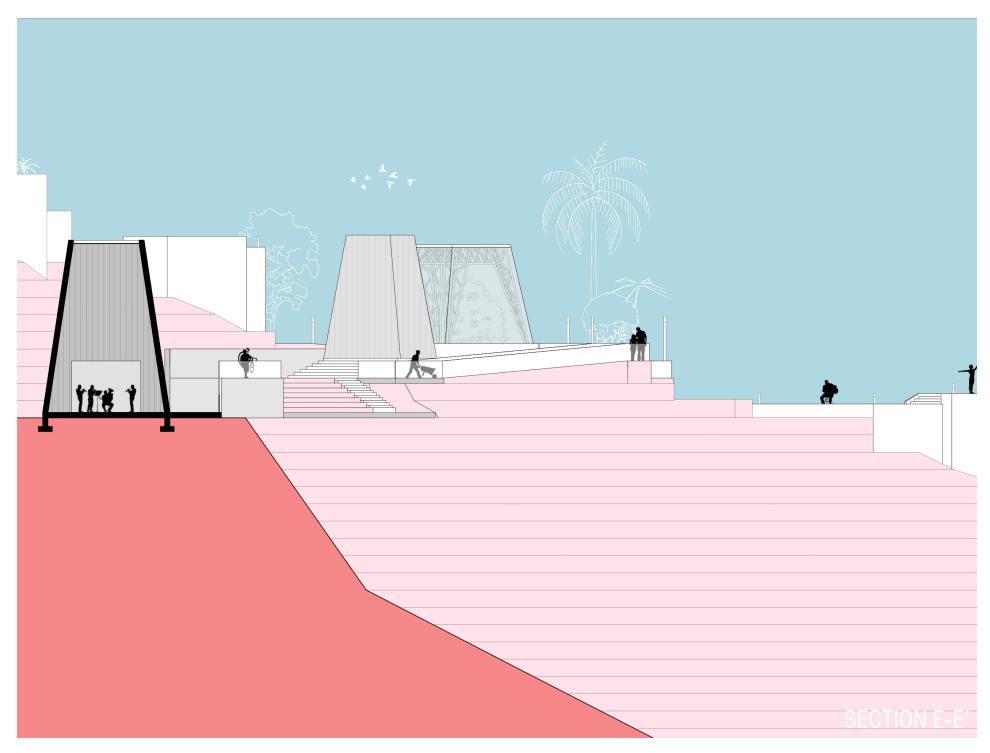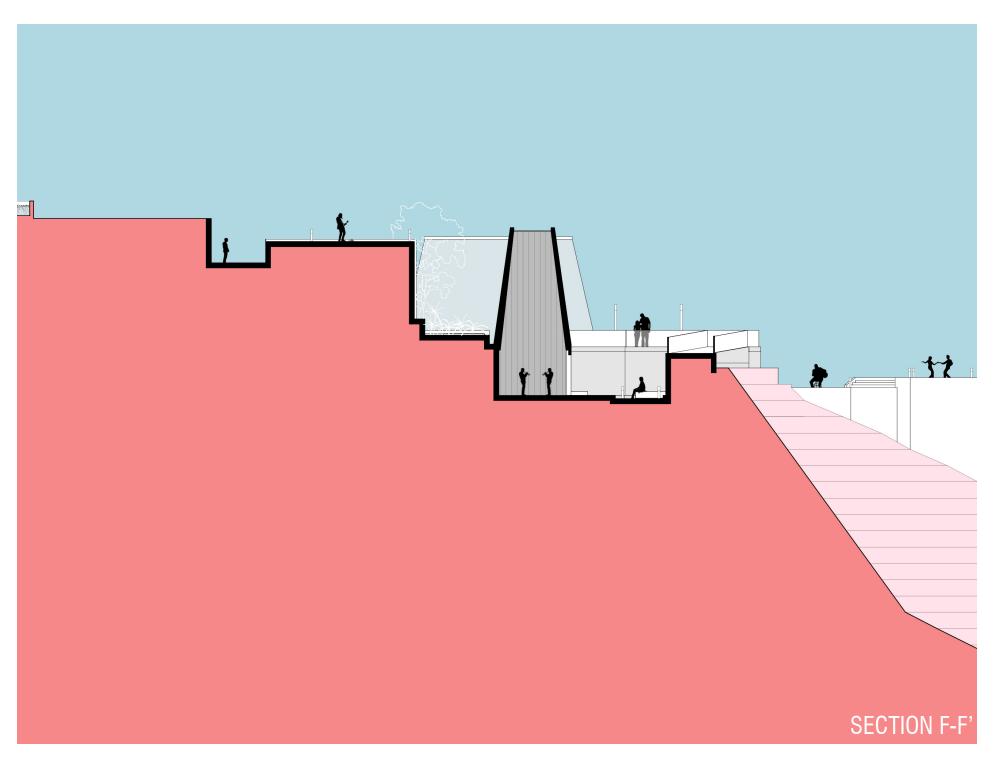 Amphitheaters
 Principal square (Node)
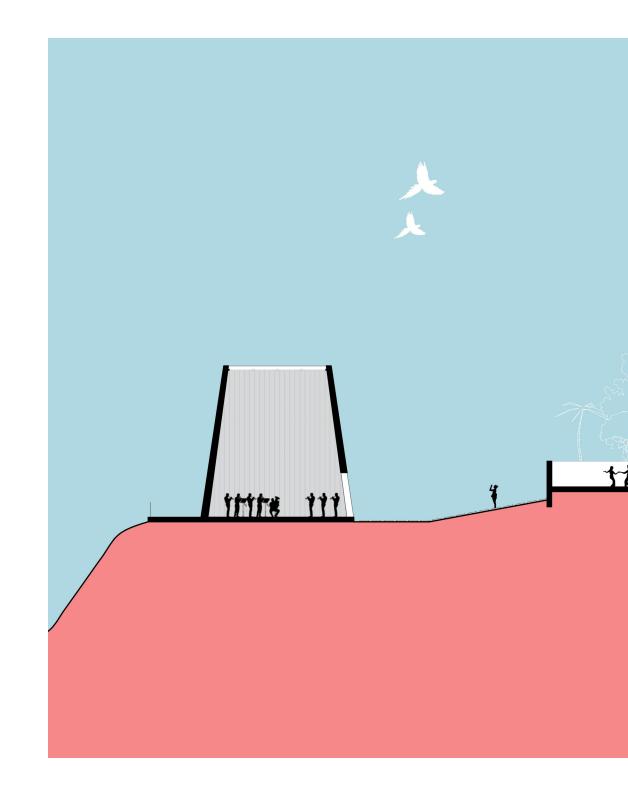
.**Restrooms**

FLOOR PLAN 2

.longitudinal section

.cross sections

SECTION F-F'

SECTION G-G'

.BUILDING #3
THE LOWEST
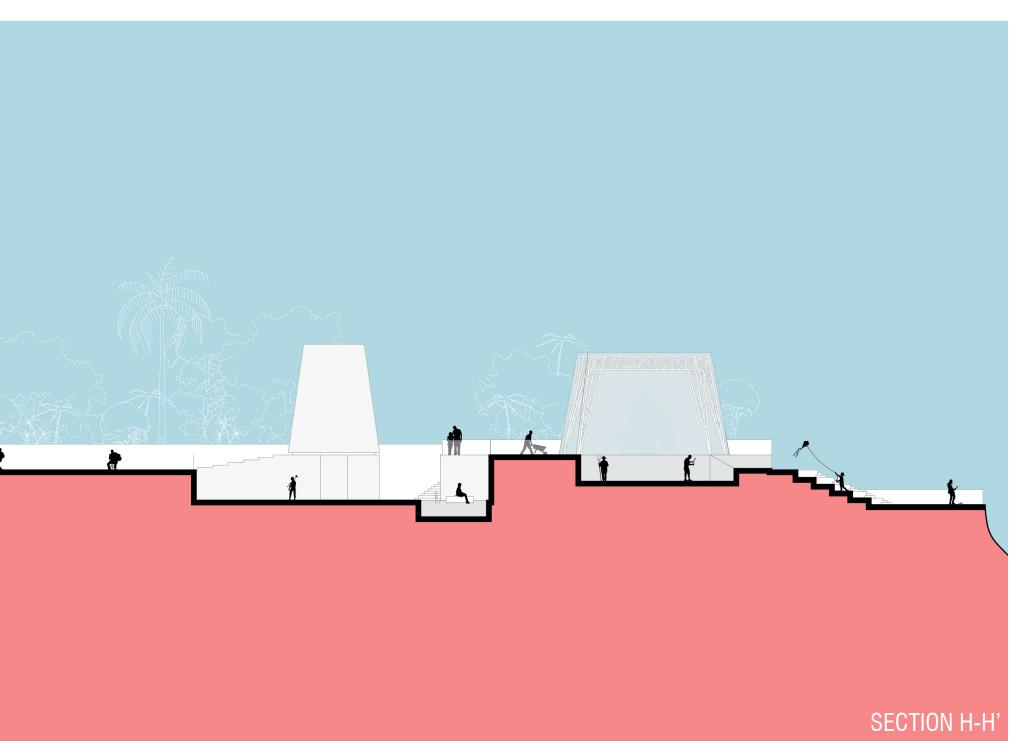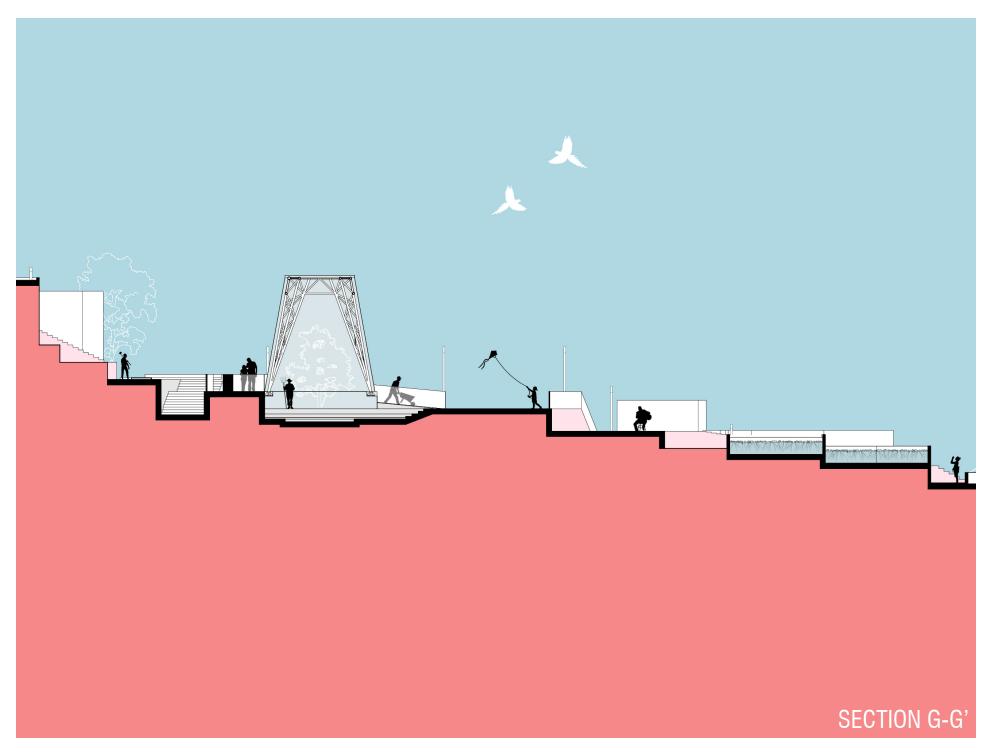
.**Wood wings rehearsal room**
Maximum users amount: 18 people

.**Brass wings rehearsal room**
Maximum users amount: 18 people
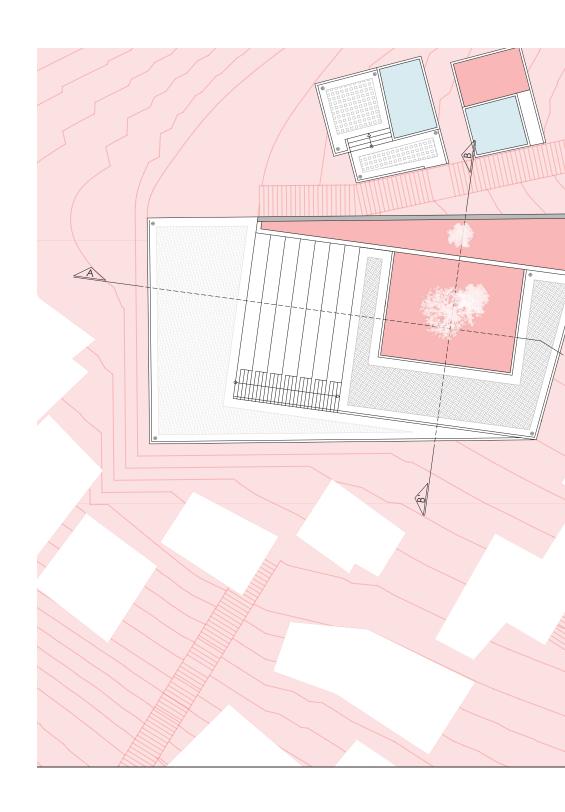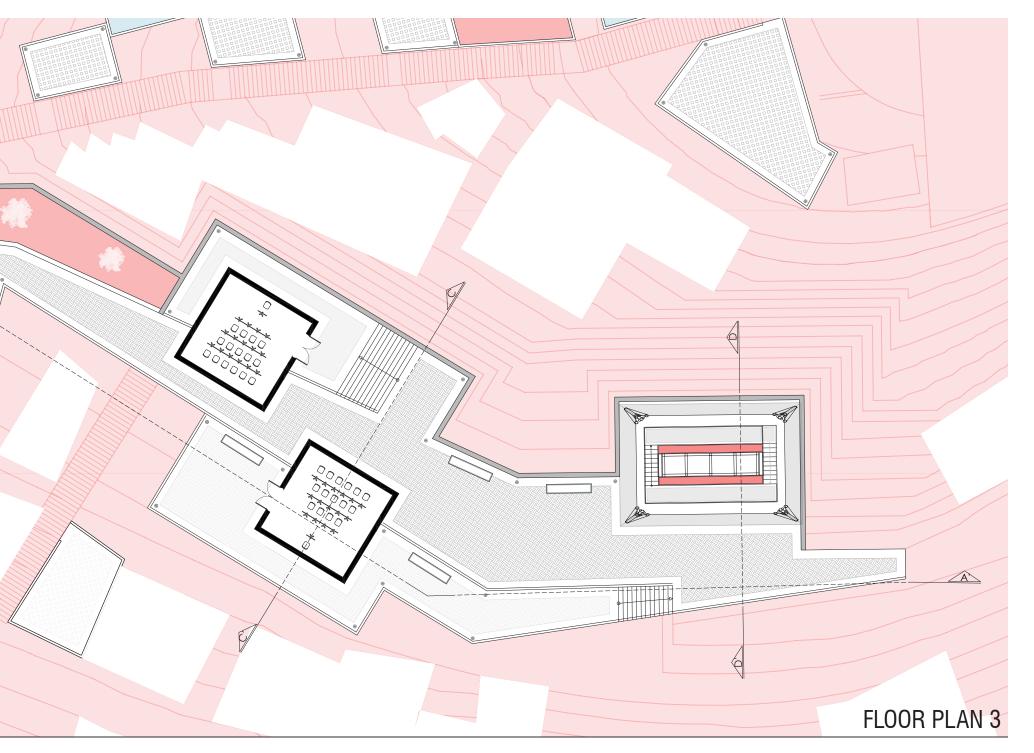
.**Greenhouse**
Plants germination

.**Public space**
Walking trails
Green areas
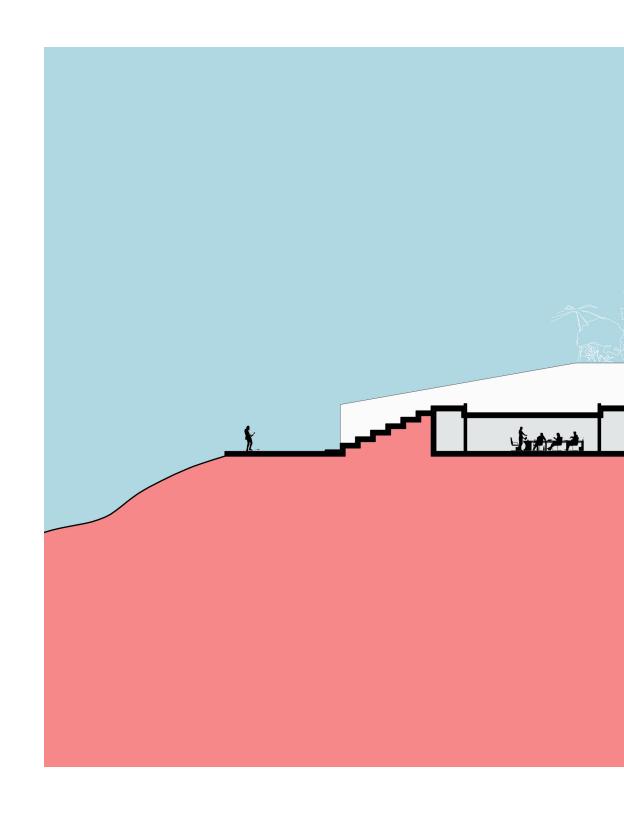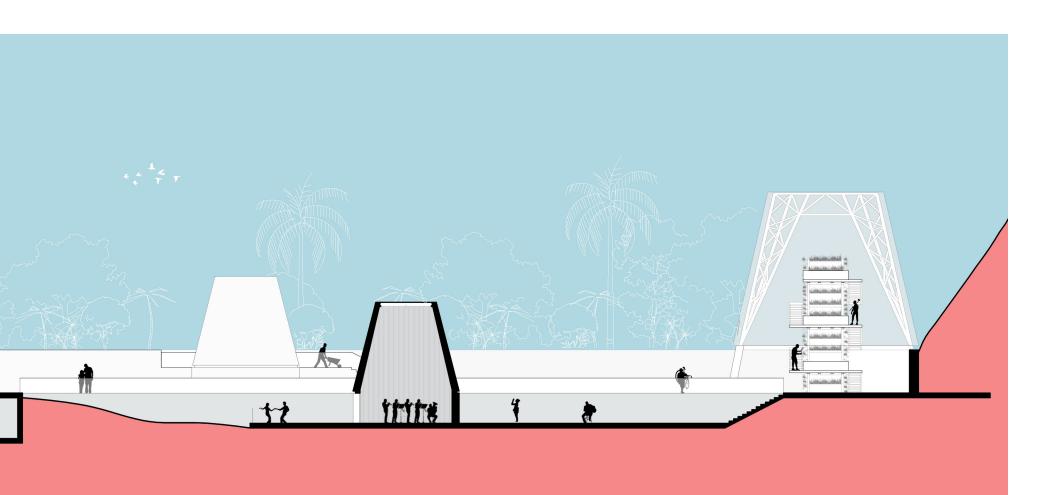Amphitheaters
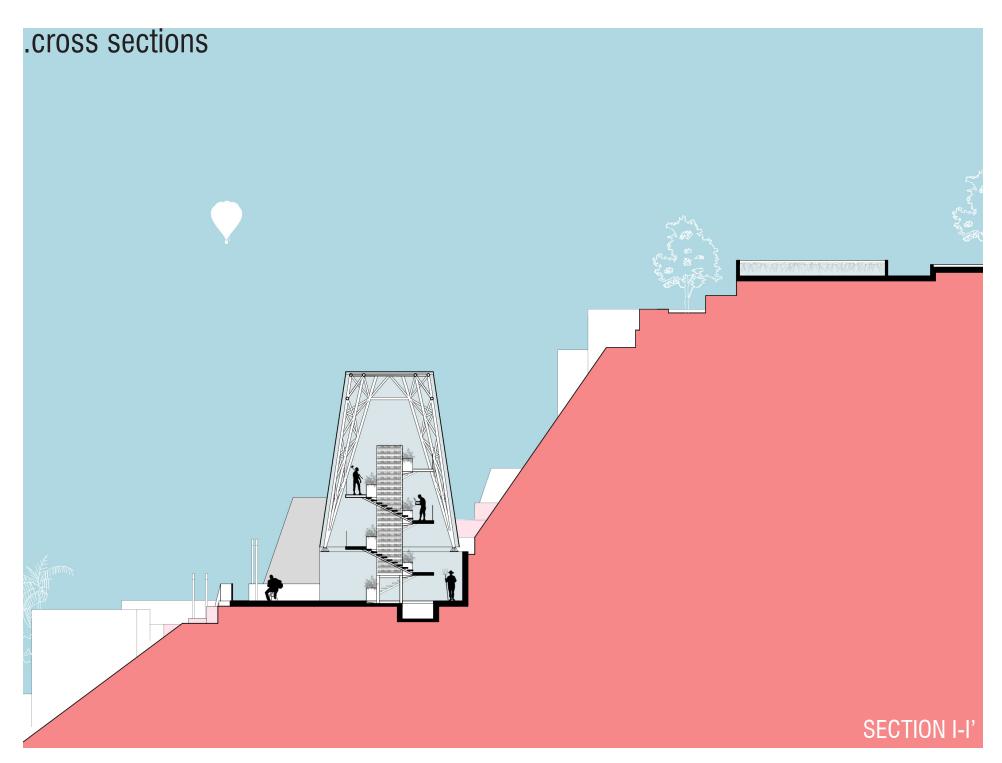Principal square (Node)
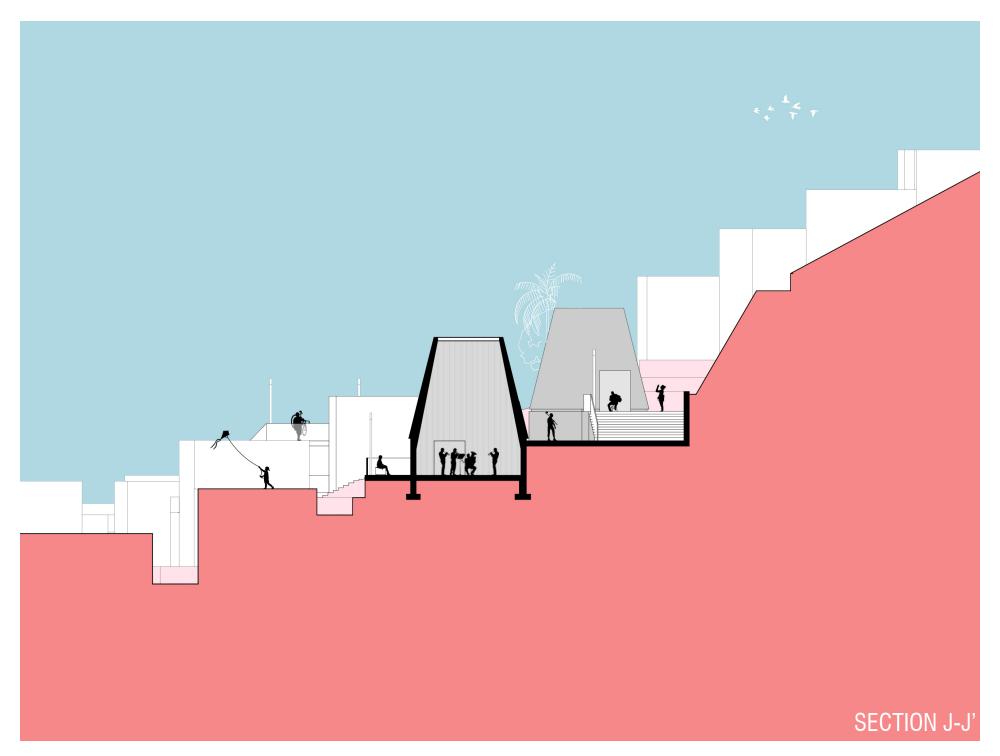
.**Restrooms**

.**Instruments / stands storage**

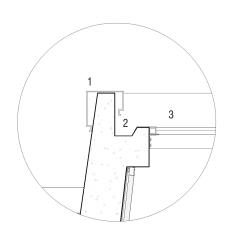FLOOR PLAN 3

.longitudinal section

SECTION K-K'

SECTION I-I'

SECTION J-J'
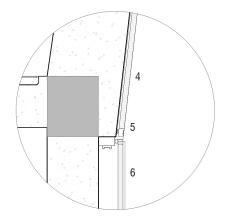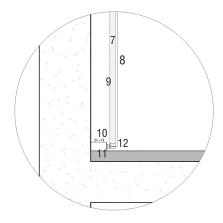
A

1. METALLIC SHEET
2. RAINWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM
3. POLYCARBONATE SHEET
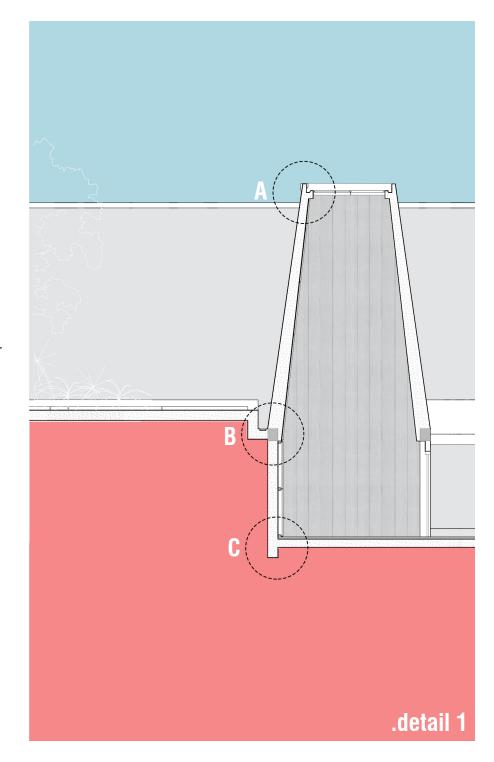
B
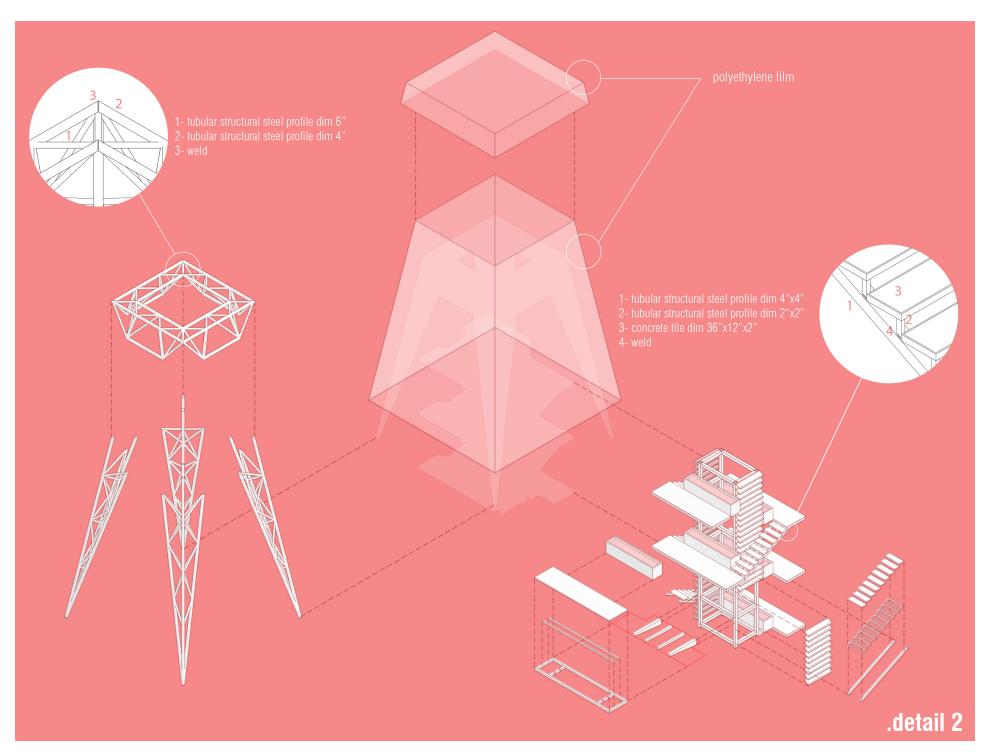
4. ACOUSTIC MICROPERFORATED PANEL
5. SUPPORT SYSTEM
6. DRYWALL PLATE

C

7. METALLIC SUPPORT
8. ACOUSTIC WOOD COATINGS
9. DRYWALL PLATE 5/8"
10. METAL PROFILE TYPE C
11. SCREW STUDS 2"
12. METALLIC PROFILE

.detail 1

polyethylene film

1- tubular structural steel profile dim 6"
2- tubular structural steel profile dim 4"
3- weld

1- tubular structural steel profile dim 4"x4"
2- tubular structural steel profile dim 2"x2"
3- concrete tile dim 36"x12"x2"
4- weld

.detail 2

.VISUALS

.collage

.CONCLUSIONS

This project served to give it a different approach to what is normally used to develop in environments with certain characteristics.

Taking into consideration the previous idea, it is possible to outline the main objective of this project—that is, creating a connection between the city and segregated areas by 'breaking the bubble.' In order to achieve this, detailed research was conducted to better understand the characteristics that stood out in the area, including its (1) strong music history, (2) accentuated topography, (3) few leisure spaces, and (4) strong limits, as mentioned already. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to identify a tool that would encourage social integration and cohesion through the combination of culture and architecture.

Such tool was inspired by the philosophy and achievements of the Venezuelan System of Orchestras and Choirs. This initiative, also known as El Sistema, was conceived to systematize the instruction and the collective and individual practice of music through symphonic orchestras and choirs, as instruments of social organization and humanistic development. This pedagogical, artistic and social model, which has achieved notorious relevance throughout the world, constitutes the social program with the greatest impact in Venezuelan democracy.

It can be concluded that, currently, the architect must manage landscape architecture as an essential part of his training and professional work. At this time, society lives in a world that reflects the consequences of overexploitation of natural resources; for this reason it is important to contribute to landscape projects through the design of public spaces.

Also, the proposal manages a dynamic concept, with totally free access (without the need to enclose the land) that allows the optimal circulation of users through wide paths. Also the composition of the green areas and floors allow to observe during the tour a series of views, which will cause the inhabitant sensations of relaxation, relaxation and excitement to travel each "corner" of the park.

The benefit that this public space represents for the inhabitants of the community is fundamental to improve their quality of life, since by "owning" adequate facilities for healthy recreation allows to integrate society safely; and in turn encourages citizen participation by generating the collaboration of the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

Currently, the architect must manage landscape architecture as an essential part of his training and professional work. At this time, society lives in a world that reflects the consequences of overexploitation of natural resources; for this reason it is important to contribute to landscape projects through the design of public spaces.

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