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FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)
Honors theses

A new verticality for Seoul
Project of a multifunctional tower

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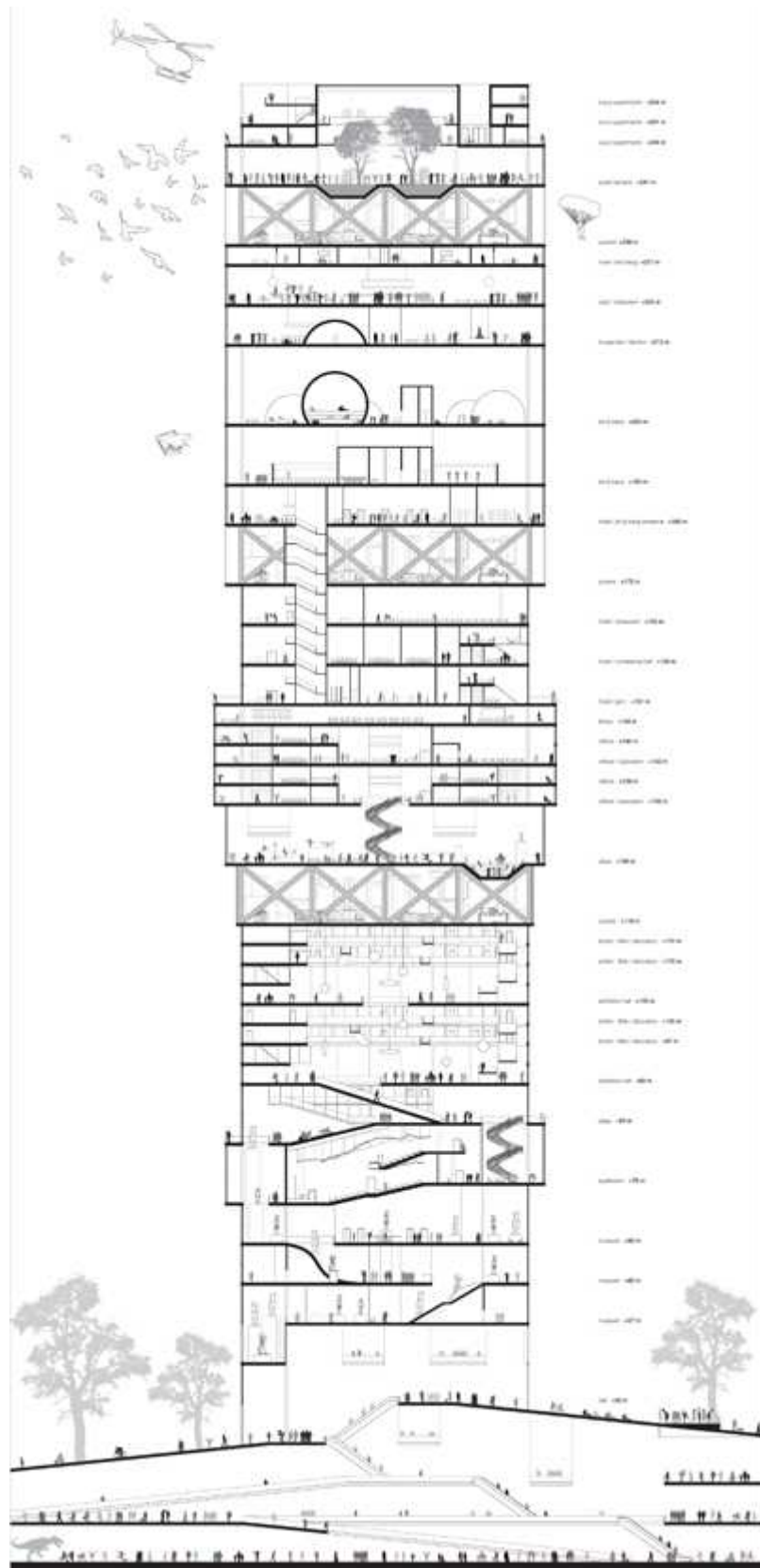
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The project of a multifunctional tower originates from the will of giving a different response to the present trends of uprightness that characterizes the South Korean architectural panorama and, more concretely, defines its landscape and skyline. The analysis made on the city brings out the fact that high density is an element the developers are unlikely to give up with, as a direct source of high incomes. However, an aspect that has not been considered in the last decades is the consequences of these economic and planning directions, with which we are going to deal in the next future. In the South Korean territory, and especially in big cities, an increasing loss of identity is being manifested, mostly due to the rigid processes of urban transformation. That caused not only the disappearance of entire Hanok villages and detached house neighbourhoods but also the destruction of their equilibrium and social dimensions. What appeared instead is a new standardized construction, which takes form through a forest of housing estates. Too often the only thing that differentiates these residential compounds is a logo referring to their brand or a different number. If in the seventies and eighties they were considered by the inhabitants as a dream of modernity because of new housing forms, today the situation has dramatically changed. A relevant focus on this matter was made by the promoters of the Korean pavilion at the 12th biennial of Venice in 2010, where several graphic works highlighted the social problems generated by this rampant development: lack of social interactions within the same districts, shortage of green areas and gradual loss of identity.

The proposal of a multi-functional tower goes in the direction of the accomplishment of these social needs within the established vertical model. Its design prefigures a completely new functional proposal, directed to generate new forms of social relations between the citizens.

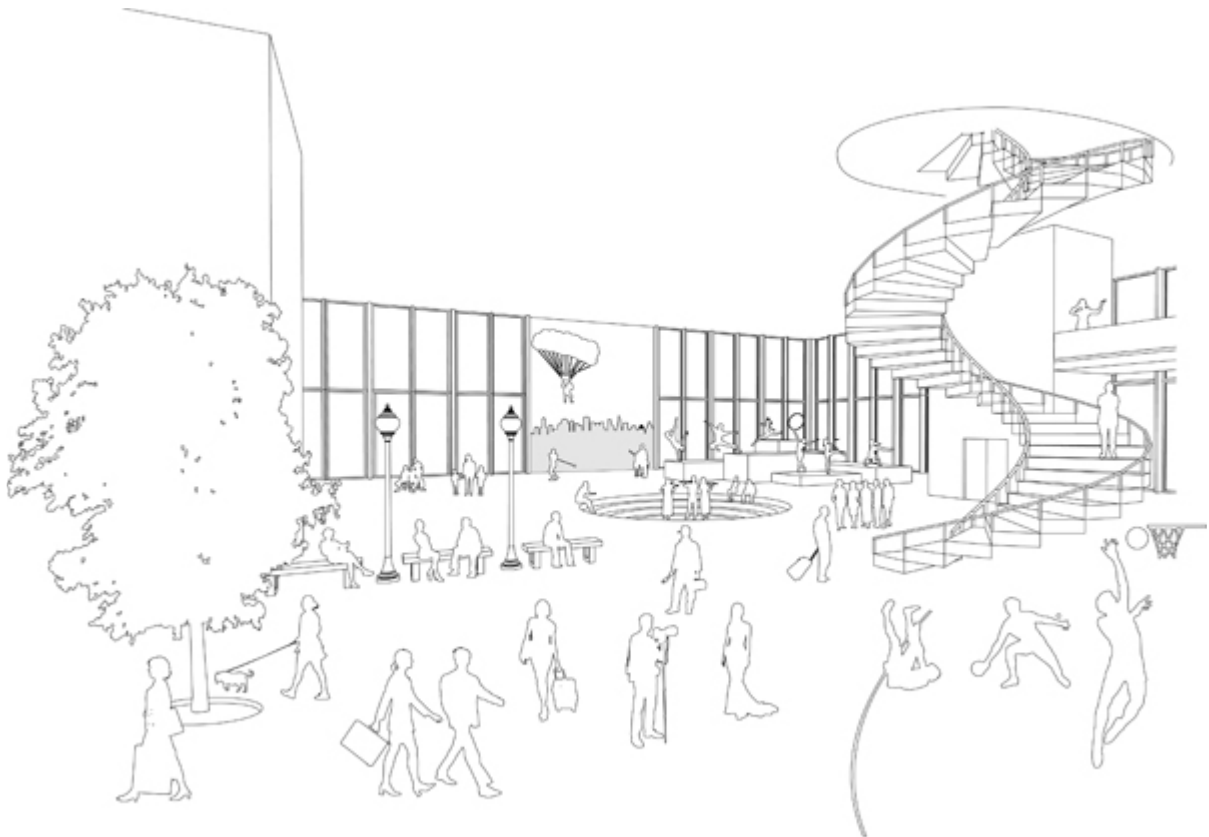
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This program is defined through the analysis of the city from which the building takes form. Moreover this solution aims to break the monotony of the multifunctional districts by creating a new vertical part of the city in which different functions and users are joined together. The city is then extended in height, maintaining the characteristic relationships, hierarchies and systems of the horizontal dimension.



In this case-study the idea of the vertical city as a mere place formed by the agglomeration of high-rise buildings and conceived as independent meteors in the urban fabric is re-elaborated and transformed into a vertical continuity of the city itself as a natural extension. Lastly, an unavoidable aspect that has to be underlined is linked to the concept of landmark. The metropolis of Seoul has been developed through time with the generation of several small inner centers, each one of which generally corresponds to one of the administrative districts, in which the city is organized. For this reason, the lack of a strong center makes necessary the constant creation of landmarks: signs and icons to define and organize the urban space.

The tower, that takes its form at the end of this analytical work, rises into a new developing area, which for its strategic position is very suitable to host a new and strong urban sign. The intention however is the reappraisal of the concept of landmark starting from the inside, considering it not only as a simple volume, which differentiates itself through a different external skin or a particularly technology developed, but as a peculiar icon of the city itself. More fittingly, a simple container which through the radical absence of a planned facade reveals its contents to the view from the outside, showing thus his innovative characters for the South Korean culture: the concentration in a single place of very diverse functions.



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