

DISPLACED
LLONCH+VIDALLE ARCHITECTURE

The work of Fabian Llonch and Gisela Vidalle –presented here in an eye –opening survey– is marvelous for its imaginative seamlessness, and the way in which the artist’s truth always shines through the circumstances of its articulation. Here is architecture of inseparable form and thought.

The thirteen projects in this book are filled with the fervor and energy of an architect who also teaches young architects. Fabian Llonch and Gisela Vidalle are part of a small group of architects who understand the importance of the relationship between teaching and practice, its place at that intricate and indefinable nexus of architecture and its theory in which architecture schools are hothouses for the incubation of ideas in architecture and design.

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WE BELIEVE IN **CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS**,
IN ALLOWING NEW ASSUMPTIONS TO INTERACT,
SO THAT SURPRISING PATTERNS EMERGE.

WE BELIEVE THAT WITH **INTERDISCIPLINARY
COLLABORATIONS** THERE IS AVANT-GARDE,
PROGRESSIVE THINKING, BREAKING OF BARRIER,
RADICAL CREATIVITY.

WE BELIEVE IN ENGAGING THE UNCERTAINTY
AND FLUIDITY OF THE **CURRENT MOMENT**.



WE BELIEVE IN **RESEARCH**.

WE BELIEVE IN **INVENTION**, EVEN
RE-INVENTION BECOMES THE ESSENCE
OF CREATIVE WORK.

WE BELIEVE THAT AESTHETIC AND
INTELLECTUAL APPRECIATION DEMANDS
MINIMUM **PROVOCATION**, SOMETHING
THAT SPURS AS TO SEE AND THINK ANEW.

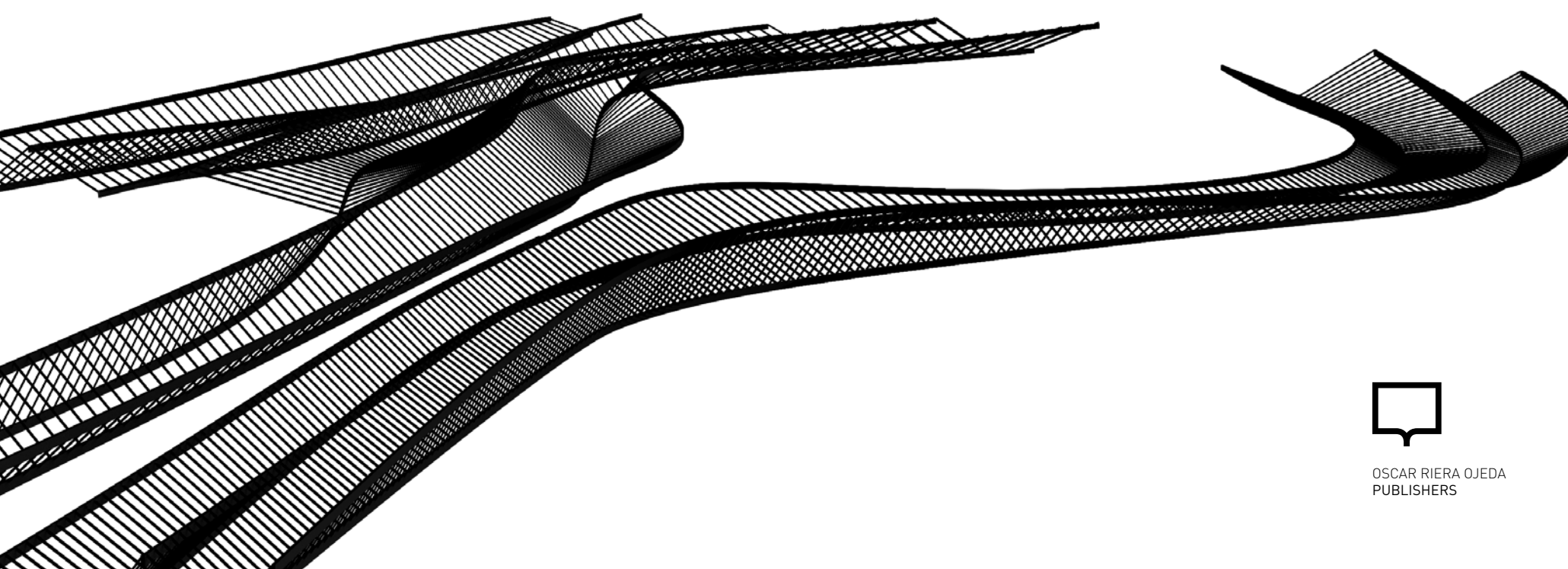
WE BELIEVE THAT **GREAT ARCHITECTURE**
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.





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LONCH+VIDALLE ARCHITECTURE

Edited by Oscar Riera Ojeda
Foreword by George Ranalli
Introduction by Michael Sorkin
Essays by Mario Corea and Paul Guzzardo



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Introduction

ARCHITECTURE OF INSEPARABLE FORM AND THOUGHT

Michael Sorkin What is the line between metaphor and icon? Icons trade in resemblance, representation, visibility. Metaphors are looser things, analogical, yoking categories often unfamiliar to each other. Metaphor is iconography pulled to abstraction, the abstraction of language.

Fabian Llonch and Gisela Vidalle work this difference with art and care. Their architecture is deeply engaged with the physical and mental phenomena that shape it but always includes some fantastic supplement that represents a choice of meaning that is not functional but more purely expressive, more personal. The work is stamped by art.

To be sure, each project begins with a careful consideration of its circumstances: the constraints of site, the exigencies of program, the movement of sun and air, the acoustics of intimacy and sharing, the rituals of gathering and acting, the discourse of form and light. These are the characteristics of the organism of architecture, the conditions of its basic behaviors and being.

But look at the church that opens this volume. There's no mistaking the hands clasped in prayer so visible in its plan, the apt and simple iconography of the gesture. What's remarkable, though, is both the subtlety of the inscription in a composition that uses the image ever-so-lightly and the way in which the forms produced seem to flow from a purer morphological investigation, one that has been pursued for many years.

In particular, there's a formal dialogue in the work of Fabian Llonch and Gisela Vidalle between two families of shape, between, for want of better descriptors, the fish and the box. Two impulses are active in the architects' imagination and their project is not one of struggle but of juxtaposition and play. Both types of form find their meanings in a condition of happy collaboration with either similarity or otherness. At the church, for example, clasped hands can also be seen as fish, an abiding Christian icon, and the same twinned curvilinearity that shapes the Sede Turismo in Chubut, Argentina resembles to the splayed shell of a mussel. The curved twins of the church are more complicated, emerging between the two rotated squares of its little predecessor which assumes a flanking logic that stabilizes the sinewy shapes.

thing to hack into that messy place where tables are buried. But this hacking is not going to be done by a heroic designer. Cities aren't marble quarries and Howard Roarks don't play well with others. This tool needs a team. This essay gropes with what that team will look like. Where is it going to come from? How it will work? Where will the squad be found? Can a team emerge out of a public art compost heap?

Before Arendt's table meditation, Lewis Mumford posted thoughts on teamwork. It was at the end of **Technics and Civilization**^v, his majestic tract on boys and their toys/men and machines. Mumford like Arendt grabs onto something you can grab, hold on to. His metaphor isn't a table. It is the instruments of an orchestra, tools in a grand humankind symphony; the gear to play a score in flux, to assemble a shared composition.

Mumford had a historian's long view. Tools and tables don't disappear but change. They transform while they are being used, written on, and taken apart. The word "wiki" wasn't around when Mumford published *Technics and Civilization* – no wiki edit software in 1934 – but Mumford understood teamwork and collaborations. He appreciated storytelling, new ways of mixing and assembling. He had seen it before. And while he knew how hard it was to play a shared composition he still thought it possible.

...our task is even more difficult: for we will have to re-write the music in the act of playing it, and change the leader and re-group the orchestra at the very moment that we are re-casting the most important passages. Impossible? No: for however far modern science and technics have fallen short of their inherent possibilities, they have taught mankind at least one lesson: Nothing is impossible.^{vi}















That's what attracted me to Llonch and Vidalle. They are designers of the possible. They believe in this din – as digital multiples mount and choke off exits – a city can still be a place where reflective citizens gather. They think we might even be able to run the rails together. Can you ask more from designers?

v
Lewis Mumford, **Technics and Civilization**, New York: Harcourt Brace and Co.(1934)

vi
Ibid., 435.



THE PROJECTS

- 030  A HOUSE IN MANILA
- 054  MILLENNIUM PLAZA
- 068  ROCKBRIDGE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
- 096  TRANSIT MEDIA LAB. THE PROTOTYPE
- 112  PERTH AMBOY HIGH SCHOOL
- 128  PARACHUTE PAVILION
- 140  EXPERIMENTAL THEATER
- 154  VINCULACIÓN URBANA
- 170  WEST END PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
- 186  SEDE DE TURISMO CHUBUT
- 196  THE ACCESS AND SERVICES BUILDING
- 212  AFIP OFFICE BUILDING ROSARIO
- 228  LAS GRUTAS HOUSING
- 242  CENTRAL LIBRARY



Wheeling | IL

MILLENNIUM PLAZA

Chicago IL_Open International Competition_1st Prize.

Italo Calvino
Invisible Cities

"... the city is redundant: it repeats itself so something will stick in our memory, the memory is redundant: repeating the signs so that the city can begin to exist..."

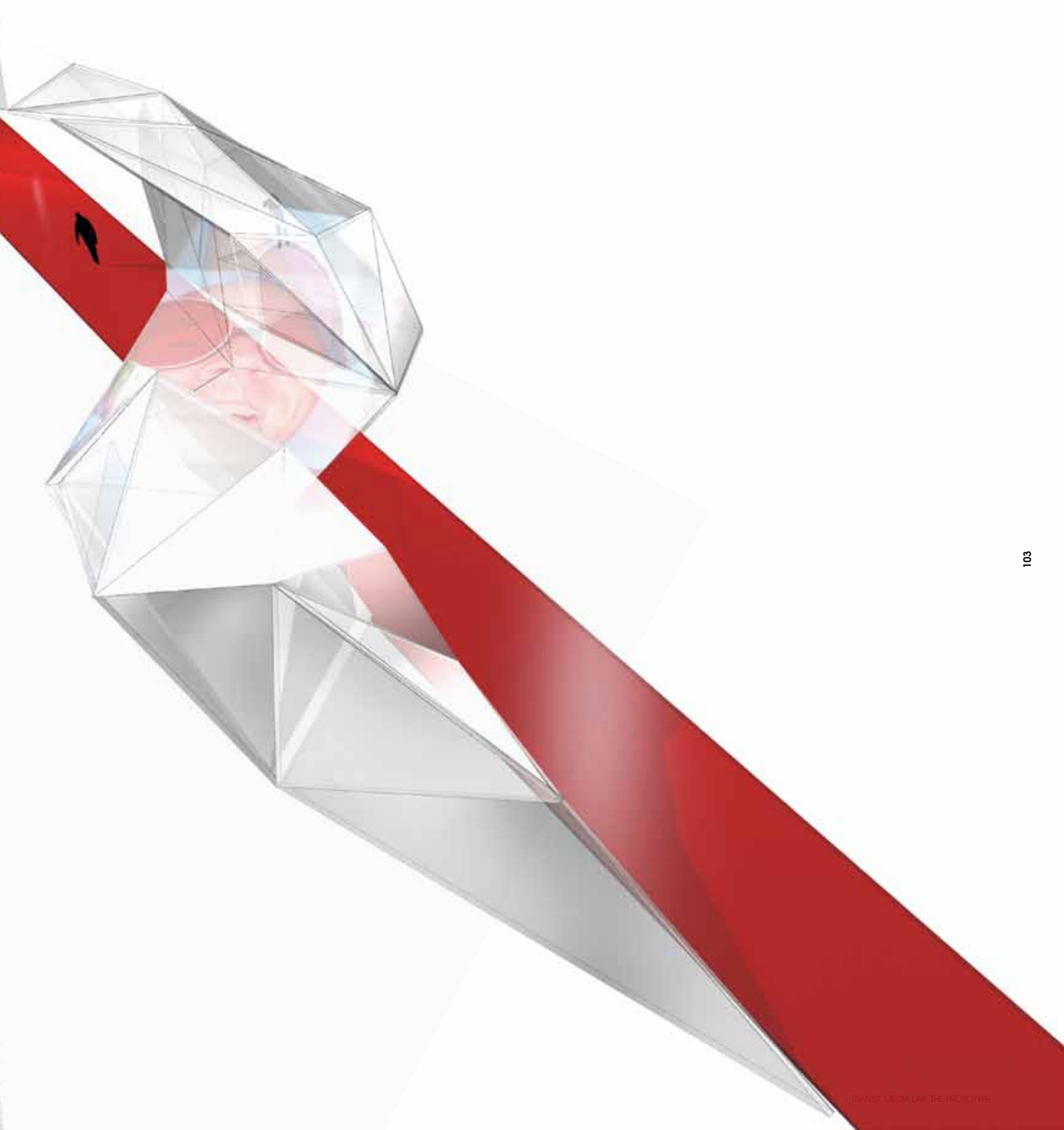
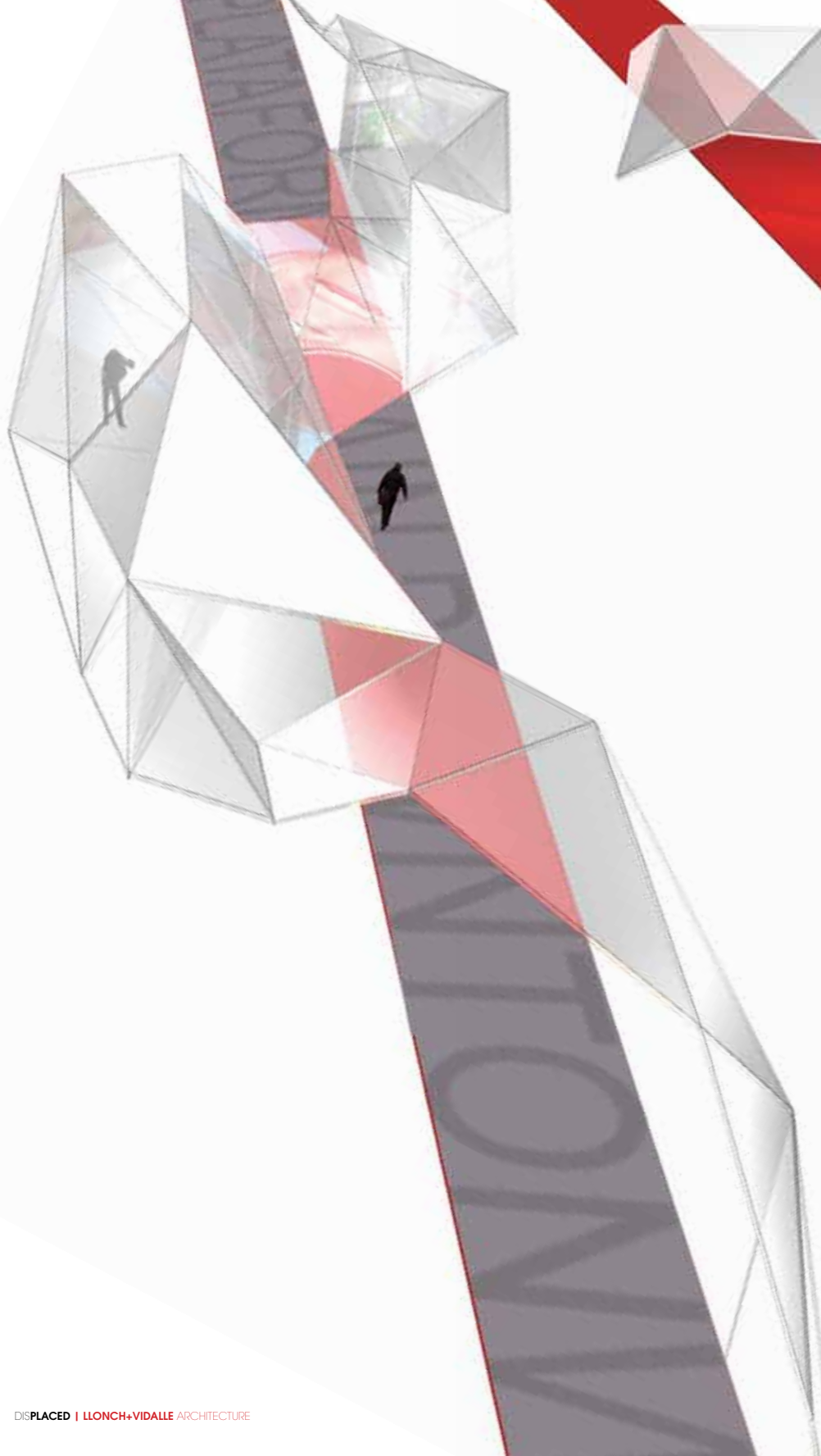
We proposed two arms

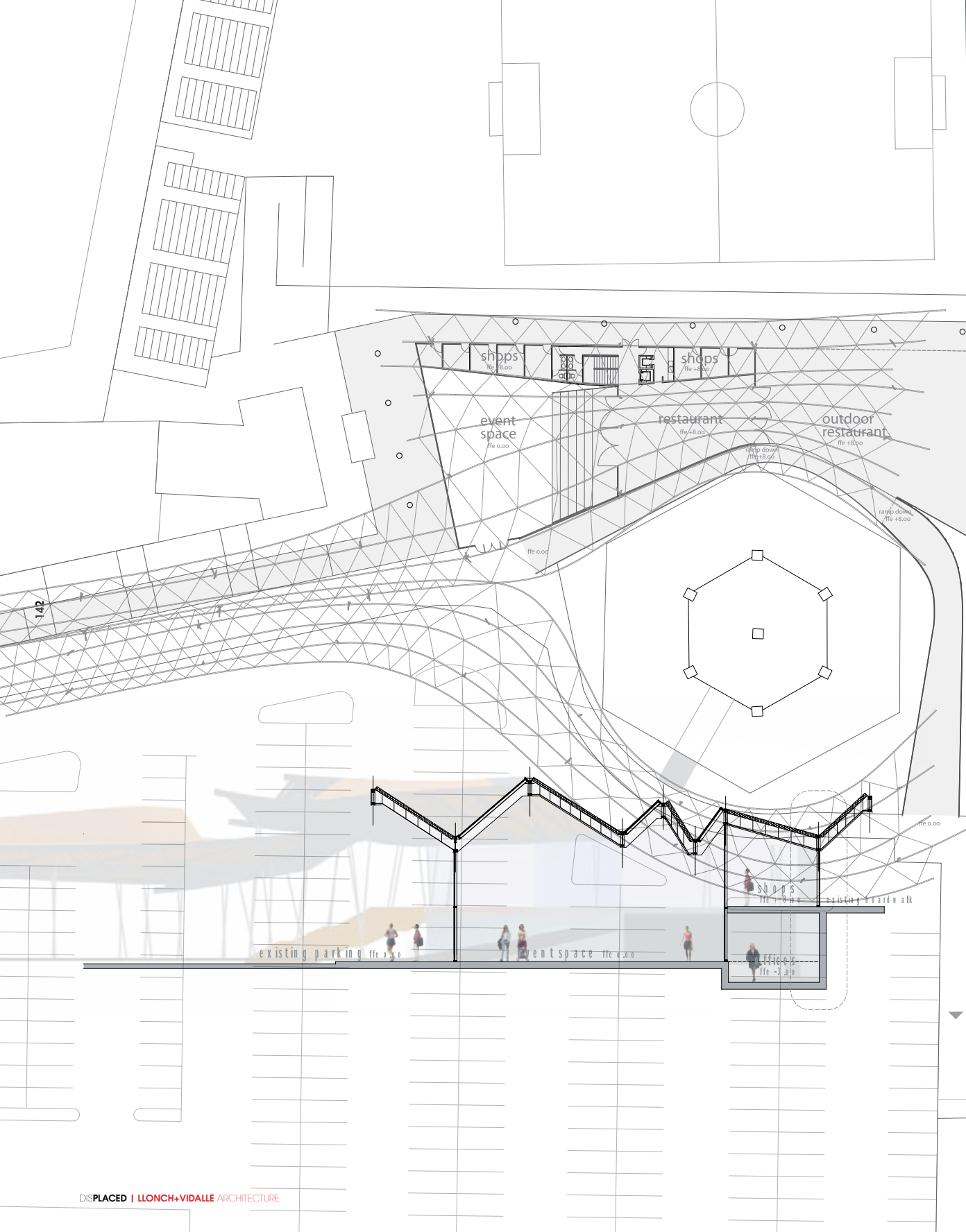
- One arm, the sanctuary, will remain at the same level as the main entrance.
- The second arm (the classrooms) will slope with the existing topography, creating direct connections with the landscape.



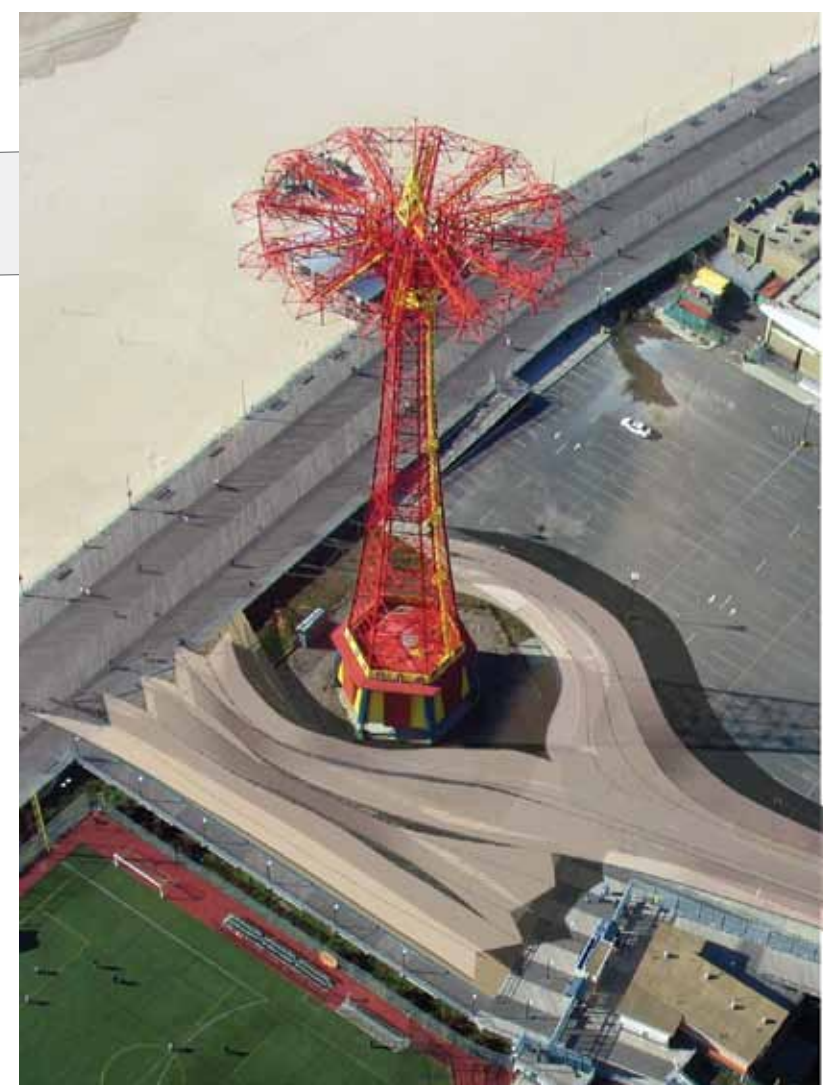




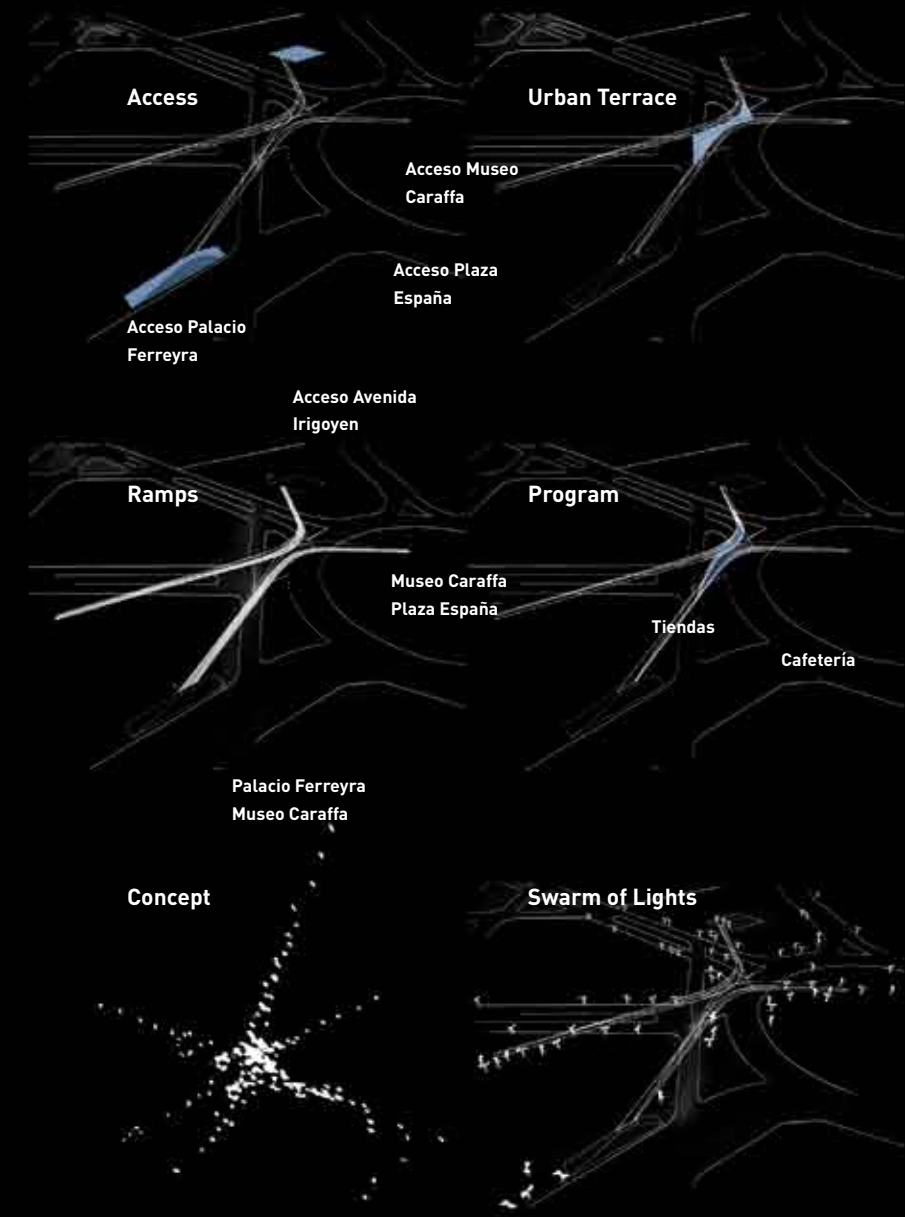




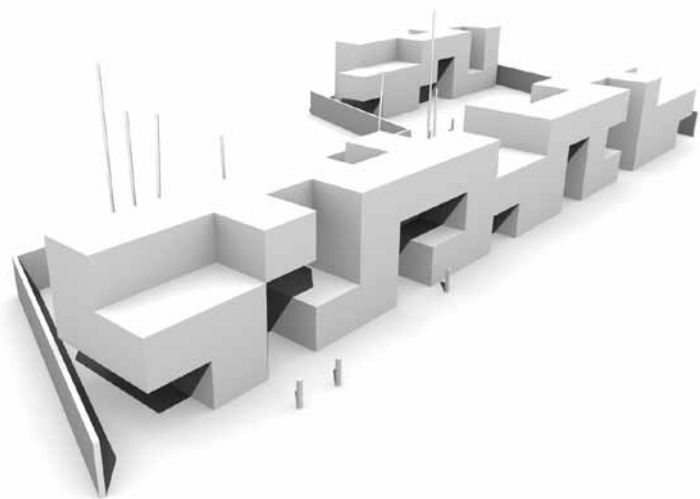
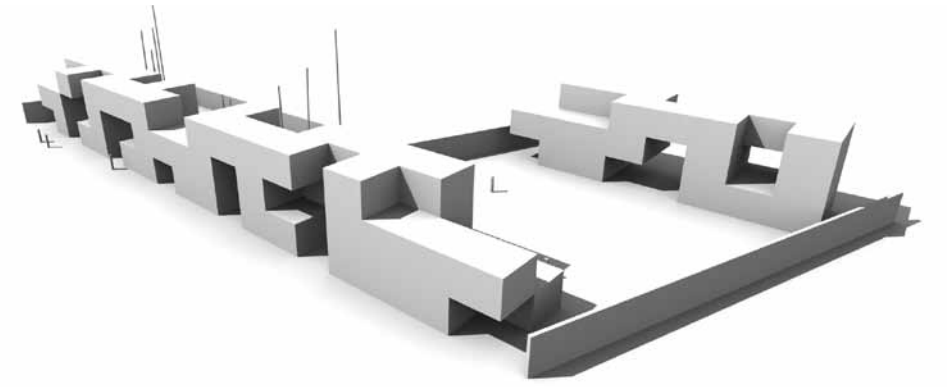
existing boardwalk
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VIEW FROM PARKING









Rosario | Argentina

CENTRAL LIBRARY

2nd Place International Competition

For this competition we proposed a meeting space, a market, a book market. A vast roof extends out in conjunction with interior protected streets, one of them, the main one, is the one which the neighbor uses almost unintentionally in order to cross to the other side of the block as a shortcut, but nonetheless notices as a part of the library. Like in every other market each one of the stands offers different products. In the new library each one is identified visually and acoustically for different parts of the program...

Finally, the project as a whole gathers up the characteristics of Rosario's urban fabric, barely altered by a diagonal definer that tries to connect different points of interest in the site, therefore creating the main entrance of the library through a public plaza.

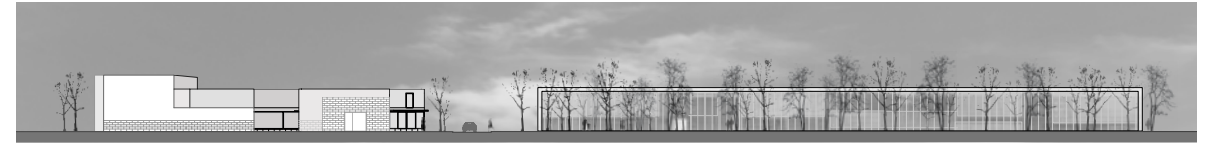
We generated a public space along Buenos Aires Avenue, at which a meeting point emerges and creates a place for cultural activities, playful and artistic such as a book fair, a playground, informal reading spaces, etc; all of them under the guard of new and existing trees.

The project tries to understand the neighborhood and its people, the pedestrian flow, the established routes, and those that have been just marked on the grass as a shortcut for getting from one place to another. In the process of studying the site we discovered that these routes are definers that connect Bonpland Street with Lavalleja Passage. This lineal space is transformed in the spine of the new building; it contains the characteristics of a public space with its own program, which also serves as an access point to different areas. It divides the program that has a free access from the controlled one.

We propose a meeting space, a market, a book market. A vast roof extends out in conjunction with interior protected streets, one of them, the main one, is the one which the neighbor uses almost unintentionally in order to cross to the other side of the block as a shortcut, but nonetheless notices as a part of the library. Like in every other market each one of the stands offers different products. In the new library each one is identified visually and acoustically for different parts of the program.



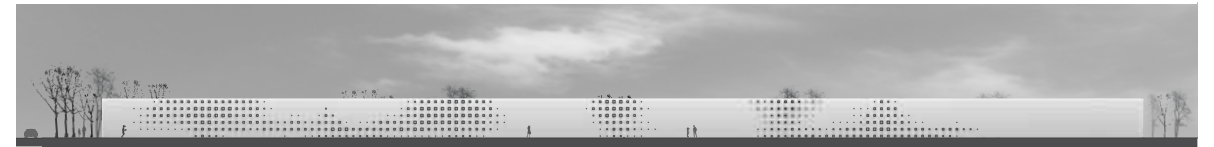
east elevation



west elevation



north elevation



south elevation



