

Politics of Fabrication III

Framing political conflict in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, Mexico City

Politics of Fabrication III (PF III) continues exploring the changing political implications of trajectories between digital fabrication and low-tech construction, and new ways of redistributing the role of architects and users in contemporary cities. The unit is interested in the social and cultural dimensions of design and how alternative modes of making, closely related to everyday life activities, can define the political agency of the individuals who inhabit the city.

This year the unit will be working in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, located in Mexico City, the largest and likely one of the most conflicting metropolis in the world. Las Tres Culturas square is well known not only for the mixed presence of Aztec, Spanish Colonial and Modernist constructions, but also for its political life including the infamous 1968 massacre. This event took place ten days before Mexico hosted the Olympics when students protested for more freedom to democratically express themselves while chanting 'No queremos olimpiadas, queremos revolución!' ('We don't want the Olympics, we want revolution!'). The Mexican Army attacked the 50,000 students who congregated in the square causing a disaster that killed more than 30, with hundreds wounded and thousands arrested. Subsequent political events have taken place in this plaza a centre of political expression in Mexico City.

During the year students will deploy designs specifically related to this socio-cultural context, including food culture, dance and music, memory, wheeling and dealing, illegal activities or transcultural

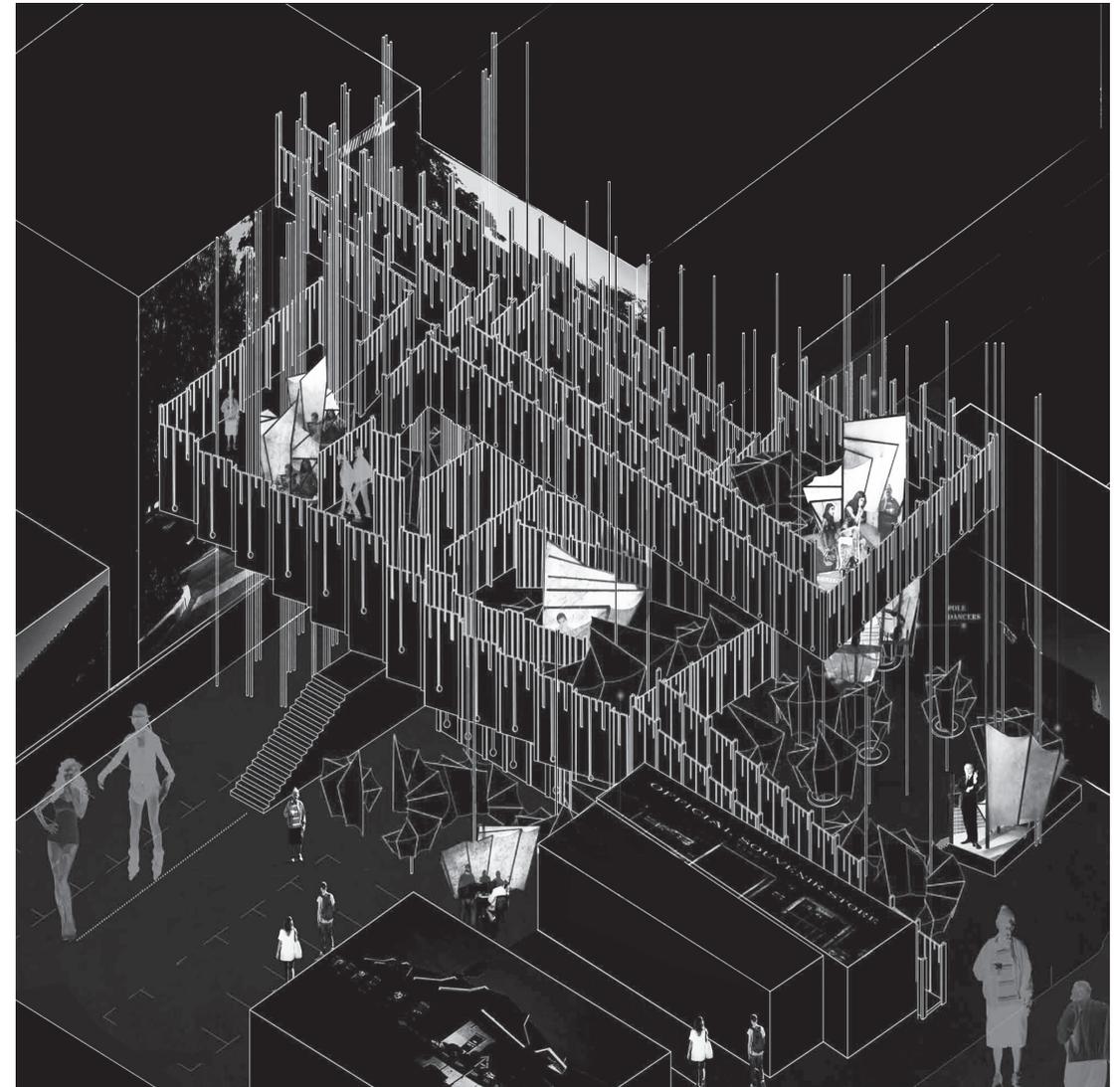
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Francisco Gonzalez de Canales studied architecture at ETSA Seville, ETSA Barcelona and Harvard University, and worked for Foster+Partners and Rafael Moneo. He is co-director of award-winning office Canales & Lombardero. He has previously lectured in England, Mexico, Spain and the USA and is the current AACP coordinator. He has recently published the book *Experiments with Life Itself* (Actar 2011) based on his PhD research on the radical domestic self-experimentations of the 1940s and 1950s.

Nuria Alvarez Lombardero studied Architecture and Urbanism at ETSA Madrid and the AA. She has worked for Machado & Silvetti Associates in Boston and for Neutra Magazine on the editorial board. Since 2003 she co-directs the London-Seville based office Canales & Lombardero. She has previously taught studio in the University of Cambridge and TEC Monterrey and lectured on Urbanism in the University of Seville. After working as a researcher at Harvard University, the University of Cambridge and the AA she is currently finalising her PhD on the dissolution of boundaries traced by modern urban planning.

relations, and will generate different understandings about how to define a contemporary public space in Mexico City. These explorations will frame the existing conflicts in the city as a way of demonstrating pluralistic expressions in public as opposed to an attempt to define and implement singular solutions to these contentious relationships.

The work will be divided into three phases. First, a pertinent issue relevant to the inhabitants of Mexico City based on their everyday life will be defined. Second, this issue will be framed and manifested into a proposed spatial configuration. Third, we will focus on how the people of Mexico City can physically conceive this spatial configuration in relation to the different construction processes available to them. Following Hannah Arendt's thoughts on politics, these construction processes manifested in public and constructed as physical registers acquire a political value as both a public act and preservation of multiple forms of life through confrontation and agonism.



Intermediate 8, Vidhya Pushpanathan (AA Travel Studentship 2011) – a series of Uncanny Events in Little Havana, Miami