

INTERMEDIATE 8

Politics of Fabrication II

Challenging political expression in Little Havana, Miami

Inter 8 continues exploring the politics of today from its most basic manifestations in the city, experimenting with new scenarios of political expression in intentionally polemical locations. In today's cities, where tourists and natives, immigrants and citizens, temporary and life-long residents live side by side, the traditional meaning of politics has changed. Consequently, political representation does not seem to depend as much on constituencies, but on direct, voluntary and unbinding associations among people who assert their presence in the public arena. The unit posits the possibility of redefining the political expression of the multitude as the making visible of the relationship between everyday activities in public and the particular material constructions that ultimately gives them political value.

This year the unit will be working on the Versailles Restaurant in the Calle Ocho (SW 8 St.) of Little Havana, Miami. This has been the epicentre of the political expression of Cuban exiles in the United States since 1971, and manifests within its walls the invisible barriers that lie between Cuba and the US. Students will analyse this building and the small public space that sits in front and comprises invisible socio-political barriers into the city. In doing so the unit will also explore the socio-cultural milieu in which these are inscribed in order to redefine them within a sophisticated understanding of politics today.

The year will begin with two small workshops in which students are introduced to the political implications of architectural elements that are used or seen in everyday life, such as the AA door entrance or the US embassy perimeter in London. These architectural elements articulate the relationship among different groups, such as Londoners and international students, or between Britons and Americans.

Following this initial conceptual development, students are expected to present their own critical arguments on the material articulation of the changing associations of individuals within the public realm. After our site visit to Little Havana, each student will propose a more specific urban strategy for architectural systems able to articulate Cuban exiles and Latinos' associations with the city. Students will test the formal, programmatic, atmospheric and constructive organisation of their design proposals in relation to their arguments. Projects will address construction methods that are able to be fabricated by the collective, relating the political expression of the multitude with the fabrication level.

UNIT STAFF

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 Canales & Lombardero. An active

architectural critic, he has previously lectured in England, Mexico, Spain and the USA, collaborated and worked in different architectural publications, and current AACP coordinator. He recently completed his PhD on the radical domestic self-experimentations of the 1940s and 1950s.

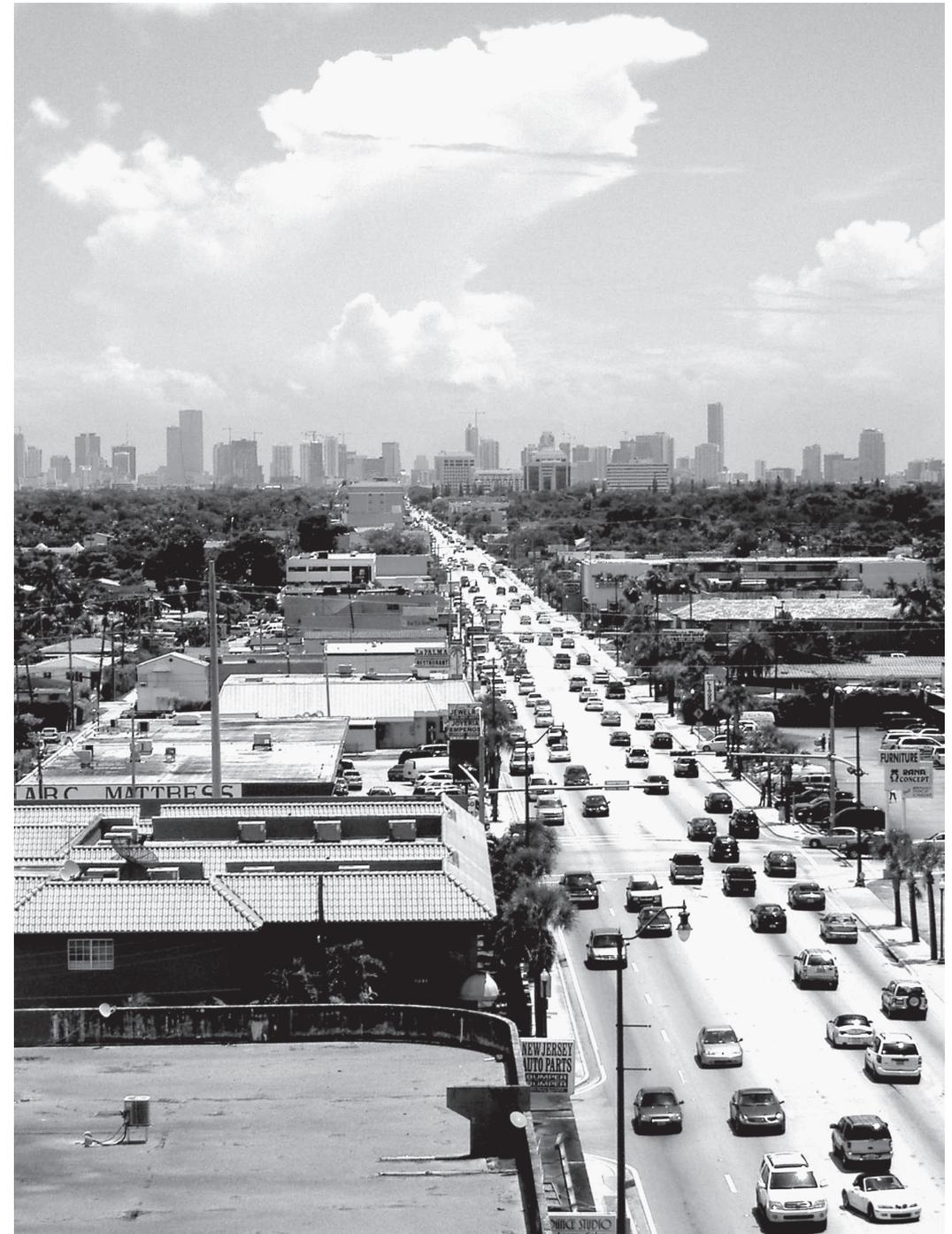
Nuria Alvarez Lombardero studied architecture at ETSA Madrid and in the Housing and Urbanism MA programme at the AA. She has worked for Machado & Silvetti Associates in Boston, and is part of Neutra Magazine editorial board. Since 2003 she has co-directed the award-winning

Canales & Lombardero. She has lectured at the University of Seville and worked 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.

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Francisco Gonzalez de Canales
Nuria Alvarez Lombardero

UNDERGRADUATE



Aerial view of Calle Ocho (SW 8 St.), Little Havana, Miami.