



Installation of Hyperwall by Intermediate Unit 8: AA Projects Review, 2018

INTERMEDIATE 8

POLITICS OF A STRIP BLOCK: COMMUNITIES BEYOND TWO HAVANAS

Considering Cuba's gradual exposure to a global economy, the future development of Havana City has come into question. Physically frozen for decades, Havana has addressed its slow urban redevelopment with a keen eye on tourism. Clear examples of this tendency can be found in the ongoing plan to build a 42-floor luxury hotel and the Ministry of Tourism has proposed the construction of a further 7,500 new hotel rooms by 2025. However, in adjacency, 132,000 Cubans have no home and live in government shelters as urban decay continues to displace Habaneros across the city. All these conditions reinforce the idea of two different, but co-existent Havanas: a visible and festive haven for tourists and certain elites, on the one hand,

and a dense and hidden constellation of local communities on the other. Intermediate Unit 8 proposes to work on new building typologies in Havana capable of imagining scenarios for a possible inclusion of these 'two Havanas' into specific strips of friction.

Students will work on a linear urban block strategy for 3,000 inhabitants (ranging 300 to 500 metres long and 10 to 50 wide) to negotiate these political tensions and their occurrence in urban, social, cultural and material contexts. Examples of linear buildings will be scrutinized so as to understand this urban typology and material experimentations will be conducted to challenge local prefabricated construction methods. In short, confronting the relation of these 'two Havanas' not only informs a deeper understanding of local community, but also – as forms of knowledge that can challenge the global status quo – forces a consideration of its technologies and economies.

Unit Staff

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Rafael Moneo: Building, Teaching and Writing. Nuria studied architecture and urbanism at ETSA Madrid and the AA and worked for Machado & Silvetti Associates. She has previously taught at the University of Cambridge, Bartlett, TEC Monterrey and University of Seville. Her work on gender studies in architecture and urban typologies has been widely published, as her award-winning book *Arquitectas: Redefining the Practice*. Both hold a PhD and are co-authors of *Politics and digital fabrication: an ongoing debate* (2017).