



WORKSHOP 4.1A PREFIGURATIVE ARCHITECTURES

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CONTENTS

UNDERSTANDING PREFIGURATION

01 PRODUCTION OF PROTEST: OCCUPY GEZI

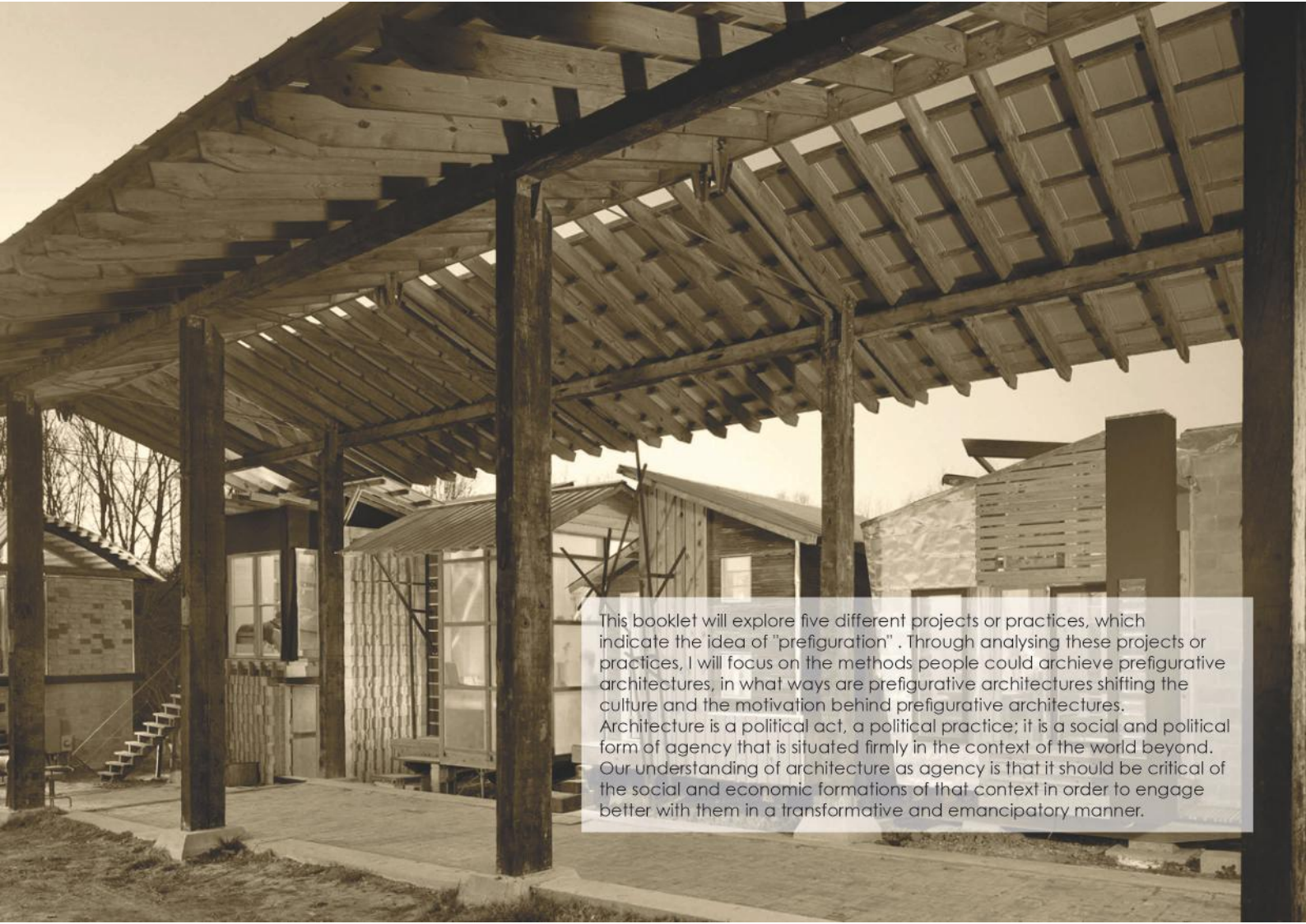
02 PRODUCTION OF PROTEST SELF-ESTEEM: NUEVA ESPERANZA SCHOOL

03 PRODUCTION OF PROTEST SELF-ESTEEM: ESPERANZA DOS

04 PRODUCTION OF SELF-BUILD COMMUNITY: HEDGEHOG AND DIGGERS SELF-BUILD

05 PRODUCTION OF AUTONOMY: ARCHITECT: MORAR DE OUTRAS MANEIRAS(MOM)

CONCLUSION



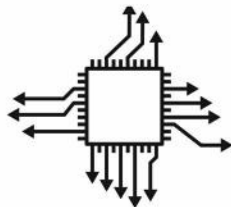
This booklet will explore five different projects or practices, which indicate the idea of "prefiguration". Through analysing these projects or practices, I will focus on the methods people could achieve prefigurative architectures, in what ways are prefigurative architectures shifting the culture and the motivation behind prefigurative architectures. Architecture is a political act, a political practice; it is a social and political form of agency that is situated firmly in the context of the world beyond. Our understanding of architecture as agency is that it should be critical of the social and economic formations of that context in order to engage better with them in a transformative and emancipatory manner.

UNDERSTANDING PREFIGURATIVE ARCHITECTURES

THE WAY TO ACHIEVE PREFIGURATIVE ARCHITECTURES



APPROPRIATION



DISSEMINATION



EMPOWERMENT



NETWORKING



SUBVERSION

Pregurative architectures could be achieved through appropriate, dissemination, empowerment, networking and subversion.

APPROPRIATION - the occupation another's property for one's own purpose legally or illegally, or taking unoccupied, abandoned, derelict or vacant sites.

DISSEMINATION - the way how knowledge is distributed and how it is being spread and spread to whom. Dissemination emphasises on open source which could be discussed in a wider context as well.

EMPOWERMENT - to make change through the empowerment of others: allowing people to take control of their own environment. Architects become active agents, acting on behalf of people who build, live in, occupy and visit architecture.

NETWORKING - a collaborative method, that a group of people working together and according to specific requirements of each project.

SUBVERSION - a strategy using existing policies, guidelines and buildings on purpose rather than they were designed for.



KNOWLEDGE



ORGANISATION



PHYSICAL RELATIONS



SOCIAL RELATIONS

Prefigurative architectures shift the culture through dissemination of knowledge, physical relations, social relations and organisational structure.

The **TECHNO-POPULAR KNOWLEDGE** could be transferred from architects to users, which can be easily understood and accepted. Architects help people to liberate the construction process to ensure the dissemination of knowledge.

ORGANISATION - a group of workers or other co-operatives, practices working in collaborative and interdisciplinary ways.

PHYSICAL RELATIONS - the idea of "adaptable" and acknowledgement about the realities of users' changing needs social relations seek to change power relations through challenging private claims to space.

SOCIAL RELATIONS - to change the power relations through challenging private claims to space.

"All social practices involve knowledge. The production of knowledge is, in itself, a social practice and what distinguishes it from other social practices is its self-reflexivity, which productively reshapes the context of practices in motive and engine of actions."

Santos B.S., Nunes J.A., Meneses M.P.
(2007)

UNDERSTANDING PREFIGURATIVE ARCHITECTURES

THE MOTIVATION BEHIND PREFIGURATIVE ARCHITECTURES



ECOLOGICAL



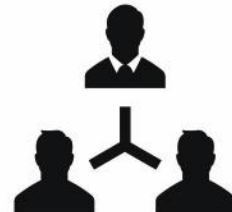
ETHICAL



PEDAGOGICAL



POLITICAL



PROFESSIONAL

Five motivations behind the action of prefiguration will lead the generation of prefigurative architectures: Ecological, ethical, pedagogical, political, professional.

ECOLOGICAL - the motivation to work with environment. Ethical is about 'being-for the Other', to 'assume responsibility for the Other'-with the Other being a 'mix of builders, users, occupiers, observers of architecture'.

PEDAGOGICAL - about teaching and transformation of knowledge. Political is about the power, the right or the privilege to claim space become paramount. Setting up non-hierarchical systems, co-operative structures are professional challenges to the normative modes of architectural practice

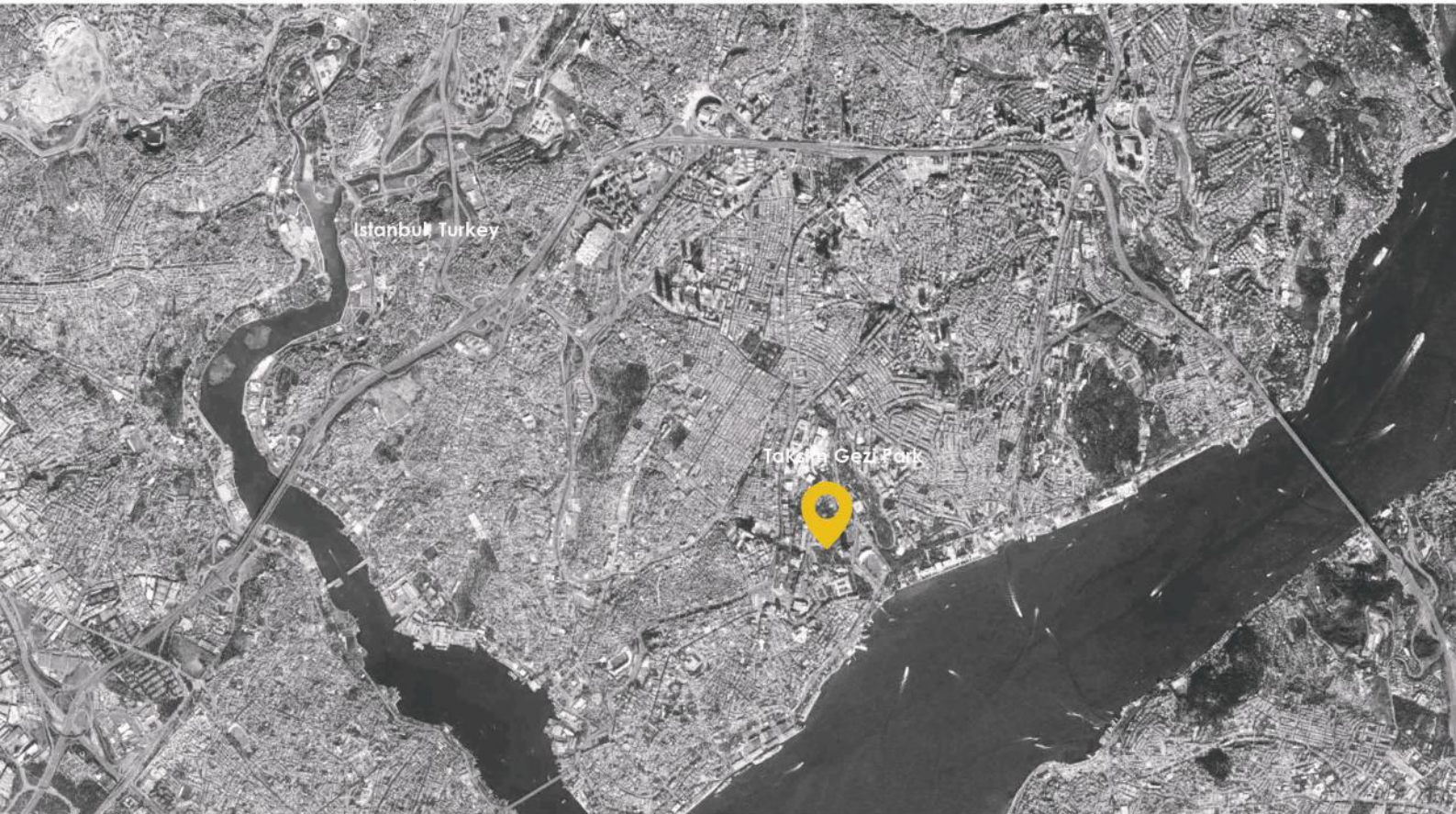
ETHICAL - 'being-for the Other', to 'assume responsibility for the Other'-with the Other being a 'mix of builders, users, occupiers, observers of architecture'. Pedagogical is about teaching and transform of knowledge.

POLITICAL - the power, the right or the privilege to claim space become paramount. Setting up non-hierarchical systems, co-operative structures are professional challenges to the normative modes of architectural practice

Setting up non-hierarchical systems, co-operative structures are **PROFESSIONAL** challenges to the normative modes of architectural practice

Project: #OccupyGezi

Location: Taksim Gezi Park, Istanbul, Turkey



Istanbul map, Image source: Google map

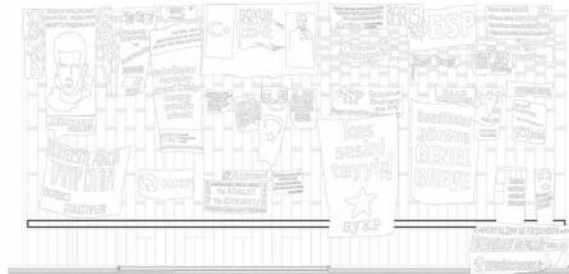
27 May 2013 marked a turning point in Istanbul, and thereby changing the history of Turkey - This is the day when the public has refuted the idea of a 'totalitarian democracy'.



OccupyGezi

Occupy Gezi started as a small demonstration in Gezi Park to prevent the park from being destroyed or redeveloped by the government. What resulted were a number of protests taking place simultaneously across the city which continued for another 20 days, uninterrupted. The park transformed into the most vibrant political space. Camps swelled into a community, an autonomous city with everyday infrastructures to accommodate both formal and informal activities.

The Gezi Park incident and others are read by some 1930s modernism researchers, and present one of the codes of neoliberalism's reflection on urban space by others.



Taksim Gezi Park map, Image source: Google map

Government Intervention and protest at Gezi Park



#OccupyGezi: Half Ekmek



#OccupyGezi: Barricade



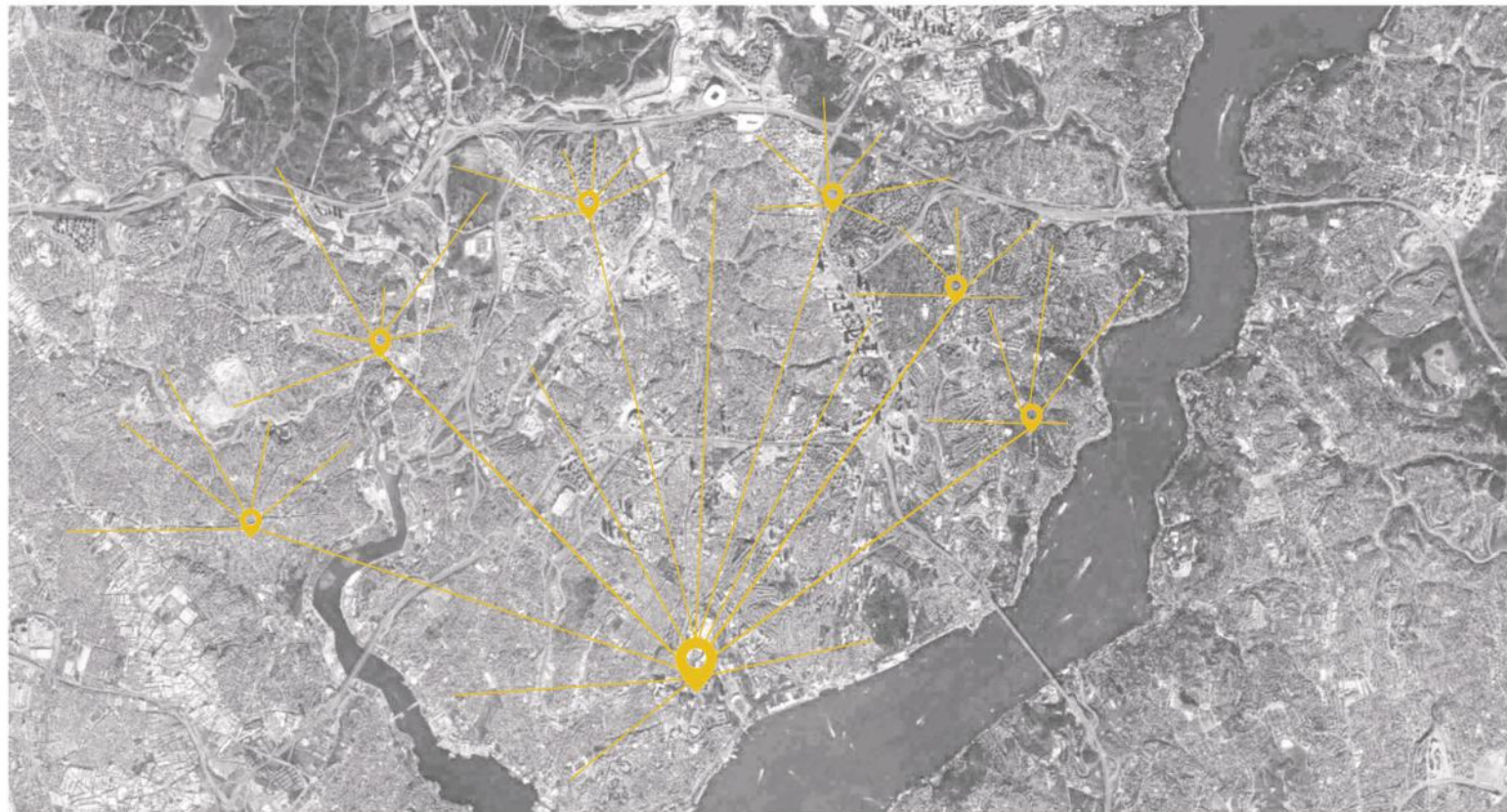
#OccupyGezi: Deck Chair

"The protests in Istanbul indicated one simple thing for architects : We need new definitions for architecture in situations when architecture is removed from architects. Each unique structure that we encounter in the streets and Gezi Park has its own in-situ design and implementation process. Documentation of these temporary structures is of huge importance for further examination, considering their limited life-cycle."

writes by organisation co-founder Yelta Köm on the Tumblr page for the project.

Architecture has become a tool rather than its classical functions.

Dissemination Map

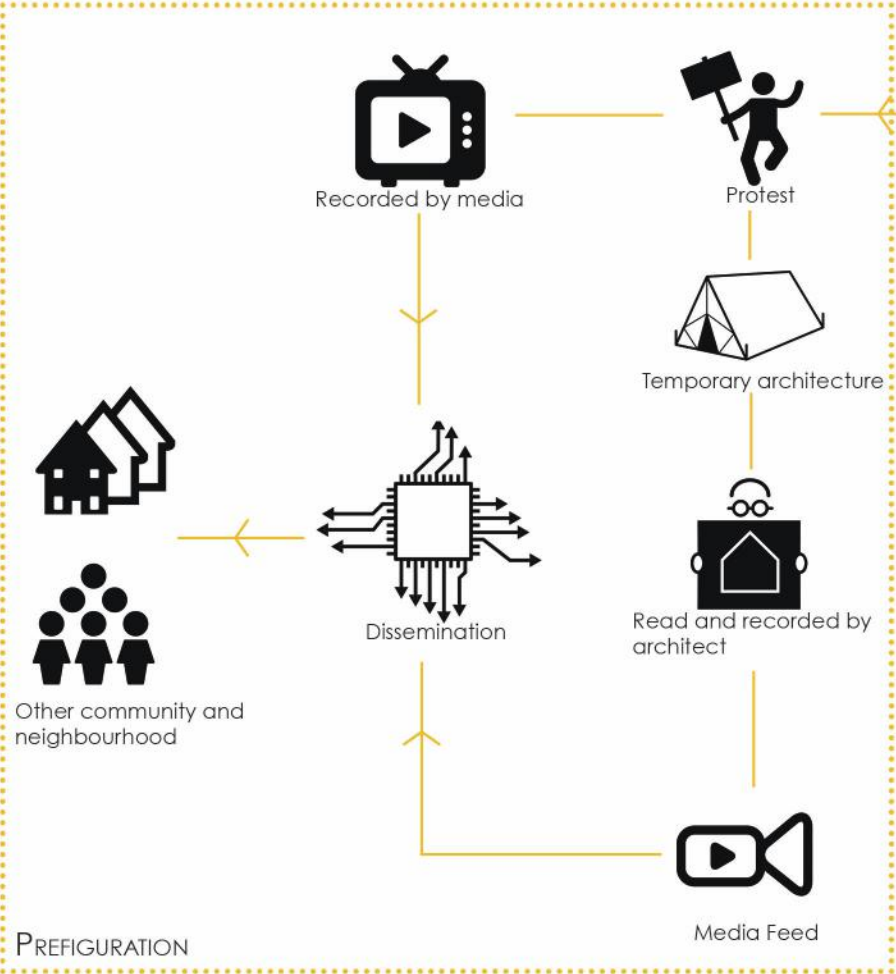


Dissemination of the spontaneous architecture in local neighbourhood

Image source: Google map

Camps on site have transformed into a community, an autonomous city with everyday infrastructures to accommodate both formal and informal activities. Gezi Park has transformed into a public movement. It is not only a protest against the government, it is also about "building together" and "creating a community together". What happened on Gazi Park soon became contagious and spread out to every corners of the city, leading to a city-wide movement where demonstrations took place on the streets and in the neighborhood.

Act of Prefiguration #OccupyGezi:



"in direct action; whereby the 'indirect protest' mechanism can be used to promote egalitarian. This spread of survival knowledge might become an expression for a social movement goal. While more people utilise the alternative knowl- edge, it might be a political symbol that contaminates ideas, messages and goals to the wider networks."

Franks, 2003

OccupyGezi induced the creation of many temporary yet ingenious architectural solutions to political problems. These structures, which later proved to be of considerable importance and of research value, are then documented and disseminated in the architectural community.

This intervention itself became a collective process for all temporary spontaneous architecture with its creative design. Everything was documented and could be used easily in the future in any other communities and neighborhoods.

Project: Nueva Esperanza School
Location: El Cabuyal, Manabí, Ecuador
Architect: al borde
Project Year: 2009



"the embodiment within the ongoing political practice [...] of those forms of social relations, decision making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal."

Boggs, 1977:100

Who is Al Borde?

4 members, nine-year-old firm

"We see our process architecturally as an under-construction thought or philosophy"

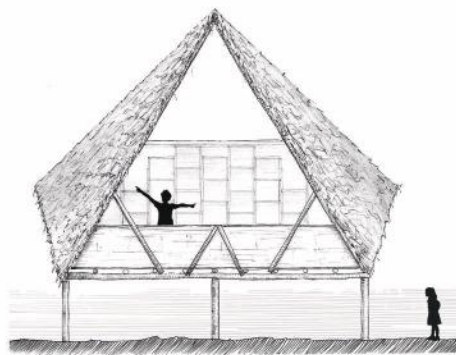
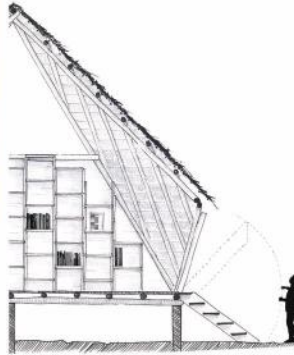
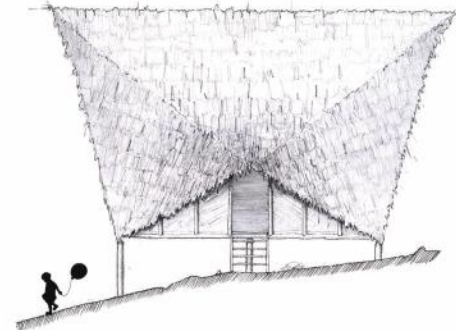
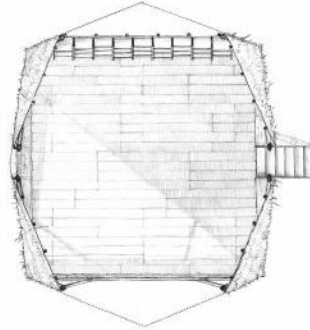


Venice Biennale of
Architecture: The Dark
Resources Architects Al Borde



Based in the the city of Quito, this practice displays a vibrant energy and explorative curiosity that manifests itself in many forms, from built projects to workshops, exhibitions, public actions and, even, downloadable DIY building instructions. The establishment of a practice that is perpetually a work in progress is a conscientious action taken by its members. Its ability to be adaptive and flexible is the foundation that makes its work possible.

The design of Nueva Esperanza School



Upon examining a rural area, the young architect firm realized that most of the schools are constructed in the forms of concrete huts with barred window. Those school look like prisons rather than schools. That is the reason why the project is looking for solving **not only immediate problems but generate long-term solutions.**

The members of the community fish and farm the land and utilize a bartering system. In this way, it is an entirely self-sufficient community, and its relationship with nature is extremely significant to its way of life.

The project uses the same materials and building patterns the community has been using for building for years. A timber basis above the foundation piles, bamboo walls, wood structure and a roof made of knitted straw scarf or "cade".

The design of Nueva Esperanza School



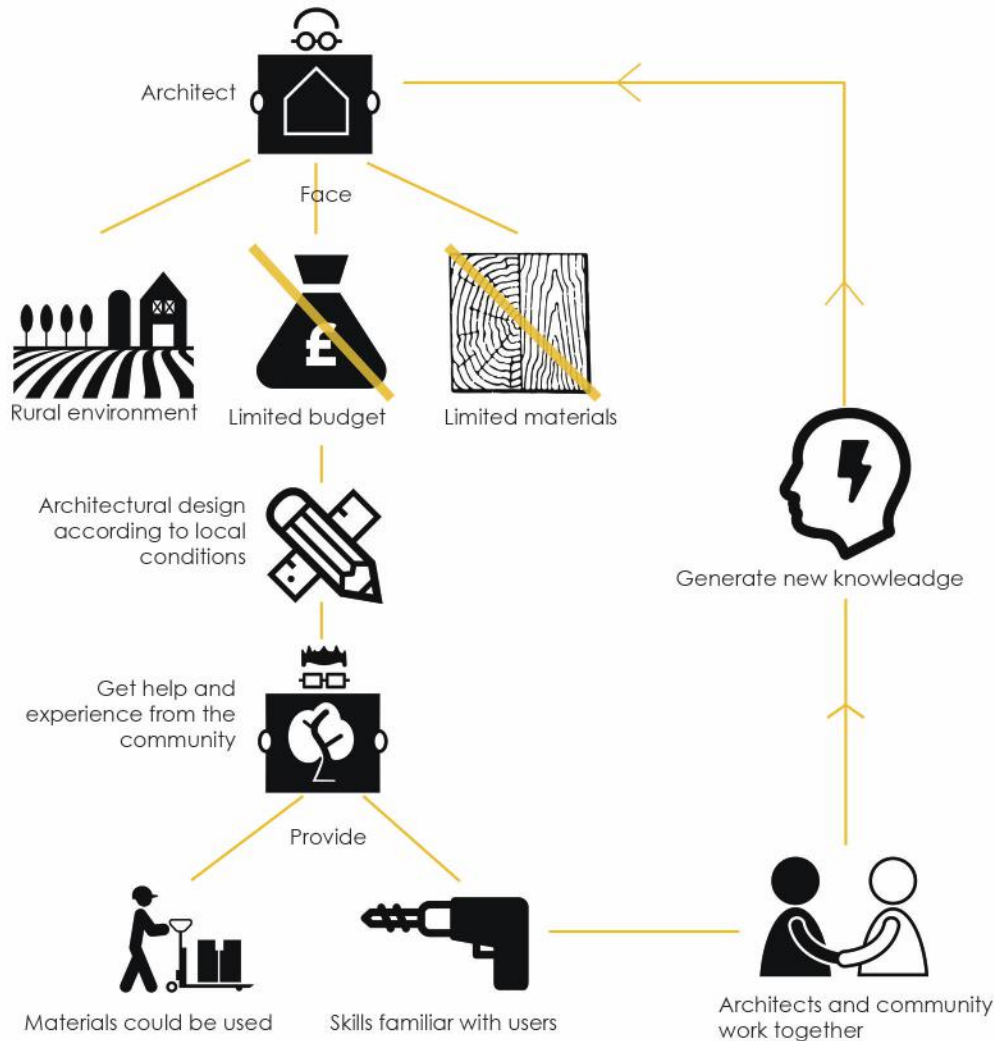
The design was developed through communication with the community and based on the available materials around the community. After Considering the available materials on site, and through reaching out to the community, the architects and communities worked together to achieve a comfortable space with creative elements for the children.

The design has changed children's attitudes towards school. This space could wake up children's imagination and creativity.



Images showing the community working on bookshelves

Act of Prefiguration in Nueva Esperanza School



The lack of resources at hand for the project forced the young firm to rely on the community in ways that many architects would find atypical: *"the community was involved within the construction because it was impossible to do it without [them]."*

The school was constructed using timber, bamboo and straw from the surrounding area, materials the community had been using to build shelters for years. They were very active in the construction process, employing building methods that they were familiar with; it was only the "conception and conceptualization of the space" that the architects supplied to the process.

Project: Esperanza Dos
Location: Manabí, Ecuador
Architect: al borde
Project Year: 2011

An extension to Nueva Esperanza School



Two years after they finished the Nueva Esperanza School, the firm was asked back to build an extension to the school in 2011, 'Esperanza Dos'. This time, the community not only participated in construction process, but also involved in decision making process.

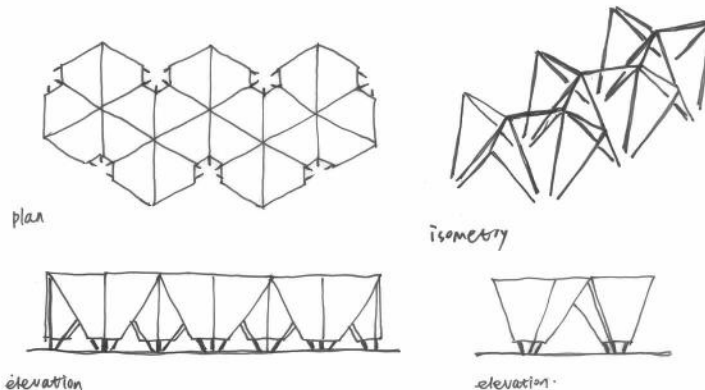


"We are always prepared to face life without hope and without fear, without hope of success and without fear to fail,"

Al Borde

"When we work with communities, we try to do all the things we have to do so that, at some point, we will become unnecessary."

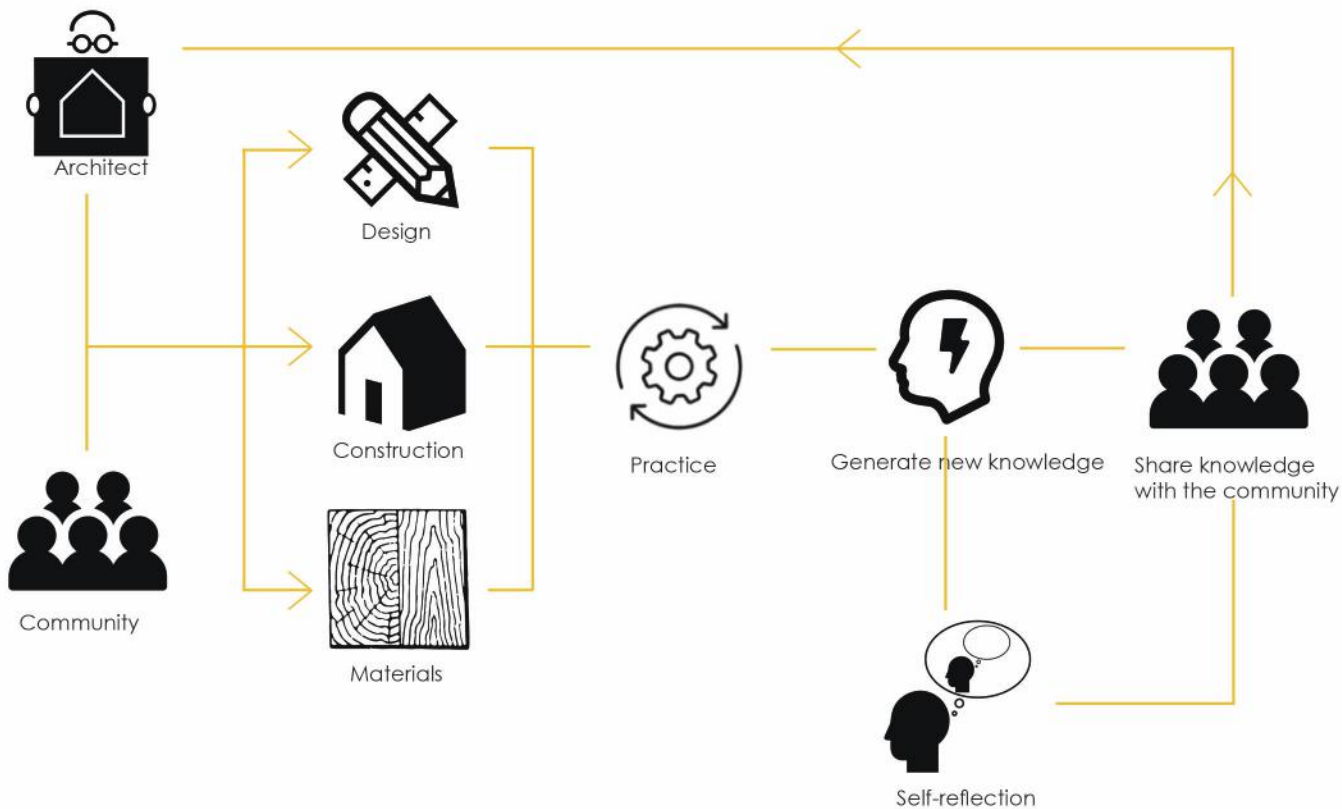
Al Borde



When they started drafting ideas about 'Esperanza Dos', they were "working with an anthropologist exploring different kinds of methodologies of participation," and they decided to "involve the community in the decision-making system to define the specific parts of the spaces."

Their ultimate goal was to foster an equal dialogue between themselves and the members of this community in the design and construction process so that the end result would reflect the needs and preferences of the people who would use the structure.

Act of Prefiguration in Esperanza Dos



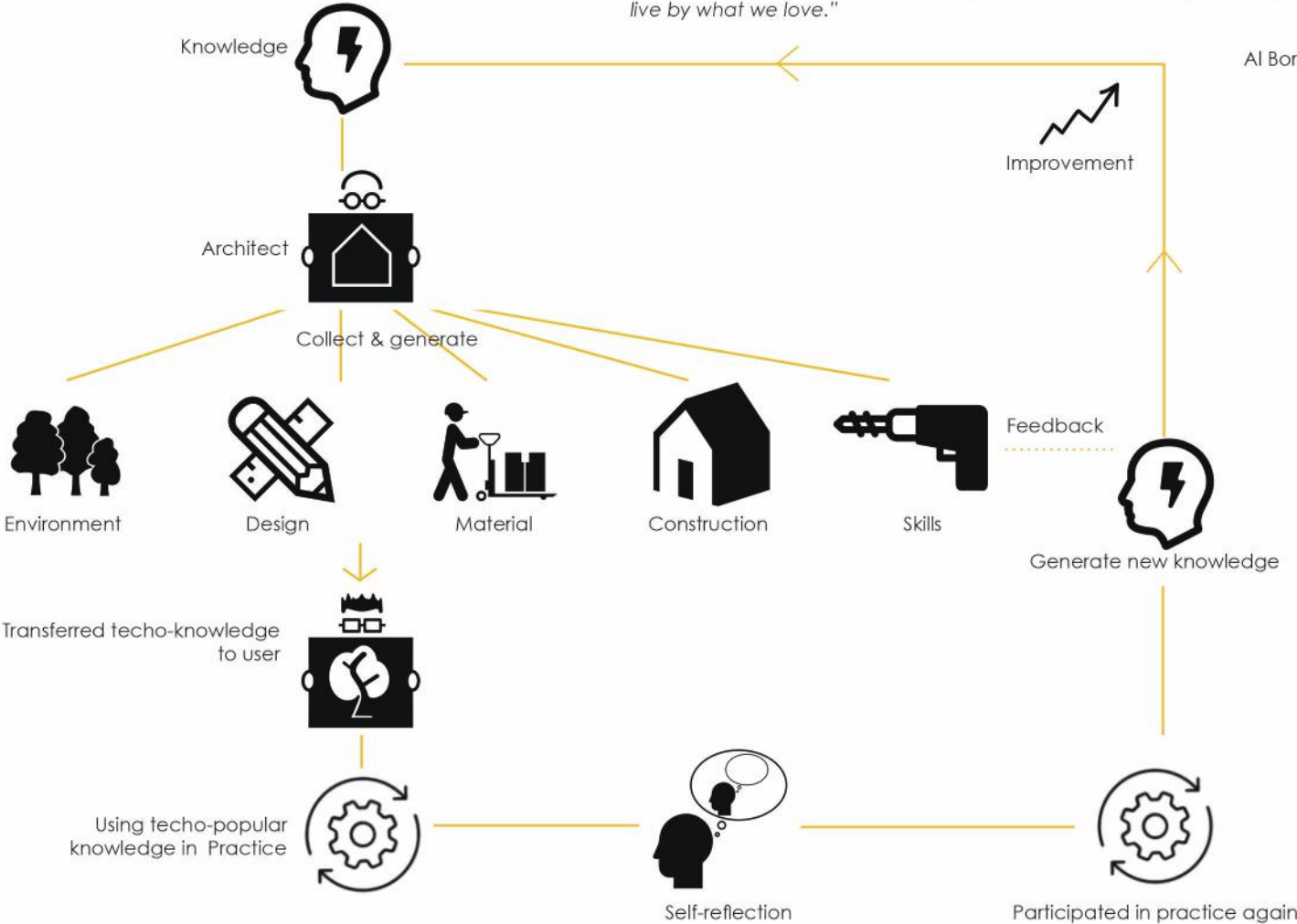
This community seeks progress. But for them, progress is achieved through personal enrichment. This enrichment has less to do with money, but is reflected in improvements in entertainment, technology, resource sharing.

Architect and community worked together from the design process to construction. Community participated in design process in order to express their ideas and requirements clearly. Designing together also improves work efficiency and encourage knowledge sharing. Each person had a preferred task in the construction and involuntarily became good at it. Then began a process of perfecting the techniques; this led to specialization in each activity and optimized processes. Finally the transfer of knowledge to another person is what ended up enriching the whole community.

Act of Prefiguration: Summary

"Our work is a manifesto of our lives, We are what we do, And hope to live by what we love."

AI Borde



Project: Hedgehog and Diggers Self-Build
Location: Brighton, UK
Architect: Architype

Diggers Self-Build

Winner of the 1997 Housing Design
Awards

Hedgehog Self-Build

Environmental Care
Award 1994



"Housing must, therefore, be used as a verb rather than a noun - as a process that subsumes products. Real values are those that lie in the relationship between the elements of housing action - between the actors, their activities and their achievements."

John FC Turner 1976:62-63

Diggers and Hedgehog Housing Schemes are pioneers in self building projects that harnesses the imagination and skills of ordinary people. These projects leveraged a simple timber frame method that was created by architect **Walter Segal** for several 'community' self build schemes in the early 1980s, and since developed and updated by **Architype** to exceed current construction standards.

Image Source: Heslop, J. (2016). Self-Build III – Self-build for social rent: Hedgehog Co-op and the Segal Method. [online] Unofficial Culture. Available at: <https://unofficialculture.wordpress.com/2015/06/15/self-build-iii-self-build-for-social-rent-hedgehog-co-op-and-the-segal-method>

Hedgehog Self-Build



Debbie's completed house

"The method produced a strong sense of community even before construction was complete. For Segal, the participation of families brought social rewards that diverted his interest beyond the architecture"

Blundell-Jones, P., Petrescu, D. and Till, J. 2005

Debbie was a single mother living in a bedsit in south London when she got the opportunity to be included in the Hedgehog scheme.

According to Debbie, Each family had to put in 30 hours of work per week. To make things easier, they created a nursery on site which they took turns to run. The participants undertook a mere two days of training to learn the basic 'farmhouse joinery' needed to build in the Segal method. As in Ingold's belief in 'thinking through making' where learning as understanding in practice: *"it is wrong to think of learning as the transmission of a ready-made body of information, prior to its application in particular contexts of practice. On the contrary, we learn by doing, in the course of carrying out the tasks of life"*.



Frame going up, resting on concrete pads



The verandas

Image Source: Heslop, J. (2016). Self-Build III – Self-build for social rent: Hedgehog Co-op and the Segal Method. [online] Unofficial Culture. Available at: <https://unofficialculture.wordpress.com/2015/06/15/self-build-iii-self-build-for-social-rent-hedgehog-co-op-and-the-segal-method>

Diggers Self-Build



Roof garden

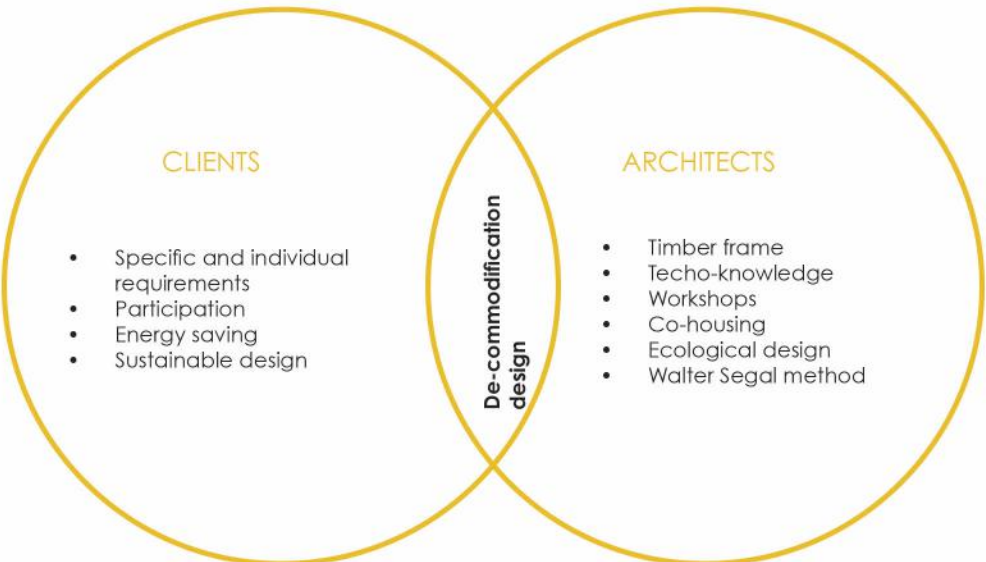
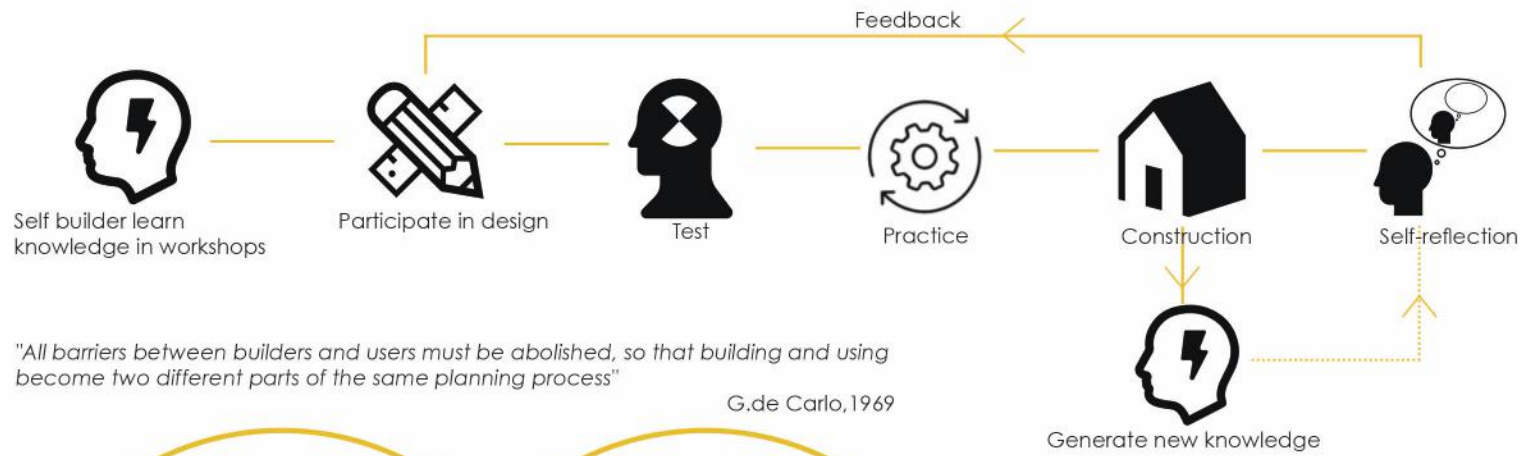


Diggers brought back to life a steeply sloping derelict site on the outskirts of Brighton with 9 self-build houses. Architype designed the scheme in full partnership with the self-builders, and the houses utilise the natural advantages of the site - split levels and south facing frontages. The scheme was the first in the UK with grass roofs and is designed to a highly ecological specification incorporating gas condensing boilers and thermal heat stores, passive solar conservatories, and super-insulated shells with recycled newspaper insulation.

Akin to Hedgehog self-build project, Diggers self-build project was also based on Walter Segal's approach. This design is generated and achieved by cooperation between architects and clients together. Clients are involved in the design process during which they provided their own comments and requirements according to their needs.

Besides the design itself, Architype has developed and updated the method and has given particular emphasis to its ecological development. Both projects not only accommodated clients' requirements, but also achieved lower energy consumption, and often pioneered new techniques.

Act of Prefiguration in Hedgehog and Diggers Self-Build



Walter Segal was best known for designing a sustainable self-build housing system based on timber frame construction. He enabled people to build their own homes that are based on a popular modular-grid design and built from materials available from their local environment.

Each family generates their own design as the designs of each house are tailored to the needs each family, therefore no two houses are identical.

The interaction between the architect and their client continues even after the completion of the project. After the design process, architects taught the their about various construction techniques, and clients kept practicing until they could carry on the process individually.

Location: Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Architect: MORAR DE OUTRAS MANEIRAS (MOM)



MOM is a research group based in the School of Architecture in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Their work is neither concerned with size, scale or function but with everyday spaces such as dwellings or simple public facilities.

Image Source: Spatialagency.net. (2016). Spatial Agency: Morar de Outras Maneiras. [online] Available at: <http://spatialagency.net/database/how/empowerment/morar.de.outras.maneiras.mom> [Accessed 7 Dec. 2016].

'Alternative' projects



The primary goal of MOM is social empowerment. In Mom, architectural design is regarded as an open process, where the clients are involved in designing, building and finally the usage of the final product.

Prefiguration now means preoccupation of practices and the knowledge behind them. Architects transferred knowledge that they already simplified to self-builders, and then the dissemination of knowledge will inform more self-builders. Architecture as agency is that it should be critical of the social and economic formations of that context in order to engage better with them in a transformative and emancipatory manner.

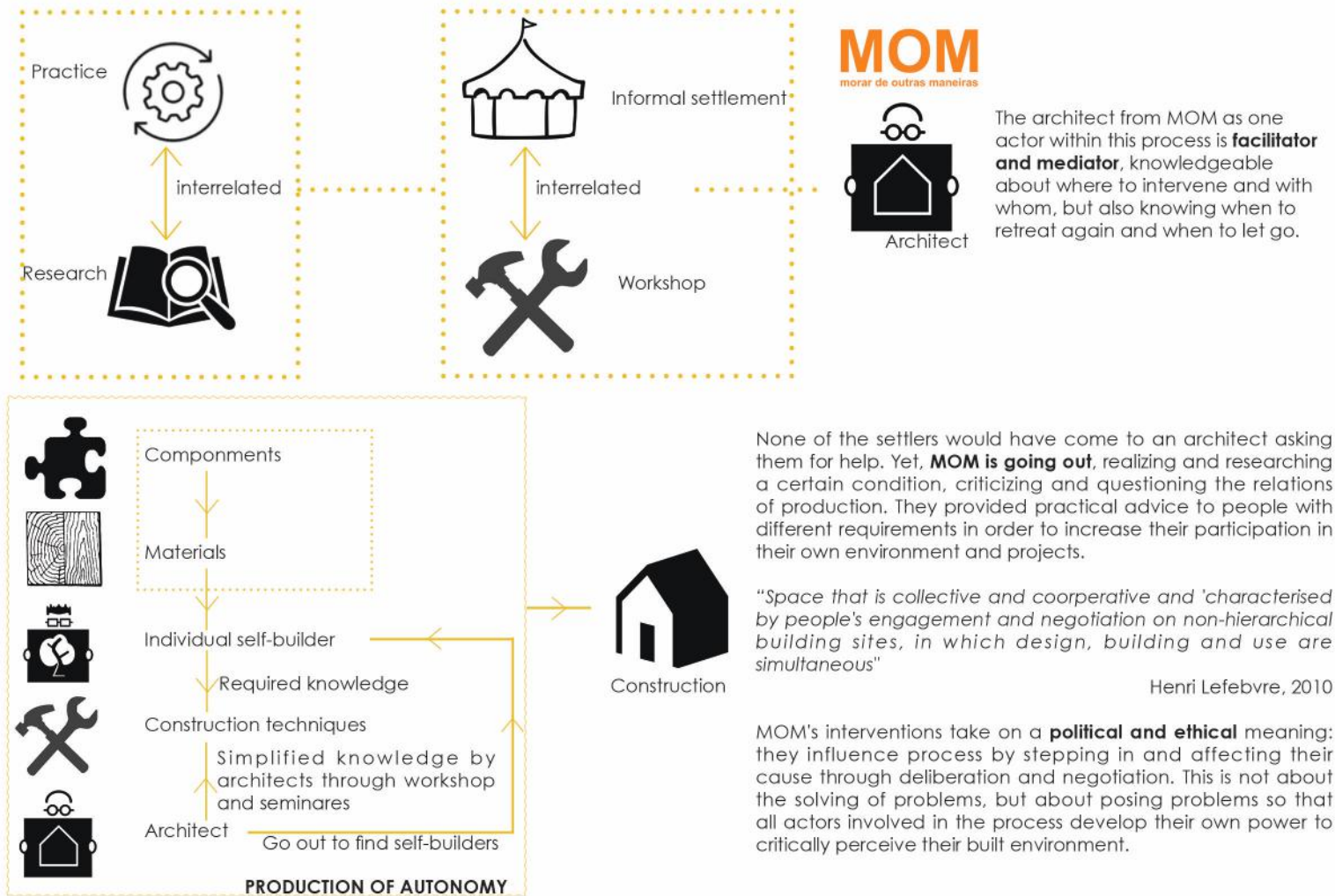
Yates understood prefiguration as a process of generating alternatives, but he also mentioned that it is not clear when and how the alternatives could relate to social movements (Yates, 2014). He explained that alternative project was not aim to build its own sake but was connected to wider ambitions, suggesting a move beyond the architect's present into something that in itself is able to express something positive.



'alternative development process in which the people [...] are at the centre of a process of transforming their lives, settlements and position in the city'.

Camilo Boano and Emily Kelling

Act of Prefiguration in MOM



CONCLUSION

HOW

APPROPRIATION
DISSEMINATION
EMPOWERMENT
NETWORKING
SUBVERSION

WHERE

KNOWLEDGE
ORGANISATION
PHYSICAL RELATIONS
SOCIAL RELATIONS

WHY

ECOLOGICAL
ETHICAL
PEDAGOGICAL
POLITICAL
PROFESSIONAL

OccupyGezi

Nueva Esperanza
School

Esperanza Dos

Self Build, Architype

MOM

DISSEMINATION

SOCIAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL

APPROPRIATION

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ORGANISATION

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DISSEMINATION

KNOWLEDGE

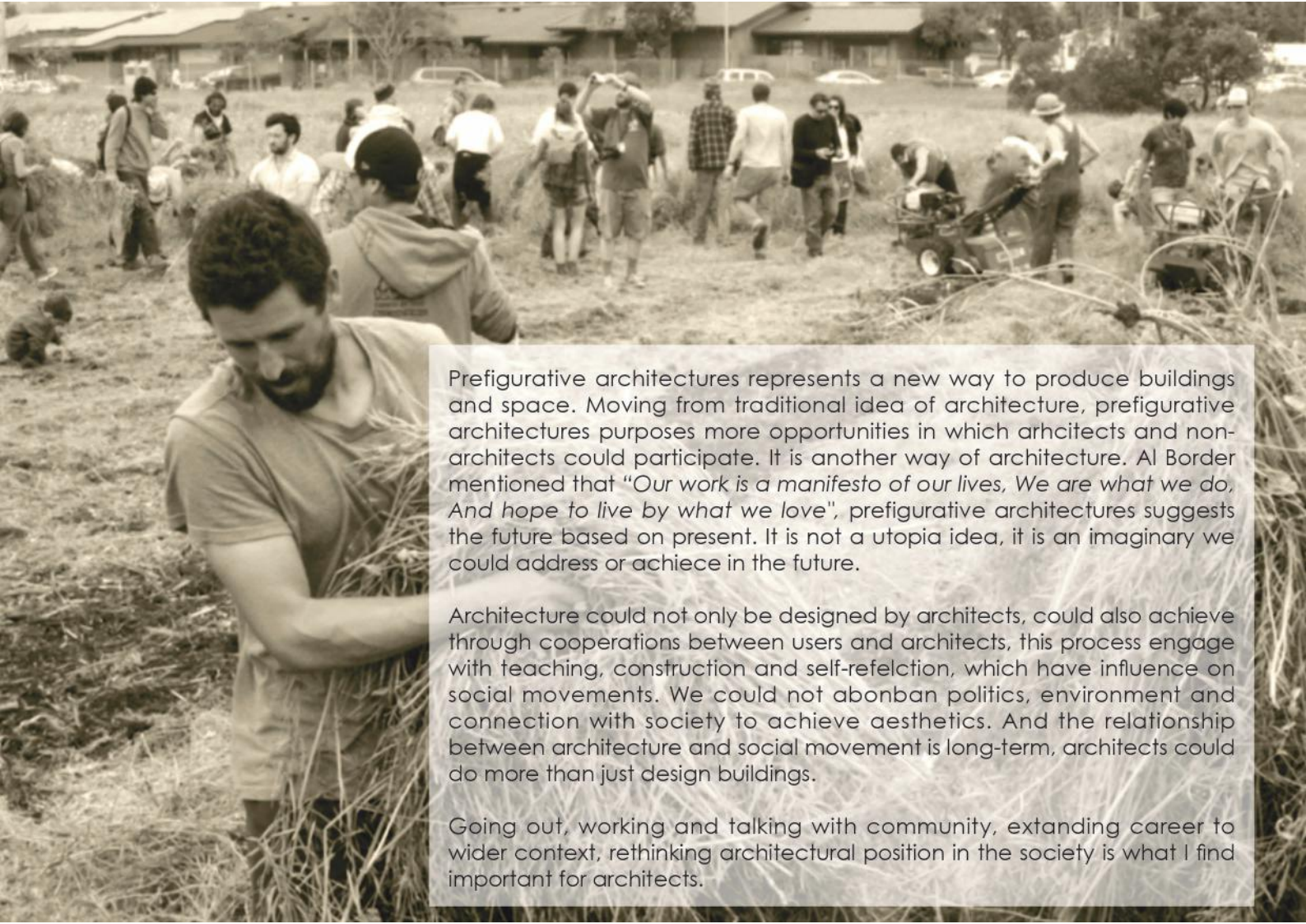
PEDAGOGICAL

EMPOWERMENT

KNOWLEDGE

ETHICAL

Through analysing five different projects or practices or movement, we could know that there are various means to achieve a much more collaborative approach to replace the traditional focus on the look of a building, from activism to pedagogy, publications to networking, making stuff to making policy - all done in the way of empowering others.



Prefigurative architectures represents a new way to produce buildings and space. Moving from traditional idea of architecture, prefigurative architectures purposes more opportunities in which architects and non-architects could participate. It is another way of architecture. Al Border mentioned that *"Our work is a manifesto of our lives, We are what we do, And hope to live by what we love"*, prefigurative architectures suggests the future based on present. It is not a utopia idea, it is an imaginary we could address or achieve in the future.

Architecture could not only be designed by architects, could also achieve through cooperations between users and architects, this process engage with teaching, construction and self-reflection, which have influence on social movements. We could not abandon politics, environment and connection with society to achieve aesthetics. And the relationship between architecture and social movement is long-term, architects could do more than just design buildings.

Going out, working and talking with community, extending career to wider context, rethinking architectural position in the society is what I find important for architects.

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