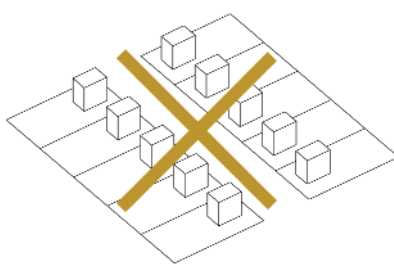
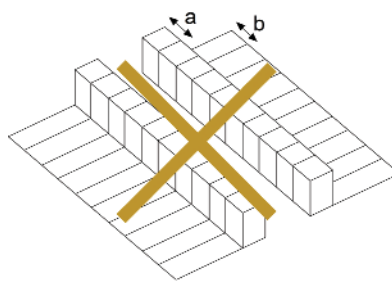


Unfinished Program: A Social Agenda

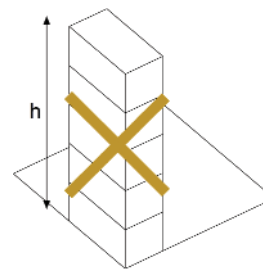
Chile Elemental



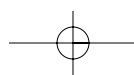
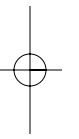
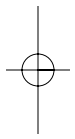
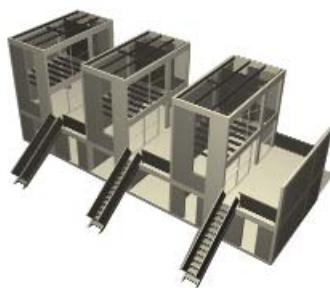
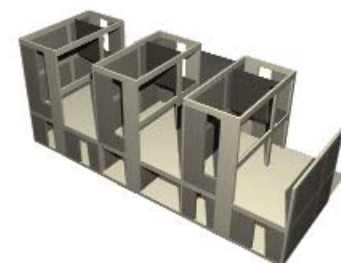
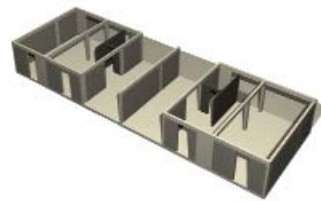
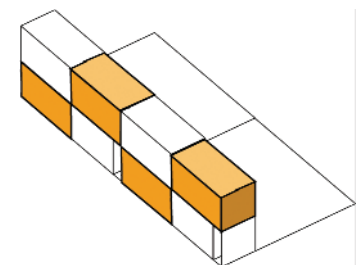
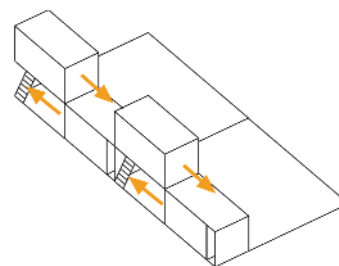
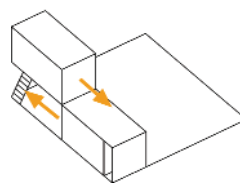
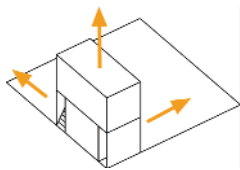
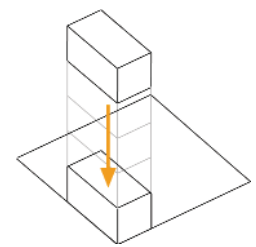
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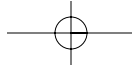


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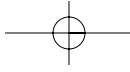




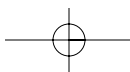
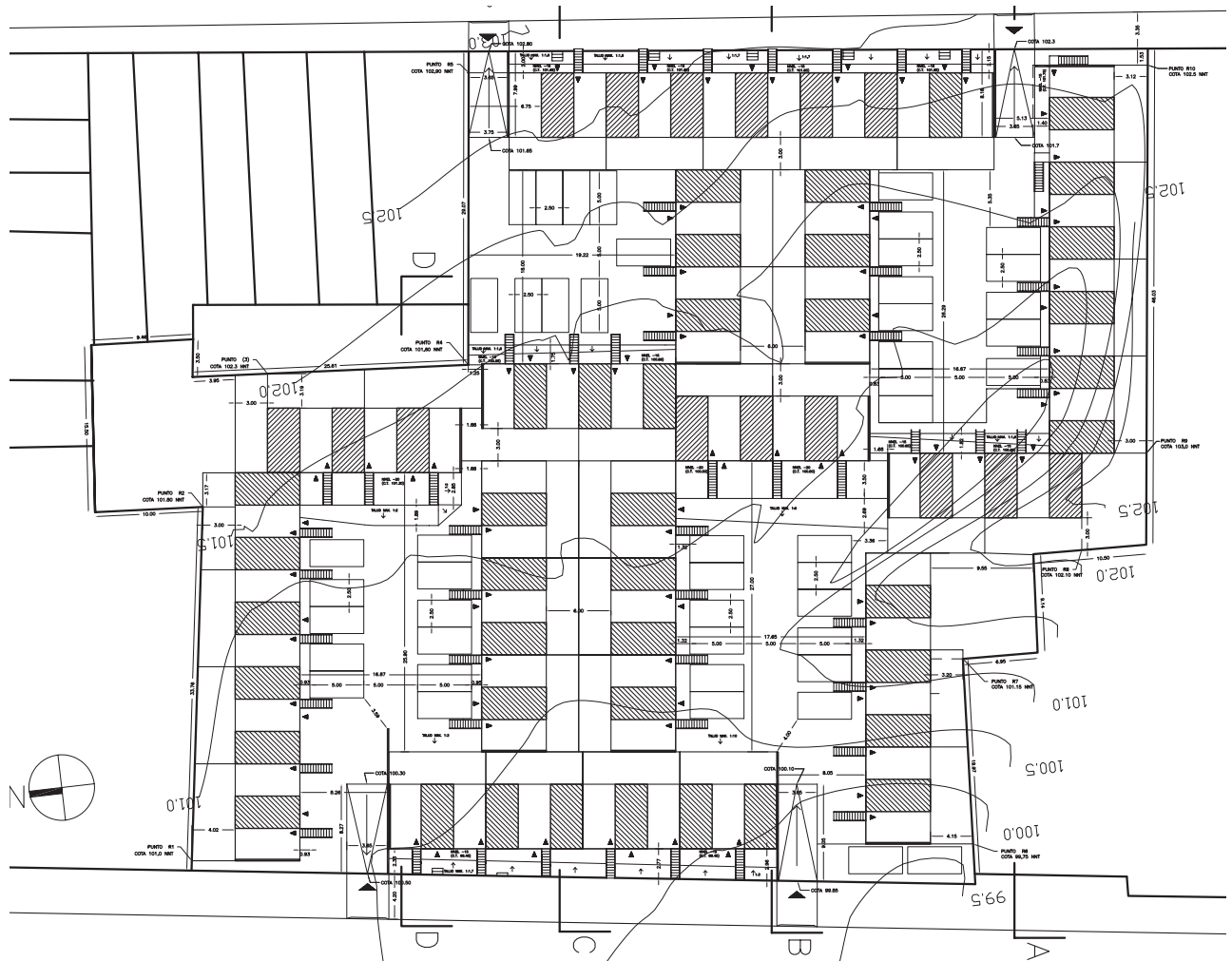
The idea of culturally or touristically colonizing a city through the production of great container museums seems to have run its course, or at least to have encountered alternative strategies. In the wake of the proliferation of showcase museums that began in the 1980s and culminated with Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao, the beginning of the twenty-first century has seen a reformulation of the role of museum architecture, and, consequently, of the museum within the city.

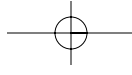
The construction of museums as indispensable features of any city wishing to put itself on the map turned architecture into a primarily formal, media-based exercise. Hoping to revitalize a city or urban area, museums became more concerned with the inventory of their shops and cafes than with their collection. But what just a few years ago seemed to be an innovative cultural-business enterprise now appears to be in a state of fatigue. Young curators, artists, and architects have recently engaged in an effort to present art as a process of production rather than as spectacle or entertainment. In projects such as the Programa Art Center, designed by Mauricio Rocha in Mexico City, the notion of the museum as depository for displayed objects has begun to give way to the notion of museum as factory (in Spanish, *fábrica*), linked with production (Spanish, *fabricar*) and creation.

The Programa Art Center resulted from an initiative sponsored by the municipal government, in which abandoned pieces of land or infrastructure in strategic areas of the city were to be converted into cultural or social centers. Taking advantage of this opportunity, two local artists in their 20s, Stefan Bruggemann and Iñaki Bonillas, founded the Programa Center as an alternative art venue and commissioned Mauricio Rocha to convert a supermarket warehouse into a gallery space. Working with the existing building, Rocha created an art gallery that retained the original character of the building as a place dedicated solely to storage and production, resulting in a workshop-warehouse that allows works of art not only to be exhibited but also to be imagined and created out of the place itself. Through a process of subtraction, the project places simple forms in complex sequences and creates an interior that allows constant move-



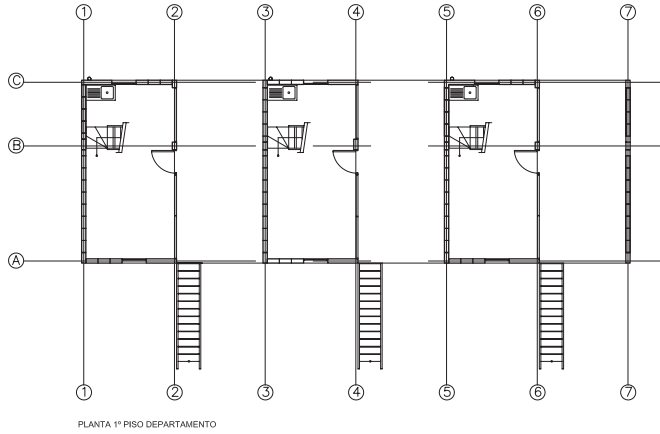
At the Programa Art Center, architect Mauricio Rocha converted an existing supermarket warehouse into an art gallery. Rocha devised a series of precisely calibrated moves that radically transformed the space with a minimal budget. The upper level gallery (top) was created by demolishing part of the existing roof; it is visually and spatially linked with the main double height gallery.



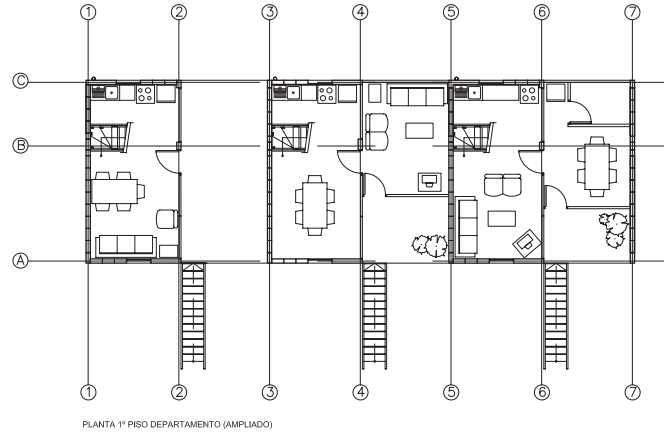


PRAXIS 8

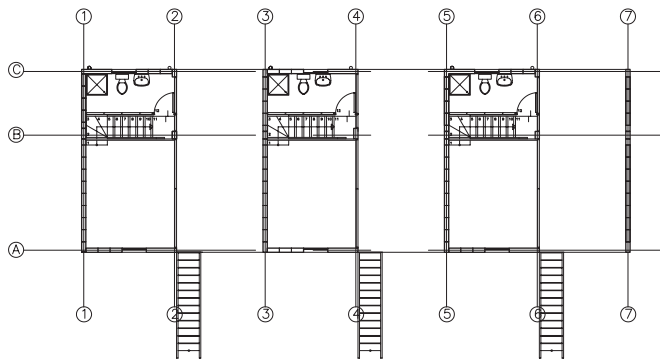
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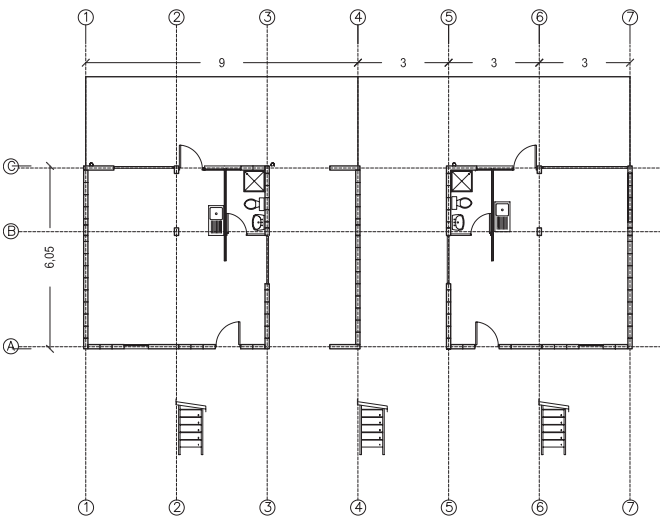
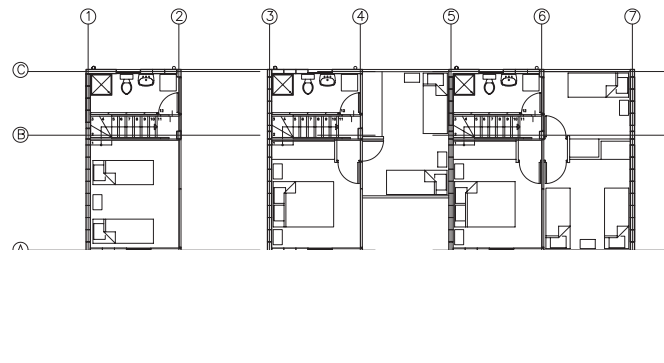
PLANTA 1º PISO DEPARTAMENTO



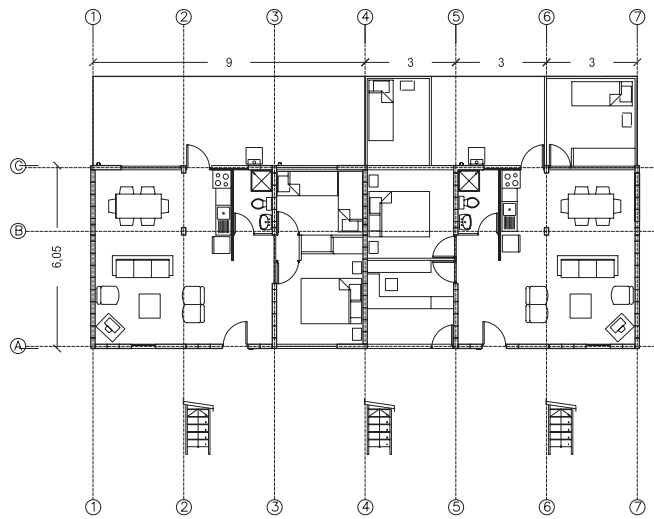
PLANTA 1º PISO DEPARTAMENTO (AMPLIADO)



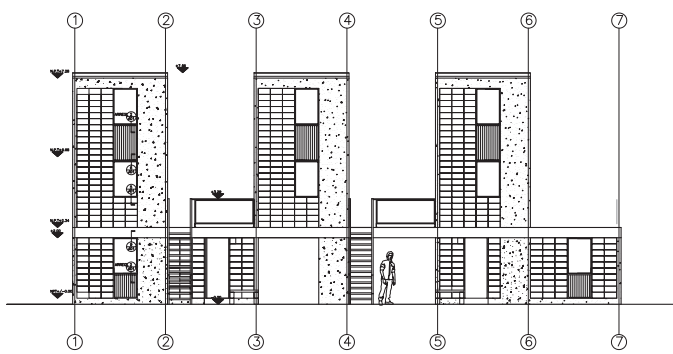
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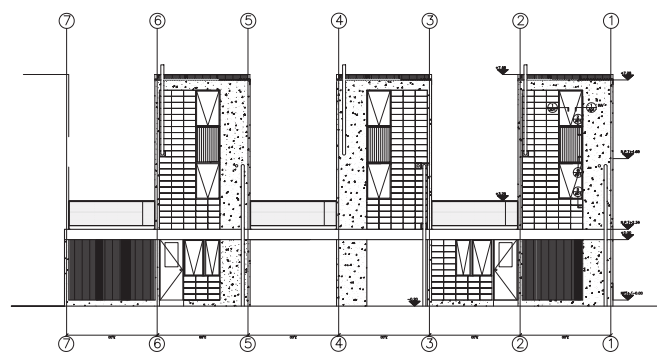
PLANTA CASA



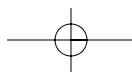
PLANTA CASA (AMPLIADA)

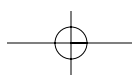
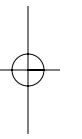
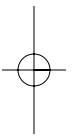
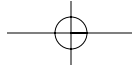


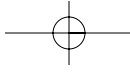
ELEVACION FRONTAL



ELEVACION POSTERIOR







the building as a place dedicated solely to storage and production, resulting in a workshop-warehouse that allows works of art not only to be exhibited but also to be imagined and created out of the place itself. Through a process of subtraction, the project places simple forms in complex sequences and creates an interior that allows constant movement behind a relatively blank facade. The only relation with the neighborhood is through the stairs that reach from the entrance through the entire gallery, interacting with every adjacent space.

In contrast to other recent trends that have brought art to airports or casinos, these new art factories distance themselves from consumer centers. The Geffen Contemporary, hidden away in a former warehouse near Little Tokyo in Los Angeles; the P.S.1 Art Center, housed in what used to be a public school; MOMA QNS, in a former textile factory in Queens; and Dia:Beacon, in an ex-Nabisco factory on the banks of the Hudson all put themselves outside of city limits and thus transform the consumption of art into a more specialized or at least a more time-consuming activity. The Coleccion Jumex, constructed in 2001 in the Jugos Jumex plant on the outskirts of Mexico City, contains the most important private collection of contemporary art in Latin America. The collection mingles with the aromas of jalapeño chili peppers from the neighboring La Costeña plant, in Ecatepec, in an industrial landscape filled with factories and traffic. Similarly, the Museo de Monterrey (now no longer in existence) exhibited the contemporary art of Mexico's second-biggest city amid the odors of yeast inside the Cuauhtémoc brewery, and the glassmaker Vitro mounted its exhibitions near the smelting ovens. By stepping outside of traditional geographic and cultural boundaries, the museums use the periphery as a restructuring element, as a space in which it is still possible to rethink the relations between art and territory.

These new art spaces choose absence or tabula rasa over the saturation of a super size architecture. These subdued proposals subtly defy an excessive architecture in a manner which, surprisingly, is increasingly more effective than big billboard buildings. Recalling Ignasi Solà-Morales's argument in *Terrain Vagues*, these art factories are silently invading unexpected and forgotten places that consequently have to be recognized as part of the city. In abandoned warehouses, amid the aroma of jalapeño chilis or brewer's yeast, these art factories flee the fusion of commerce-spectacle-tourism-art and offer an architecture with new experimental possibilities that redefine the relationship between art, architecture, and the city.

— FERNANDA CANALES, a Mexican architect and critic.

above: At the Programa Art Center, architect Mauricio Rocha converted an existing supermarket warehouse into an art gallery. Rocha devised a series of precisely calibrated moves that radically transformed the space with a minimal budget. The upper level gallery (top) was created by demolishing part of the existing roof; it is visually and spatially linked with the main double height gallery.

below: Axonometric diagram showing Rocha's intervention into the existing site. Using a strategy of subtraction, he created two parallel stairs that traverse the entire building and link adjacent galleries; he also demolished part of the existing roof to insert two new floor levels.

