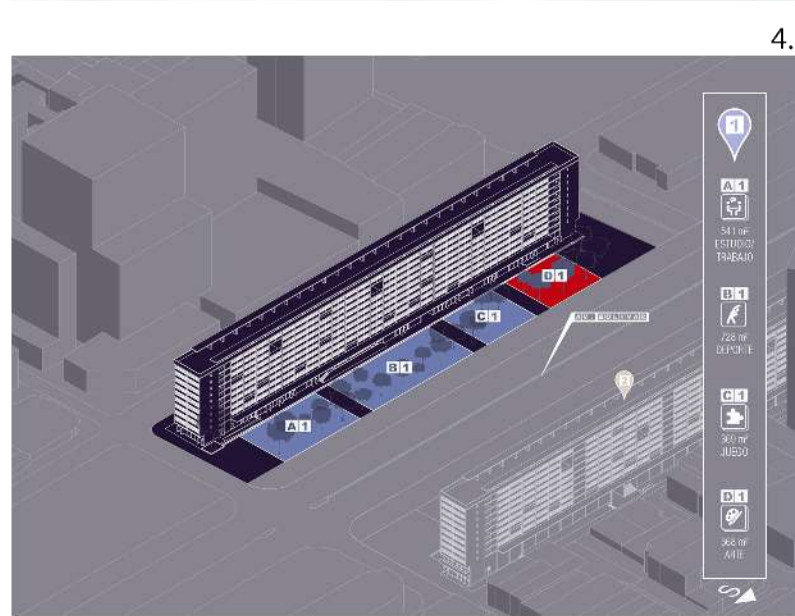


1. Cultural Lot before intervention. "We want a public space" tagged on perimeter wall.
2. Bolivar Avenue of Caracas. Social housing building and new public border gained for the city.
3. An iconic piece celebrating the encounter of people.
4. Lotification of areas subject to project competition. Cultural Lot highlighted.
5. The gazebo. A typological reference of the Latin American collective remembrance.



Introduction

Amenidades Urbanas (Urban Amenities) is an urban rehabilitation project promoted by Caracas' Municipality in Venezuela, together with other public institutions, professional collectives, and the support of organized communities.

As a response to flooding vulnerability in marginalized settlements, the Venezuelan government deployed a series of housing solutions inside the conventional, more stable and better service-provided urban fabric. The inhabitants living in this neighborhood moved from at-risk mountain slums to new buildings in the city center's Bolivar Avenue.

The spatial configuration of these structures opened new opportunities for public spaces, in an effort to promote exchanges, revitalize abandoned areas and empower historically segregated communities.

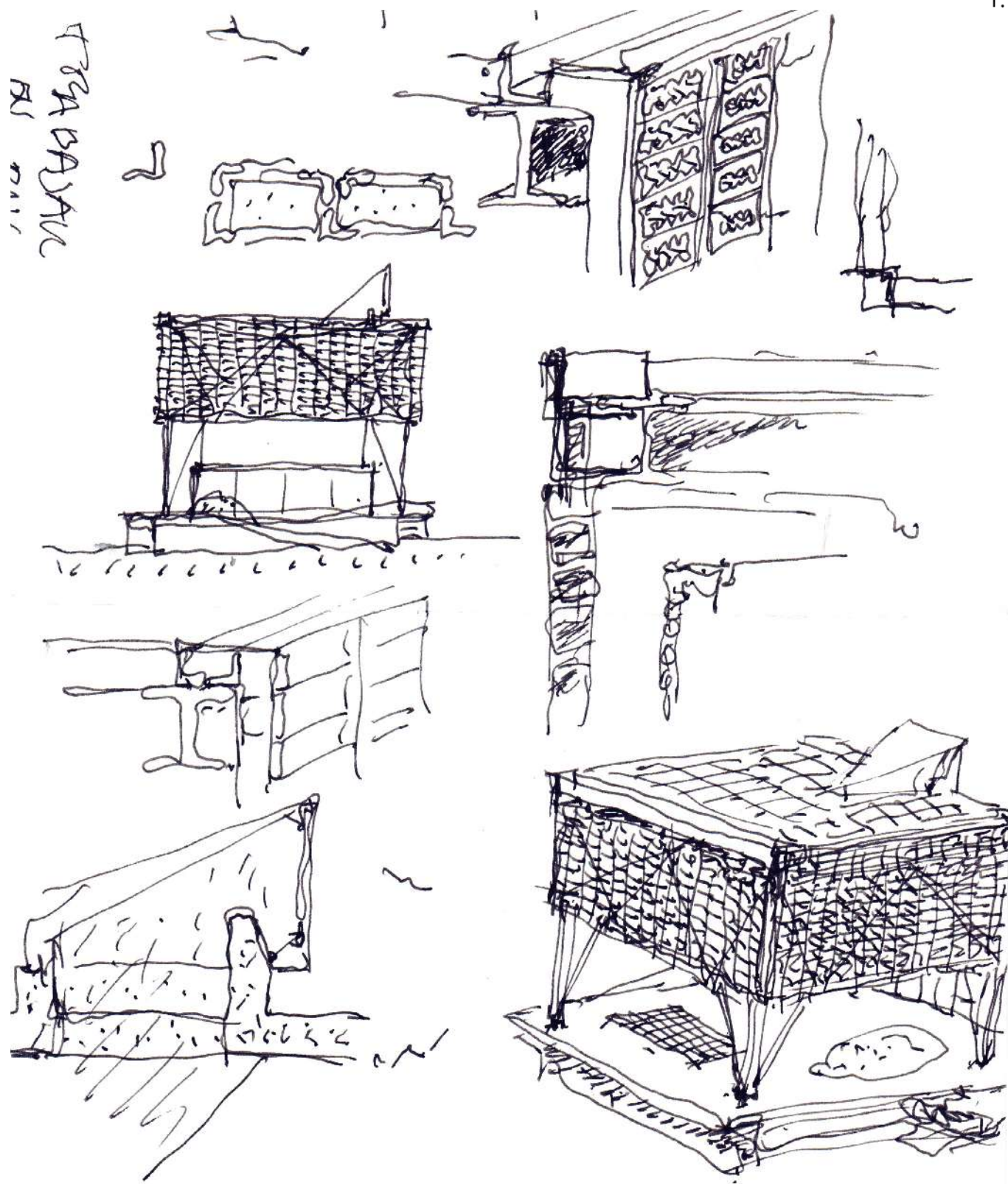
Initial designs were chosen through a national open competition launched in the late 2015, and later on developed and built between 2016-17. The work here presented corresponds to a winning proposal for a fragment of the master plan intended for cultural activities.

We recurred to the gazebo, which is in essence a stage and a roof, as a typological reference present in the collective remembrance of Latin American parks and plazas. As an iconic piece, it emphasizes the condition of the object over flat surfaces, with its four sides open to the public celebrating the encounter of people.

URBAN AMENITIES - CULTURAL LOT

Ricardo Sanz Sosa & Rodrigo Marín Briceño

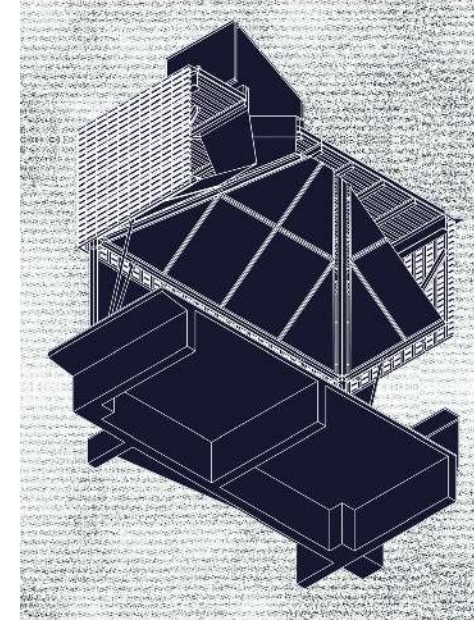
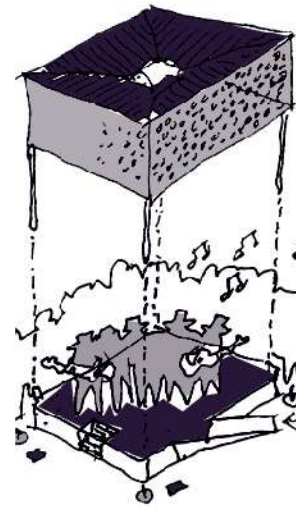
1. Research through design. Drawing explorations for gazebo's technical solutions.
2. Preliminary ideas for a cultural space.
3. 3d modeling and project definition.
4. Theory of Architecture course lecturer Rodrigo Marín with his students.
5. Professor Ricardo Sanz tutoring project design at Central University of Venezuela.



1.

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3.



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5.

"Foster the socially responsible role of built environment professionals by stimulating social modes of practice before speculative economic profitability."

Hasselt Charter Concern no. 2

Initiative and Creation Process

We have developed a partnership through which we integrate architecture and urban debate, with investigation through design and teaching.

Our collaboration project has aimed since its formation, to serve as an open space for discussion, and a speculative design hub, where we address the problems of our built environment, focusing in the creation of new approaches to architectural and urban form.

Investigation through design is a constant in our work. As tutors in the Central University of Venezuela's School of Architecture, we guide courses in the fields of theory and design that help us awaken consciousness in the upcoming generations, of the role we play in society and the impact our decisions have in our environment.

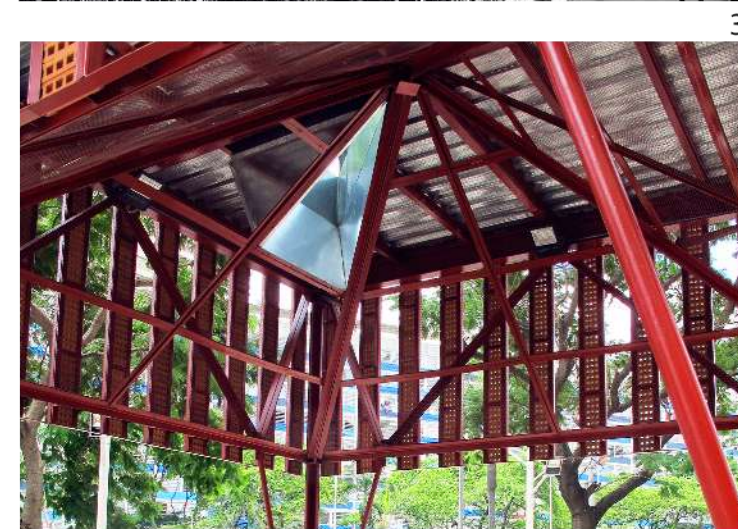
The experimental nature of our work obliged us to enroll systematically in design competitions from NGOs and public institutions, as a means to validate our ideas with society and search for concrete financial opportunities to implement our hypothesis, while maintaining simultaneously other sources of employment.

The promotion of a dynamic of exchange and a creative entourage between students, professionals and community members, has proven successful in the task of rethinking our cities in the context of a very complex political, social and economic juncture.

URBAN AMENITIES - CULTURAL LOT

Ricardo Sanz Sosa & Rodrigo Marín Briceño

1. Community workers assembling the façade.
2. Structural façade frame to hang the clay brick.
3. Inside de gazebo, the juxtaposition of layers in addition to the foliage of the trees blurs the image of surrounding objects.
4. Clay products. Catalog from "Alfarería Venezuela".
5. New possibilities for the use of traditional materials.
6. A dry joint system eliminates the need of mortar.



"Facilitate the use of appropriate technologies, materials and labour adequate to local values, to the cultural specificity and responsive to the natural environment."

Hasselt Charter Concern no. 5

Innovation and Possibilities

In an unprejudiced interpretation of standard materials and conventional constructive practices, we resorted to the popular knowledge and skill on clay and steel work, recurrent in urban marginalized settlements.

We chose a clay brick abundant in the Venezuelan market, traditionally used for façade covering; instead of breaking the paired element, we left it in its original presentation, and turned it on its side to provide protection from the sun and function as a ventilation brick, which in tropical contexts, allows exploiting the relation with nature.

Since the connection between clay and steel creates fissuring in the long term, and the traditional installation process went against the constructive nature of a quick assembly work, we created a system where each brick would fit in the structure without any mortars. As cement and water were not necessary, we managed to lower the ecological impact on the surroundings, while reducing costs of material purchasing, transportation and construction time.

Altogether, we approached the project from the symbolic, material and intellectual resources of our time and country, without compromising the poetic aspiration and search for innovation that architecture implies, hoping to shape a contribution for an aesthetic rediscovery of our urban imagery.



URBAN AMENITIES - CULTURAL LOT

Ricardo Sanz Sosa & Rodrigo Marín Briceño

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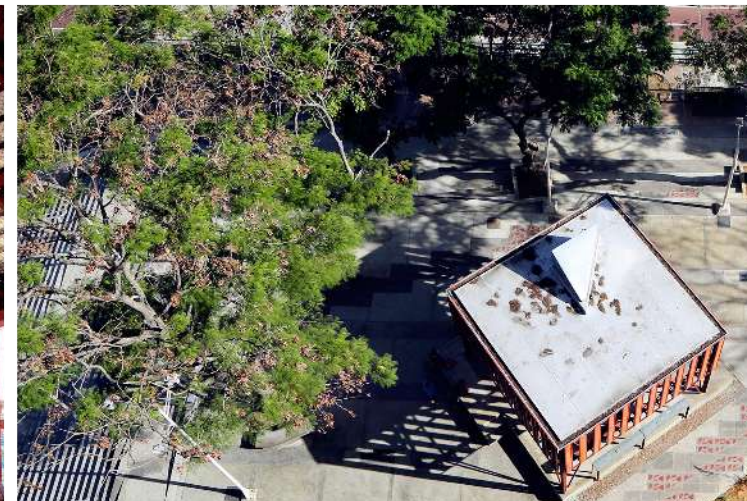
2.



3.



5.



6.



1. A reflection on the primitive refuge idea, where a short moment of intimacy under its roof, offers a humble thought about being a citizen.

2. General public checking candidate projects at Architectural Museum in Caracas.

3. Panel of juries announcing verdict.

4. Community workers leveling floor finishes.

5. Aerial view.

6. A religious minority uses the gazebo on Sundays as a church.

URBAN AMENITIES - CULTURAL LOT

Ricardo Sanz Sosa & Rodrigo Marín Briceño

"Support participatory, democratic, multicultural and interdisciplinary processes and approaches in strengthening community solidarity as a factor of rural and urban social development."

Hasselt Charter Concern no. 8

Democracy and Development

The competition call in which this project is subscribed as one of many areas of intervention, promoted a collaborative way of defining the city's new public spaces. In fact, experts in architecture and urbanism, social researchers and politicians, together with community leaders, gathered as jury members in the competition deliberation.

During the later project definition and building stages, we sustained constant interaction with key community representatives and workers, as well as a technical team (engineering and administration). The challenges in the creation of agreements in such a wide multidisciplinary and socio-cultural universe are justified in the pertinence of the implemented strategies and the experience outcome.

The infrastructure now obeys to an in-between condition of semi-public administration. The gazebo is open to the public but its management (lighting and event schedule), is controlled by the inhabitants of the building, empowering its citizens but demanding their care and responsibility as well.

In a project where domesticity leaks to the realm of the collective, the humble gazebo stands proud as if a little house was placed in the public space, acting as a reminder of our common efforts and achievements, whether hosting a cultural event or simply offering rest and contemplation.