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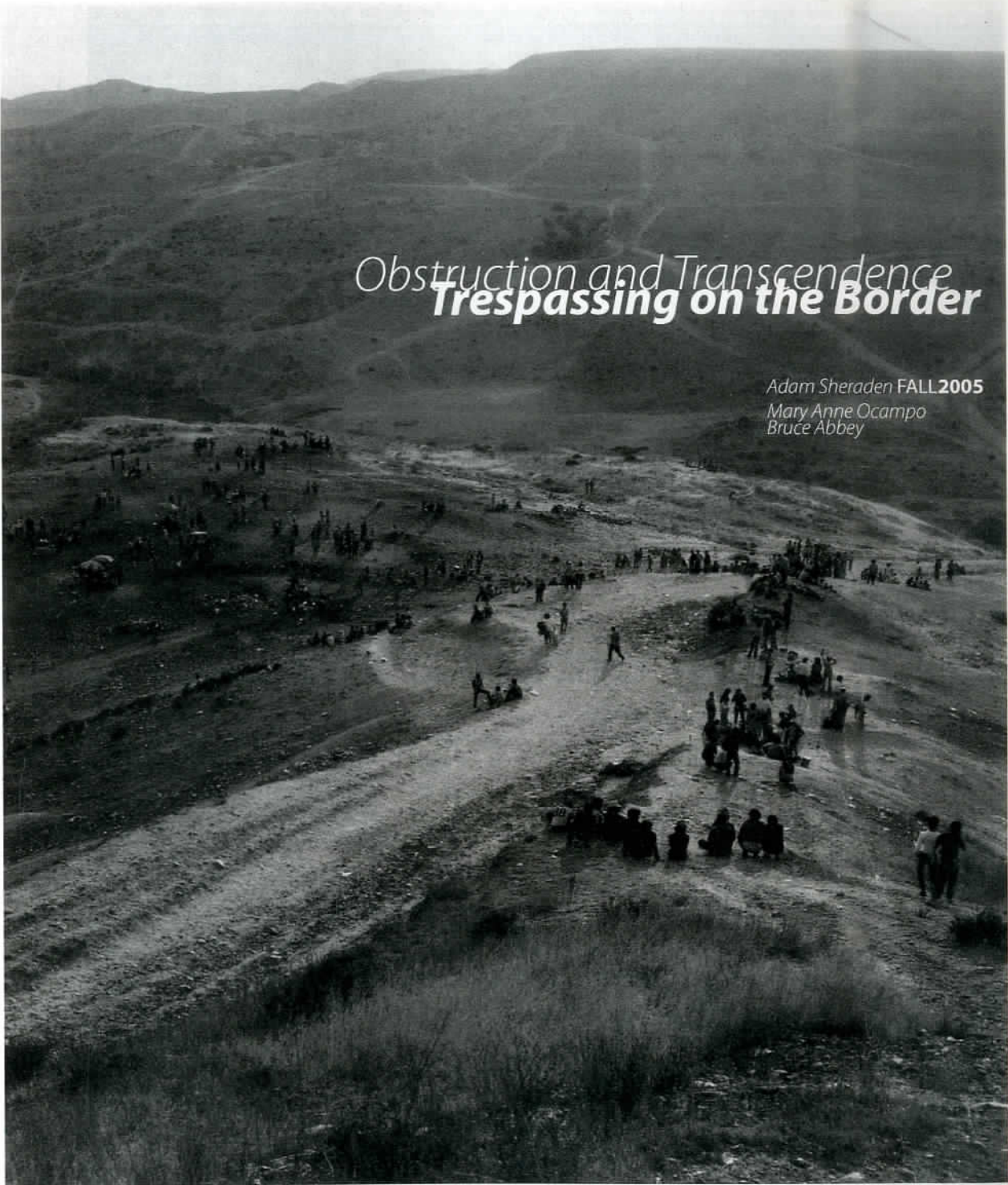
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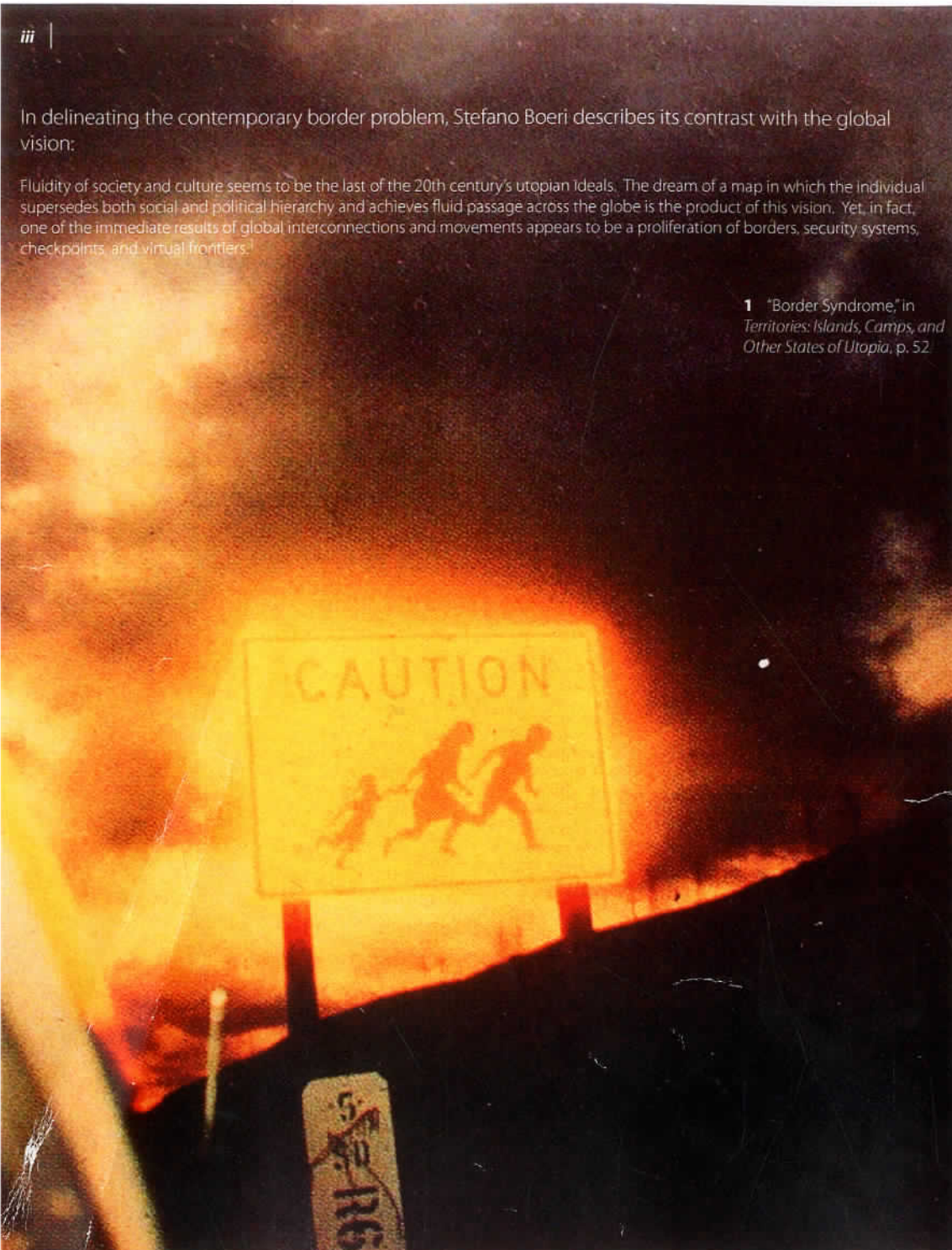
Obstruction and Transcendence
Trespassing on the Border

Adam Sheraden FALL 2005
Mary Anne Ocampo
Bruce Abbey

In delineating the contemporary border problem, Stefano Boeri describes its contrast with the global vision:

Fluidity of society and culture seems to be the last of the 20th century's utopian ideals. The dream of a map in which the individual supersedes both social and political hierarchy and achieves fluid passage across the globe is the product of this vision. Yet, in fact, one of the immediate results of global interconnections and movements appears to be a proliferation of borders, security systems, checkpoints, and virtual frontiers.¹

¹ "Border Syndrome," in *Territories: Islands, Camps, and Other States of Utopia*, p. 52.



Tijuana is the new laboratory for globalization. The borderlands are the site of a uniquely hybridized culture: the result of years of contact between Mexicans and Americans at the edge of these two nations. The *border*, however, is the paradoxical circumstance of the borderlands. While existing as a site of exchange for people and goods at ever increasing scales, it is also a militarized zone policed by the border patrol and concerned citizens. The border is, ultimately, a barrier to the northward flow of Mexican and other immigrants.

The border is an element of both spatial obstruction and cultural transcendence. I propose that there should be a physical manifestation of this cultural transcendence as there is a border fence to register the material obstruction that the border fence produces. The border, as a political and spatial construction, allows for the formation of separate cultural distinctions and therefore is as much a defining element in the city as other social institutions. The border is the final punctuation mark on this arid landscape.

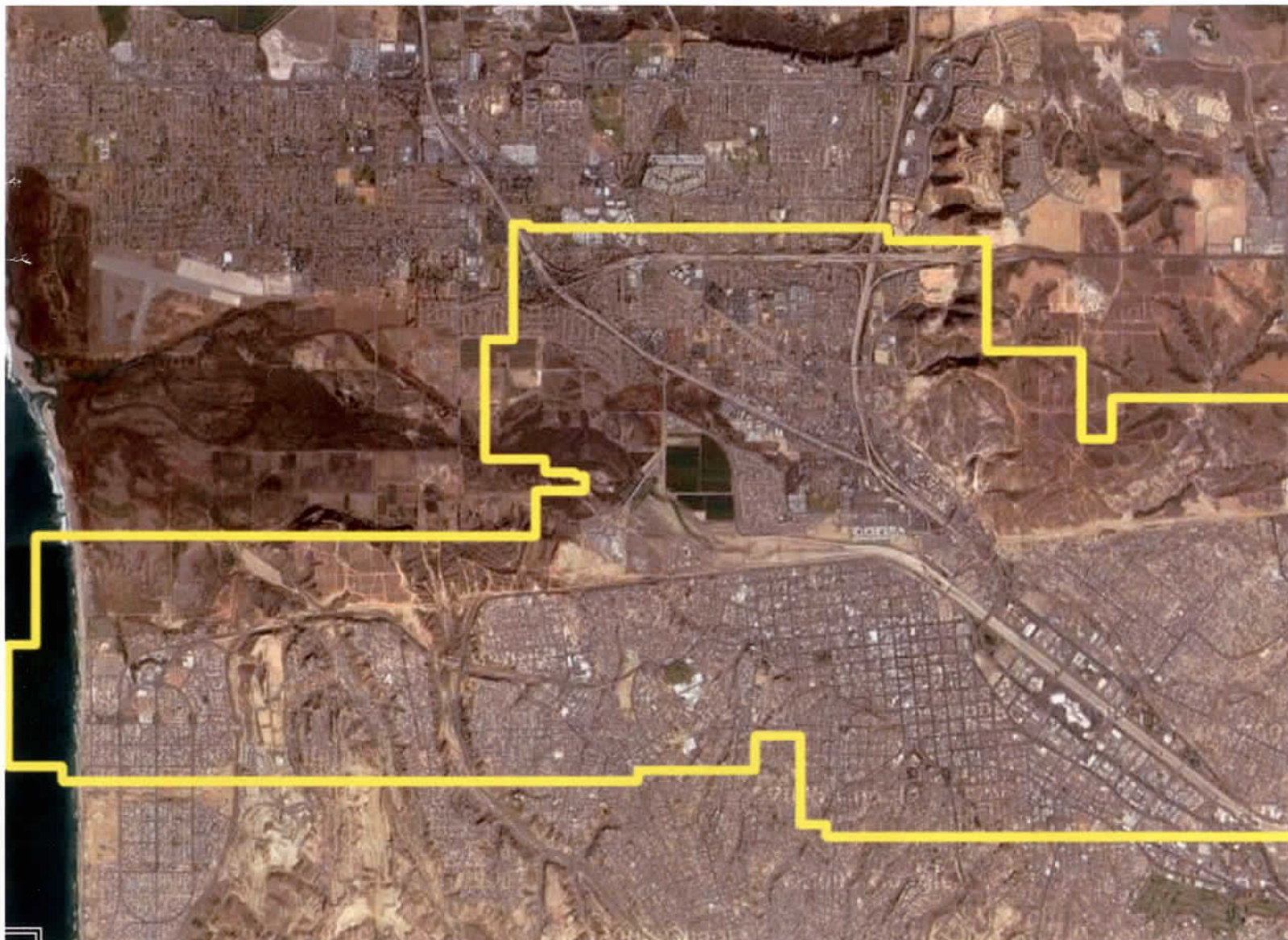
A border arts center will provide a place on the border for the continued probing of the border's meaning and presence in shaping the identities of the two cities and their people. It provides an official forum, as art institutions often do, for cultural protest and transgression. Space for visiting artists provides a link to the global nature of contemporary artistic production, allowing the issues of borderlands to exceed the spatial limits of Tijuana and San Diego. Materials research facilities encourage experiments with the boundaries of contemporary material culture and maintain the relationship of people between ephemeral culture and the physical world.

The specific program will include gallery space, media archive, material research facilities, visiting artist studios, conference space, an auditorium, and an outdoor space for site-driven works. There is also a temporary international connector between the buildings, which will be an event at different times of the year.

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2 Gustavo Del Castillo,
"Between Order and Chaos,"
p.125; based on 1997 statistics



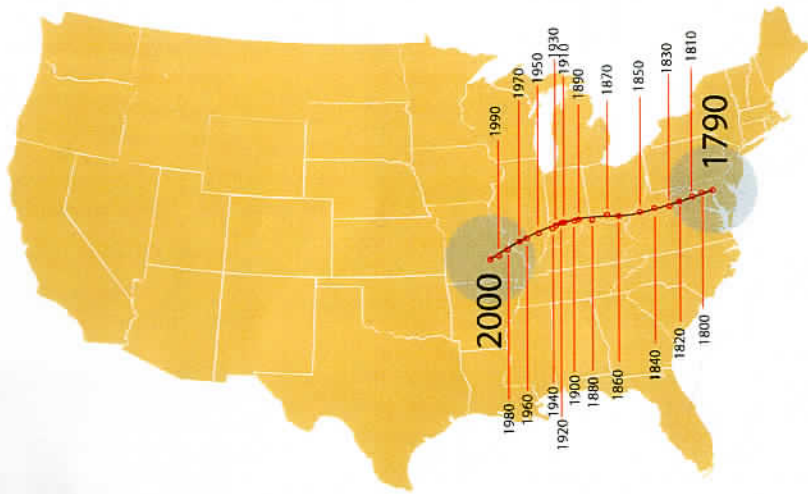
[Site Context]:

At the farthest corner of Mexico, The Tijuana-San Diego border is also the most-trafficked of all the points along the border at nearly 50 million people each year.² The border in its entirety is one of the most traveled in the world with more than 250 million people crossing legally each year. Flow is overwhelmingly into the United States. Notably, the United States demonstrates unilateral control of the border. The Mexican government maintains little border patrol, and is known for stopping just short of advocating crossing the border into the United States.

The Tijuana-San Diego border is a very hilly terrain with the main settlements of Tijuana and the outskirts of San Diego built in the valley between the mountains to the east and south and the Pacific Ocean. The Tijuana River flows northwest through the city of Tijuana, just northeast of the downtown, and flows beyond the border into the United States until it arrives at the Pacific Ocean, a few miles south of downtown San Diego. The river basin is encased in concrete, like the Los Angeles River, as a way of alleviating the erosive floods that happen from time to time in this dry region. The area around the river basin provides the most flat land for development and is the site of Tijuana's most established city grid. The river "crosses" the border within a few hundred yards of the U.S. point of entry, and thus a few layers of fence run on either side of the basin as part of the boundary reinforcement.

As the river runs along the border on the American side towards the ocean, it creates a deep setback of development from the border with Tijuana. The veritable no-man's land created visually reinforces the notion of a border as a barrier with Mexico. It is occupied by border patrol agents, secondary fences, military property, and a state park at the Pacific Ocean.

Tijuana, however, exhibits a "zero setback" from the border. In fact, were it not for a major road that runs parallel to the border on the Mexican side, development would likely abut the border. Some housing developments in the Playas de Tijuana (Tijuana Beach) have the border fence as their property limit.



The Westward Gaze
Geographic Center of Population, 1790-2000

3 Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, p. 1,2

[Investigation]:

Wilderness: an American boundary condition

From the arrival of Europeans in the New World to Frederick Jackson Turner's closing of the Frontier, wilderness has provided for the new inhabitants of the North American landscape a persistent feeling of uncertainty. The term, "wilderness," derives from the association with wild beasts, savagery, and the lack of cultivation.³ To Roderick Nash, wilderness was the first condition for the foundation of American civilization. It was primarily in reference to the wilderness condition—the constant limit of spatial knowledge, that American civilization was constructed. The dialectic of civilization and savagery created an adversarial understanding of the expansive nature to the west. For one to survive the wilderness experience and maintain a relationship to a former civilization, the re-enactment of cultural values was crucial. In this context, we can see that civilization is a fragile and questionable thing. The wilderness condition forces those at the frontier to engage in cultural speculation. In other words, frontier culture is a constantly re-iterative act.

The farther one moves from existing cultural centers, the closer one gets to the frontier. Historically, at these cultural fringes, there has been a strong emphasis on the tenure of a rooted culture coming from one's heritage. With routines, traditions, and values, these cultural behaviors become re-iteration of identity and association.

Using the concept of the Trojan horse, I am exploring the capacity for a foreign element to exist on either/both sides of the border. This proposal is an institute for border arts and global culture. It will be understood as a site of challenge and contemplation. People will draw from both Tijuana and the U.S., but they will remain separate.

The logic of obstruction and transcendence in spatial and visual terms will be the guiding principles in the development of the project. It is intended to be at least two buildings; one will have entry on the American side, one from the Mexican side. The spatial limits of each building will surpass the border, so that the building with entrance on American territory will not have access to the land on Mexican territory, and vice versa.

To respect the visual and spatial parameters of the border fence, the buildings will operate using the logic of the fence. Thus, the 10 ft high fence will maintain its integrity, but above the 10 ft line, the buildings can extend over the line.



Frontier: the limit of Mexican civilization

From the 16th century until the 19th century, Mexico was a resource for the Spanish Empire. During this occupation, prototypical cities were developed to serve as functional centers for the movement of goods back to Spain. Mining cities grew in Guanajuato, Pachuca, and Zacatecas. The port cities of Veracruz and Acapulco were established for shipping exports, and administrative cities were Mexico City and Guadalajara, both in the central southeast. Baja California and the arid Mexican north were considered futile ventures. This was Mexico's frontier. It is in this context that we find the development of Tijuana and many of the cities along the border.

Mexico City is, without question, the political, economic and cultural capital of Mexico. It is to Mexico as New York is to the United States. With its origin as Tenochtitlan and later as the Spanish colonial capital, it is Mexico City that becomes the measure for the rest of Mexico. It also maintains central control over the development of other cities in the country. The urban scheme of Mexico City is also spread throughout the country as a paradigm for establishing social and political hierarchy. The Spanish, in colonizing Latin America, brought with them the Law of the Indies, written by King Philip I in the 15th century.⁵ These ideal parameters called for the placement of a main piazza at the center of town, proportional to the size of the population. Then facing onto the piazza,



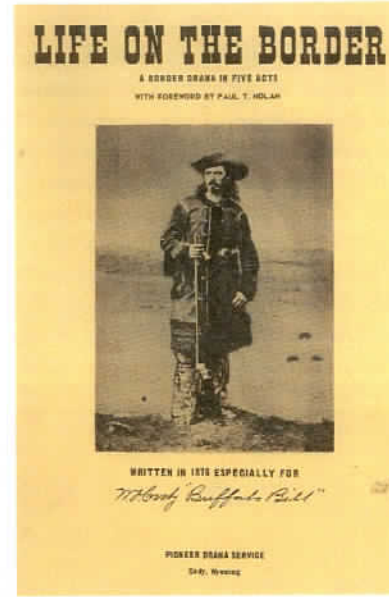
aristocratic residences, state buildings, and the primary church were to be monumental reminders of the sovereignty of the colonial authority. The main streets also entered onto the corners of the piazza, oriented counter to the prominent wind patterns, in order to minimize gusts through the center of the city. Social status was contingent with the location of residence in distance from the central square. The wealth has stayed concentrated in the city center over time as well, in contrast to American cities. Thus, Mexican cities of this Spanish descent maintain this rigid grid and central piazza. Though developed at a much later period, Tijuana still exhibits a European sense of order in its first city plan, of the 1880s.

The urban system along the Mexican border defies the older models of development at international boundaries, where nations maintain their defensive distance from the border. The logic of town placement was with economic prospects in the United States. Later developments such as the Program Nacional Fronterizo (PRONAF) during the 1960s gave the border zone generous assistance in improving infrastructure towards the attraction of industry from the American side.

This approach to the border marks a shift in paradigm of the Mexican government, which is strongly held to be a centralist system. The gaze to new development drawn from American proprietors and dependence on the U.S. economy separates the border regions from the rest of Mexico, which still drew from the prototypical functional city-model that referenced itself back to Mexico City.



Border Montage, Non-spaces, Globalization
Student work from Teddy Cruz's vertical studio at SCI-Arc.



Book from 1876, featuring the symbol of the American West, Buffalo Bill Cody.

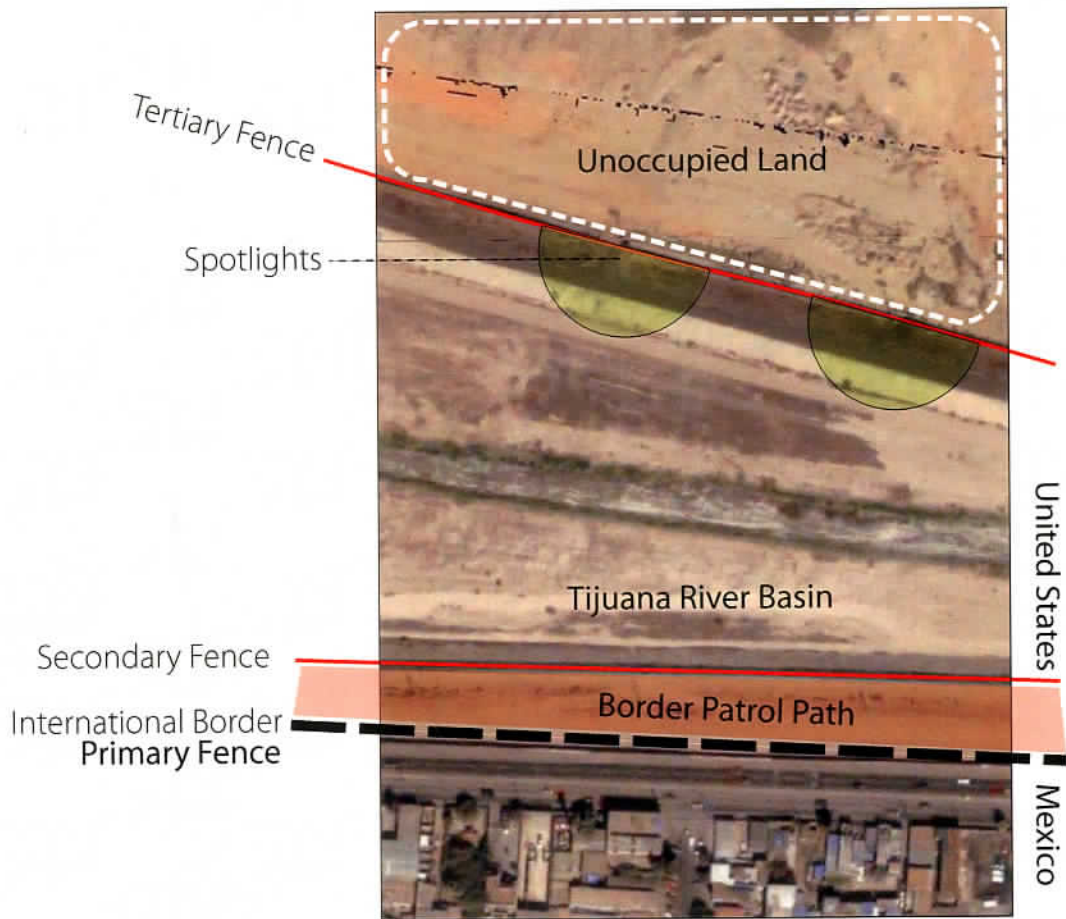
4 Dear, Leclerc. Introduction,
The Postborder City, p. 12

The Western Frontier was the trophy of American settlement. More than two hundred years in the making, the West drew an eclectic variety to its doorstep. Over time the Eastern reference lost influence to the idea of cultural re-invention. The West cultivated an acute knowledge of its distance from prevalent cultural capitals farther east. It can even stake a strong claim on its liberties towards the invention of a new society.⁴ In the 1960's California was a hotbed for the counterculture that became, for the rest of America, emblematic of the unbridled state of the contemporary West.

The Southwest and the border with Mexico have also represented another kind of spatial and cultural limit. Language plays a strong role in defining a loose edge with Mexico. It would seem, then, that the edge of these two civilizations should exhibit a state of flux and expressiveness unlike the more stable geographic interiors of nations whose cultures reference only themselves.

Border Control

At the U.S.-Mexican border, the barrier exists to keep Mexicans out of the U.S. The points of entry into the U.S. serve to regulate and slow the flow of Mexicans and other foreigners into the country. The border fence was never intended to exclude all those trying to enter the United States, but to control their numbers. Thousands of Mexican workers, both legal and illegal, make their way north on a daily basis. The border creation and management operates with a lobotomized consideration for its physical context. The (in)considerations of the border include both the drastic topography along the Tijuana-San Diego border, as well as environmental factors like the Tijuana River and the archeological sites at the southwest corner of the United States in Border Field State Park.



At the San Diego-Tijuana border alone, there are:

1550 Border Patrol agents
44 miles of corrugated steel fence
6.5 miles of high-intensity fence



The border deployment currently consists of a two-wall system (sometimes three), an array of surveillance devices delineated along the border, as well as seismic detection systems to detect ground movements of incoming migrants.

Here on the edge of Mexico, every night as the sunsets, Border Patrol helicopters emerge, like mosquitoes, buzzing the skies above and beaming laser spotlights down into the canyons and migrant footpaths. The wall lives.

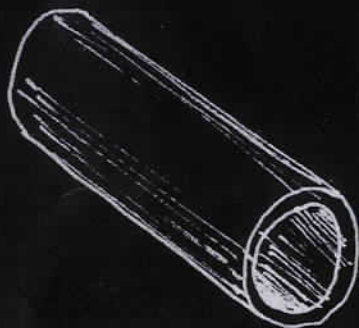
-Lawrence Herzog, *Where North Meets South*, p. 137



Enclosures



Israel-Palestine Safety Wall



Pipes



Canada-U.S.A Soft Border



Funnels



Mexico-U.S.A Selective Border

In Stefano Boeri's "Border Syndrome," he proposes a research program for the study of border devices, which discuss the management of national-spatial boundaries and the flow of goods and subjects from one side of the border to the other. The devices provide a preliminary index for the classification of boundary making and the lifespan of boundaries.

6 "The Postcard City: Symmetries between Tourism and Terrorism," in *Sprawltown*, manuscript.

7 Paul Ricouer and Charles Kelby. *History and Truth*, p. 275-283.

8 Boeri, "Border Syndrome," p. 53

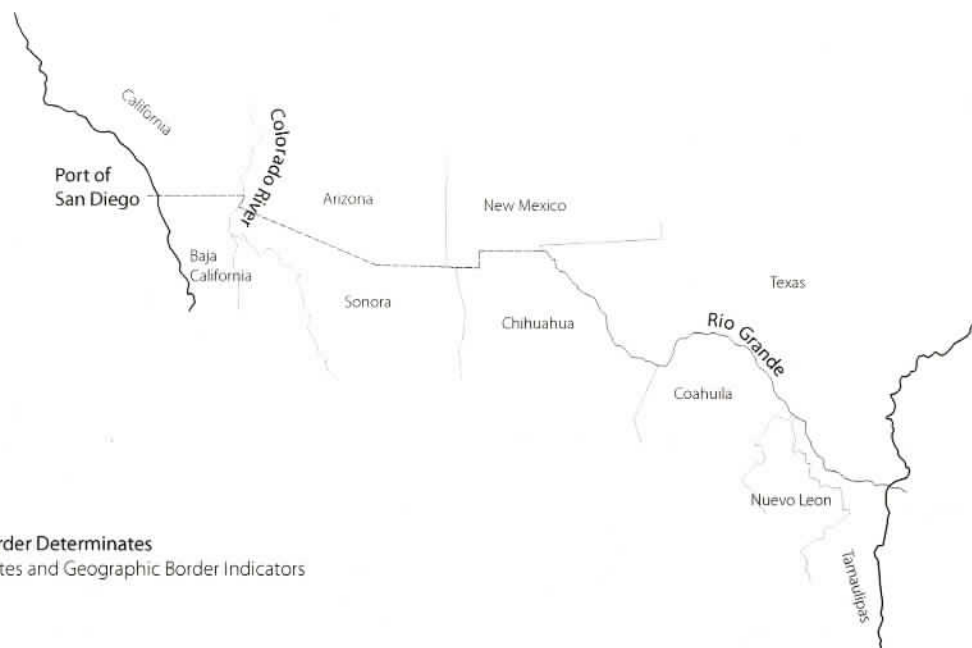
Globalization | National Sovereignty:

It is in their respective natures that the goals of globalization and national sovereignty run counter to one another. Globalization, in its heightened capacity to transcend the limits of physical space, imagines the smooth passage of things in a boundless system. Nationalism seeks exclusive definition from other nations, based on language, political doctrine, and economic values.

The culture of globalization, as an economically driven entity, seeks the complete inclusion of all inhabitants as beings of consumption. Everywhere, people are being given standard patterns of behaviors. Richard Ingersoll, in his book, *Sprawltown*, discusses the phenomena of tourist-citizens and citizen-tourists as an extension of these standardized social norms. The tourist-citizen is a tourist in a foreign environment who is, by virtue of being in his desired location, a willing participant in the civic realm. But without actually being a citizen, the tourist-citizen operates under the control of the locale in behavioral and cultural dimensions. Activities that involve spending money are the most universal and encouraged practices in tourist places and are, for the most part, a negligible acceptance in the experience of the place. Shopping ties the tourist-citizen to the citizen-tourist back home in America. The privatization of public space in the form of shopping malls has created a quasi-public environment that questions behavioral norms in the public realm. Because malls are private enterprises, the illusion of public-ness accepts people in, so long as their occupation is shopping. Thus, the citizen is forced into a similar behavioral pattern as that of a tourist in a popular foreign place, who falls victim to the control by private exploits of "public" space.⁶ I will return to the production of global consumer space while discussing the urban ecologies of Tijuana.

In the context of variant cultures, Paul Ricouer challenges that the meeting of foreign cultures is never a harmless endeavor. In "National Cultures and Universal Civilization," Paul Ricouer writes of humanity's massive acceleration towards a globalized system and the demise of true cultural imagination.⁷ The implications of this problem probe all of the forms of cultural expression that define one culture from the next. This attests to the conflicting nature of cultures and their capacity to exert their hegemony upon others in the world.

The reality of the border situation is that the border is a force in both political and economic spheres; yet it sides always with the physical maintenance of the barrier condition. The fluid vision of globalization is still mostly virtual, and the security of the border is a consistent national issue. Boeri echoes this point in stating that the paradoxical nature of globalization is that, while increasing the ease of flow of goods and information between places, it increases the specificity of local places. Exchange with Tijuana is the most local condition of the processes of globalization and their awareness of their physical confines.



Border Determinates
States and Geographic Border Indicators

La Frontera

The border shared by the U.S. and Mexico is 1,951 miles long. It spans from Brownsville, Texas-Matamoros to San Diego-Tijuana across four American states and six Mexican states. The borderlands population, defined as those living within roughly 20 miles on either side of the border, is about 12 million people. The border is the prominent indicator of the borderlands, and its historical development and perception is worth some consideration here.

After the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the U.S. invasion of Mexico, the border was difficult to distinguish apart from the Rio Grande. Mexico ceded all of Alta California (the current state of California) and all the area north of the Gila River, Colorado River, and Rio Grande. During the 1850s stone markers were placed incrementally at the border by the Americans to denote the border as a survey on the landscape. The markers were situated within sight of each other, but did not hinder movement or disrupt towns that straddled this arbitrary border. The residents at the time consisted of indigenous people, longhorn cattle, and copper miners. For all intents and purposes, this border was a negligible formality.

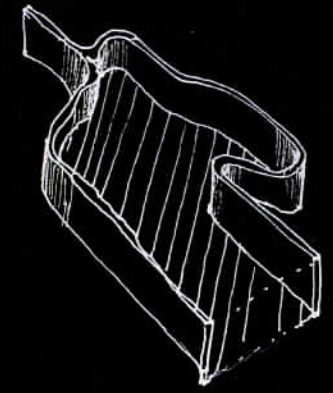
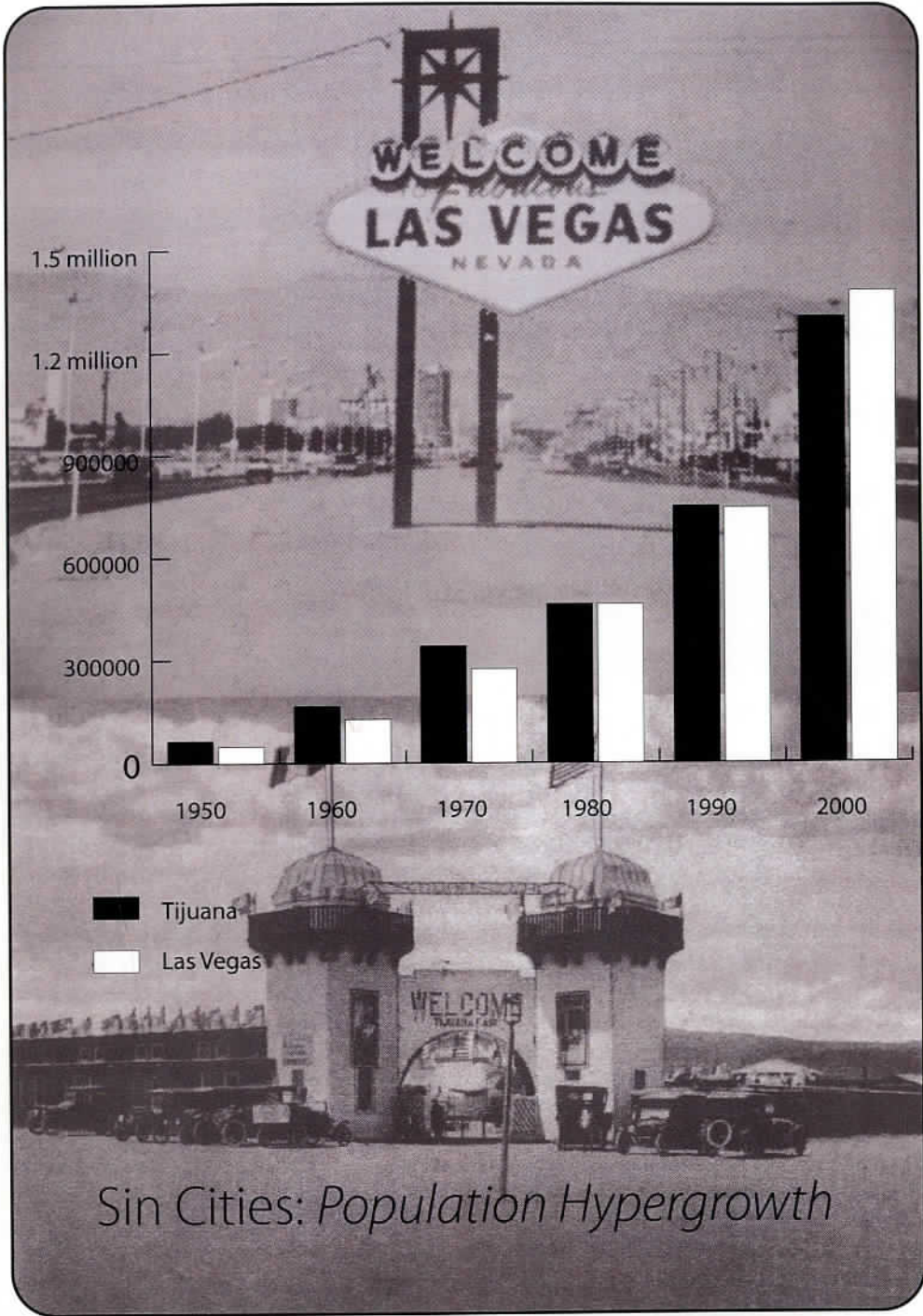
In 1910, the Mexican Revolution (and U.S. influences on its outcome) prompted the U.S. Army to occupy the Rio Grande valley and the border-states of New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Barbed wire began to divide frontier towns in an effort to stave off the influx of revolutionary input to the Southwestern states. In 1920, the newly established Border Patrol replaced the Army in policing the boundary. However, laborers could flow quite easily into the United States during this time. After World War I, the demand for Mexican labor was high, and thus the border was seen as a dam for cheap labor. Workers in the United States, without citizenship, were frequently denied rights to freedom of speech and the ability to organize in labor unions. In case of over-supply of workers, or ill cooperation, the workers were simply deported as an expendable resource.

El Paso Border Patrol Officers

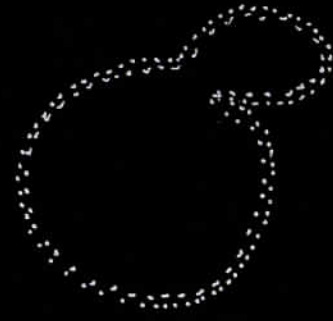


The Great Depression struck the border as hard as the rest of the United States and thus closed the border to incoming workers. This sent a considerable migration back into central Mexico for the next decade, until the 1940's. The Braceras program, prompted by the United States, brought a considerable draw back to the border for workers to energize the war munitions and manufacturing industries. The increase of workers in this time frame remained consistent and grew from this point on. From the 1950's to the 1980's, the American border-states were the fastest growing urban areas in the nation, suggesting that the border economy with Mexico was reinforced as well.

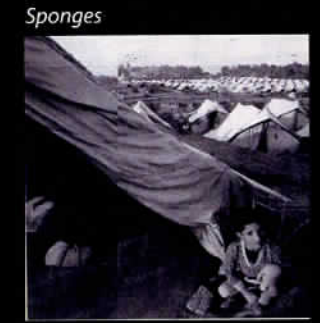
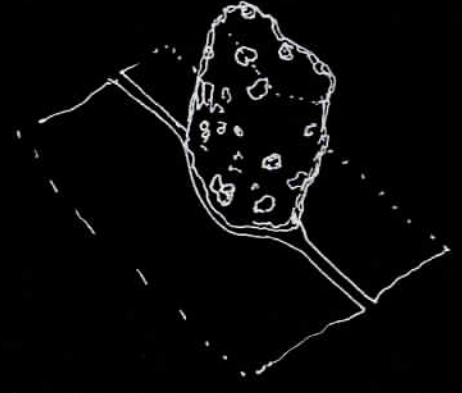
The 1980s saw an increase of border security presence as national fears grew about the fidelity of the border. Operation Gatekeeper was launched in 1994 along the San Diego sector of the border and initiated the construction of a ten-foot high, corrugated steel fence that would run for 12 miles along the urban areas of the border. Increased technological improvements and fence proliferation have subsequently occurred such that the steel fence runs 44 miles from the Pacific Ocean into the Sonora desert. This militarization of the border was facilitated by loosened concerns with the Soviet Union, increased concern with drug trafficking through the border, and a surplus of corrugated metal from the 1990 Persian Gulf War. Since 1996 the Border Patrol has doubled in size and increased operations to curb trafficking of people and drugs into the United States. Once in the U.S., there are frequent checkpoints looking for suspicious traffic; this is a second line of defense that has been in use since the 1940's. The perils of illegal immigrants are well publicized, as the high security at major entry points forces undocumented migrants to attempt crossings well into less-patrolled areas in the desert, risking dehydration and starvation. The border fence adds a layer of hostility to an already infernal landscape.



Brazil-Paraguay Market Attractor



Berlin Former Site of Wall

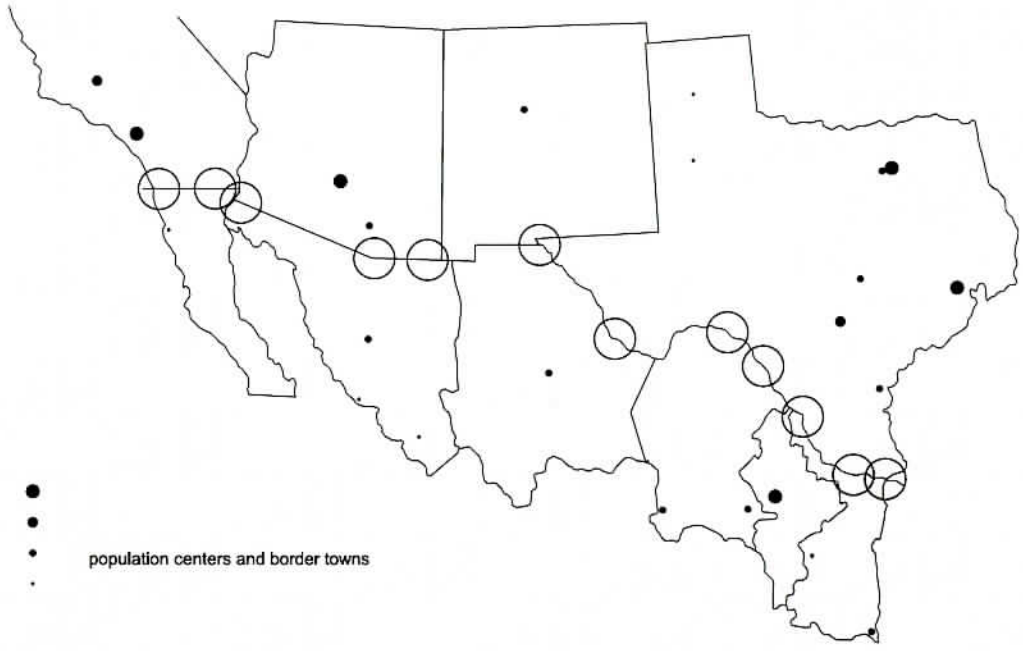


Kashmir Refugee Camp

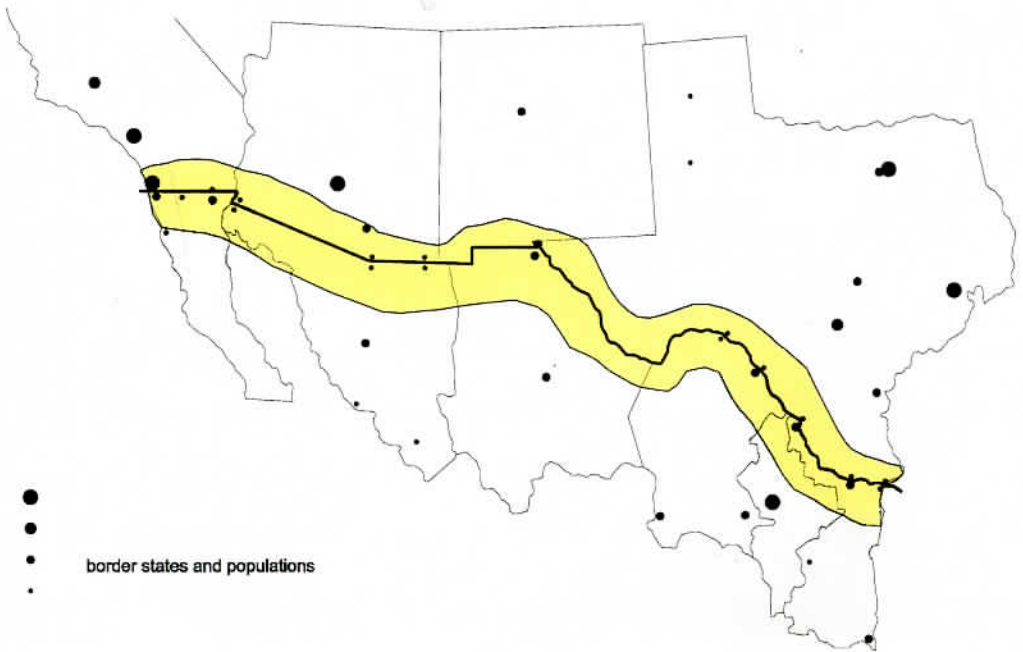
Boeri's border devices include (left, top to bottom):

- Enclosures:* Walls, Fences, Occupied by guards, unilateral control
- Pipes:* Highways, Tunnels, Roads, least obstruction to the flow of goods.
- Funnels:* Selective admission of flow

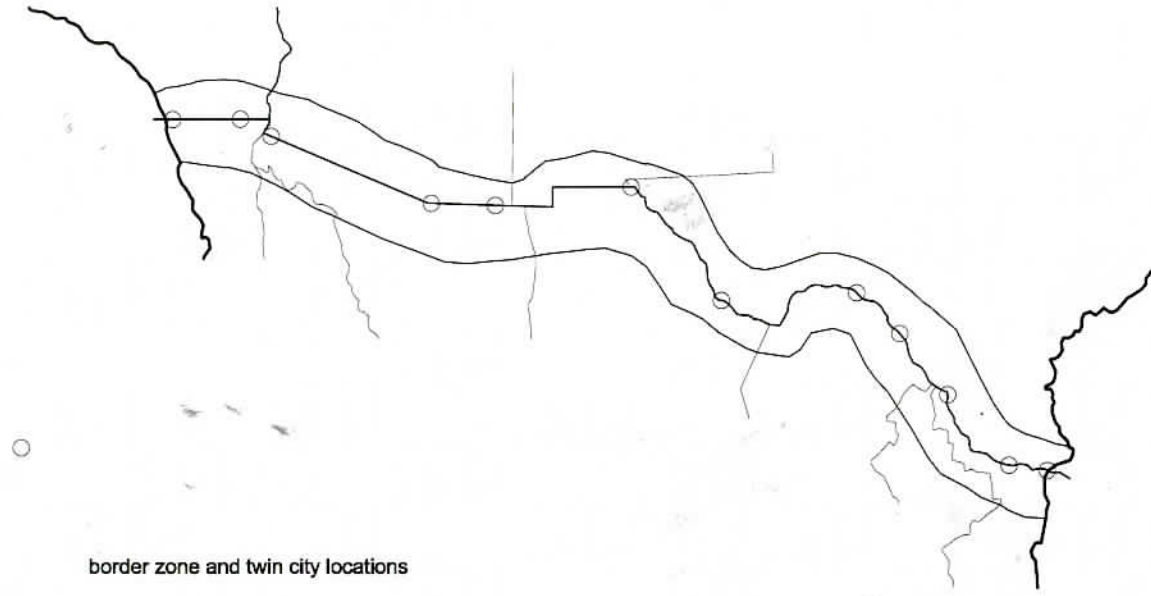
- Folds:* Widening of the boundary to allow for things like "no man's land," or market space, potentially occupied by multiple, affiliated entities
- Phantom Limbs:* the memory of a former boundary that no longer exists. Often instinctual remembrance of boundary causes occupants to behave as though the boundary still exists.
- Sponges:* Former boundary that now becomes a focal point for commercial activities, markets



● ● ●
population centers and border towns



● ● ●
border states and populations



border zone and twin city locations



Occupying the Edge

The border economy has as a physical manifestation the emergence of twin-cities at the edge of each country. They each meet in a unique way with reference to their geographic setting and topographic context. The most telling contrasts occur at these cultural intersections where settlement patterns create distinctly different kinds of urban fabric from the Mexican to the American side of the border. There are 13 prominent twin-city points on the border, with many smaller adjacencies present.

In the outskirts of most cities on the Mexican side of the border, there exists a nearly anarchistic occupation of land development, known as colonias. They are phenomena closely studied by urban theorists as a type of unplanned (in a professional sense), self-organizing urban entity.

The colonias usually begin their border existence by occupying land near an assembly plant, or near the border (in most cases, these are almost the same thing). The land is usually of little real-estate value, is on steeply sloped terrain, far from city centers and access to electricity, running water, and sewerage, and often near or on sites contaminated with pollutants. However, once the land is occupied with rudimentary houses, the neighborhood can form an association to petition the government to assist in the further development of these services, as well as other amenities like street lights and sidewalks. Also, the lack of governance and regulations in this dynamic framework has been suggested to be of great benefit to the resident participants. Shops and services open up spontaneously out of individuals' homes to amend their distanced situation, and it demonstrates an active urbanism that allows the people to shape, in very real ways, the places in which they live.

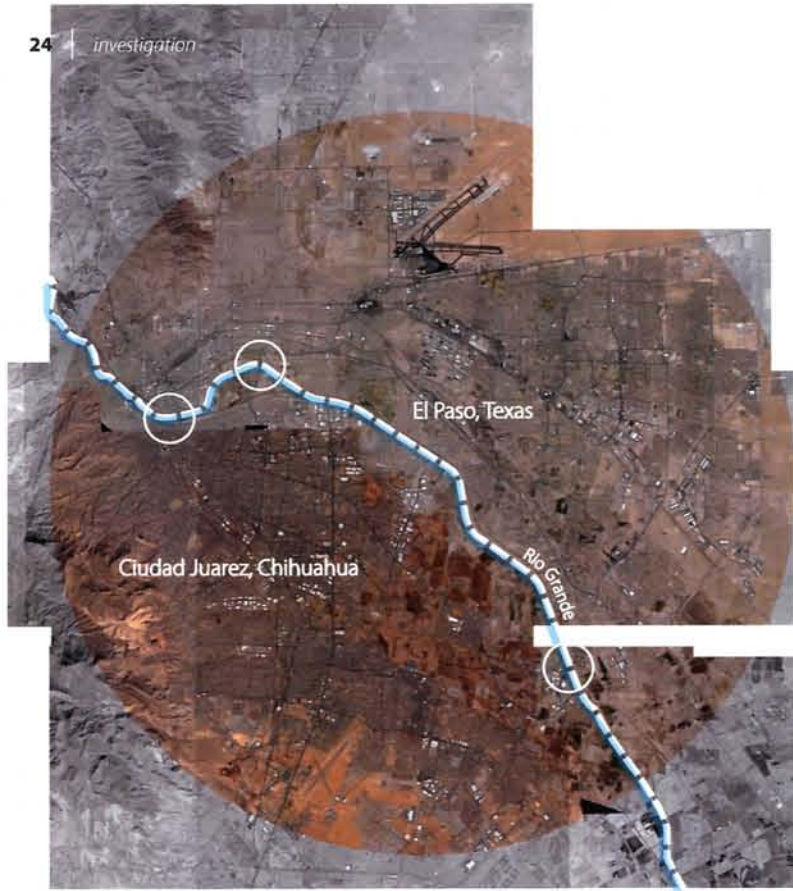
9 Hectar Manuel Lucero, "Peopling Baja California," *Postborder City*, p. 96

10 Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism*, p. 26

Tijuana found its beginnings around 1850 in this desolate region as a cow town. In 1900 the population was only 243. As a series of cattle ranches, Tijuana was a quiet place until the beginning of the 20th century.

The Tijuana Fair of 1916 marks perhaps the first prominent surfacing of the city to a large American audience. Begun in response to series of regional fair competitions, Tijuana drew from the success of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego, which drew 3 million visitors to southern California. This fair was held in commemoration of the opening of the Panama Canal, and competed with San Francisco holding the World's Fair during the same year. The primary attractions at Tijuana's fair consisted of activities banned in California. These included boxing matches, cockfighting, bullfights, and various types of gambling.⁹ A racetrack was started by an American proprietor in Tijuana during the same year, attracting the glitz and glamour of Hollywood actors. This began Tijuana's start as a tourist destination for Americans and world visitors. The Volstead Act of 1920, prohibiting the production and consumption of alcohol also brought in waves of tourists to Baja California.

Tijuana was, in fact, a proto-Las Vegas. The cities experienced nearly identical trends in growth, with a temporary jostle in Tijuana's moral temperance tipping the scales in favor of Las Vegas winning the title of Sin City.¹⁰ These images of Tijuana's decadence have formed the popular notions of Tijuana as an eccentric urban environment.



At the edges of their nations, the two cities are prone to fantasy - endpoints of successive mythic journeys in pursuit of the grail of prosperity. -Sally Yard



POSTMODERN CITY: shifting paradigm of urban context

- understands the city *not* based on functions and set flows
 - instead, **the city is accepted as an inherently hybrid set of uses, functions**
- hard boundaries define buildings, streets, rigid systems of flow
 - rather, **postmodern condition is defined, individually, by soft boundaries**

Global Ecologies of Tijuana

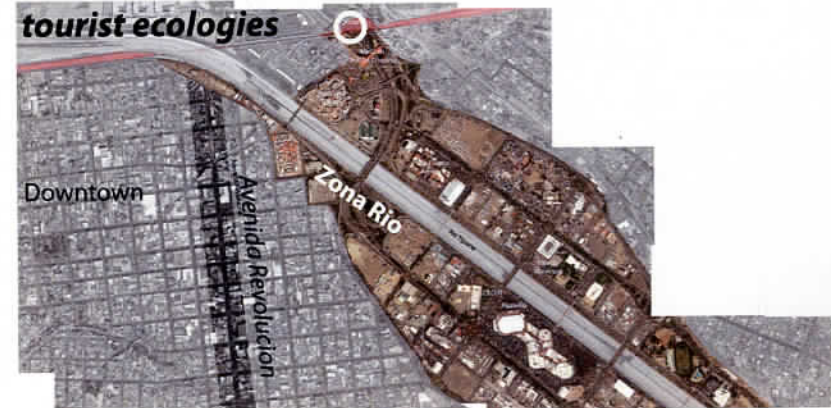
"Tijuana has more to do with science-fiction novels than history books about Mexico."
 -Raul Cardenas

Tijuana, as a postmodern city, contains distinct urban ecologies rich with a myriad of economic and cultural idiosyncrasies. The interaction of global networks with Tijuana highlights these ecologies such that the two scales—the local and global, are closely linked. These ecologies are: *global tourist and consumer space, sites of conflict, global factory systems, and post-NAFTA neighborhoods*.¹¹

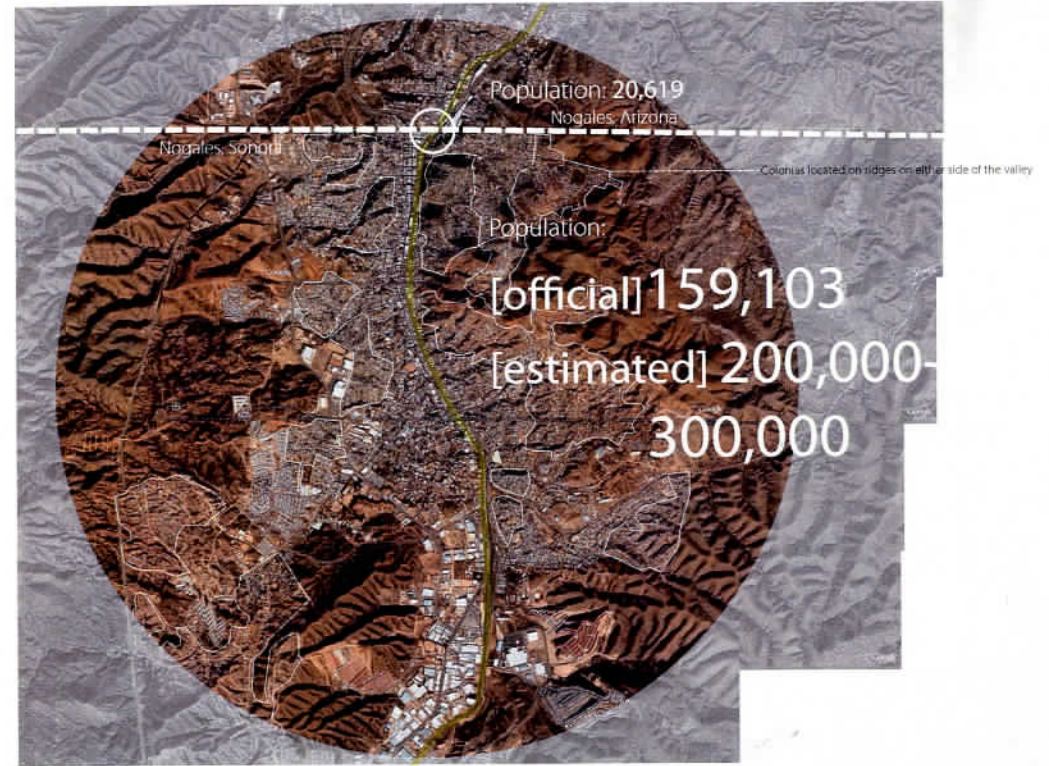
Tourist and Consumption Spaces are closely linked and located in vicinity of the border. The river zone becomes an extension of American-style shopping and entertainment fixtures that are meant to attract tourists and shoppers. This can be seen as a form of cultural insulation for American visitors. The effect is one of comfort and familiarity.

Tourist space seeks to exploit the highly recognizable facets of the local culture. Thus in Mexico, the production of a safe and comfortable, yet overtly Mexican image is the goal. This also approximates a tactic of global consumerism, which is the universal recognition of signs and symbols. The Mexican experience would be understood by any group as distinctly Mexican, regardless of its actual relationship to Mexican culture or experience. The tourist is only meant to experience positive experiences, thus the negative facets of Mexican culture, such as impoverished conditions and the urban poor, are highly controlled to maintain a particular image in tourist areas. The experiential border can then be extended in social and cultural terms to an area much farther removed from the border crossing itself. "Mexico" happens much farther inland and over a longer period of time.

Sites of Conflict. The militarization of the border, and the economic disparity and exploitation of Mexicans make the border a powerful site for protests and demonstrations. The fence is covered with memorials for those who have died crossing the border, in the form of graffiti and white crosses posted on the fence.



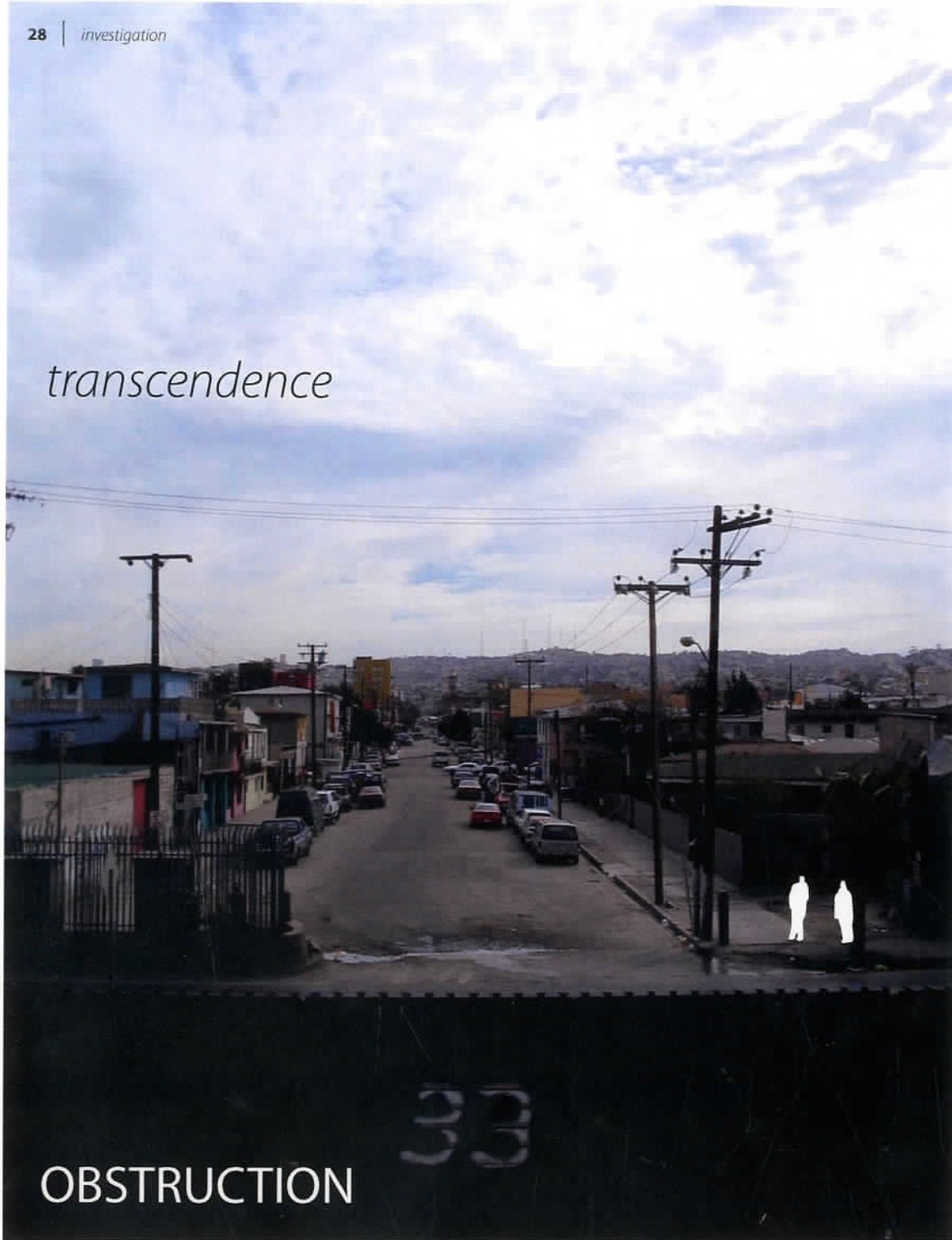
¹¹ Herzog, "Global Tijuana," *Postborder City*, pp. 119-142



Colonias, as economic and spatial indices, draw into question the present situation of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. These ad-hoc dwellings are tied to the economic prospects at the border. Often in maquiladoras, foreign-owned manufacturing plants in Mexico that assemble consumer goods for export, the inhabitants of the organic colonias find their means of sustenance. One familiar with colonias cannot help but imagine the factory nearby. As part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994, these factories both greatly increased in number, and in their proximity to the U.S. border. The maquiladoras usually plan housing developments for management and upper-level employees near the factory, but there is often a substantial shortage of low-income housing.

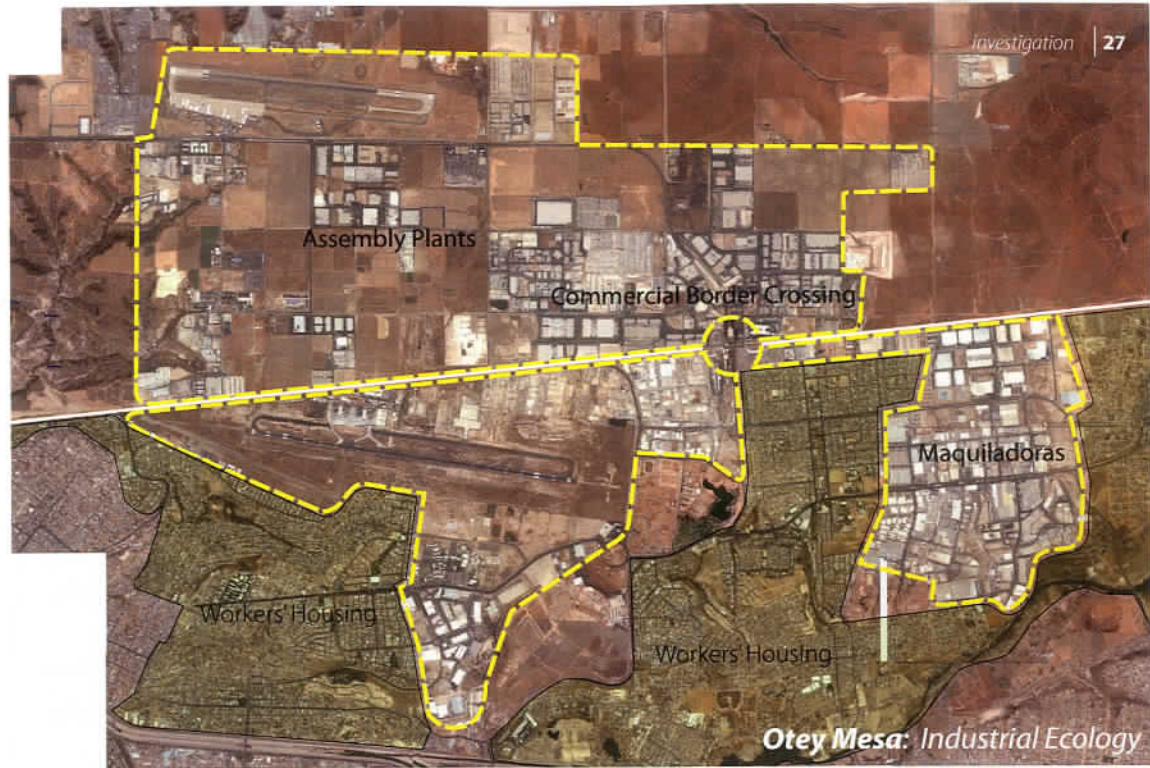
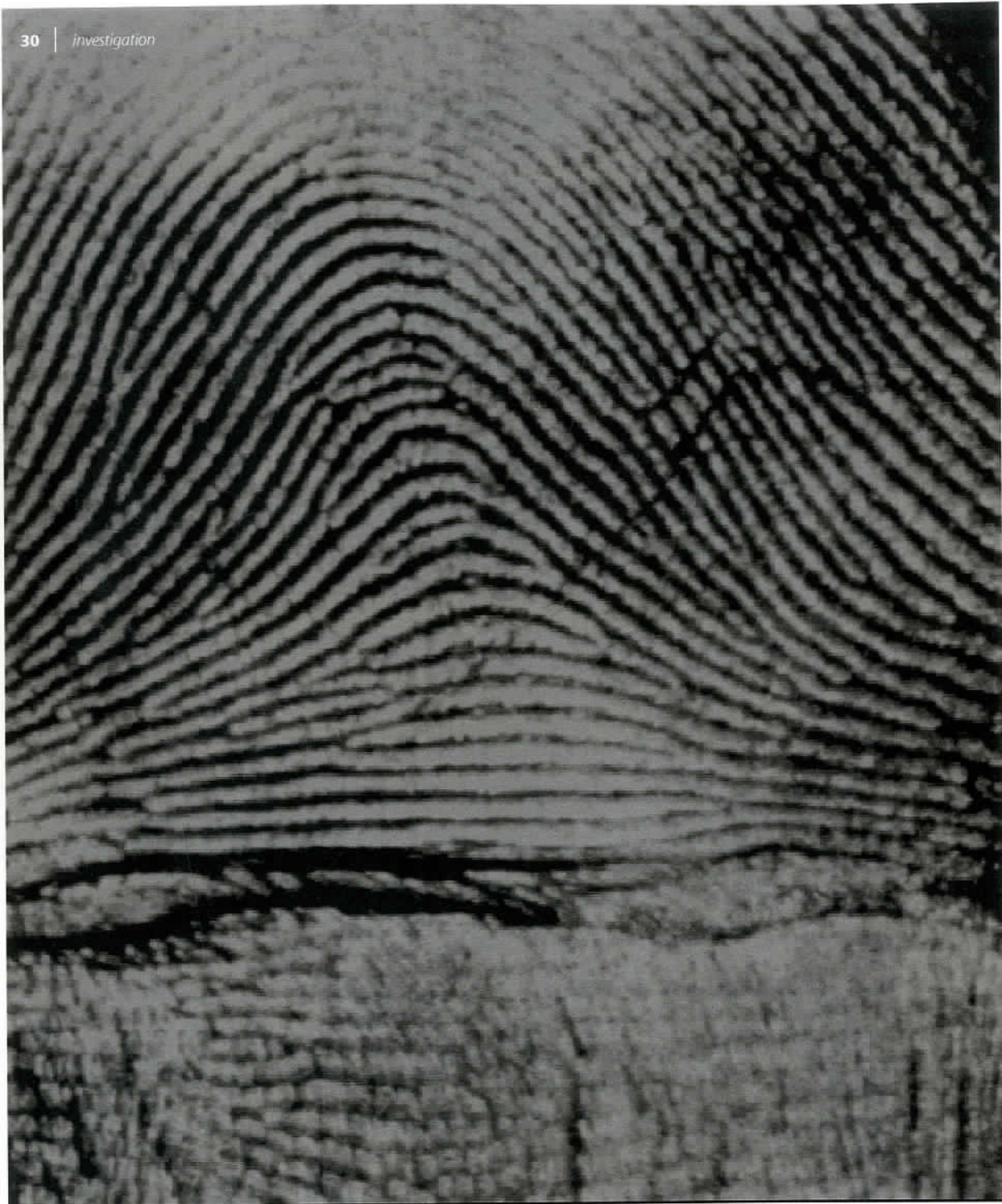
NAFTA projected further opening of borders to numerous forms of economic activity throughout the continent, but especially visible at the U.S.-Mexican border. Assembly plants have been making boomtowns in the border districts over the past ten years. With lessened restrictions on environmental ethics, availability of adequate infrastructure, and plentiful cheap labor, Mexico became the site for thousands of assembly plants. The contrast cannot be much greater than in the lifestyles and living standards across the border than near an assembly district.

transcendence



OBSTRUCTION

The wall acts as a double-sided screen, receiving the images projected upon it by San Diego and Tijuana, the two cities it divides. For San Diego, the wall exists only to protect itself from the 'other,' while for Tijuana, the wall seems to exist only to be transgressed. -Teddy Cruz, "Two-Way Journeys," in *Thresholds* 20, p. 73



12 Castillo, "Between Order and Chaos, Caught in the Middle," p. 137

Global factory systems are exemplified in the aerial photo of the Otay Mesa. On either side of the border, for a few miles, there are the majority of Tijuana's more than 800 maquiladoras. In 1992, Tijuana contained 512 maquiladoras and employed nearly 70,000 workers. Tijuana is the world's largest assembler of televisions, giving it the parochial nickname of TIVI-juana.¹⁵ There is a commercial airport on either side of the border here, as well as a supplemental border crossing for primarily commercial purposes.

Post-NAFTA Neighborhoods. Accompanying the expansive network of maquiladoras are the residential areas to house all of the plant workers. These are built and located in conspicuous relationships to the factories themselves. The companies often build developments for their managerial staff and executive divisions. The "footloose" working class are located in nearby colonias on squatted land. The colonias also branch inconveniently far from the rest of Tijuana at the peripheral limits. Likewise, with great exploitation of the working masses comes the great benefit to the elite minority. The proliferation of wealthy enclaves on the Pacific coast south of Tijuana is an aspect of this expansion. Cheaper living costs in Tijuana have also resulted in a population of over 20,000 Americans living on the Mexican side of the border but working in the United States. Mexican law stipulates that non-citizens cannot own Mexican property, but changes incorporated by NAFTA extended lease times to 60 years for non-citizens.

The material of boundary is significant for its associations. For example, a *chain link* fence denotes an efficiency of material for amount of boundary covered. It also implies a less strong boundary, wherein it defines or excludes a given space, but allows for visual permeability. A *sheet metal* fence also has an economy of means, an industrial reminder, and not a visually permeable boundary. It excludes both visually and spatially. A *concrete* wall has industrial and heavy connotations and a greater sense of permanence; it visually and spatially excludes, and is meant to remain for an unlimited amount of time. In Tijuana, it is also reminiscent of a *tabula rasa* condition of urban renewal. A *stone* wall can have the qualities of hand-made, timeworn construction, which has a more permanent, but tactile effect. It can have indigenous qualities if made from local stone, and provides a visual/spatial barrier. A *compacted earth* wall has an extremely indigenous quality, having been made by hand from materials on site. It thus resembles the surface of the ground and blurs the distinction between the wall and the ground—the man-made and the natural. A *billboard* blurs the message of the border by creating a focused visual limit—something intended to be looked at. A *mirror* hides its support and reflects that which is projected onto it.



Trojan Horse

The myth of the Trojan horse provides a useful conceptual model for the transcendence of barriers. In mythical Troy, the enemy presented Troy with a large wooden horse, which was accepted as a gift, concealing an enemy within. The Trojan horse is a coated pill, chewable vitamin, flavored cough syrup. By presenting itself in an offertory manner, undesirable elements are easily received. The Trojan horse is essentially about camouflage and revelation. In this border situation, the possible allusions to the infiltration of various forces to either side are overwhelming and too numerous to count. Thus, the occurrence or deployment of a Trojan horse need hardly be well concealed to camouflage its intentions.



Rem Koolhaas/OMA. Paard von Troje
The Hague. 1995-2004.

This project was a performing arts center in one of the city's historic districts. The strategy was to perform a facadectomy to the existing building, behind which the new building program would be accommodated. Thus the name means, "Trojan Horse," in Dutch, and acts as a euphemism for the compromise of a contemporary architecture within a historic context. Here is pictured the rear elevation of rusted steel.



Index and Evidence

An index is something that represents something else, creating evidence as a historical trace. For example, when you detect smoke, it is evident that a fire is or was present. Therefore, smoke is an index of fire. Ashes form the evidence of the phenomenon. This allows present objects to take on additional connotations, to mean more than themselves. A fence is a physical obstruction. Its form and appearance relate to a cultural context that installed it and it in turn creates a new cultural context in its presence.

In the present discussion, the boundaries found at the border tell us much about the perceptions of daily life and culture there. Evidence found on the border exists in numerous capacities. The presence of U.S. Border Patrol agents and their equipment, and the types of barrier (walls, fences, suspicious glances, etc) evidence political and cultural intentions. Most critically, the *art* on the border is the most prominent method of understanding the hybrid and distinct identification of the border. Ultimately, the border becomes an object of personal interpretation. The borderlands become a site of individual narratives, registered by the expressions of artists at the border.

The border creates a context for site-specific works of art by which the art is understood and "framed." A major debate about the nature of this artwork questions the export value of the art. If borders and borderlands exist wherever nations meet, and likewise, globalization is a worldwide phenomenon, how does this art transfer context(s)?

The materials used to build the dwellings tell us also about the concerns for those living in the borderlands. The ways in which walls have been constructed to delineate the national boundaries are also evidence of unspoken intentions, realities. How can materials shape the association or index towards a particular phenomenal perception? What are the material implications for borderland and global context?

ERRE: *Marcos Ramirez*



Tijuana-born artist who represents a few prominent strains of influence in his work.

- 1) A sense of place and identity (however dynamic these are) in the borderlands.
- 2) Conceptual approach driven by present considerations of reality
- 3) Mexican lineage of socially-critical work

“Toy an Horse,” right, a 30-foot tall wooden structure placed on the San Ysidro-Tijuana border-crossing for InSITE, 1997.

This project was built in response to growing American nationalist sentiment about the negative influence Mexicans were apparently creating by crossing over from Mexico. The two heads propose that this analogy works both ways, as the weaker economic position in Mexico allows for the exploitation of Mexican people and resources. It sat in the ambiguous space between the “official” political boundary, and the American Point of Entry terminals.

“Century 21,” below, remembering the former Cartolandia of the pre-CECUT plaza, InSITE, 1994. In this revitalized context in the River Zone, Ramirez awakens the memory of this site-as its former occupation. The shanty, typical of colonia development on the urban periphery, is here advertised as though in a real estate guide. It brings about the juxtaposition of upper and lower class systems.



Adaptive Context

Border art seeks to question identity and distinctions prevalent between neighboring cultures. Some artists relate the hybrid condition of border identity with the punctuated distinctions of both Mexican and American cultural heritage. The piece below, "Garden of Earthly Delights," by Ruben Ortiz Torres, takes a riding lawnmower, a common instrument on American lawns, and makes it "Mexican." He takes a series of primary components (the seat, the hood, etc) and puts them on hydraulic lift systems, similar to those applied to car suspension systems. With a set of other accessories, he creates an identifiably hybrid machine. One might imagine this method applied to other vehicles and apparatuses in a like manner. Like the Trojan horse, this object becomes acceptable to both an American audience, for its formal familiarity, and appeases a Mexican audience.

In another way, the architect-sculptor Marjetica Potrc explores rudimentary dwellings throughout the developing world. The phenomenon of squatting and "homemade" dwellings from everyday materials inspired her to document and reconstruct models of these units in galleries. The 24-Hour Unit is a model based on a Turkish government program that allows users to occupy, without penalty, a piece of land and whatever they can build on the site in a 24-hour period.



Ruben Ortiz Torres. *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 2002.



Poster advocating Jewish re-settlement in Israel. Written in Hungarian, 1930s.

13 Sharon Rotbard, "Wall and Tower," *Territories*, p. 168

Between the World Wars, Zionism was a strong ideological force being enacted in Palestine. It sought to re-establish the Jewish homeland and eventually would lead to the state of Israel. This program sought to occupy land in small, militarized camps, in order to provide safety for incoming settlers.

Wall and Tower initiated an original tradition of local Trojan horses, machines of infiltration and other types of ambulatory, temporary, political, and hyperactive objects: the tent in the outpost and the mobile home in the settlements.

These banal objects are ostentatious not because of the way they look, but rather because of their outward display of their *potential* for mobility, expansion, and transformation; because they threaten to transform the temporary into the daily, the daily into the permanent, and the permanent into the eternal; because of the way they represent all these possibilities in the landscape in order to transform the land itself into an arena of struggle and power.¹³



Border Door (est. 1984)

This collective of conceptual artists marks a turn in the border art scene, moving from nationalist Mexican emphasis to a bi-national border recognition. During the Chicano movement immediately prior to BAW, there was a denial of the border's legitimacy and a call for its removal. With BAW, there is a recognition and acceptance of the border and a striving to find ways to bridge /blur the boundary. For them the border is home, but not home. Their work is very close to the InSITE program in spirit.

Border Door, above. Richard Lou, 1987. An attempt to offer a dignified passage for migrants crossing the border. He left 100+ keys on the door for those that would eventually cross, but who he would never meet.

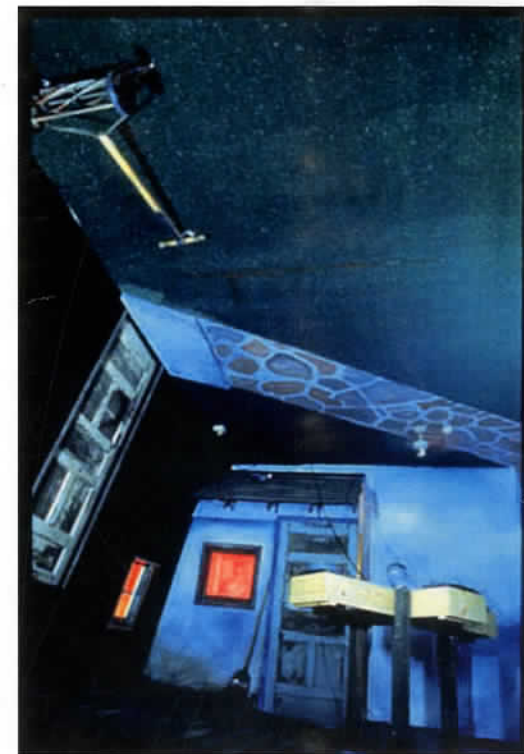
Right: A performance on Imperial Beach. For a good portion of their existence, the border ended where the sand started, and the beach-border was a common site for conceptual and performance art.

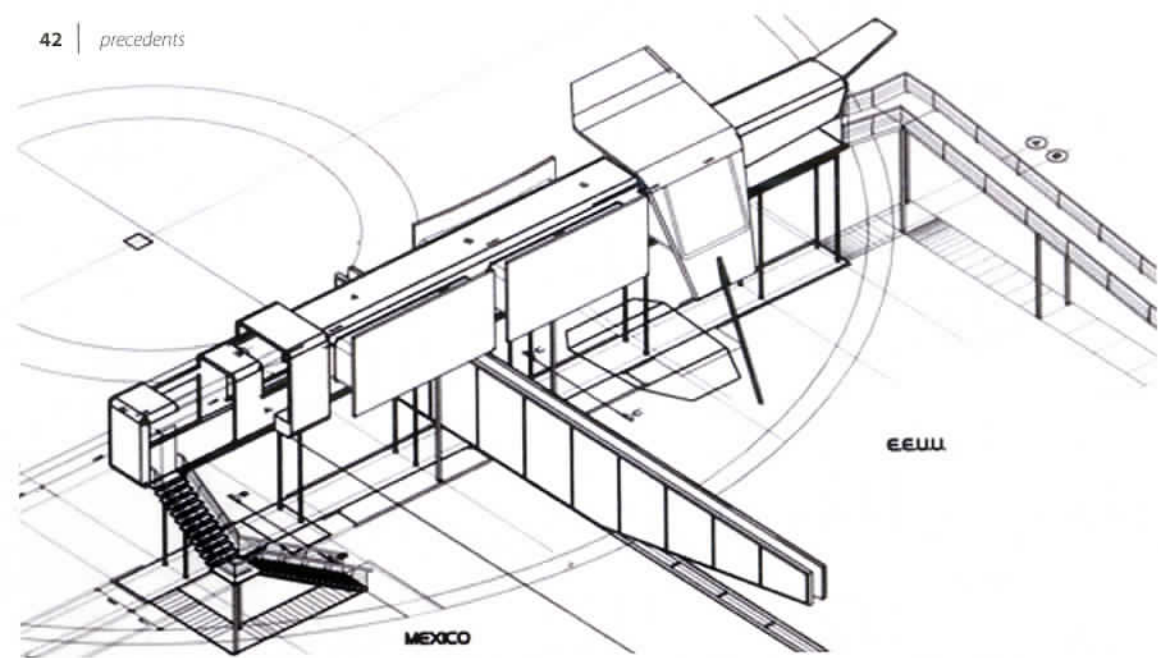
Another prominent work was 911: House Gone Wrong, 1987, that brought into a chaotic bricolage a cardboard dwelling of a colonia, and suburban tract home...in a storefront in San Diego.



Performance, Border Arts Workshop, 1980s. The group was fond of the boundary at Border State Park, where the border meets the Pacific Ocean.

911: House Gone Wrong. Border Arts Workshop, 1987. An American lawn in astroturf for a ceiling, with the roof of a colonia dwelling as the floor. The chaotic scene was made more terrorizing by the sounds of police sirens and shouting.





Torolab: Vertex Project, Border-crossing gallery, 2001.

An artistic collaboration in Tijuana headed by architect Raul Cardenas, Torolab is involved consistently with speculative projects in the city and along the border. This project is located at the westernmost point along the U.S.-Mexico border. By creating an art gallery with art produced/donated by border-crossers, they attempt to make the experience both contemplative and personal. The narrow space of the gallery also allows the crossers to see each other face-to-face, in reaction to the main point of entry into the U.S. that is an overwhelmingly anonymous experience. The exterior of the bridge is a series of panels to receive projections.

The mobile and temporary capacity of this bridge-crossing point opens up the speculation for such structures to exist at multiple points along the border. It also considers the potential for a real occupation of this transient state.



Another of Potrc's projects documents and reproduces a "core unit" that acts as a service core for a house. The occupants receive utilities such as sewerage, running water, and electricity. The house can be expanded off of the core unit to the occupant's needs and abilities.

...the elasticity of [Tijuana's] urban fabric is less a reflection of a utilitarian and rational parcelling up of space than it is the outgrowth of its inhabitants' socio-economic circumstances. -Maggali Arriola



Marjetica Potrc. Core Unit, 1997. Below: Used in Guatemalan Context.



Marjetica Potrc. 24-Hour Unit, 1999.



"The planned community in its state of physical completion and its limited expression of functional relationships, eliminates the social, political, and economic vitality that is a primary component of the unregulated communities."

"A house in the colonia is always in a state of becoming."

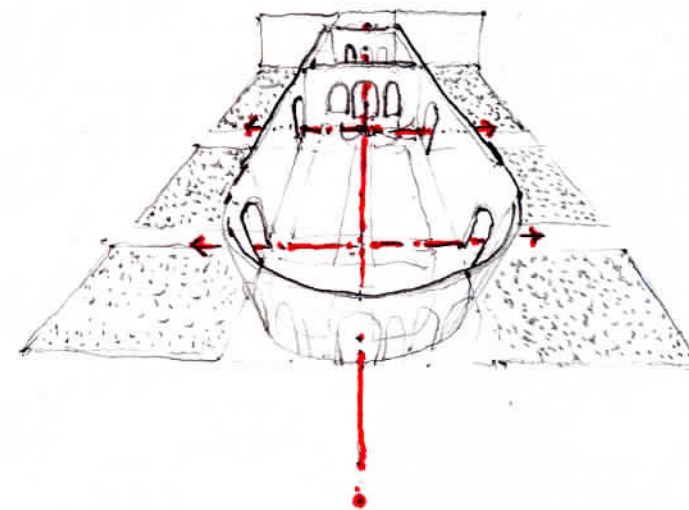
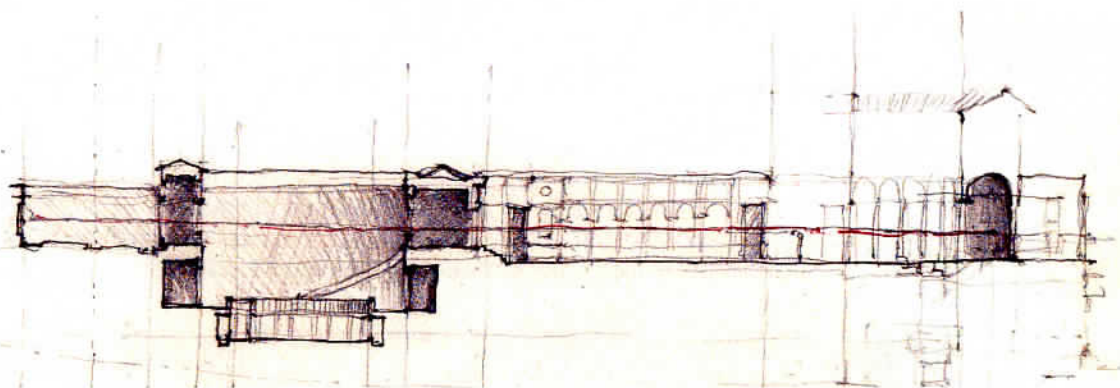
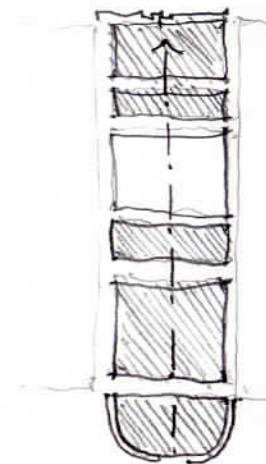
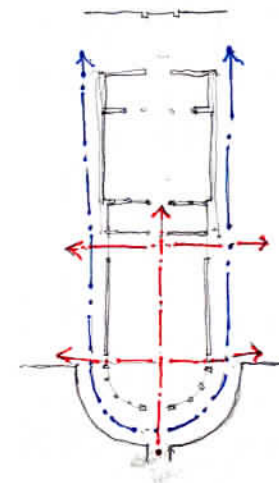
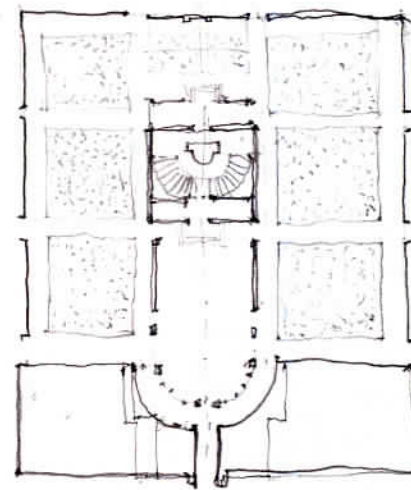
David Baird, "Bi-national Communities and the Unregulated Colonia"

Giorgio Vasari: Villa Giulia, Rome. Begun 1550.

This famous villa built for Pope Julius III, was a pleasure palace for the entertainment of guests and a place of relaxation. The primary spaces of the palace are the rear courtyards and gardens. The villa creates a semicircular courtyard which allows the building to serve as a frame for the garden. A central axis visually unites each successive garden and courtyard space, while a series of architectural screens filter the perspective. While visually connected, the gardens are not directly accessible along the central axis. One is required to leave the central axis obliquely in order to proceed to spaces beyond the initial courtyard.

This study is useful for the building's play between visual connection and spatial obstruction. The method of creating screens to intercede with the visual axis also allow for further adaptation in this current project. The Villa Giulia has a clever formal development which requires the visitor to explore and discover the access to further parts of the garden.

Italian Villas and Gardens,
p. 163-169.



OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture): Kunsthal. Rotterdam, Netherlands. 1992.

The building, a series of art galleries and museum functions, occupies a complex site condition. The site is adjacent to a dike with major roads running on top of it. It then must also situate itself with respect to another smaller road that runs at the base of the dike. The opposite condition of this is a large public park.

The strategy was to maintain a square plan with these major site conditions (sectional difference between top of dike and park level, and right-of-way for roads) to intersect the distribution of program. Two stacked ramps allow circulation through the center of the building, dividing the program more distinctly on either side of the ramp.

These major interruptions become the drivers in the design. I am interested in the understanding of the building as a solid mass that uses a site strategy to create subdivisions within the specified program.



LCM (Laboratorio de la Ciudad de Mexico): Bridging the Border, El Paso, Texas. 2004.

This firm was begun two years ago by Fernando Romero, a project architect for the Casa da Musica in Porto by OMA architects. This speculative bridge museum on the U.S.-Mexico border attempts to use an institutional building as a public forum for gathering and passage. Its boxy form is reminiscent of the Casa da Musica in its sharp, irregular planes and boxy simplicity.



GALLERY	8500 sq. ft
Reception	500
Exhibition	5000
Auxiliary	500
Offices (3)	500
Storage	2000
MEDIA ARCHIVE	1000 sq. ft
Library	
Film/Digital Storage	
Viewing Area	
Offices (2)	
CAFE	1000 sq. ft
Kitchen	
Service	
Dining	
RESIDENCES/STUDIOS-4 (visiting artist, temporary)	1000 sq. ft each
Bedroom/Living	
Studio	
Collaboration Space	
AUDITORIUM	1500 sq. ft
Seating for 150	
Projection Room	
Stage, Platform	
OUTDOOR COURT	2000-4000 sq. ft
Sculpture Space	
Contemplation/Meditation	
BORDER PATROL POST (surveillance)	500 sq. ft

The program reinforces the display and production of border art while bringing the visitor into the space of the border, itself. The contemplative connections between source (however latent) and result will be reinforced in this location.

The program is to be split between two buildings: one on the Tijuana side, one on the San Diego side. The interplay between the two buildings will maintain a dialogue between programmatic components. In both buildings, there will be visiting artist space, gallery space, and cafes. The outdoor court and Border Patrol post will be on the San Diego side. The auditorium and media archive will be on the Tijuana side.



This site proposal exists at the south bend of the Tijuana River, where flat ground begins to be recovered from the concrete river basin. The proposed site would tie into the urban fabric of Tijuana, while being accessible from the American side as well. The buildings would primarily exist on American land, though the proposal would allow the arts institute to occupy the land without entrance into the country beyond the building property. The site is about one-quarter mile away from the legal points of entry, to the east. This puts the site out of easy reach of the border crossing, to the extent that the idea of maintained separateness is a feasible venture. The American access is more difficult, but the site is accessible by car, as a set of industrial or government buildings exist a few hundred feet to the west-northwest. The major challenge to these site is a four-lane highway running parallel to the border on the Tijuana side. **The two site proposals shown represent the sites of the buildings together, not the individual site of each building.**

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Boeri, Stefano. "Border Syndrome. Notes for a Research Program," in **Territories: Islands, Camps, and Other States of Utopia**. Berlin: KW-Institute for Contemporary Art, 2003. pp. 52-60.

Cruz, Teddy. "The Tijuana Workshop," in **Architectural Design**. 69.7, 1999. pp. 43-47.

SCI-Arc was using Tijuana as a laboratory for understanding the global city under a research program initiated by Cruz. He describes some of the initial research within.

Davis, Mike, and Moctezuma, Alessandra. "Policing the Third Border," in **Architectural Design**. 69.7, 1999. pp. 34-37.

Mike Davis is an urban theorist dealing primarily with the modern West and southern California. He offers a very strong critique of the persistence of borders and strategies that target immigrants for expulsion.

Magical Urbanism.

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Diken, Bulent, and Laustsen, Carsten Bagge. "Zones of Indistinction- Security, Terror, and Bare Life," in **Territories: Islands, Camps, and Other States of Utopia**. Berlin:

KW-Institute for Contemporary Art, 2003. pp. 42-51.

There is a good discussion of the implications of global flow and the diffuse nature of controls in a global economy.

Ellingwood, Ken. **Hard Line: Life & Death on the U.S.-Mexico Border**. New York: Pantheon Books, 2004.

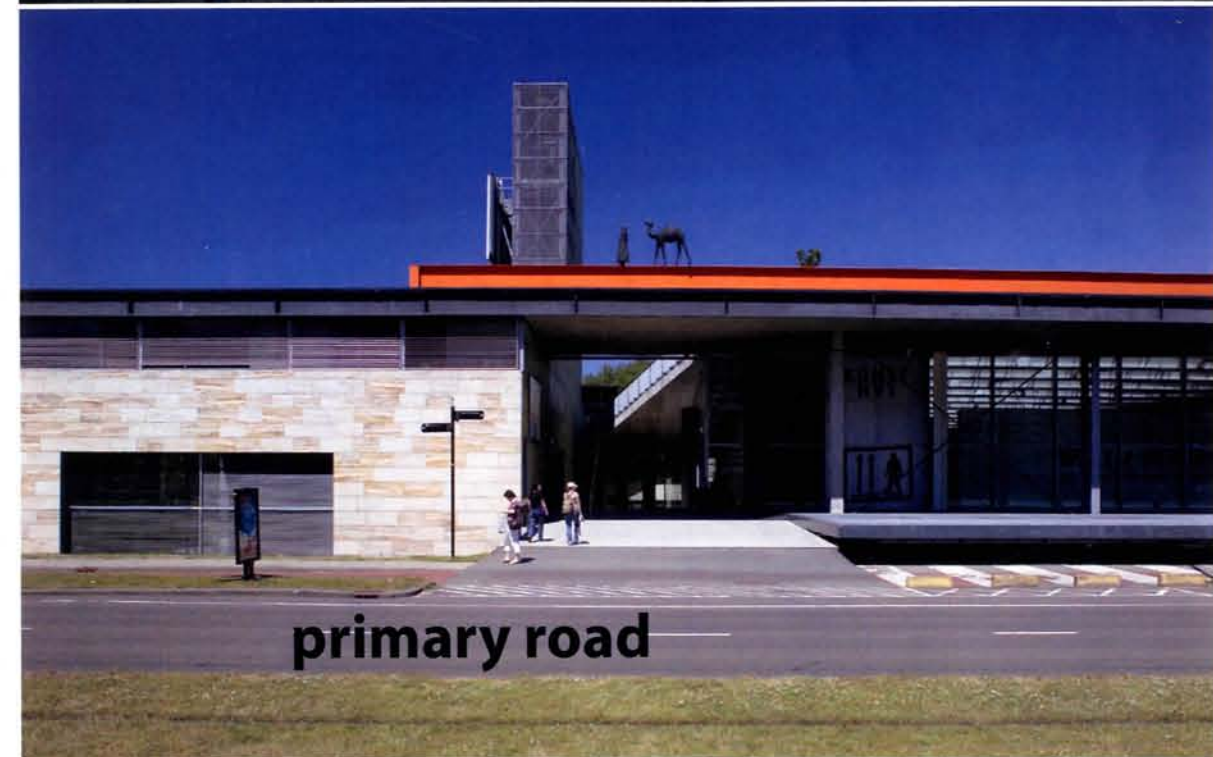
Gonzalez, Robert. "Ensalada Tijuana. Welcome to the Gritty Landscape of Globalization," in **Cruelty & Utopia**. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005.

Herzog, Lawrence. **Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.

Kwinter, Sanford, and Fabricius, Daniela. "Contract with America," in **Mutations**. Barcelona: ACTAR, 2001. pp. 566-602.

This stream-of-consciousness on American conditions and phenomena arrives at a strange understanding of the excesses of liberties and controls.

Nash, Roderick. **Wilderness and the American Mind**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.



Nash looks at a series of ways in which Americans have experienced the condition of wilderness with inference to the frontier--for the frontier can be seen as the extreme limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness. I think this will elaborate on the experience of the frontier as a place for cultural maintenance and re-iteration.

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Ricouer, Paul, and Kelby, Charles, ed. **History and Truth.** Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965.

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Turner, Frederick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" [1893], in **The Frontier in American History.** New York: Henry Holt, 1947.

This work is seminal in basic American history. It describes the phenomenon of the frontier-condition in the formation of American character. Highly criticized, it opened a new understanding of American identity-formation, away from the East and European influences.

Weisman, Alan. **La Frontera.** San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986.

The anecdotes taken from all along the U.S.-Mexican border provide a broad spectrum of life in these borderlands.