Rooftop.

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Class of 2009

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Thesis I

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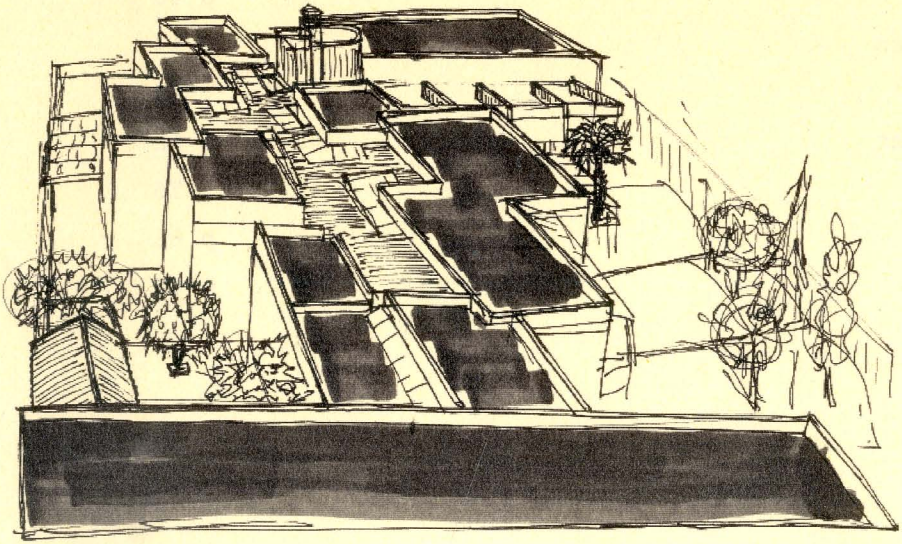
Contents

The first remembered roof.



Foreword

I seek a space where I have the power and the choice to appropriate it the way that I want. A space where I can do whatever I feel like doing at the instant that I am in [on] it. As an architect, my job is to design spaces to be used in specific ways by specific people. The space I seek has no function, and can be used by anyone. The space I seek is internal to the city. It is a space that is above other spaces. It is a space that does not turn its back to its surroundings. It is a space that gives me the sun, the wind, the rain, and soars above the street.

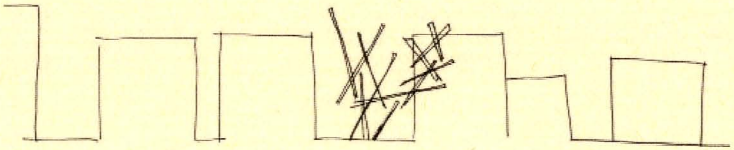
The forgotten roof is that space that can be anything I want it to be. The energizing experience of being up there is reinforced by the fact that I can appropriate the roof in any way I want. To appropriate a space to one's whims is empowering and liberating. This feeling is not often encountered, as we are increasingly being surrounded by designed spaces. A squatter squats out of necessity, but what if there was a place, or a collection of spaces, that one could squat temporarily for whatever act (s)he might need?

Abstract

The forgotten roof is that space that can be anything you want it to be...if you are able to reach it. The rooftops in Beirut are very protected by the owners of the buildings, so getting to a roof is almost impossible. I propose to create structural systems that allow one access to the roofs of a few buildings, and that system will branch out taking one from one roof to another. I am thus providing an access, open to those willing to make the effort to take it, and I leave the roofs bare to be appropriated in the way wished by those who have ventured up there. These buildings are not residential; they are being used for offices or commercial shops, or they are abandoned. My vision is that this structural system can expand and adapt to many parts of Beirut.

My chosen area for investigation and intervention is Hamra. My chosen site of intervention is a narrow empty plot on Hamra Street, and the abandoned building adjacent to it. The empty plot will house the main 'trunk' of the structural web that goes up and spreads out. It will consist of spaces that are free floating, not housing any particular function other than taking one up, but they are big enough for one to stop, sit, and look if one chooses to. This trunk also branches into the abandoned building, breaking it, opening it up, and invading it, in an attempt to insert the qualities of the experience on the rooftop into the building.

It creates spaces for people to appropriate as anything they might want, be it a space to drink coffee, a space to read or study, a space to socialize, a space to hold debates, a space to host a concert or a film festival, a space for a weekly market etc... Thus I will have created a place where anyone can be however (s)he wants to be, and where anyone can do whatever (s)he wants to do; a squat available for those who want it for a few hours every now and then.



What interests me most about a rooftop is being on one.

A big part of it is the feeling I get from being on the roof, on the top of the building. I feel it more on the forgotten roof, on the roof that I'm not supposed to be on. I feel it more when I'm on the roof that doesn't have a parapet, that if I look down I might get dizzy and there would be nothing to hold onto to steady myself. I feel it when I'm on the roof that is high up above all the buildings around it. I feel it when I'm on the roof that is low and is engulfed by all the buildings around it.

I feel it.

I feel it less when I'm on the roof that has been lacquered and cleaned up and beautified and made for someone to be on it. I feel it less when I'm on the roof that is full of tables covered in cloth and flowers and waiters running to and fro. I feel it less when the roof has a deep parapet of vegetation protecting me from coming too close to the edge, and thus preventing me from appreciating what's happening below.

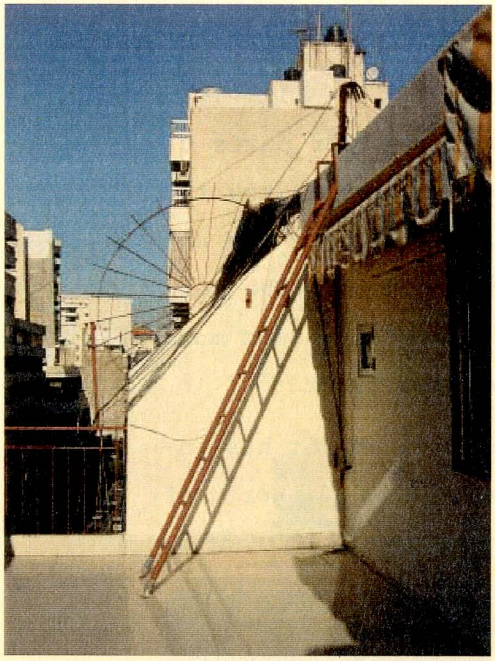
I feel it.

The roof is mine because I discovered it. I remembered that it was there and I thought of being on it. It looks like no one has been there for months. There is a gentle breeze, and the sounds of the street below seem to be dulled, but not to the extent that I stop feeling that I'm outside. The sun is shining brightly. I choose a spot against the wall of the stairwell that is in the sun. I take off my sweatshirt to be in my T-shirt. It is nice to feel the wind and sun on my arms in January, without shivering from cold. I take out my ipod and place it next to me without turning it on. Next, I take out my sketchbook and pen, and begin to write.

The forgotten roof is a space that is appropriated in several ways depending on who's using it. It is not designed. Actually, it is designed to not be anything except the end of the building; the place to dump satellite dishes and water tanks. So there is no functional reason to go up there except to do some maintenance on the water tanks, electric cables etc, that are there, or to install new objects such as solar panels, or to maintain the waterproofing membrane that is often left exposed because there is no one that would walk on it to damage it.

This all feeds into the fact that the roof ends up being a very difficult place to reach for the average building resident. Take my own roof for example. To reach it, I have to go into the house of my neighbours on the 7th floor, go into the second floor of their duplex apartment, go out onto a bedroom balcony, and climb a thin steel ladder. Many buildings I have seen are similar in this way. In most cases the roof is appropriated and privatised by those on the last floor.

One would think that those people who own these roof apartments would actually use the roof. In a lot of cases they don't. Sometimes the owner loses interest and couldn't be bothered, or the owner would have used it as a child, but then grown up and stopped being interested in it as an open space, and considers closing parts of it off with lightweight partitions. One of the people who owned a roof apartment had some relatives in Jordan. He related it to those villas in Amman who have a swimming pool, and it is always empty, or used for storage.



Trend

My home is in Mar Elias, but this is common to many other parts of Beirut. In most of the new buildings in Hamra, for example, the top floor is usually a duplex, or is an apartment that takes over the entire floor, or something else that is different or special. The general trend is that the roof apartment is the most expensive, and much effort is made to increase the luxury of the roof apartment.

This trend came about with the advent of the elevator, and it has increased recently, with those owning the roof investing in all sorts of added facilities that would increase the extravagance of the roof.

Before the elevator, buildings would only go up to three floors so as not to tire the inhabitants too much. The older buildings had higher ceilings, so more steps to reach each floor. They began shrinking the height of the apartments to fit an extra floor for the same number of steps. (Khalaf, quoting Raymod Ghosn, p96) Usually the servants were given a room on the roof to house them. Now, it is the place that would indicate a high economical status for the individual or the family living in the top floor of the building.

To really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder.

Architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses as much as by the enclosure of its walls. Murder in the Street differs from Murder in the Cathedral in the same way as love in the street differs from the Street of Love. Radically.

Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture*, 1978

"To really appreciate architecture, you may even need to commit a murder." - - Bernard Tschumi, Advertisements for Architecture, 1978.

The power of the roof is the awareness of the danger of being on it. It gives me a sharpened sense of being, with my senses extra alert, and my mind less dominating. It makes me feel like I am. I continuously mention the elements of sun and wind. I do feel these things on the street, but they are not dominating my attention like when I'm on the roof. The roof also has that added aspect of height that also intensifies the sensual relationship with the rooftop.

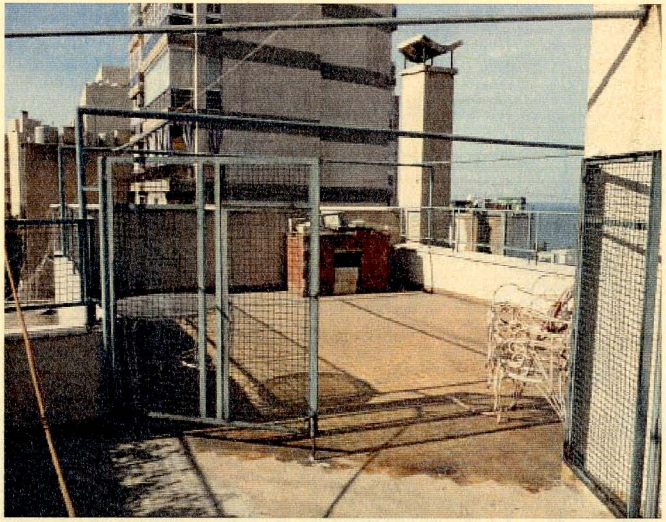
I appreciate the architecture, because of my heightened sense of mortality.

Tree

A place where I felt that people share this exhilaration with a place is up in trees. Put people in a tree house and they would also get excited with just being there. This sense of excitement is one that children experience all the time. As we grow older, it fades, as we become less amused with things, because we rationalize them in banal ways. It brings me happiness when I'm caught by surprise with a whiff of fascination with something.

Used Roofs

The use of the rooftop in Lebanon and Beirut is an old common practice. The older the building is, the more likely that the roof is used by its inhabitants. Historically, buildings in Beirut were smaller, with a small number of floors, and belonged to single families. The roof would be a shared space for all the members of the family together. It is very widespread to grow things on the roof. A very common thing to find is the grape vine, creating shade for the roof users. The vine is a very useful plant because it has full lush green leaves during the summer, shading the roof from the hot sun, and it loses its leaves during winter, inviting the sun onto the roof to warm up the space underneath. Many other plants were grown on the roof, in large tin containers that used to contain essentials such as powdered milk, or more commonly now because of the abundance in the market, in plastic pots that resemble traditional clay ones. But people get creative; they don't always use the available planters. In one very amusing case there were old bathtubs lining the entire edge of the roof, and they were all filled with dirt and planted with flowers. Next to them was a huge cage where the two dogs belonging to the owners lived.



In a few cases, the roof is developed throughout the lifetime of the building adapting to the uses of the residents. One abandoned building I stumbled upon showed remnants of short walls and concrete benches on the roof that defined spaces of use. There was a room on this roof, and I couldn't access the top of it, but when I ventured into the building adjacent to it, I found that I could reach the roof of that room from an in-between landing in the stairwell of that building. So I had discovered a roof that is accessible not from the space below it, but from the entirely different structure beside it. I doubt that when the building was built, the architect planned to reach this part of the building in this way.

TL: Rooftop in constant and full use of its owners

TR: Space on roof designed as communal space, bu privatized by owners of top floor

BL: Rooftop with short walls and concrete benches

BR: Roof of room accessed from building adjacent to it

'Amarat Yacoubian

The popular book by the Egyptian author Alaa Al Aswany portrays modern Egyptian society through the Yacoubian building and its residents. The story tells that the building was built in 1934 by the then doyen of the Armenian community in Egypt, Hagop Yacoubian. The building rose "ten lofty stories in the high classical European style" (Al Aswany, p11) "On the broad roof two rooms with utilities were set aside for the doorkeeper and his family to live in, while on the other side of the roof fifty small rooms were constructed, one for each apartment in the building. Each of these rooms was no more than two metres by two metres in area and the walls and doors were all of solid iron and locked with padlocks..." (p12) These rooms were used by the residents of the apartments as laundry rooms, or rooms to keep the dogs. After the Revolution in 1952, most of the residents fled, and the building was occupied by several types of people, and the rooms on the roof were for the first time set aside for the household servants of the residents in the apartments. The roof was also being used by the wives of the residents to raise small animals (rabbits, ducks, and chickens) but that was banned after some time due to unsanitary conditions.

In the 70s, many of the residents moved again, and soon the connection between the iron rooms and the building's apartments was severed, so new poor residents coming from the countryside rented out the rooms. "The final outcome was the growth of a new community on the roof that was entirely independent of the rest of the building." (p14)

Although the book is based on an actual building, its stories are fictional. However, rooftop communities such as the one described in the book were found on several buildings in Cairo at the time. It was a common occurrence for the poor to adapt the rooftops of such buildings in this way.

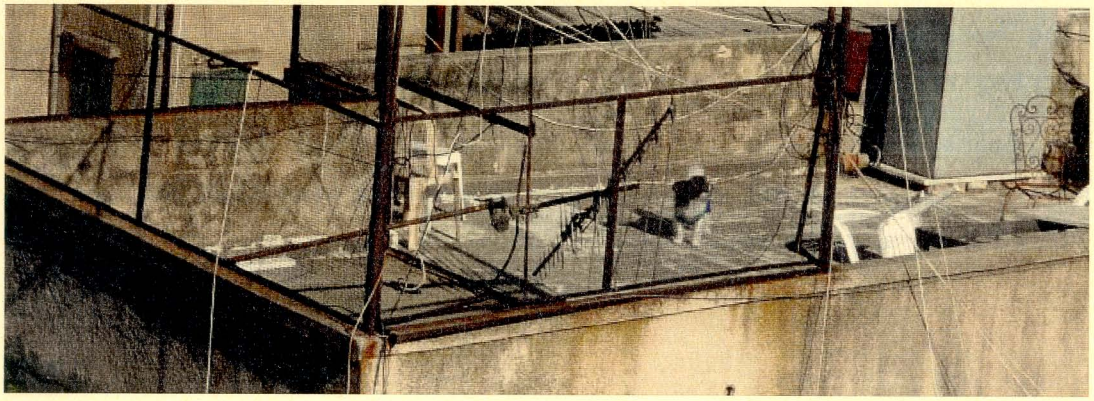
The use of the roof morphed with the times and the social atmosphere of the city. The iron rooms on the roof began as spaces where the residents could not imagine a person could occupy; they were where they housed their dogs. Over time, they became the homes of several families, with the children running around half naked, the women sitting outside, cooking, chatting, and hanging laundry, and the men sitting lazily after a long day's work.

The transformation of the roof into a community re-questions the power of design in situations where there is a need that must be answered with a quick solution.

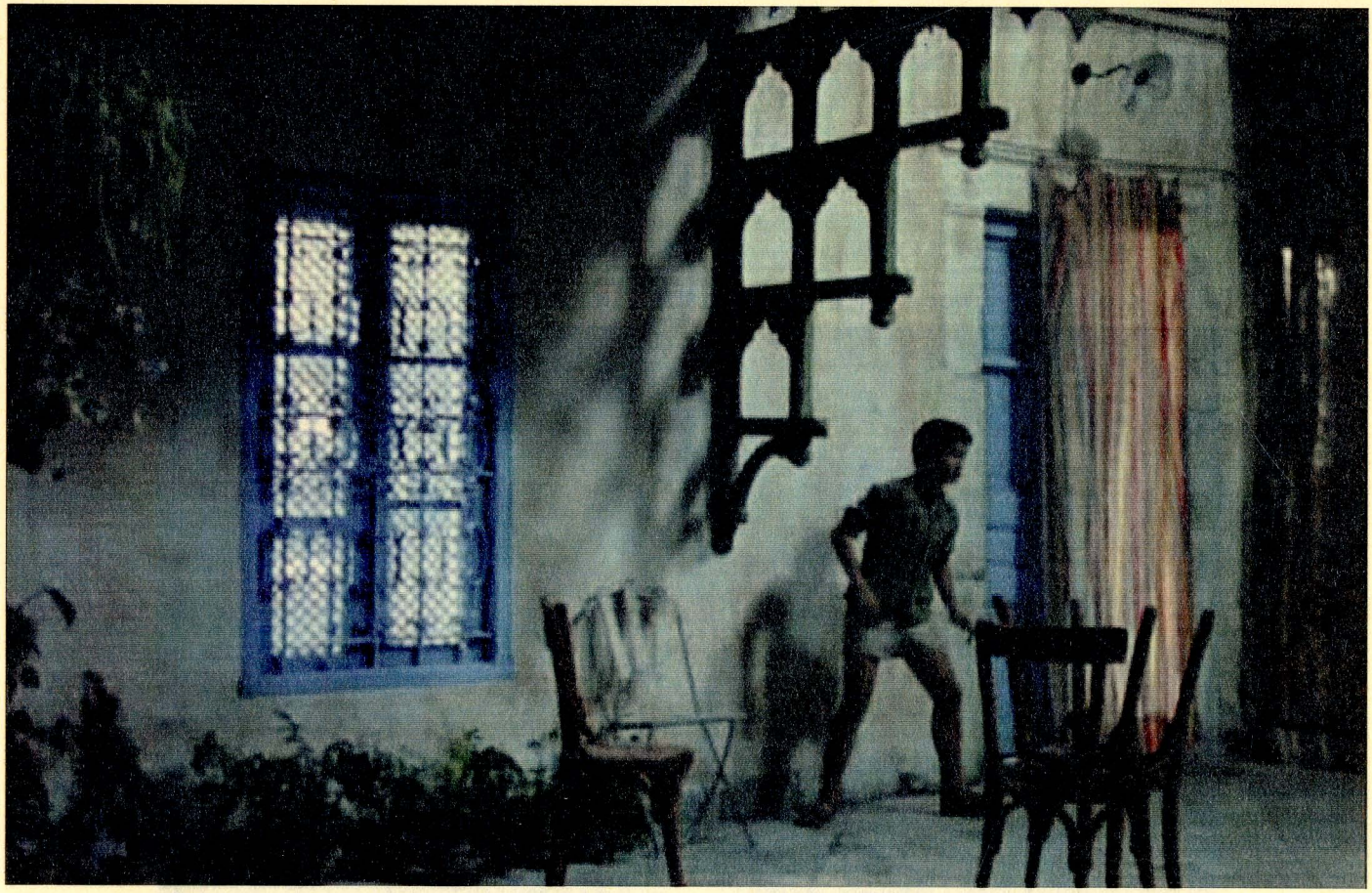
Animals on the Roof

As mentioned earlier, the roof of the Yacoubian building was at some point a place to house dogs, or a place to raise small animals. In Beirut there is a common practice to raise pigeons on the roof. The pigeon owners would sometimes steel pigeons from each other by calling with certain noises. I recall the roof across from my bedroom window in Mar Elias, where there was a man raising pigeons. On several occasions I would be startled by a loud noise followed by the deafening flutter of the wings of hundreds of pigeons as they took flight off the roof.

Dog on roof in Hamra.



Roof accross my bedroom window where pigeons are bred.



The boy Noura has just jumped down from the side of the wooden shade into the courtyard of his home.

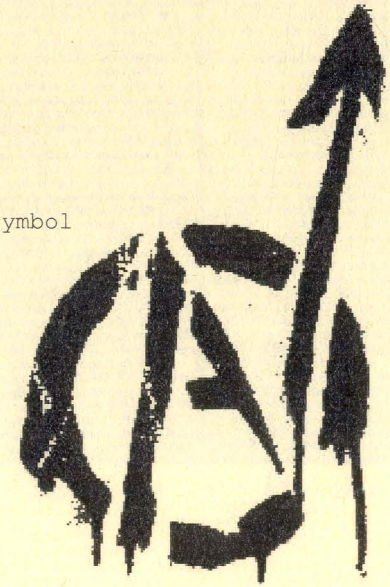
Halfaouine

The Tunisian movie directed by Férid Boughedir speaks about a boy in Tunis called Noura who was reaching puberty but was not yet considered a man by society. He spends a lot of time on the rooftops of the town observing the lives and happenings of others from that hidden distance. Most of the rooftops are on the same level, and so he has a whole roofscape where he can travel with quick speed from one area of the town to another. He could literally run on the rooftops; they are all connected like a second floor. Each house is delineated by a low wall which is easily jumped over, so there are not many obstacles. He would peak over the edge and look down at the street, and even when there was the occasional second floor on the roof, he would peak through the window of it and look inside. To reach the roof from his home, he jumps up and hangs onto the side of a wooden shade that he climbs up and then continues up onto the roof.

SYmptoms of a SYndrome

After spending my summer in Rotterdam, I developed symptoms of a syndrome I like to call the 'anti-Holland syndrome'. The symptoms include a fascination with raw, un-designed spaces, situations, occurrences; the neglected, undiscovered, decaying corners of the city; the freedom the squatters have with the structures they squat in.

International Squatter's symbol



There are some organized squats in Rotterdam where the municipality organizes for students or young tenants to squat in a building that is soon to be renovated, in order to keep the building running somehow, and so when it is redone the water and electricity etc systems work fine. There are also the squats in the buildings that are going to be demolished. There is a fantastic video where there is a fabulous photograph called 'Alice' of the reflection of a reclining nude woman in a circular mirror. Two friends were squatting in 2 adjacent houses. There was just a wall between them, but to get from one apartment to the other they would have to go all the way down and exit the building and enter the neighbouring building and go all the way back up to the other's room. The buildings they were living in were planned to be demolished in the near future. They decided to punch a hole in the walls that separate them from each other so that the access to each other's rooms became more accessible. One of them owned a large print of the photograph of 'Alice', and they were both big fans of it. They decided to drill a circular gap the size of the circular mirror. The video is of the whole process.

They had the freedom and power to do that because the buildings were going to be demolished. They created this straightforward way of visiting each other simply because the temporary nature of the situation gave them the power and freedom to do something like that.

Power and freedom to do something like drill a hole in the wall the size of a circle in a photograph. This is the freedom I find on the rooftop.

Photographer MTA Bosch, www.mtabosch.nl

An excerpt from Robert Neuwirth's book "Shadow Cities":

> "The world's squatters give some reality to Henri Lefebvre's loose concept of "the right to the city." They are excluded, so they take. But they are not seizing an abstract right, they are taking an actual place: a place to lay their heads. This act - to challenge society's denial of place by taking one of your own - is an assertion of being in a world that routinely denies people the dignity and the validity inherent in a home. As Patrick Chamoiseau put it in Texaco, his richly imagined fictional squatter history of Martinique, "In City, to be is first and foremost to possess a roof." (p311)

To squat is to illegally occupy a piece of land or a space in a building. It is out of necessity that a squat happens. A squat in an abandoned building is almost always temporary, because the squatters will be kicked out and the building demolished, or it will return to its owners. The law in Lebanon states that if people have been squatting in the same building or piece of land for 20 years, it becomes theirs. There was a large trend of squatting in Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil war between the years 1975-90, and many families stayed in the homes they squatted in, but were eventually evicted. The squatting issue caused many problems in areas such as Ouzai were there was a massive movement of people who built their own homes along the coast and stayed there. They live in bad conditions, but there is no power over them to find a different solution.

Although all squatting is a form of appropriation of space, the type of squatting I am interested in is the one that exists in [on] an existing piece of architecture. I enjoy the thought of misusing a building to cater to needs that were not in the calculations of the design.

Models of appropriation

The phenomenon of Uncle Deek is a model of pure success that comes from the combination of an attractive programme strategically placed near a large public space such that it doesn't need to provide any seating. One comes and gets the coffee or tea or beer and either walks or drives away, usually to park somewhere on the corniche, or to walk somewhere on the corniche. So there is a service or product offered, but no where to enjoy it, so people take it to the corniche. No one tells them to do it, but it's just there, and it is open to be used in any way the user chooses. It could be a romantic stroll, a de-stressing time-out, a place to jog and stay fit. It is used in countless ways depending on the users. Some keep the car radio blasting with the popular music of the time. The corniche is simply there, easy to access, and easy to use, and very enjoyable, so everybody uses it.

The ultimate multi-function is no function.

Where other than the corniche can one just sit with ones coffee, or ones fruit cocktail, or ones book, and just read, just be? Sanayaa garden is a fenced up space near the law school where one cannot take pictures. The entrance on the side of the main traffic street is locked up with heavy chains and a thick lock. The only other entrance is on the other side of the garden, the residential side. The times I've been there are few, as it doesn't seem to be a place where I can go anytime I want, and do anything I want in it. Although beautiful and peaceful during the day, I wouldn't want to be there when it becomes dark. As opposed to the corniche which is wide open onto the sea and the curve of Lebanon in the north and south. One turns ones back to the city and opens up to the sea. There is one point of the railing on the corniche where there is a gap, and one can wander down onto the shore. There is nothing there except the shore and the water. It is more than enough. We go there to have a knefeh breakfast; we go there to have a coffee; we go there to have a beer; we go there to have a conversation that lasts for hours into the night. All year round. And what is it? Just a rocky shore with polluted seawater.

Downtown Beirut's arrière boutiques

In the past, Downtown Beirut, or the Bourj, as it was known back then, was the exact opposite of what it is currently. Instead of the extremely organized exclusive picturesque Centre Ville that we have today, the Bourj was a place where people who had no space went and created their own place.

> "...the Bourj had many of the features [...] of an avant-garde countercultural setting. Hence, groups with leanings to experiment with new ideas and lifestyles or to let off steam against some injustice in society were drawn to it. Intellectuals, journalists, poets, political aspirants, activists and ideological groups of all persuasions created their own venues for self-expression, conviviality and camaraderie. In the absence of sanctioned outlets, virtually any space [...] could be readily converted into proxy meeting places." (Khalaf, p197)

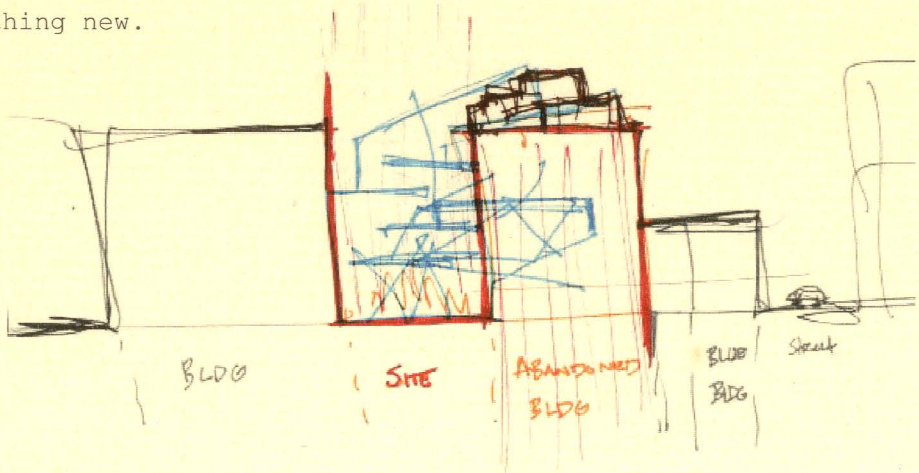
Such examples are unthinkable in the downtown that exists today. The security measures taken to ensure the safety of the Parliament and the United Nations don't leave much room for any created venues of self-expression. The way the downtown of Beirut is formed today doesn't even target the Lebanese people, despite its efforts to engage them in its clean and empty streets.

> "At the back of the Baaklini drugstore, one of Lebanon's most prominent painters and sculptor, César Gemayel, had established his first makeshift art studio. Partitioned by a portable wooden screen, the studio became at night a spirited meeting place for political, intellectual and artistic debates." (Khalaf, p198)

A place where such a narrative might be feasible today would be somewhere outside the Bourj. I suggest Hamra, simply because it is an area that I know much better than others, and thus can make more accurate assumptions about its social character. A narrative like this one seems to be in character.

What to build

The corniche is superior to the Sanayaa garden because of its openness. Where can this experience be achieved in the city among the dense urban fabric? This is the feeling the rooftop offers. I want to create accesses that are the gaps in the railing barring the rooftops of Beirut from the general public. They cannot be as subtle as the simple gap that takes you down, because they will be taking you up. Up requires a whole different experience, a whole different type of effort, a stronger desire. Not everyone will want to climb up to the roof, especially if one has to climb stairs, without the help of an elevator. But the climb is part of the experience. I also want to recreate the feeling of being on the roof by taking over an existing building and experimenting with the potential of combining it with something new.



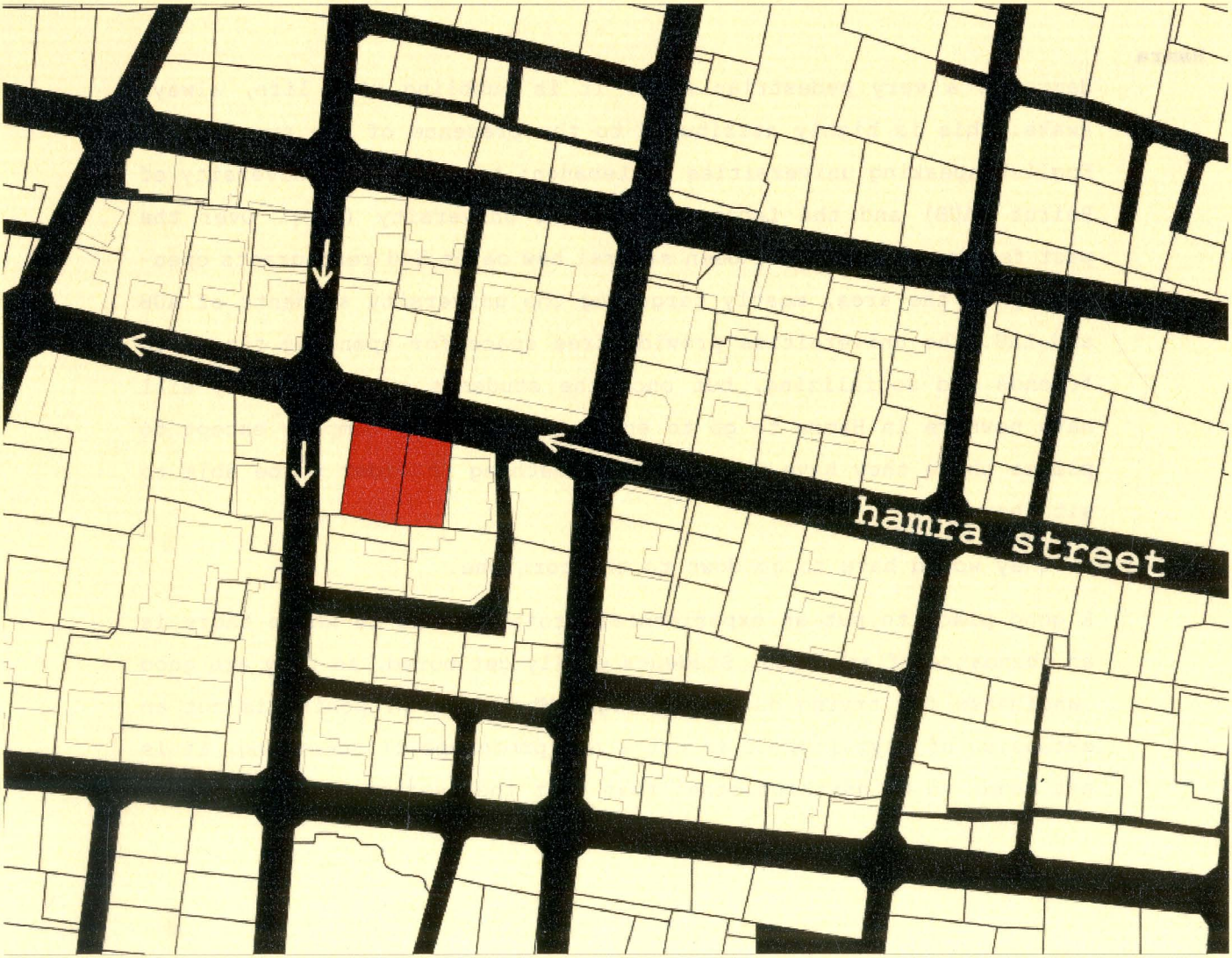
Hamra

Hamra is a very pedestrian area. It is bubbling with life, always awake. This is highly attributed to the presence of the two largest English speaking universities in Lebanon: the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU). Over the past few years there have been several new cafés and restaurants opening up in the area, mostly targeting the university students of AUB and LAU. The universities provide free space for spending time with friends and socializing, but once the students graduate, they will have nowhere in Hamra to go to enjoy each other's company except to places where they have to purchase something in order to be able to sit there.

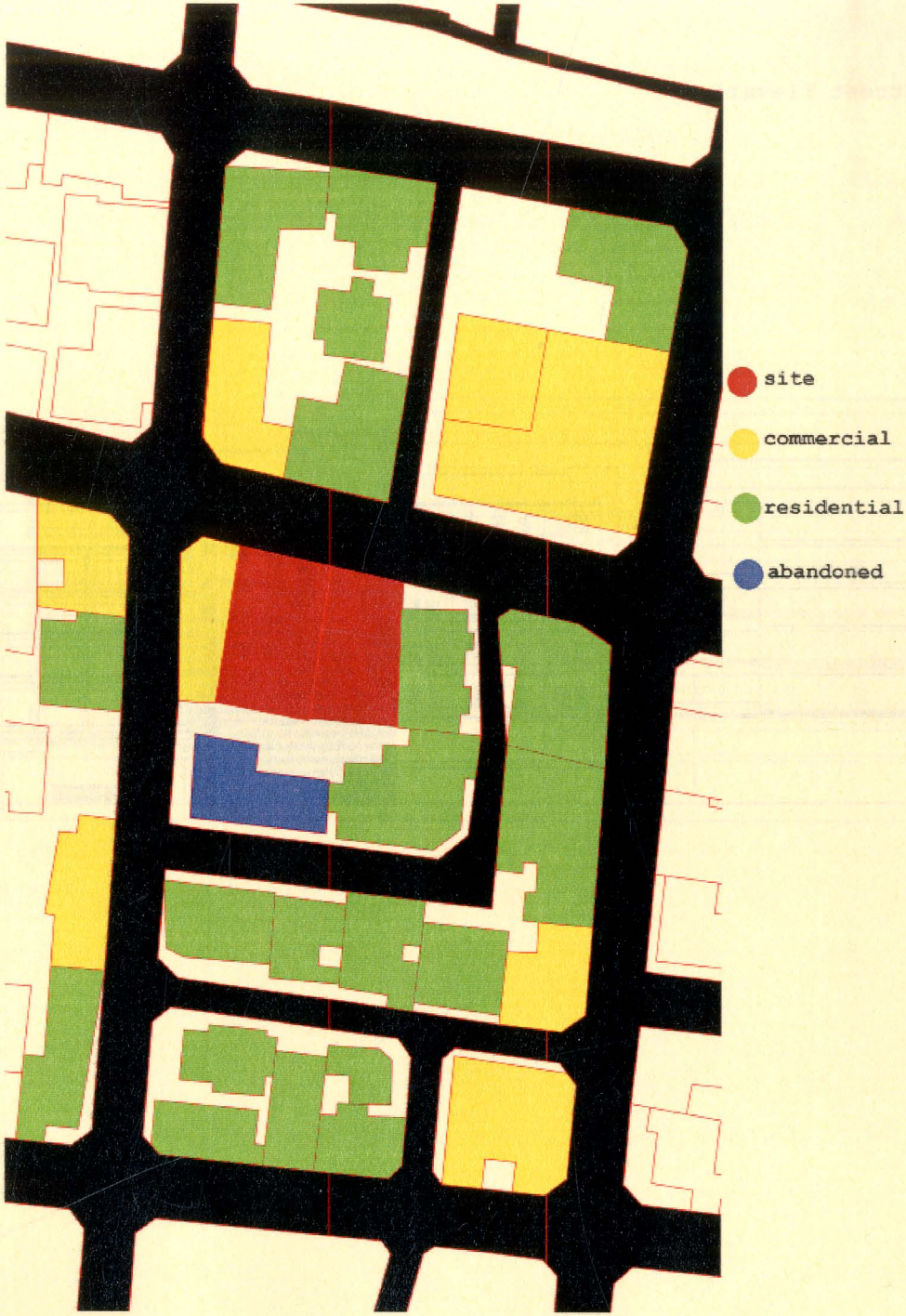
Or they would have to go down to the corniche.

A good place to put an experimental project would be where there is an abundance of students. Students easily get bored, so they are good candidates for trying out new things. What I am proposing is not an extension of anything, it is not a new prototype of something, it is not meant to be anything other than what the user might need.

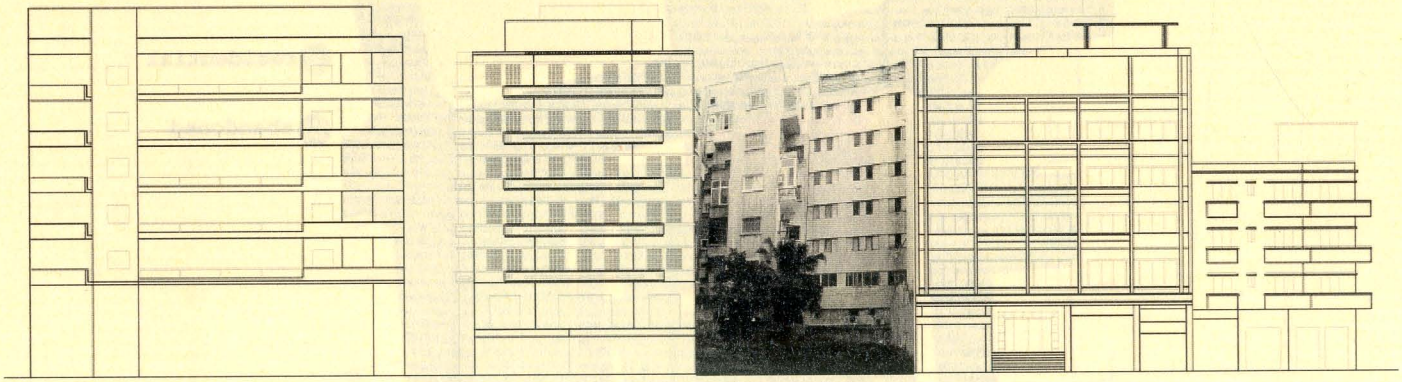
Sites



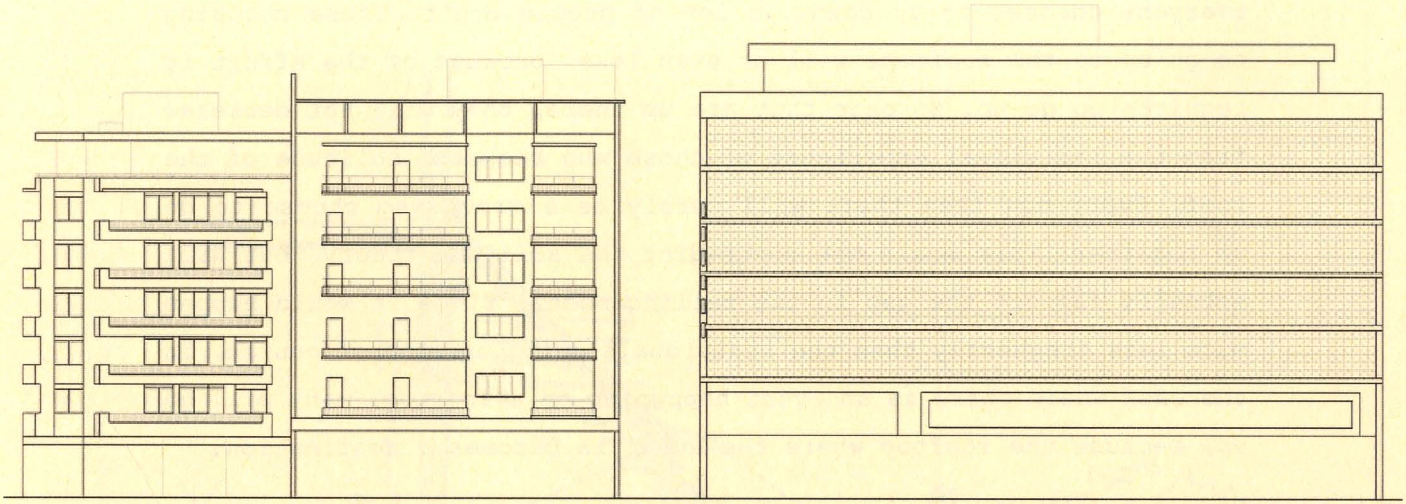
Landuse



North Street Elevation



Sou th Street Elevation



Programme I: Access

Catalysts that are there to take people up to the roof, after which the programme of the roof is up to the people who have reached it. I believe that it would be enough to create an access to the roof(s), since only those who really want it will go up and be on the roof.

It is just like the gap in the corniche railing: it's there but not everyone chooses to go down...a lot of people don't. Those choosing to go up to the rooftops will be even less, because of the effort it requires to go up. So once they are up there, they will not decrease from the individual experience of those who seek the solitude of the roof. Every now then there will surely be a group who choose to go up together. This would not contradict the solitude theory, but will actually support the gap in the railing model, since it would happen much less frequently than the individuals going up. And of course, in the case where there is an event happening on a rooftop, many will go up, because the rooftop where the event is becomes a destination.

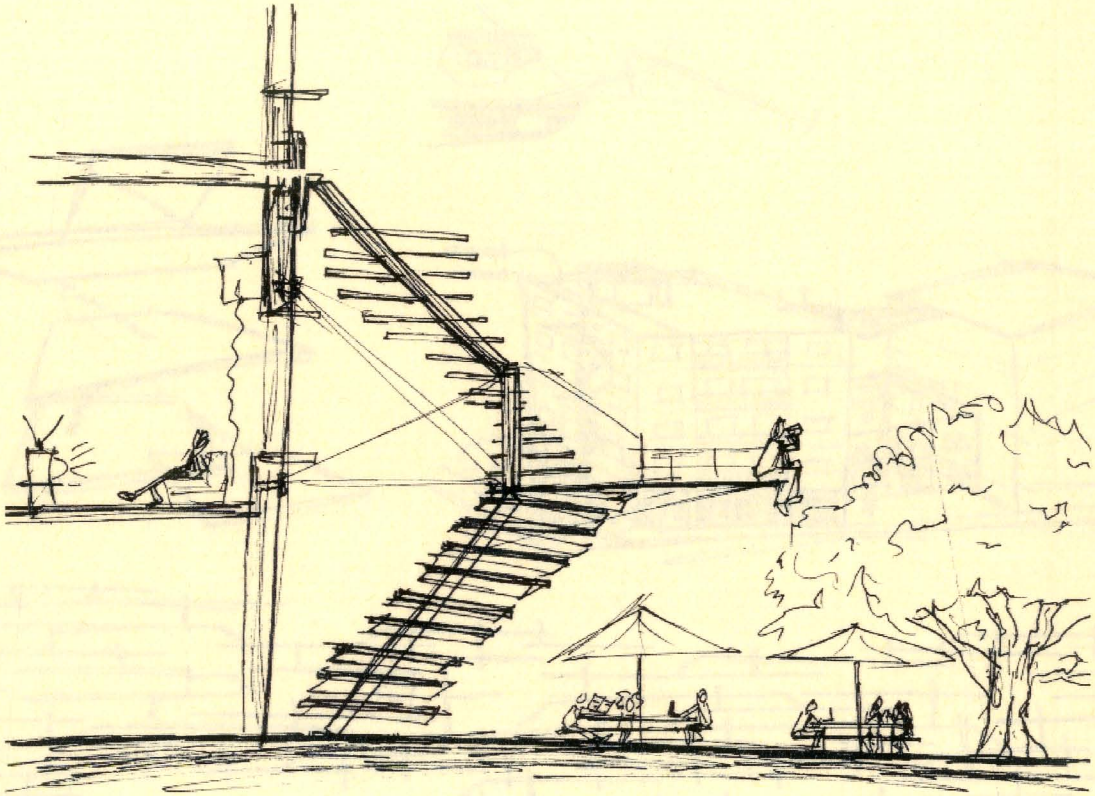
To break it down:

-Most frequently: Individual seeking solitude.

-Less frequently: A group seeking an isolated but an in-the-city space where they can spend some time.

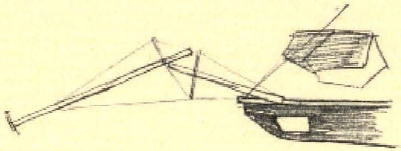
-Occasionally: An event will happen turning a rooftop into a destination point and many people will come up.

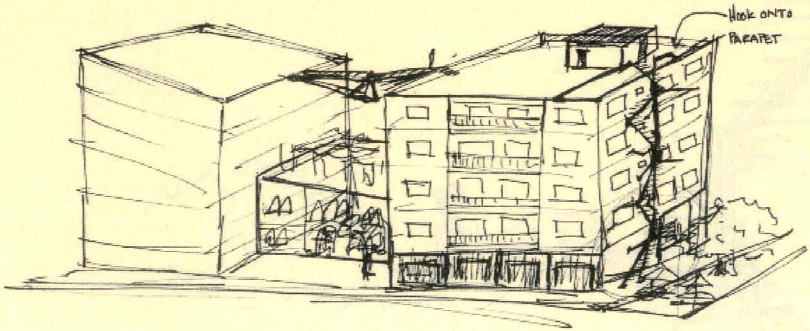
The accesses are more than just accesses to the roof of individual buildings. Some of them branch out to other rooftops that can only be accessed from these structures. This creates a network of rooftops that can be explored.

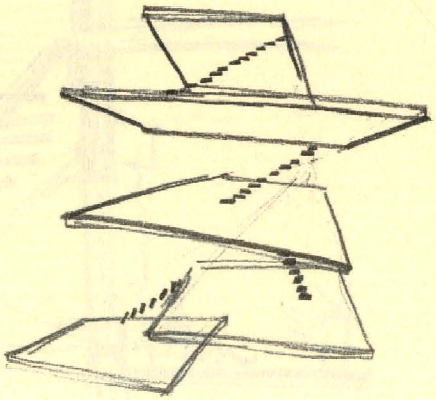


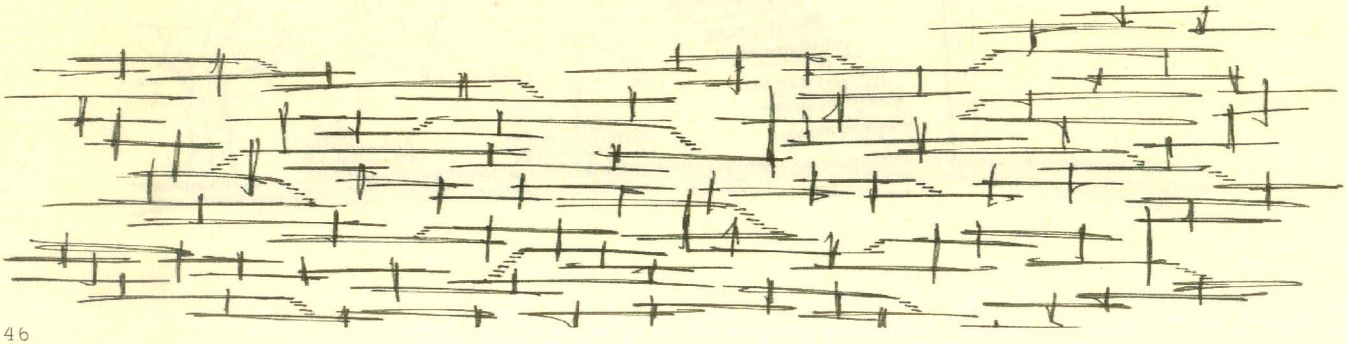
Logistics

The rooftops made accessible are the ones sheltering buildings which are not residential. This includes office buildings, commercial buildings, buildings housing a few companies...and abandoned buildings. In the cases where there are objects on the roof such as water tanks and satellite dishes and electric cables, they will be relocated to a section allocated for them on the rooftop, and that will be closed off from the visitors to the roof.









Rooftop Culture

Having all these accesses to the rooftops of Beirut will cause a stir in the street culture, and extend some of it to a rooftop culture. The rooftop culture involves using the rooftops as meeting points, as circulation from place to place, as a layer of urban life with a whole new system of references, a whole new way of reading the city. It involves spending time and creating memories on the rooftops.

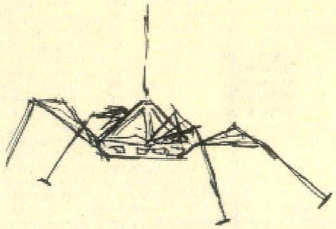
After a while the roofscape will come alive with possibilities of usage. People will turn the same roof into a multitude of things. The same space will be different places to different people. It could also be different places to the same person, depending on her/his need for the roof at each moment.

Tensegrity

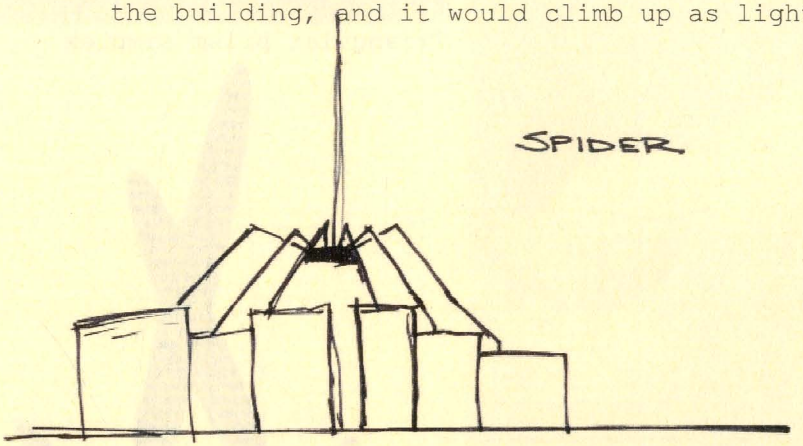
The word tensegrity was first introduced by Buckminister Fuller, and is a direct contraction of 'tensile integrity'. Inspired by the X module designed by Kenneth Snelson, a student of his in 1948, Fuller experimented and expanded on the concept of tensegrity for many years after that. (Bin Bing, 17) He developed many tensegrity structural forms over the years, but they were all based on the triangular prism simplex form.

The triangular prism simplex form consists of 3 rods and 9 cables. The 3 rods don't touch at any point; the tension in the cables is what holds the form tight and upright. Because the nature of the cables is thin, they almost disappear, making the rods look like they're floating.

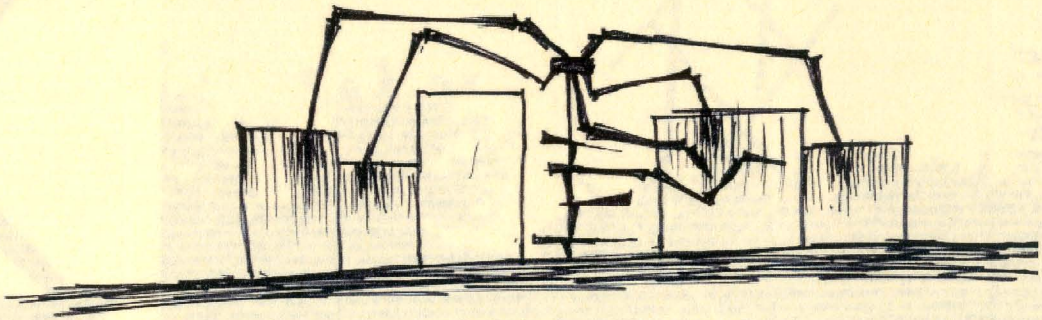
The tensegrity structures are not very reliable structurally, because the "load carrying capacity relies on the buckling resistance of crossed long bars and whose bars are constructed as flexible tensegrity truss in very long spans" (Bin Bing, 18) So in compression they don't work very well, but as a truss system spanning large distances they work fine. They can be used for creating large canopies of fabric shelters.



I am not interested in the structural capacity so much as the formal lightness of the system. Although it would be remarkable if the accesses to the rooftops were all tensegrity structures, I would be happy with achieving the visual effect of the system, even if it works differently structurally. For example, if the structure were to rely on the building it is climbing up on for support, the connection could be treated in a way to make it look like it's barely touching the building, and it would climb up as lightly as a spider.

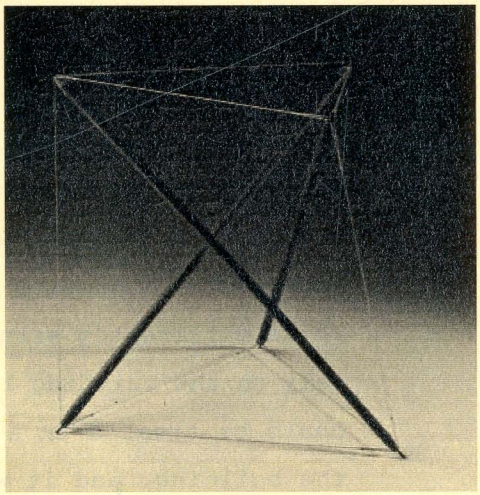


SPIDER

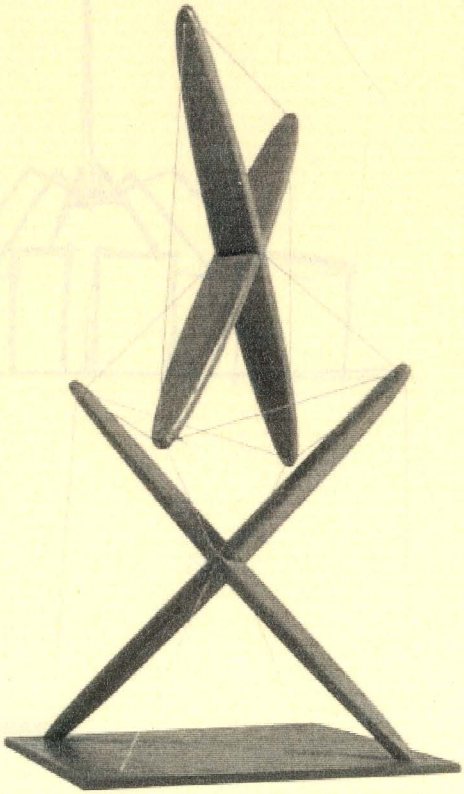


UPSIDE-DOWN SPIDER

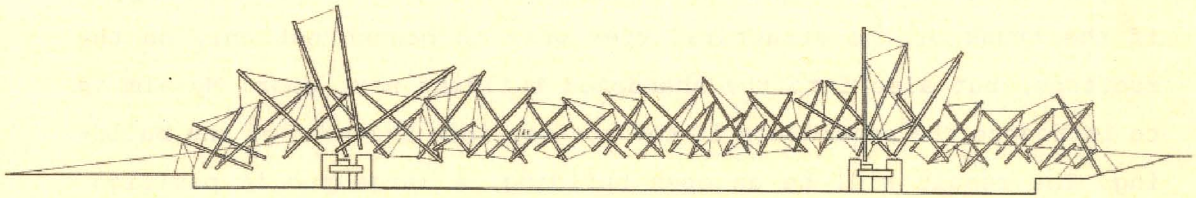
Snelson's Needle Tower



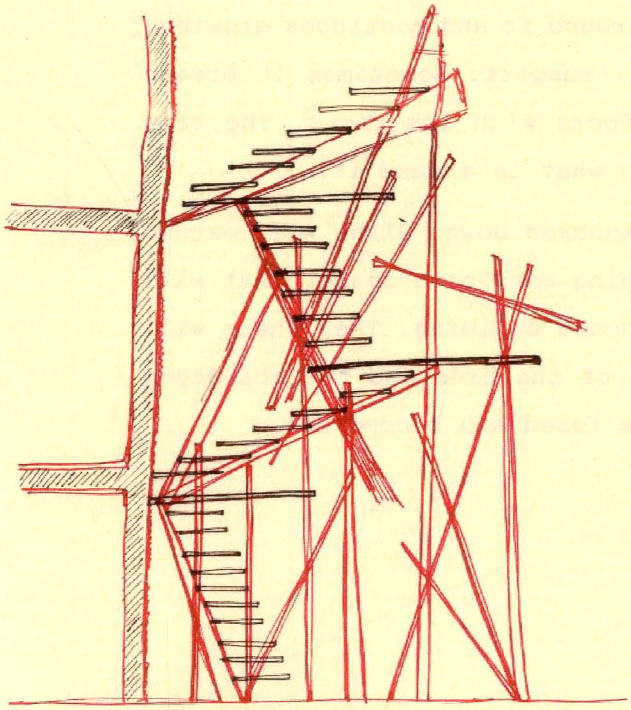
Triangular prism simplex

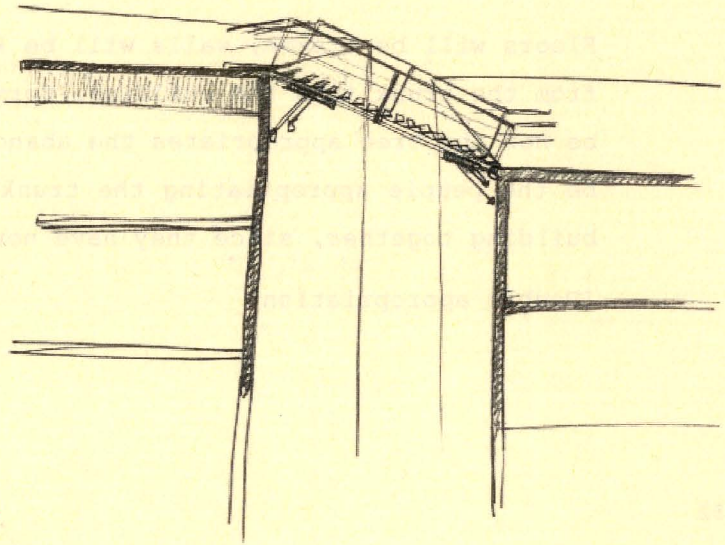


X module designed by Kenneth Snelson



Tensegrity bridge designed by Kenneth Snelson in collaboration with RHA in 1996





Programme: Squat

This part of the programme is an experimentation of what can happen if the trunk of the structural tree were to branch not only on the rooftops, but also into the abandoned building next door. My aim is to introduce the experience of the rooftop into the rest of the building. The result will be an open building, a large public pavilion, that holds opportunity for several types of programme. The abandoned building will be pierced with the structural 'tree'.

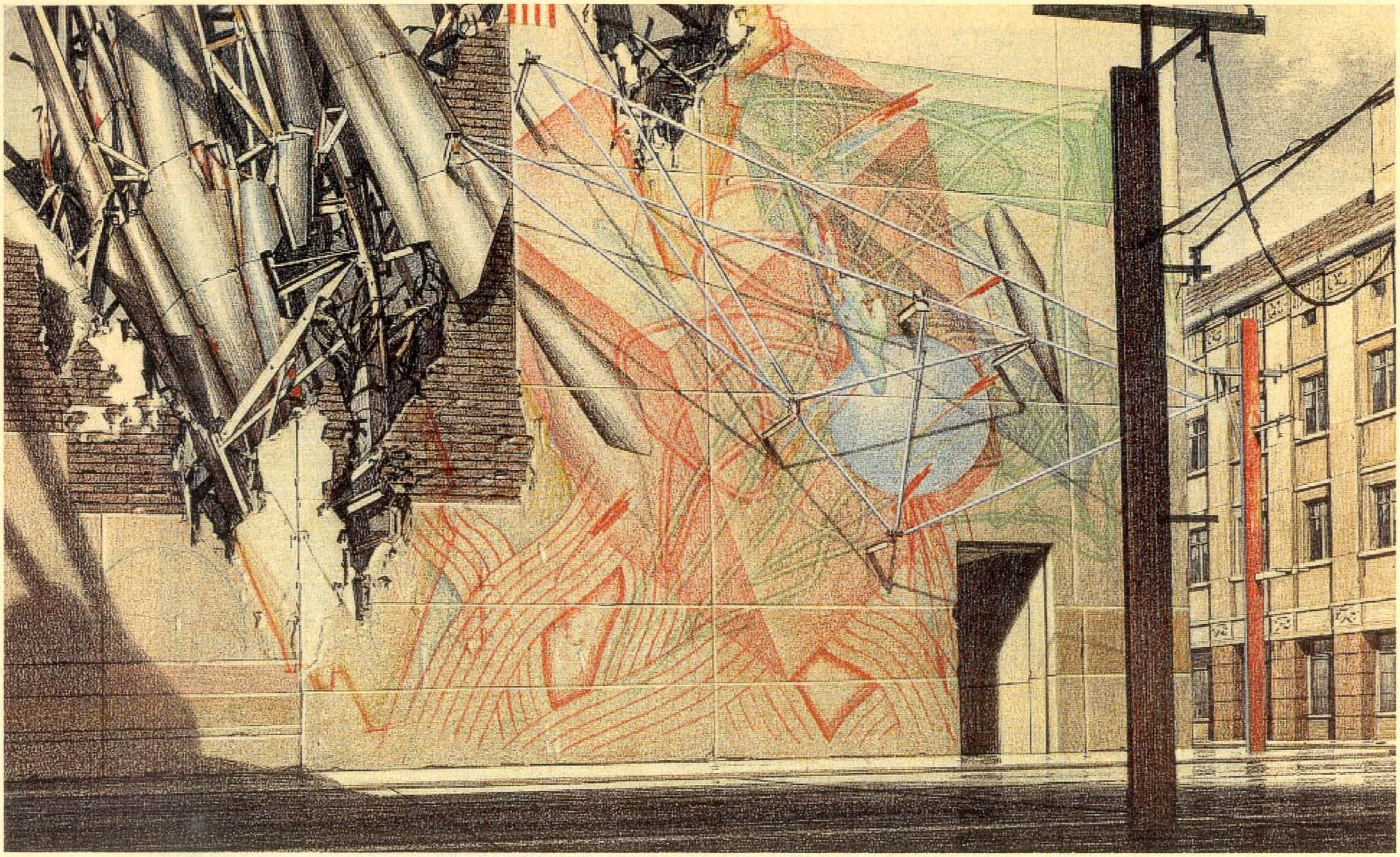
Trees are always adjusting to the obstacles that are found in their environments. They always manage to find a way to grow and expand, even when there are some strong immovable materials that are in the way, such as wrought iron fences on the edges of gardens, or a wall that is so close to the tree that it wraps around it and continues growing, sometimes even using it for structural support. Sometimes it breaks through walls with its branches, or floors with its roots. The tree always manages to survive and adapt to what is around it.

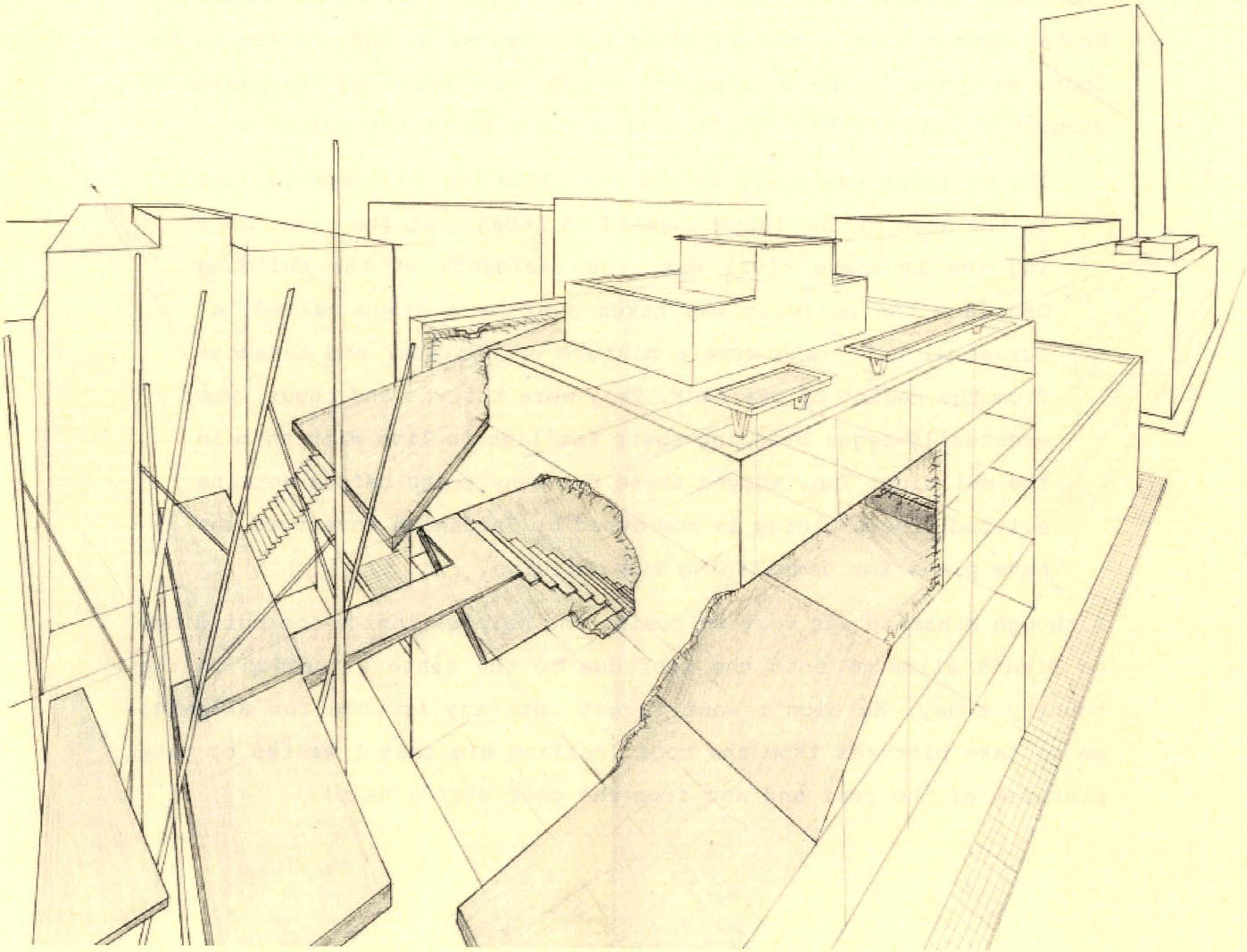
Floors will be broken, walls will be knocked down. Slabs will extend from the trunk into the building, forming one large space. That will be how the tree appropriates the abandoned building. Then there will be the people appropriating the trunk of the tree and the abandoned building together, since they have now fused and become one.

[Double appropriation]

The spaces created with the fusion of the two programmes will be able to house any activity desired by the users of the space, who are simply anyone who seeks a public place to just spend some time freely. One could find a place to sit, to eat, to listen to music, so study, to hold rehearsals, plays, debates, exhibitions, movie screenings, concerts, markets, garage sales...

Sketch of a mechanical creature breaking out of a building
Source: Internet





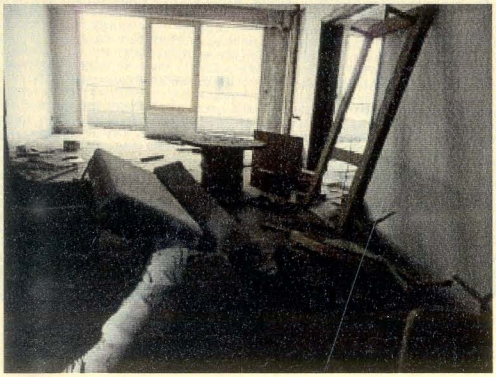
Lot 896

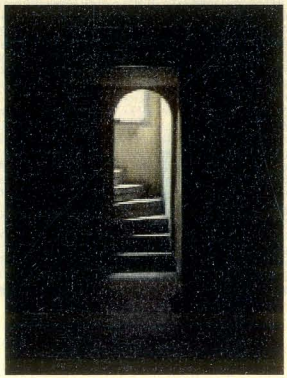
The building on Hamra Street has been abandoned for several years. On the steps leading up to its entrance sits an old man called Mohammad. He has been coming to the building for 7 years. He has the key to the lock. He comes in the morning and guards it from being trespassed by youngsters. He told me the following story about the building:

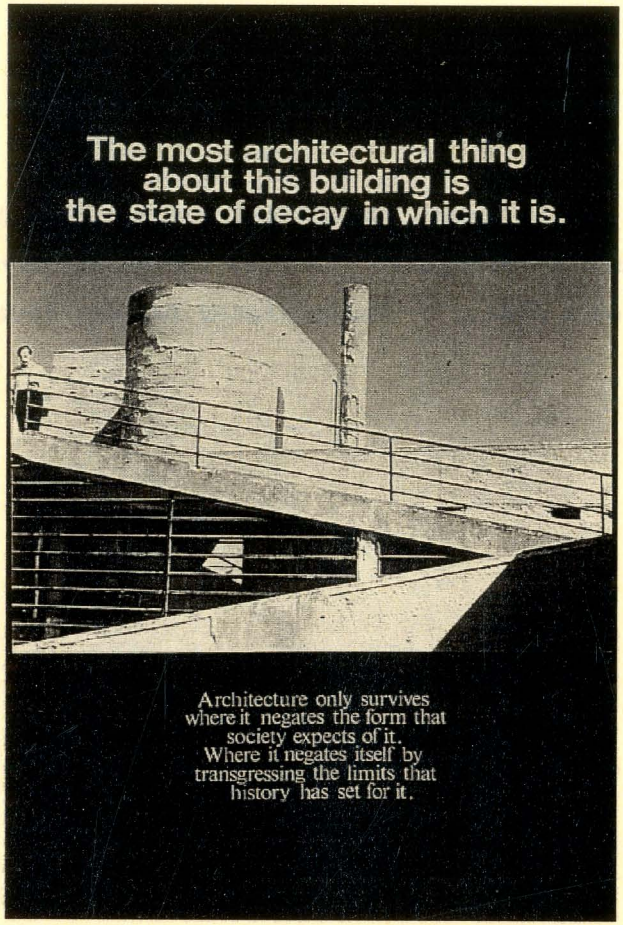
> The building was built in the mid 1960s. It was commissioned by the head of the Lawyers guild in Lebanon at the time. During the Lebanese civil war, the residents of the building fled, and the building was taken over by a group called "al fursan al homr" who were a mixture of Syrians, and Lebanese from the region of Baalbeck. They were thieves and thugs, who eventually began bringing their families to live with them in the building. They stayed there for many years before getting evicted. The building is now owned by Jordanian investors who have plans for demolishing the building.

Although Mohammad was very welcoming and helpful inside the building, he didn't allow me onto the roof due to the tense situation in the country today. He didn't want to get into any trouble for allowing me to take pictures from the roof (telling him that I wanted to take pictures *of* the roof and not *from* the roof didn't help).

The building consists of 6 floors, with 2 apartments on each floor, one bigger than the other. The ceiling is relatively high, and the rooms are wide and comfortable. The dust is a cm thick on the ground, and it looks like no one has walked in the apartments in years; my feet were causing clouds of dust as I walked as gently as possible through the rooms. A few doors to some rooms are blocked off by concrete; there are pieces of overturned furniture in many rooms. Everything has the same colour: dull brown. Some coloured tiles appeared below my feet as I swept some dust away with my shoes. Paint is peeling off the walls reflecting the beautiful theme of decay inherent in the whole building.







Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture*, 1975

"A room should not be fixed, should not create a static mood, but should lend itself to change so that its occupants may play upon it as they would upon a piano." - Buckminister Fuller, Your Private Sky, p111

Afterword

A common theme in architectural interventions is the 'revitalisation' of something - an area, a social practice, etc. - in the city. Architects are invisible social workers, catering to the psychological well-being of the dwellers of the world.

This thesis is dedicated to the psychological well-being of the architect, me, in creating architecture that caters to my spatial whims and fantasies. These include the ability to escape into [onto] a space where I can exit the city while still being very much in the city. These include having a space to mold for my own, similar to an enormous model at a scale of 1:1, that I can manipulate and design as I occupy it. It is a hypothetical experiment where an access to a space exists, or a space exists, and it is left to see how it will be inhabited.

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