

P4 Reflection

Personal Information

Name: Reijiro Sawki

Student Number: 4326490

Studio

Theme: Border Studio / Architecture of Violence

Teachers: James Westcott, Karrel Vollers, Mitesh Dixit

Argument of Choice of the Studio: Interest in the location of the studio and how it doesn't give a project but you have to discover a project through research.

Graduation Project

Title of the graduation project: Food Hub / Food Valley

The relationship between research and design:

The design of the Food Hub / Food Valley is a result of different levels of research. In the regional scale (the whole scale of the border region), I chose "Food" as my main problem of focus and zoomed into the agricultural strip divided by the U.S, Mexico border in the middle that sits right next to El Paso and Juarez, which later became the site for the Food Valley. Starting to focus on the agricultural strip, I started to find all sorts of problems happening in the strip: the division of the strip, the crops grown, the little local consumption of the crops produced, the water problem, the bovine TB problem and the working conditions of the migrant farmers. The strip was clearly coming to its limits and needed a new vision for it, leading to the proposal of the Food Valley. I am proposing to transform the strip into the optimal food shed for El Paso and Juarez and in order to make it functioning, the central facility "Food Hub" arose. Based on the analysis of the current site and the research on healthy diet, the master plan of the site was determined in order to feed El Paso and Juarez better healthy food. The Food Hub is a complex of different programs supporting the valley: distribution center, wholesales market, process factory, research center, farm school and accommodation. The programs were determined by the research of the strip where I picked up the problems and finding ways to deal with it. The design of the Food Hub became my main architectural focus, where I tried to bring these different programs together and create a space where you can see the diversity and complexity behind food in order to feed cities.

The relationship between the studio theme and the thesis proposal:

The Graduation Border Studio deals with the entire area around the border of U.S and Mexico. The border is a result of act of violence from the U.S government where they have tried to expand their land in the past changing the border 3 times and currently imposing a militarized border because of the Secure Fence act in 1994. When thinking about the border, all sorts of images can already arise (drug wars, dangerous border cities in Mexico and etc.), but as a studio we decided to drop all of our presumptions and look at the border in a clear mind. That is why we used ecological zoning as the perimeter of the border region in order to avoid any judicial boundaries and found potentials of both the U.S and Mexico and positive things coming out from the cooperation of the two countries, which led to studio scheme of the border zone, “Transborder Federation”, where we propose a new binational government that allows better collaboration of the two countries.

As a subtheme of the studio, we were always thinking about a way of dealing with the border without literally touching the border. The Transborder Federation is a result of this way of thinking and as my personal thesis proposal I needed a theme that could deal with the two countries and later inform a design proposal. That is why “food” became my personal theme, since the two countries have the worst obesity rates in the world and that is clearly because of its poor diet. Through the proposal of the Food Valley, it aims to create a new healthy diet for El Paso and Juarez and become an agricultural model for the whole border region. The set of Food Valley and Food Hub is case model for the other agricultural islands in the border region and it informs the agricultural policies of the Transborder Federation.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework:

The thesis is based on the research that was done in the first half of the Msc3 phase, which was carried out by the whole studio group. The studio created an atlas for the border region in order to understand how the whole area works and what could be addressed in the further part of research. A field trip was organized to actually experience the border region and understand it more. Meetings and presentations were conducted during the trip with University of Texas at San Antonio, UC San Diego (Teddy Cruz) and Borderplex that were helpful in further understanding the border region and see the potential of it. Coming back from the trip and finishing off the atlas, each members of the studio further researched into their interest and led to a new border scheme (Transborder Federation) and from each of their interest led to small-scale project (Msc4).

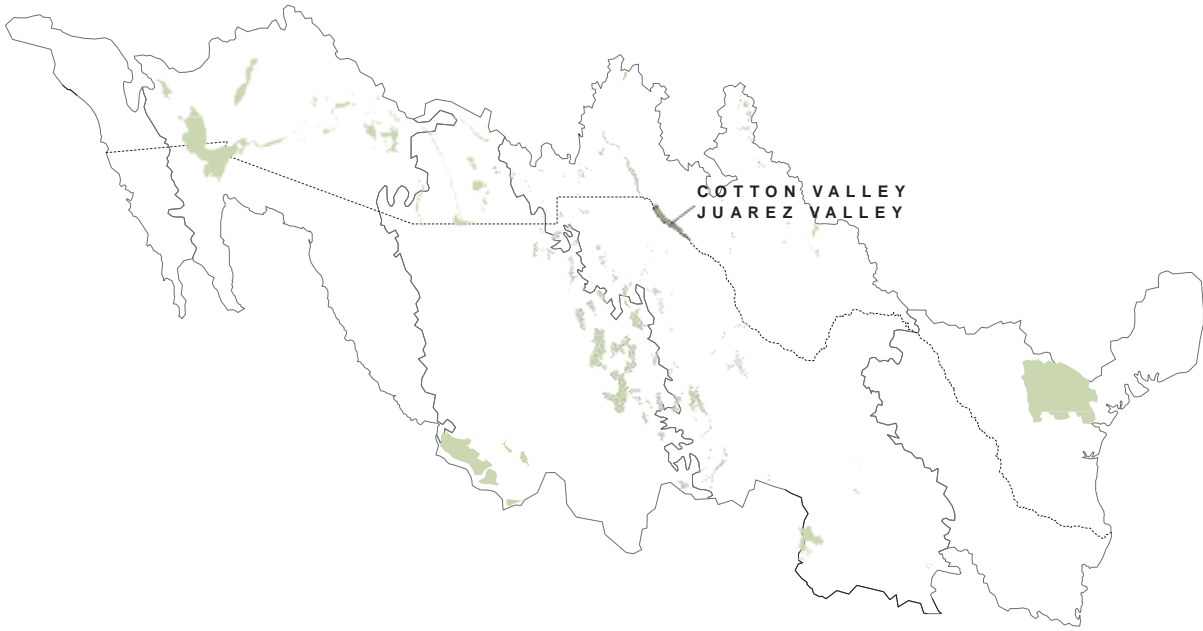
Since the Food Valley and the Food Hub is the agricultural model of the Transborder Federation, a research on ideal food consumption and different sorts of agricultural land use has been done in order to determine the master plan for the Food Valley which could later be applied to other agricultural islands of the border region. The Food Hub was a complex of different sorts food related programs, thus an analyses of each of the programs were conducted in order to architecturally understand the typology of the programs in terms of the size of the functions and the circulation of it. In order to actually create the complex and a space where you can see all the programs

working as one, digital models were the tool of investigation of the massing and shapes of the Food Hub, as well as the positioning of it on site.

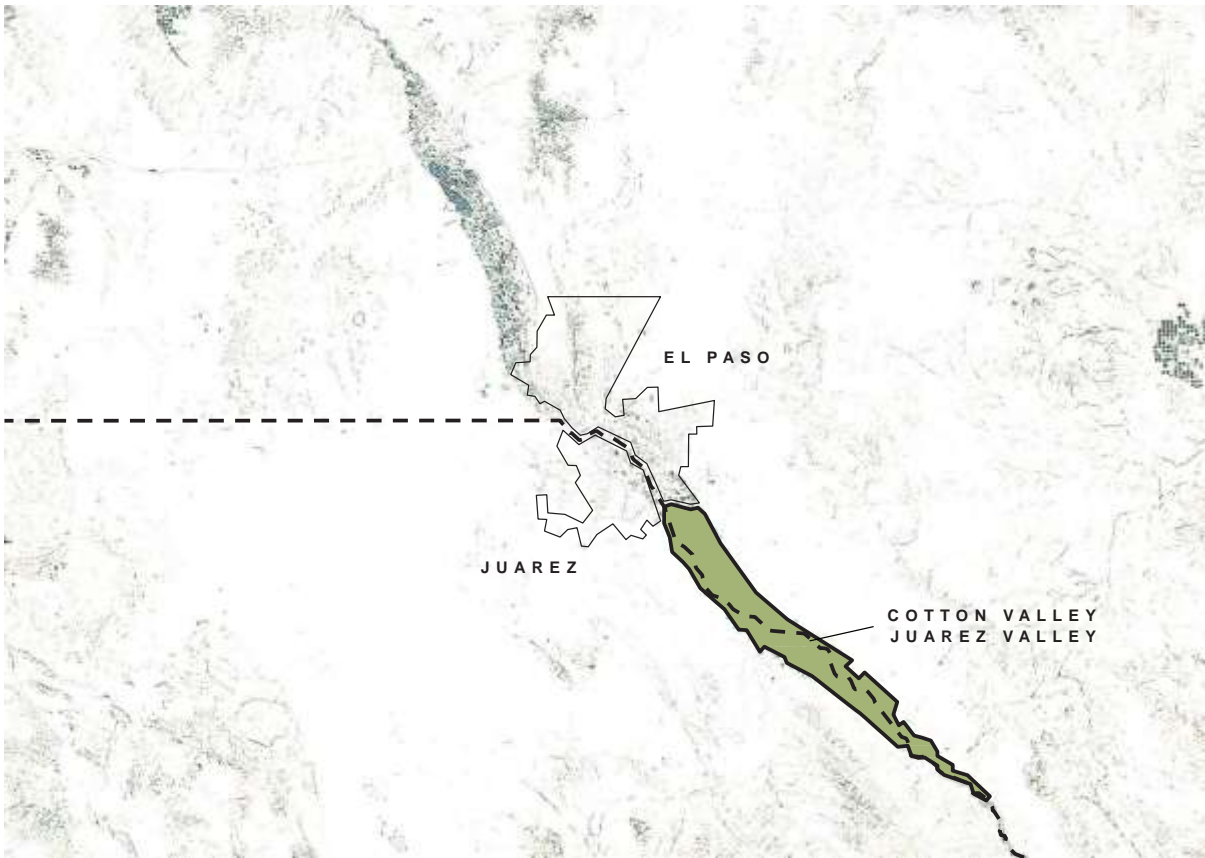
Relevance in wider social context:

When thinking about the problems of contemporary cities, “Food” is one of the crucial ones. Currently many cities rely on their food to be transported from all over the world, but thinking about the global population growth, the development of poorer countries and climate change, we are not sure how long this model could last. The Food Valley is a model for cities to have their food source closer to it, which could make food and agriculture familiar to the people in the cities and have better safety of the food, in terms of the safety in the quality of the food itself and in securing food for the people of the city while always there is a risk when you depend on outside sources.

When actually such a land becomes close to the city, the visualization of it becomes the issue. In that case the Food Hub, which is an invented typology of food/agricultural complex, becomes a useful architecture of showing the complexity and diversity behind the whole process of delivering the food to the people of the cities.



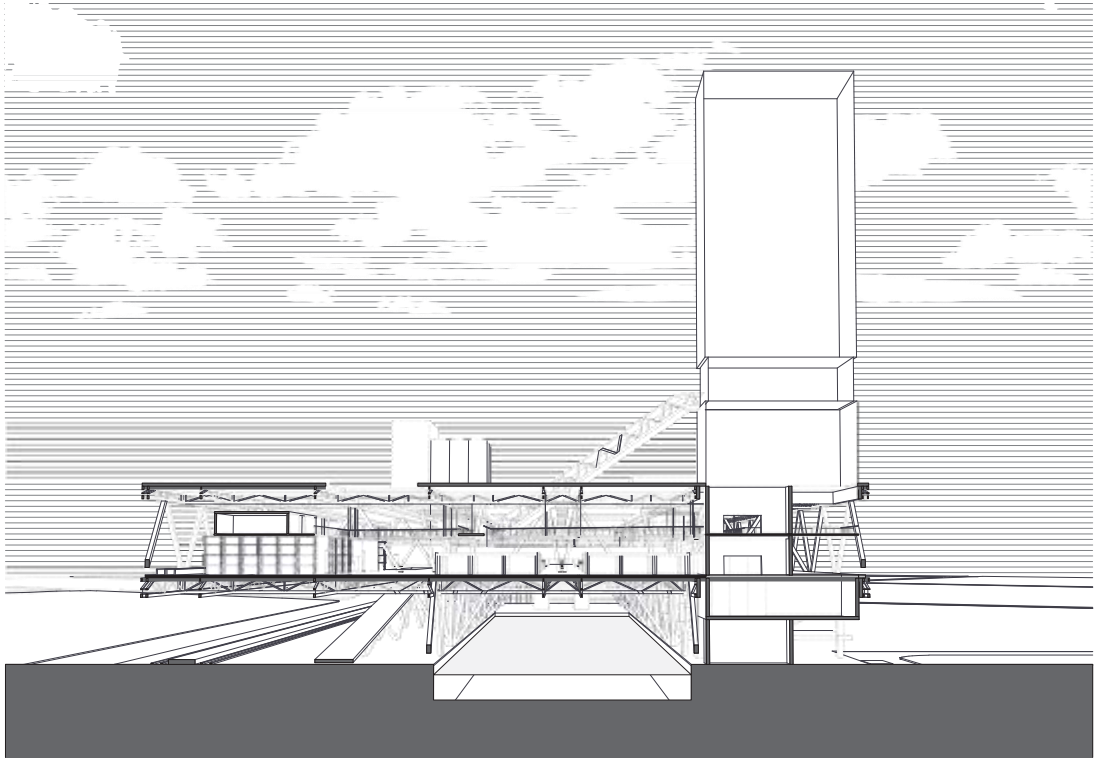
Strip in Border Region Scale



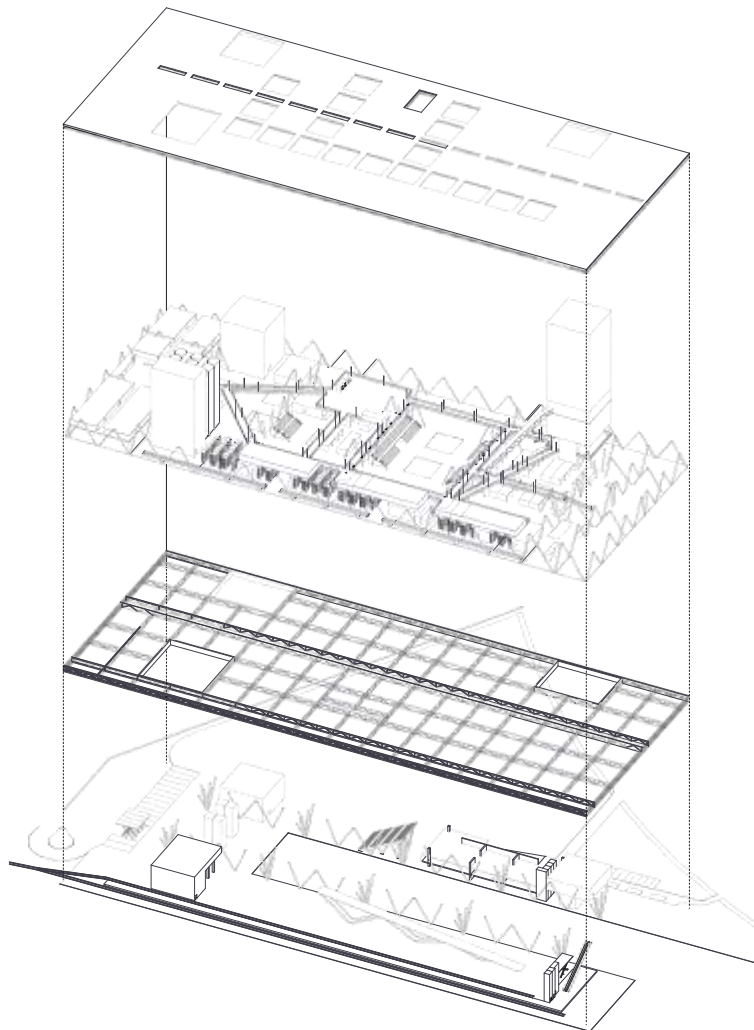
Strip in City Scale



Satellite Photo of the Strip



Perspective Section of Food Hub



Axonometric of Food Hub