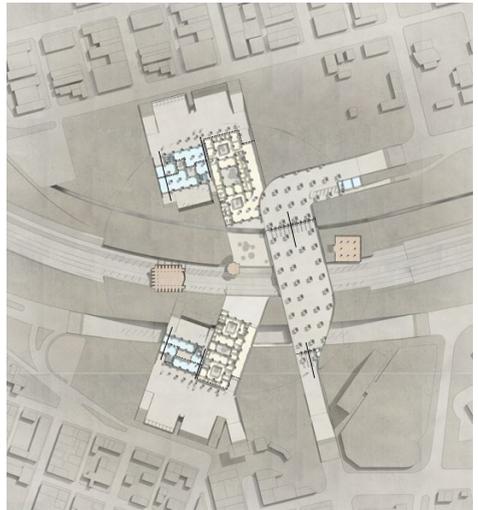
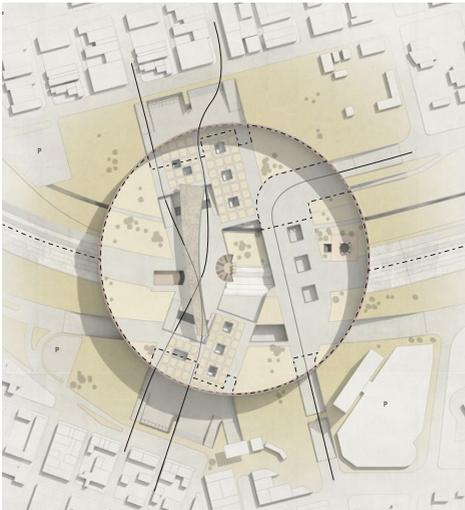


THE BORDER

El Paso (U.S.A.), Juarez (Mexico) Carsten Smink

Complex Projects, AR3CP010, Msc3/4, Tanner Merkeley, Sebastian Janusz, Karel Vollers



The borderlands between the U.S.A. and Mexico are usually associated with problems of immigration, violence and illegal trades. As a reaction, the architecture of the border and its crossings is one of aggression, control and exposure creating an identity and spatial experience that undermines and damages the binational communities, socially, politically and culturally. The binational border, by its nature, is the place where differences in culture, language and politics meet. A balance between its resistance and permeability potentially creates an environment that attracts and stimulates authenticity and diversity.

At the heart of the twin-cities of El Paso, U.S.A. and Juarez,

Mexico, lies the second busiest crossing along the U.S.-Mexican border for which I made a new design. The design has to deal with over 50,000 people crossing every day both on foot and by car. In the design I enlarged the space between the border check points creating a political free zone in which I tried to oppose the current architectural trend by focussing on, freedom and ambiguity in movement and use and on spaces that offer shelter and privacy. The border is materialized as a 25 meter tall wall that encloses a contextual vacuum in which the people, the current border and the existing crossing can be seen in a new light, and can act free from contextual connotations and expectations.