The terminal is the corporeal and at the same time metaphysical connection with the world. It will represent not only the Cubans that will travel out but also the ones that will come back. Both experiences are to be separated and exercise different feelings on the users. Coming back should be a feeling of rediscovering the land whilst going away should be a feeling of discovering the new and future Cuban identity (“here is where it started they will say”).

Architectural translation:
- Physically from the terminal to the gate the passenger should experience the new Cuban identity while from the gate to the terminal the passenger should go through the multiple layers of Cuban culture, history, architecture,…
- From a sensory point of view every interchange should be based on a type of experience (example going on to the piers the passenger should be engulfed in light as an experience of enlightenment, look upon a brighter future), coming into the terminal the passenger should experience the climate, the air, the smell, the rain,…

The three Pillars of my design: Function Feeling Identity

1.1 Function

( the following text is based on extracts from the research books and presentations on terminal planning
an construction)

- Minimum 10 million pax (min 16 gates) (optimal number of piers = sqrt(gates) thus 8 piers or 4 longer ones depending on walking distance requirements)
  - Phasing of the Piers:
    - Phase 1: 5mill pax (8 gates) 4 piers
    - Phase 2: 10 mill pax
    - Phase 3: Second terminal extension of the piers
    - Etc…
- Retail (airside or landside?)
  - Culturally Cuba is not a place for malls, there is no logical reason for the introduction of an extensive retail on the landside, only recreational and eating facilities for waiting.
  - Airside: it needs to be lively exactly as a Cuban street, this activity should be visible for both Arr and Dep as social impact helps in anchoring the relation of the airport with the country. Nevertheless, see pathfinding, it should not obstruct from the functionality of the pier.
- Prime location vs operational needs:
  - Placements choice for diff activities should be based on the functionality of the gates and terminal
- Dwell time vs efficiency:
  - Because of the desired arch effect dwell time should be proportional to the efficiency (see also pathfinding)
- Walk Distances:
  - Departing Passengers From the furthest Check in to the Farthest Gate (max 300m unaided walk path)
  - From the kurb to the farthest check in (150m)
  - Transfer between furthest gates (aided walk 800m)
- Reliability vs redundancy (look at the long term)
  - Long term future design adaptability. Change in political or economical situation should not influence the terminal
  - Accommodate changes in processing methodology (ex. Self border control booth, Schiphol, or self-baggage check)
- Pathfinding:
  - Clear line of sight for the facilities
  - An interchange should be an uplifting experience.
  - The design should emphasise the interchange’s role as a portal into different transport modes, provide a welcoming environment for the traveller and create interest by emphasis of the arrival and departure points.
  - Natural daylight should be maximised wherever possible, creating a sense of well-being and reducing a sense of enclosure.
Imaginative use of lighting can give many opportunities for holding interest, and variety and colour enhance this effect. Spaciousness is important, especially since many people are prejudiced against enclosed and underground stations because these spaces have been cramped in the past.

An interchange should be designed with good sight lines between different modes of transport, to assist wayfinding and add a sense of interchange experience. Soft internal landscaping will soften the design of interiors and provide variety. The geometry of the interior and choice of materials should ensure a calm interior.

The architecture, technology and facilities should work together to provide a coherent whole. The architectural expression of the interchange should reflect the culture of this century and the technology of contemporary travel. Fun and drama should be injected into the experience. Person eye view Landmarks should be introduced to act as focal points. Each interchange should have a distinct identity, though with consistency in the design of elements such as wayfinding to make movement easy to understand.

High-quality construction should ensure that interchanges are desirable places to visit for a long time. Design should be ‘timeless’ yet of its time. Robust design should give the interchange a sense of permanence.

1.2 Feeling and Identity:

Coming back:

-Cuban Streets/Culture

-coming home
- feeling the safest
- nice feeling to be where everything started for you
- comforting feeling to be where your loved ones are
- comforting feeling to be where you made so many memories that marked you forever

Coming home brings so many mixed feelings: joy of seeing everything so familiar again, melancholy and nostalgia of past time, combined with sadness for bad memories lived here, all in the same place. But above all, coming home is comfort. Comforting feeling of being where everything started for me, comforting feeling that I know the order of things and the impression that everybody can understand me, can get the way I am. So much joy to be where all my loved ones are, such a great sentiment of being reunited with all that formed me as the person that I am today. Although I didn’t have a very easy life here, I feel the safest in this very place because it’s home. Because it’s where all started and I know nothing else better.

A tear drops slowly while my eyes search eagerly for the el Capitolio. It all comes back to me now. I was just 10 years old when He entered the city, everybody was so ecstatic. My father embraced me and with the utmost happiness in his voice he shouted: "Viva la revolucion, Viva Fidel". Huh!, If he only knew ,– "Viva Fidel", he much regretted those words not so many years later.

The fasten seatbelts sign is on, we must be approaching the airport. Indeed, not moments later, out of the milky cloud, I identify a captivating form. It makes me think of the old tales of my grandfather about his childhood in Africa. Yet, very interestingly, as we further approach it I can almost picture the noisy streets of the neighborhood I grew up. They were far too noisy, uneducated and impolite for the western world, but for me it was the safest place, it was love, comfort, it was home.

The terminal unfolds above me, The heavy and hot Cuban air feels like mother’s embrace. I am home, “cuba mi isla bella”.

I take a moment to cherish this first contact with my home, as it already sets me in contact with my comfort oasis. No, the airport is the oasis; it’s giving me the illusion of reaching a holy, desired place. It’s
giving me the space to imagine everything beyond it just as I left it, just as I remember it, full of meaning, full of essence, full of emotions and hopes. Regardless of its novelty, I can easily recognize traces of our colorful culture.

Going abroad

- Explore/Escape/Exodus

- new horizons
- everything new, different
- getting new perspectives
- seeing the world with a different pair of eyes
- experiencing
- wanderer, explorer
- getting to know the world
- realising that what you know represents the smallest part of a big thing (the entire world)
- wanting to know more and more

Going abroad is the first step of becoming an explorer, an adventurer. It allows me to forget about everything I knew and start putting aside new knowledge.

We are almost at the terminal; the train ride was an incredible feeling. I have not expected in my lifetime to experience my Havana from the rails. As I step on the escalator I already hear and feel the intensity of the space, at the end of these steps the world is awaiting me.

The terminal unfolds before my eyes. The space is big and bright. The architecture is compares to nothing of what I have seen before yet it has such a soothing feeling it is very appealing, it is alien yet very close to my heart.

My horizons instantly expand and I realize that what I knew so far is most probably the smallest part of a very big thing. Once I get to know different things, I see the world with a completely different set of eyes because what I see shapes my perception. Once I start learning and discovering new things, I want to know more and more as if I had an obsessive thirst of knowing everything that I didn’t know so far. The more I know, the more I realize that I know nothing.

The airport is my bridge to extending my knowledge. It takes me to the other side. To the unknown side, where everything is different and unexpected and also exciting. The airport is the first contact that I have with the unknown side. It's construction is so impressive, I have never seen anything like this in my life, yet it all feels so familiar. I still see things that I can relate to my culture. And I get even more anxious with the thought that this is just the beginning of my exploration, of my adventure. This is the first step towards the rest of my life.