BRANDING ALAMAR
Made in Alamar, A Craftmanship Center Program

Xiangfei Chen
Complex Project
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Branding Alamar is a project which can give Alamar an identity instead of a bedroom community and make local people possible to start private-own cariers through Alamar's Craftsmanship tradition. In the architectural layer, this project will lead to a craftsmanship center in Alamar.
A Long Walk with Oscar

Oscar, a maintainer of a primary school in Alamar, met me when I was walking around the bungalows. He walked with me and answered my questions with very poor English. After a 15 minutes walk we said bye to each other but he found me again later and gave me a piece of paper with his contact information. Alamar people want to communicate to the world, but their location makes this hard. How can they face the future?
WHY BRANDING?

Don't Be A Forgotten City in the Future
Alamar is more like a bedroom community now. If we make a simple calculating, 93330 people live in Alamar, 45% of them are labor force (from the age structure of Cuba), 93330×45%=42000 jobs requirement. Through the excursion, the atmosphere of Alamar become clearer. It is a sleeping city. Most people live in Alamar travel to havana every day.
And there are still a lot of people hanging on the street with nothing to do. They get money from the welfare or their kinsfolk in Miami.
Bedroom community will lead to a serious problem which can be easily found in Beijing nowadays- high carbon footprint in the way to work. This is already happened in Alamar now though it is not that obvious.
In the future, with the opening of Cuba this situation can be worth if we do nothing. It is time to give Alamar identity and find its special position in Havana and Cuba.
The Cuban Revolution is and always has been a brand and a brand story. The formula of a great brand story is this: origin story + brand benefits = brand story (expressed through brand voice and imagery) and has it all. In terms of founding myth, we have Castro, Che and Cienfuegos along with charged signifiers like “Batista,” “social justice,” and “revolution.” Cuba’s brand benefits are complex, from its deposition of a dictator and universal literacy (functional benefits) to its medical altruism around the world and support for fledgling resistance movements (societal benefits) to its romance of swashbuckling, redoubtable revolutionaries memorialized in films like the Motorcycle Diaries and by Marxist/Leninist troubadours like Silvio Rodriguez and Pablo Milanes (emotional benefits). Much of this was, of course, cannily constructed by the regime with the help of journalists like New York Times correspondent Herbert Matthews and photographers like Alberto Korda. Cuban branding took decades to develop and it culminated in one great image: the pop-art Che poster, one of the most iconic artifacts of modern branding. The test now will be whether the brand will remain undimmed with the thawing in US/Cuba relations. Scarcity breeds mystique; as we enter this new phase, it will be instructive to see whether Cuba will become absorbed as another outpost of globalization or remain the rebel brand.
REVOLUTION
SEXY
BEACHES
RUM
CIGAR
CHE
DESIER
CARIBBEAN
PASSION
DANCING
LATIN
MUSIC
DESERT
BEACH
NATURAL
CRUM
Alamar, planed to be a luxurious urban villa extension of Havana

The region of Alamar was intended to become a luxurious urban villa extension of Havana. In April 1955 Dr. Alamilla submitted a sketch plan called ‘Plan El Olympo (or Olimpo). This plan was praised for speculations. The stories of making money by buying a plot became famous in the late fifties. But the villa suburbs would have never been built due to the Triumph of the revolution of 1960. Everything changed.
After revolution, Alamar was planed to be a full functional Soviet-style city

The scheme below is redrawn from the original plan provided by architect H. Ramirez. As planner for the original Plan Alamar, he showed the preset goals for the area. The unbuilt coastline should have become tourism area, as the rest of the coastline to the east and west. The blue district in the scheme should have become sporting area. Unfortunately both areas were never realized. The central district and the forest on the south-west area are both partly realized, but not completed.
But now, Alamar is a bedroom community
Buses in rush hour are very crowded to move people to their working area, but the bus in back turn is always empty.

Taxis are not easy to catch in rush hour and Alamar people are used to share a taxi with 6 strangers in a prise of 10 CUP per person.
Things can be WORSE in the future

In 20 years, if we do nothing ...

$\text{Capital Invest}$

- Havana Center
  - Room Price Up
  - People Move Out

- Tourism Beach
  - Only Hotel for Tourist
  - People Move Out

Alamar
- A Bedroom Community
- Alamar Will Be Forgotten
Problem of Bedroom Community

High carbon footprint on transportation

Low local employment and Non-identity community
BRANDING
WHAT?

Craftsmanship
As an Opportunity
Craftsmanship: Skill in a particular craft. Alamar was built by Microbrigadas, which can be understood as a kind of craftsmanship. Alamar survived from the special period by craftsmanship too. Lacking of food, Alamar people use the abandoned space to grow up food by their hand. They use everything they can find to create what they need. They fix everything by reusing elements from other stuff. Cuban people call this 'Invendo'. They create informal and 'illegal' sheds as additions of residential buildings to be their workshop. These initiatives are often extra occupations outside the regular job workhours, in an attempt to have some additional income upon the state-regulated salaries. Alamar people created and survived by their hand, this tradition of craftsmanship can also be the opportunity for the future.
Back in May, Chanel became the first luxury house to hold a runway show in Havana, Cuba — designer Karl Lagerfeld had never even visited the island until days before the event — and flew 700 guests and 45 models to the picturesque (and very trendy) locale for a weekend-long extravaganza to celebrate the French label’s cruise 2016/2017 collection. With their gifted Chanel fedoras, a fleet of colorful, vintage convertibles on hand to shuttle them around town, local musicians providing a live runway soundtrack and an organized group outing to Cabaret Tropicana, attendees were given a crash course in Cuban culture — well, at least Lagerfeld’s romanticized (if not slightly myopic) ideas about Cuban culture. "This is all about my vision of Cuba," Lagerfeld told The Cut. "But of course, what do I know about Cuba? It is very childish, my idea."

**Fashion is actually a good fit for the Cuban revolutionaries**

Could it be that fashion is the Cuban revolutionaries’ weak spot? It was Alberto Korda’s 1960 black and white portrait of the young revolutionary as a brooding heart-throb that turned Che Guevara into a global pin-up (his image is still ubiquitous in Cuba) and made the beret, that quintessential emblem of Left Bank Parisian chic, a symbol for armchair communists the world over – memorably satirised in the 1970s BBC sitcom Citizen Smith. President Raúl Castro’s granddaughter studied fashion in Paris and even interned at Vogue Paris, or so a Cuban designer tells me with authority.

**With an anti-globalisation attitude that has only very recently changed, Cuba still feels very old-world,** and it was with old-world charm and warmth that the brand was (albeit a little surprisingly) welcomed to the city. The festive atmosphere was really brought to life by the inhabitants of the city who cheered and laughed – setting the mood of excitement that helped made the show a hit.
Craftmanship Traditions in Alamar
Microbrigadas

The microbrigadas is a Cuban phenomena, a Cuban solution to an economical problem. Back in the 70’s, a lot of houses were needed, but there was no money. The baby boom of the 60’s provided an enormous population growth, giving a high unemployment rate.
In order to provide work for all the people, Castro came in December 1960 with its solution to both problems, the microbrigadas.
Every microbridage consists of 33 persons. The amount of persons is based on the production required. One standard building block, which many of them are in Alamar, should be finished in exactly nine months. Most of the brigadas had one foreman and four persons with administrative tasks within the microbridage. Next to these jobs they were also construction worker. Alamar people created their home by their own hands. This is a kind of craftsmanship.
Craftmanship Traditions in Alamar
Urban Agriculture

This map shows the location of farming land and residential buildings. Also, the density of agriculture is easily seen.

- Residential Buildings
- Farming Shed
- Agriculture Land

Map of Urban Agriculture, 1:13000
After the collapse of the USSR, Cuba faced the problems of oil shortage and food shortage. To solve the problems, the state started to encourage urban farming as to produce food as well as save transportation, namely fuel costs. As a result, the former one-crop economy had to be changed into a more divert plantation composition. Urban farming generates in Alamar mainly due to the location itself, which means the empty space for formerly planned public facilities which have never been realised provides a possibility to develop urban agriculture. The site is also besides the green ring of Havana and the sea, along which is still empty space. In Alamar, the urban farmland is a main brach of the landscape system and there is a transformation in between shown by the undefined farmland near the waterfront, reflecting the residents there desiring to explore the urban farming activities into a wider area. The former natural shelter forests have been cultivated while the empty space near the beach is used for banana plantations. With so many types of formal and informal land-use, urban farming indeed transforms the environment there into another kind of quality. **Alamar people feed themselves in the special period by the urban agriculture which is also a kind of craftsmanship.**
Craftmanship Traditions in Alamar
Workshop in Self-build Sheds

Map of Self-build Sheds, 1:13000
The absence of local job opportunities has resulted in a wide range of informal activities in Alamar. These initiatives are often extra occupations outside the regular job workhours, in an attempt to have some additional income upon the state-regulated salaries. Since the urban plan of Alamar was never finished due to a lack of means, an official municipal centra is missing. Contrary to the more formal commercial facilities, the informal manifestations have now become the most vibrant public social meeting places, dominating the streetlife. However, although most of the structures are legal and the ground on which they stand is rented, the self-built sheds are often of very poor quality and are an eyesore for the local urban planners. The expected future inflow of capital will mean the end of these important public spaces and social structures. (The local planner said)

Where to put these talented craft men in the future? If they have a better working environment, no doubt that they can create something with their craftsmanship really amazing.
WHAT PRODUCTS?
MIEMBROS DE LA ASOCIACIÓN CUBANA DE ARTESANOS ARTISTAS (ACAA)

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TEXTIL</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>VILLA CLARA</td>
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<td>06</td>
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<td>07</td>
<td>SANCTI SPIRITUS</td>
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<td>08</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>GUANTÁNAMO</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>ISLA DE LA JUVENTUD</td>
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MOST POPULAR
CERAMICA (CERAMICS) 222
METALES (METAL) 169
TALLA (WOODCARVING) 206
TEXTIL (TEXTILE) 150
WOODWORKING
Woodworking is already happen in many sheds in Alamar.

TALLA (WOODCARVING)

Wood living goods can sell to local people while improve local crafts quality. Alamar people have much experience on it.

WOOD LIVING GOODS
METAL

BUZO is famous in Alamar which is a museum created by upcycling metal stuff.

METAL ART

LIVING GOODS

This kind of upcycling metal art craft can be often found in Alamar. Which is famous by BUZO.
The textile factory can be improved to a higher level which produce high quality and nature dying handmade dressing.

**DRESSING**

**NATURE DYING**

ALAMAR VIVERO have some farming crops which can provide nature color for dying. This is a Alamar special product.

**TEXTIL**

There is a textile factory in Alamar. These talented lady can create more creative product in a better working environment.
DRESSING
The textile factory can be improved to a higher level which produce high quality and nature dying handmade dressing.

CLOTHING

Evidio Perdomo Rodríguez
Clothing can use the product from textile and dying to make higher value products.

LEATHER BAG

Jesús David Sanjurjo Valdés
Leather Bag is a craft full of cuban feeling, and its in the chain of dressing.
ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Organic products can be an Alamar special part which can use the material from unban farming.

SOAP

Handmade Soap is popular in the world such as LUSH. And it is easy to made by hand.

ESSENTIAL OIL

The raw material of essential oil can be provided by local organic farm.
ORGANIC PRODUCTS
Organic products can be an Alamar special part which can use the material from urban farming.

NATURAL MEDICINAL
Nature medical is very popular in Cuba and organic farm in Alamar also provide many materials for it.

FOOD & DRINK
Organic food and drink can be a theme of the restaurant and bar.
HOW BRANDING?

A Growing Craftsmanship Center
Craftsmanship Center of Alamar is a building which can allow those artisans and handcraft workers in Alamar to work together and create more creative and find goods. In the beginning years, these things can be handmade soap or handmade furnitures which can supply to local people. After years development, these things can be souvenirs or luxury for tourists, also they can be some functional 'invendo' or artifact.

More than a production center, the building will also be designed as a community center where young people can find jobs to learn the craftsmanship from old artisans and they can start their own career from here. 'Made in Alamar' will be the common tag of everything create here. This will be the brand of these goods, also the identity of whole Alamar. In 20 years, as Cuba opens gradually, we may even find a fancy store in Den Haag named 'Made in Alamar'. The building will be designed to grow up with the development of the brand.
WHY BOTTOM-UP Building Strategy?

1. ALAMAR'S SELF-BUILD TRADITION

2. BUILD CRAFTSMANSHIP BRAND'S IMAGE

3. A PRIVATE-OWN PLACE AS A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL IN CUBA
How does the Craftsmanship Center Work?

A Bottom-up Building Strategy

Local craftsman invest for the 1st phase building, they will start their production at first. They can sell their products to get profit.

Public space will be used as market, tourism, sparetime school and restaurant to attract people and get profit.

The production will be branding and the building will grow up with the spreading of the brand.

More artisan can join the brand in phase 2,3 building.
THE CRAFTSMANSHIP CENTER IS AN ASSOCIATION BUILT UP IN A BOTTOM UP WAY WITH THE INVESTMENT FROM ORGANIZATION AND PRIVATE ARTISAN. IT CAN IMPROVE THE CRAFTSMASHIP INDUSTRY OF ALAMAR.
FIART, ACAA AND FCBC
NUMBERS OF INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITORS

cubanos en 26 stand institucionales y 243 individuales.

2012 2014 2016
Art, utility and trade is not just a slogan; it is the strategic principle that accompanies the work of creators length and breadth of the country. Develop an important role in the production of furniture, footwear, ceramics, metalwork, textiles and other utility products. This principle also fits the work of other professionals who have focused on rescuing forgotten trades, with good taste, quality, excellent designs and undeniable aesthetic values.
2. RUNNING

THE CRAFTSMANSHIP CENTER IS THE BUILDING PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR CUBAN ARTISANS AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO START OR DEVELOPE THEIR CAREERS AND EARN MONEY FROM IT.
VIEJA 20000 - 180000 CUC
VEDADO 20000 - 180000 CUC
ALAMAR 7000 - 20000 CUC
LESS THAN HALF PRICE OF HAVANA OTHER AREA

LESS THAN HALFWAY OF THE PRICE IN OTHER AREA

CHEAP PRICE MEANS A LOWER COST OF INDUSTRY
The **expansion of the non-state sector of the economy has continued**, as state employment was reduced from 81.2% in 2010 to 70.8% in 2015. Just over half a million Cubans are registered as self-employed; they provide services and generate much-needed production. **An atmosphere that does not discriminate against or stigmatize duly authorized self-employment is being defined**; however there have been cases of corruption and illegalities, the confrontation of which has proved, once again, to be too little too late, as is the example of evasive behaviors in terms of tax payments and illegal exercise of prohibited activities. Just as we aspire to greater efficiency and quality in state sector production and services, we also favor the success of non-state forms of management, on the basis, in all cases, of strict compliance with current legislation. This reality confirms the benefit in continuing to diversify our sources of income, in order to never again depend on a single market or product, and to **develop mutually beneficial trade** and cooperation relations with all countries, setting a proper balance in this sphere.
With the expansion of non-state economy, Alamar people can start their own career through the production center to face the opening future.
3. COMMUNITY

The Craftsmanship Center is the building which provide Alamár people a defined public space and give Alamár a clear identity of craftsmanship.

Youth can learn more skills of craftsmanship and meet more opportunity.

Tourists can experience the whole crafts making process and choose high quality products.

The local can use the public classrooms to learn, use the public space to sell and get more community service.
Alamar people are creative but have nothing to do
4. COOPERATION

The Craftsmanship Center is a hub of the Alamar's industry chain. It can cooperate and improve other related fields.
5. EXTEND AND FLEXIBLE

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

A → B
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE ABLE TO COPY.
ALSO THE WORKSHOP SPACE SHOULD BE EASY TO TRANSLATE TO ANOTHER STUDIO TO FACE THE FUTURE CHANGING.
In 5 Years, Souvenirs and Handicraft for Havana
In 10 Years, A Popular Brand in Cuba
In 20 Years, A Worldwide Craftmanship Brand
I LOVE CUBAN STYLE!
TYPOLOGY STUDY
Single Workshop
Leather, Dying and Textile
Metal Working and Blacksmith

metal machine
Pottery
S I N G E L
STUDIO

Terra Cotta Studio
98.0 sqm
Vietnam

1: Entrance
2: Vegetable garden
3: Bamboo frame for drying terra cotta
4: Turning table
5: Stair
6: Bench and shelves
7: Void
8: Glass

Ground floor plan
DIFFERENT UNIT
Hand Craft Making

Product Storage & Shop & EXPO

Raw Material Storage
WHOLE WORKING PROCES AS A DISPLAY
Hand Craft Making

Raw Material Storage

Product Storage & Shop & EXPO

DIFFERENT UNIT
WHOLE WORKING PROCES AS A DISPLAY
Morioka Handi-works Square

This is a facility where you can “see, touch, and create” various traditional craftworks and foods of Morioka. There are 2 main areas: the Workshop Area and the Exhibition Area. In the Workshop Area, there are 14 workshops where you can buy products, watch professional craftsmen at work, and get hands-on experience making original goods. An easy activity for starters is making Nambu sembei rice crackers, which is done in a similar manner to Belgian waffles. Another easy activity is putting flavored syrup on plain dango or dumplings. The dango store has very unique dango, such as cream dango and okaka (dried bonito flakes) dango. In the Exhibition Area, over 3,500 local specialties are sold. There is also a replica of a Nambu magariya house, a traditional L-shaped building in which a stable is joined to a house.
Plan of Visitors Center

Plan 1

Plan 2

78000
施設の全体配置図

① 振興センターゾーン
② 手づくり工房ゾーン
経験豊富な職人の手ほどきを受けてものづくりができる11種目の教室は、最大300名程度の団体まで受け入れができます。あなたも職人の技を身近に感じられる「手づくり教室」に参加してみませんか。

【手づくり教室料金表】

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<tr>
<th>教室名</th>
<th>コース名</th>
<th>時間</th>
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<td>陶器</td>
<td>A1 350g(食器・湯呑・小皿)</td>
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<td>A2 700g(食器・抹茶茶器・ピアカップ)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>60分</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B3 マグカップコース</td>
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<td>雑染</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C3 スカーフ(小)(サイズ43x134cm)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>D2 小物入れ(大)(例:リモコン・メガネ入れなど)</td>
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<td>わた紙工</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

※体験人数が20名以上となる団体様や初学者・旅行者等の団体客は、1ヶ月以上前までにセンター事務室に申し込みください。20名未満の個人のご案内は、直接当園にお申し込み下さい。※陶芸及び陶器教室客は、4時間以上の1〜2ヶ月から、期間延長がございます。※当日教室は、応募いただいたものをその場で作ることができるコースとなっております。また、食事時間は体験時間に含まれておりません。

【公財】盛岡地域地場産業振興センター
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The Jan van Eyck Academie is a catalyst in the process of talent development. It activates talent in open relationships with the world.

The Jan van Eyck Academie is a multidisciplinary institute that furthers experiment, research, study, production and exchange. Promising artists, designers, curators, architects, writers and other thinkers are given the time and space that is needed to develop their talents, to discover as yet unexplored perspectives and delve into deeper layers of themselves.
MAKING SPACE FOR MAKING ART

Over the past 15 years we have been working closely with ESW to assist in their campaign to raise funds to move out of their draughty old railway shed and into a new, purpose built facility. We have done this in two distinct phases, representing two separate funding sources; one through publicly accessible sources such as the Lottery Fund and the second through the Arts Prize - an anonymous donation of £3m for an arts building in Edinburgh.
Exhibition 1000
Hall 100
Collective Storage 700
office 200
Workshop 900
Goods Flow

Workers Flow

Visitors Flow

Goods Flow
VILLAGE

- 21% Working and storage
- 31% Shop, Expo and experience
- 18% Collective Storage
- 9% Office
- 11% Experience Room and Lecture hall
- 10% Restaurant and Bar

MAKING SPACE

- 26% Working and storage
- 36% Shop, Expo and experience
- 23% Collective Storage
- 10% Office
- 5% Hall
NEED MORE PRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

ALAMAR

- 30% Working and storage
- 16% Shop, Expo and experience
- 21% Collective Storage
- 10% Office
- 10% Experience Room and Lecture hall
- 7% Restaurant and Bar
- 6% Community Service
**Scheme**

**Central Hall 1100m²**
- Lobby 300m²
- Toilet 50m² * 4
- Office 1000m² (Management office 500m², Brand Development Office 500m² Can be extended, Storage 30m²)
- Multifunctional Hall 200m²

**Workshop 2500m²**
- Clothing (Leather 150, Textile 150, Clothing 150 and Dying 150) 600m²
- Organic Life (Cleaning Product, Food and Herb Medicine) 450m²
- Wood (Furniture, Woodcarving,) 450m²
- Metal (Upcycle and Art Crafts) 300m²

**Shipping & Storage Center 1800m²**
- (Temporary storage & Package 400m, main material storage 1400m², Trucks Field 30*2 m)

**Craftsmanship Experience 2100m²**
- Museum 200m²
- Shop & Exhibition 1300m²
- Wood, Metal Experience Room 150m² (Machine*15, Working Desks*10)
- Textile, Dying, Leather Experience Room 150m² (Machine*10, Working Desks*10)
- Food, Cleaning, Herb Experience Room 150m² (Machine*8, Working Desks*10)
- Metal Experience Room 150m² (Machine*7, Working Desks*10)
Community Service  800m2  
Retail 400m2  
Rum Bar 50m2  
Organic Restaurant& Canteen  300m2 (Eating 140m2, Kitching 120m2, Storage 30m2, and changing room 10m2)

Parking 3000m2 100Cars

Front Square 1000m2

Total  ~9000m2
HOW TO ORGANIZE?
Use inner public space to organize

Sheds/Small space shaped by a large construction.

Small space shape the space by themselves.
Use inner public space to organize
Kennedy Center for Theatre and the Studio Arts

A traditional space organization. A series of workshops, lecture rooms and studios organized by a continued corridor. Corridor organized is the 1st type in topology
Space in Series
Chiba Civic Center

Use courtyard and lobby to organize
Kameda Civic Center

Use inner corridor to organize
Sheds/Small space shaped by a large construction.
The border between public and private is blurred. The operation space of people is defined only by columns and activities.

**KAIT Workshop**

The border between public and private is blurred. The operation space of people is defined only by columns and activities.
Blurred Space
Markthal Rotterdam / MVRDV
Market is a good example for this type.
World of Food

Public space look like path, activities defined by each unit. Still blurred because the interface of sheds is open to public.
Small space shape the space by themselves.
HABITAT 67

Public space is defined by the unit. People and people's everyday life play the main role.
NEW BABYLON/ CONSTANT
More dynamic space like game.
Saitama Village Center
Discrete space organized
BUILDING CONCEPT

Raw Material Storage

Hand Craft Making

Product Storage & Shop & EXPO

A Traditional Craftsmanship Shop
A Craftsmanship Shopping Market In Cuba
In Havana, you can find crafts souvenir everywhere, even there is a Handicrafts Market selling all kinds of crafts under a big shed. But you will find it is hard to know where these things come from and how these things be made. These handicrafts lose their most important attraction.
GLOBALISM SWEATSHOP

Like China, Vietnam or Indonesia, global company such as Nike build factory there and hire local people with low price which lead to illness, unfair and alienation.
HANDICRAFTS SHOP
A BROKEN CHAIN

MAKING
MAKING SELLING & EXHIBITION
Find back the full production chain and show it. This is important to a branding strategy.
Make the whole producing process visible for the city
TRADITIONAL VISITORS FLOW
NEW VISITORS FLOW
EXPERIENCE IS THE KEY
MIX the exhibition and experience rooms with the real working part.
TO BRAND CRAFTSMANSHIP, REBUILD THE CHAIN BETWEEN PEOPLE AND MAKING PROCESS IS THE KEY
In the physical center of Alamar which was planned to be cultural and economy center of Alamar. Because of the special period, this plan is never finished. The community center and cinema is also abandoned now.
Choose the empty field surrounding the highest residential building in Alamar city center. This building can be an icon of the branding strategy while provide rental housing for staffs.
Site is in Community Central Area of Future Alamar
HOW TO RESPOND THIS MESSY TISSUE?

City Tissue
Surrounding Atmosphere
Building Entrance
MASS STUDY

1. Provide more street interface for community people.
2. A brand need a complete and strong image.
3. Use complete shape to reorganize the messy tissue
WRAPPING HIGH RISE BUILDING AS A BRAND ICON ALSO PROVIDE RENTIAL HOUSING
AND LEAVE THE GROUND FLOOR FOR COMMUNITY.
MIX EXHIBITION AND SHOP WITH WORKSHOP TO MAKE PEOPLE WALK INTO THE BUILDING
GATHERING THE SERVICE ROOM IN TO CENTRAL TOWER

MAKE THE HIGG RISE FACADE CATCH MORE EYES FOR THE BRAND
SHAKE IT!
ENTRANCE AND CENTRAL SERVICE

COMMUNITY SQUARE AND FREE MARKET
CRAFTSMAN
LOGISTICS
VISTORS
EXTEND
PHASE 2
PHASE 3
The Cuban Revolution is and always has been a brand and a brand story. The formula of a great brand story is this: origin story + brand benefits = brand story (expressed through brand voice and imagery) and has it all. In terms of founding myth, we have Castro, Che and Cienfuegos along with charged signifiers like “Batista,” “social justice,” and “revolution”. Cuba’s brand benefits are complex, from its deposition of a dictator and universal literacy (functional benefits) to its medical altruism around the world and support for fledgling resistance movements (societal benefits) to its romance of swashbuckling, redoubtable revolutionaries memorialized in films like the Motorcycle Diaries and by Marxist/Leninist troubadours like Silvio Rodriguez and Pablo Milanes (emotional benefits). Much of this was, of course, cannily constructed by the regime with the help of journalists like New York Times correspondent Herbert Matthews and photographers like Alberto Korda. Cuban branding took decades to develop and it culminated in one great image: the pop-art Che poster, one of the most iconic artifacts of modern branding. The test now will be whether the brand will remain undimmed with the thawing in US/Cuba relations. Scarcity breeds mystique; as we enter this new phase, it will be instructive to see whether Cuba will become absorbed as another outpost of globalization or remain the rebel brand.
REVOLUTION
SEXY
BEACHES
RUM
CIGAR
CHE
DESIER
CARIBBEAN
PASSION
DANCING
RESOLUTION
SEX
MUSIC
DESIRE
BEACHES
LATIN CHE
2 Cuban Cigar
Who wouldn’t covet the exclusive rights to the global marketing of the legendary Cuban cigars? Consumers consider the Cuban cigar “the premium puro”—the world’s best cigar smoke. Like French wines, the Cuban cigar can be mimicked but cannot be authentically reproduced elsewhere: it is a unique je ne sais quoi blend of terroir (soil and climate), carefully cultivated seeds, a secretive blend of select tobacco leaves and wrappers, and patented processing techniques. Further, Cuban cigars are a lifestyle product, associated with sophistication and class, machismo and power (think Winston Churchill), and—with a little imagination—a blend of tropical sun, surf, and sex.

But for all the valences around these products, part of the surprise is how rustic they are when you come in for a closer look. Cuban brands do very little to make their touchpoints memorable. Brands like Havana Cub, Cohiba and Montecristo have simple sans serif logotypes with little in the way of intricate design.

The austerity of Cuban expression only serves to highlight that it almost doesn’t matter; being Cuban is what’s important. And that’s what comes across in Havana Club’s ads – the overexposed cinema verite captures bygone times and a perpetual present that feels like the past.

This is the magic on which the brand rests — a place of abandon but also steadfastness.
3 CHANEL CUBA
Back in May, Chanel became the first luxury house to hold a runway show in Havana, Cuba — designer Karl Lagerfeld had never even visited the island until days before the event — and flew 700 guests and 45 models to the picturesque (and very trendy) locale for a weekend-long extravaganza to celebrate the French label's cruise 2016/2017 collection. With their gifted Chanel fedoras, a fleet of colorful, vintage convertibles on hand to shuttle them around town, local musicians providing a live runway soundtrack and an organized group outing to Cabaret Tropicana, attendees were given a crash course in Cuban culture — well, at least Lagerfeld’s romanticized (if not slightly myopic) ideas about Cuban culture. "This is all about my vision of Cuba," Lagerfeld told The Cut. "But of course, what do I know about Cuba? It is very childish, my idea."

Fashion is actually a good fit for the Cuban revolutionaries

Could it be that fashion is the Cuban revolutionaries’ weak spot? It was Alberto Korda’s 1960 black and white portrait of the young revolutionary as a brooding heart-throb that turned Che Guevara into a global pin-up (his image is still ubiquitous in Cuba) and made the beret, that quintessential emblem of Left Bank Parisian chic, a symbol for armchair communists the world over – memorably satirised in the 1970s BBC sitcom Citizen Smith. President Raúl Castro’s granddaughter studied fashion in Paris and even interned at Vogue Paris, or so a Cuban designer tells me with authority.

I can’t find confirmation of this, but then the Castros have form when it comes to controlling inconvenient news. More flagrantly, Fidel Castro’s own grandson Tony Castro – an Alice-band-wearing, Cara Delevingne-browed 19-year-old – is a sometime model who, to the glee of the international press, was rumoured to have been booked to appear in the Chanel Cuba show.

No small scale affair, this was a refreshingly different runway show, with a real carnival atmosphere that really suited the collection. With an anti-globalisation attitude that has only very recently changed, Cuba still feels very old-world, and it was with old-world charm and warmth that the brand was (albeit a little surprisingly) welcomed to the city. The festive atmosphere was really brought to life by the inhabitants of the city who cheered and laughed – setting the mood of excitement that helped made the show a hit.