Transforming public space in a peripheral condominium neighbourhood of Addis Ababa

In the metropolitan region of Addis Ababa the population is expected to grow from four to ten million in the next decade. This growth of population means that a large number of houses has to be produced to keep up with the growth of the city and at the same time deal with the current housing shortage. Around ten years ago the Ethiopian government started a mass housing program that provided houses that can be bought with subsidized loans. All around the city condominium blocks are built, from small scale interventions in the inner city to large scale developments in the periphery of the city.

These large scale peripheral neighborhoods have an urban layout that reminds us to the modernistic ideas of large buildings in vast open fields. A selected landscape is created with compounds that consist of around six housing blocks that have little or no connection with the street life. In many occasions these compounds are fenced off for a sense of security. All this results in a public landscape that has little connection to the buildings and the people that live in them.

The design proposal focuses on one of these peripheral neighborhoods that has been build six years ago. By introducing a new type of housing block the public space is transformed from a vacant unpleasant landscape into a network of pedestrian streets and public places.
The city region of Addis Ababa

Reduction of the urban intervention: reconstruciting the existing roads and introduce a netrok of paths and public spaces through the site
Cluster Isometric Site plan 1:500
Typologies

The block consists of four floors each with a different existing uses. The ground floor includes a shop and a restaurant, the first floor has a salon and a commercial space, the second floor is a residential area, and the third floor is a public space. The block is shaped like a square from the back. The interior spaces have been arranged in a way that they remain open to the public, creating a sense of transparency and openness.涟漪

Composition of the block

The above described block is combined with another identical block with a staircase in between to form the building. For security reasons this staircase is only accessible for the people that live above ground level.

Adaptability

The building described above is the minimal block size. This minimal block can be extended on both sides of the staircase to form longer rows of housing. Extra staircases can be added to improve the circulation.

Circulation

The ground floor houses are accessible through the colonnade at the front of the building. If a ground floor house is situated next to the staircase there is also the possibility to enter the house through the back garden.

The houses above ground level are accessible through a gallery. This gallery is positioned on the backside for the first and third floor houses and on the street side for the second floor houses. This circulation system brings activity on both sides of the building.

Architecture

The architecture of the building reflects the architecture of Ras palaces and churches that can be found in Addis Ababa. Both building types have a thick stone wall and light veranda in front of it. This veranda provides a transition space from outside to inside. Besides that, it functions as a circulation space to get from one room to another. Another reference can be found in the modernist architecture that was build in Addis Ababa in the 60's and 70's. Many of these buildings have a close relation to the public space through form and function. A tool often used to provide a transition from outside to inside is the colonnade.
Block

Isometric plan, section and elevation 1:100