THICKENING the THRESHOLD

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Summary

of the presentation

Points of departure for design
Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Thickened threshold

Ground oscillations

Design Strategy

Challenging the strategy

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Points of departure for design
ENTRY SQUARES OF UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA
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UNIVOCITY OF THE ENTRY SQUARES

ENTRANCE AT CALLE 26

ENTRANCE AT CALLE 45

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ENTRANCE AT CALLE 53
UNIVOCITY OF THE ENTRY SQUARES

- ENTRANCE AT CALLE 26
- ENTRANCE AT CALLE 45
- ENTRANCE AT CARRERA 45
- ENTRANCE AT CALLE 53
THIRDING-AS-OTHERING

Thirding-as-othering is a critical strategy proposed by Edward Soja in 'Third space' as an alternative to thinking in binary opposites. Thirding-as-othering is a process of restructuring information that draws from both sides and allows to notice fields of concurrence.
SMOOTHING

‘ARCHITECTURAL CURVILINEARITY. THE FOLDED, THE PLIANT AND THE SUPPLE’ GREG LYNN

‘Smooth mixtures are made up of disparate elements which maintain their integrity while being blended within a continuous field of other free elements. Smoothing does not eradicate differences but incorporates free intensities through fluid tactics of mixing and blending.’

Threshold is a space that has a dual nature. It can connect and separate. The state of it changes from open to closed. Ambiguity is at the essence of the meaning of threshold. Due to that it escapes the symbolic and customary meaning.
POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

EMANCIPATION
Thresholds are spaces where different groups of ‘others’ encounter each other on equal basis. People can exercise different roles in a threshold space not based on his or her identity. Stavros Stravides hypothesises that if space gives form to social constructs, threshold can inspire a different social world.

BELONGING
(Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1969-1980, Architect: Ralph Erskine)
In ‘Life between buildings’ Jan Gehl speaks of ‘soft edges’. Soft edges permit activities more prolonged more than just coming and going. Soft edges can counter the alienation that frequently effects the residents of contemporary cities.

HOSPITALITY
(Montessori School Delft, Architect: Herman Hertzberger)
Threshold as a place where two world overlap combats mistrust, hostility between the sides.
ANALYSIS OF THRESHOLD SPACES

DOMESTIC THRESHOLD
Teesaquilí, Bogota

PORTICO
Panteon, Rome

PORTAL
Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

ARCADES
De Passage, Den Haag

HYPOSTYLE HALL
Mosque, Cordoba

RAMP
Rolex Learning Centre

CITY GATE
Calle 26, Universidad Nacional de Colombia

TUNNELS
Dobrzyskie Turnpike, Plock, Poland

URBAN STAIRS
Spanish Stairs, Piazza di Spagna, Rome
ANALYSIS OF THRESHOLD SPACES

Urban scale
Sequence of moving through the space
Relation with other urban spaces

Architectural scale
Relation with the surroundings

Architectural scale
Inner composition

Detail scale

Furnishings

Function
## ANALYSIS OF THRESHOLD SPACES

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- **Urban scale**: Urban design elements that influence the overall experience of the space.
- **Architectural scale**: Elements that relate to the architectural design and structure of the space.
- **Pedestrian scale**: Elements that cater to pedestrian movement and comfort within the space.
- **Pavements**: Surface materials and design of the pathways within the space.
- **Function**: The purpose and intended use of the space.
Thickening the thresholds at the boundary of University campus.
Can thickening the threshold encourage many different groups of users to spend time in the entry squares and provide good conditions for the informal vendors?

Can thickening the threshold empower the people crossing the gate?
Ground oscillations
HYPOTHESIS

DVERTING THE PATH OF THE PEDESTRIAN
Enriching the use of the entry squares with the use of ground oscillations.

Empowering the passer-by while crossing the gate with the use of ground oscillations.
CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENNA

CAMPIDOGLIO, ROME

PLAZA DE BOLIVAR, BOGOTA
CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENNA
Providing privacy without putting up any boundaries.
Key section: 9 sections intersecting at the focal point of the square

CAMPIDOGlio, ROME
Intersection of flat and sloping surfaces.
Key section: Symmetrical intersecting at the centre of the

PLAZA DE BOLIVAR, BOGOTA
Treatment of the ground at the meeting with the facades.
Key section: Along the facades and cutting the square in the middle.
CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENNA
Focality without monumentality.

CAMPIDOGlio, ROME
Enclosed urban interior.

PLAZA DE BOLIVAR, BOGOTA
Treatment of the ground at the meeting with the facades.
CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Joints of the floor which make possible the functioning of the landscape in respect of water drainage, structural stability, thermal expansibility.

PIAZZA DEL CAMPO, SIENNA
Pronounced seam
The incline and direction of the slope are irregular. The seam accentuated in a differing paving colour, pattern and the slight concave emphasize the focal point of the square and create a seeming impression of flat triangular surfaces converging in one.

CAMPIDOGLIO, ROME
Pronounced seam
A stepless seam delimits the edge characterized by biggest accessibility. Where access was meant to be more difficult the transition between a flat and a sloping surface was formed with the use of other directions and surfaces. The steps resulting from this operation give a subtle definition to the oval shape of the plaza.

PLAZA DE BOLIVAR, BOGOTA
Unpronounced seam
The seam between flat and tilted surfaces is concealed by continuous paving pattern. However some of the seams are marked by drainage pipe inlets.
Design attempts
ENTRY SQUARE AT CALLE 26
DESIGN AS A PROCESS OF SUBTRACTION
GEOMETRICAL OPERATIONS ON THE SURFACE

Strengthening
Piazza del Campo, Sienna

Cut
Campidoglio, Rome

Peeling
Plaza de Bolivar, Bogota

Weaving
Libraries at Jussieu, Paris

Draping
Rahalderstraede musicon, Rolskide, Denmark

Serpentine Pavilion, Herzog de Meuron
GEOMETRICAL OPERATIONS ON THE SURFACE

- Stretching
- Folding
- Draping
- Cut
- Subtraction
WRITING EXERCISE
PERCEPTIONS OF THE BODY

ACT 2 SCENE 1
I walk to the university after I get off the bus.
Perception of the ear
As I slip on the other side of the colonnade
the noise is allayed. Something else starts to
prevail. It is an animated sound of people com-
ing from many directions. It s a rattling sound
of dishes and a rustle of packaging. Heated
discussions happen around me. I do not hear
the street any more.
Perception of the body
I run down the slope accelerated by the inline.
I spring aside the people who I find in my way.
My steps are erratic and my calves tense as I
try to slow down and avoid collision. There

ACT 2 SCENE 2
Perception of the eye
I climb up the slope. I cut the gate diagonally. I
turn around to gaze at the space which I have
left behind me. A group of people sits on the
floor just a couple of meters away. They are
having lunch, absorbed with their conver-
sation. I can observe the entire market from the
place where I am.

ACT 2 SCENE 2
Perception of the body
Before I know it I find myself in the lowermost
point of the landscape. I feel something has
changed. My body is at ease. I do not need to
resist the gravity any more. The ground is flat
soft and cold.
Perception of the ear
This place is dark. The ceiling gravitates
towards the ground. The floor and the ceiling
close the perspective into a narrow gap.
When I look outside I can only see the lower
part of the bodies of the people passing. It is
as if the height difference has moved us away
from each other.

ACT 2 SCENE 2
Perception of the body
As I run down the slope, I step on the soft
grass. A few steps more and I am standing on
the hard concrete again. Students are enjoying
their lunch break laying down on the grass
or hurriedly revising for the next lesson. I am
running late. I leave the place behind me.
Design strategy
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

0. ACTION on a surface.
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

1. TOPOGRAPHY continuously undulated through the gate.
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

2. **GRADIENT** of two materials blurring the transition and defying the division of space into functional subspaces.
THIRDING the dominant position of the gate with pavilions which capture the body and sight of the passer-by.
Walk I

topography
The edge of the street
At the descent of the stairs
At the descent of the stairs
Inside the campus
Inside the campus
Material
TEXILE BY OLGA AMARAL

CESTA LUNAR 016, OLGA AMARAL
WEAVE OF CLINKER PAVING AND GRASS

Red clinker paving
Stacked bond

Grass
GRADIENT
SEAMS

A. ACCENTUATING SEAMS
   Non-permeable floor

B. Permeable floor

C. CONCEALED SEAMS
   Non-permeable floor

D. Permeable floor
**SEAMS**

- **A.** ACCENTUATING SEAMS
  - Non-permeable floor

- **B.** Permeable floor

- **C.** CONCEALED SEAMS
  - Non-permeable floor

- **D.** Permeable floor
ACCENTUATING SEAMS
CONCEALED SEAMS
Walk II
Water
An accentuating seam
Permeable floor
An accentuating seam
Non-permeable floor
An accentuating seam
Non-permeable floor
An accentuating seam/concealed seam
Non-permeable floor
A concealed seam
Non-permeable floor
Creek around the center of the market
Creek around the center of the market
Pavilions
‘THIRDING’ THE GATE
AN ARRAY OF PAVILIONS
A MODULAR SYSTEM
ENCOUNTER WITH THE FLOOR
In this solution of the joint the continuity of paving is interrupted. Shape of the pavilion is reflected in the floor in a ‘shadow’ filled with crushed clinker. The foundation sinks into the crushed clinker.

ADMISION INTO THE FLOOR
In this solution the bottom of the pavilion is perfectly fitted into the brick puzzle. Bricks flow around, underneath or through the pavilions undisturbed.
PROGRESSION OF MATERIAL QUALITIES

Fragmented
Matte
Warm
Soft
PROGRESSION OF MATERIAL QUALITIES
PROGRESSION OF MATERIAL QUALITIES
PROGRESSION OF MATERIAL QUALITIES

Monolithic
Seamless
Smooth
Fine
Cold
Hard

Shining
Dainty
Minute
PROGRESSION OF MATERIAL QUALITIES

Monolithic
Seamless
Smooth
Fine
Cold
Hard

Shining
Delicate
Dainty
Ceramics
Monolithic

Assembled
Matte
Warm
Challenging the strategy
ENTRY SQUARES OF UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE COLOMBIA

CALLE 26
CALLE 45
CARRERA 45
CALLE 53
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

Entry square at Calle 26

GATE AS THE ATTRACTION

Entry square at Carrera 45

GATE AS THE CONCLUSION
MOVING THE CENTER
The centrality can be broken. The perceivable center of the space can be moved from the gate.
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

DIAGONAL
Deviating the axis perpendicular to the fence. It is different to approach the gate from the front then along a slightly leaning line.

OPEN COMPOSITION
Moving the axis beyond the gate. Creating a composition that puts the pavilion of the center. Shifting the attention. Composition which can be multiplied along the fence.
THICKENING THE THRESHOLD

GATE AS ONE OF COULISSES

GATE AS ONE OF EPISODES
Changing the frontal perception of the gate pavilion by thirding it with other small buildings.
INFLUENCING MOVEMENT

'The alternating disruption and restoration of balance which is walking'
From Dimitris Pikionis, 'A sentimental topography'
ENTRANCE BY CARRERA 45
LEISURELY USE
Conclusions
A manifesto of a thickened threshold
1. **THE CENTER** of a thickened threshold does not lay in the place where the boundary can be crossed.

2. **FUNCTIONS** are not represented in or assigned to specific spaces.
CONTINUOUS GESTURES used upon the floor have effects transmitted over large portions of it. Any space can be influenced by introducing changes in distant parts of the floor.

Unlocking the VERTICAL DIMENSION the vertical dimension influences the perceptions and the reactions of the body of the user.
5. **THIRDING** the dominating built structure with elements of similar size allows to change the perception of crossing as the main activity to one of the activities enacted in a space.

6. **GRADIENT** merges the forms and functions smoothly with one another.
Appending
‘A pattern language’
IN WHAT SITUATION can I use this method?

WHAT can this method be useful FOR?

WHAT INSTRUMENTS, actions and instructions does this method entail?
PATTERN NO. 258 ESTRANGEMENT

Making the familiar strange
Discovery, destabilization, surprise, fear or amusement, irony, joke.
PATTERN NO. 257 AMBIGUATION

Proliferation of meaning.
Reluctancy, contamination, differentiation, quantity,
incompatibility.
Influence on the schemes of behaviour
GUARD:
Always at noon the musician shows up. Sits on the same spot every day. Takes the case of his guitar and puts it in front of him.

It is difficult to ignore the presence of the man. I need nothing with his kind. I look far ahead. My eyes slide right off the straw hat worn by the man onto the back of the old florist trying to sell roses to a gringo. Not this sound again.

What is he playing? Haven't I heard it already. This beggar must be playing the song my father once taught me. Is it possible that he's been to my hometown?
STREET MUSICIAN:
I keep my eyes open for security. I am used to being startled by them. I try to avoid being seen. I find shelter in places that belong to no one. Finding safety in the open has become my skill.

This time I was not careful enough. The guard nabbed me. I shudder as he pats me on my back. "What is it, you are playing" he asks.
SPACE OF SURVEILLANCE
Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power'

In a space of surveillance roles are imposed on us. Actors follow normalized behaviour codes which are in force in a space. The behaviour codes are imposed with the means of techniques of surveillance and punishment.
SPACE OF APPEARANCE
Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition

It a thickened threshold daily repeatable practices are disrupted. Masks are shredded. Agents and practices gain a new meaning. Perception of self and others changes. Discovery and surprise are introduced into people’s daily lives. People start to question the sensibility of the world around them and begin to reshape the environment in accordance with the new relations.
Ceasar Franckstraat, Delft
Ceasar Franckstraat, Delft
Thank you.