

***Living the outside by Rita Topa***

***Local: Yamate, Yokohama - Japan.***

**Context:** Not always cities could have a previous urban planning - Yamate is one of those places.

During the American army occupation at Yokohama, Yamate was the place they chose to construct their homes. The mountain area was cut with new concrete roads, the landscape become full of unity family houses, most of them without garden or any exterior area besides road and parking areas.

This apparently chaotic "organic city" has an interesting potential, reminiscent of the old Mediterranean cities, where landscape produces the space hierarchy and orientation.

**Proposal:** To create a transition point between the housing and the high-density public areas. A meeting point like a common yard, where we could read, relax or use all the modern society amenities.

In the last few years, we witness the emergence of new commercial centers with their shopping street and inside plazas, private investing in new technologies and performances, while the city public space was forgotten.

It is time to upgrade public spaces.

**Designing:** Car parking becomes today's neighbors meeting point, a nowadays "Paleo plaza".

Yamate topography gives a possibility for a structured network, a new layer is created and suddenly a network of parking and sleeping areas becomes a network of plazas, with new programs for the community.

In this case, an art school is designed and spreads into the area, this kind of program goes to the biggest plazas, creating the hierarchy system.

The formal approach gets changed in accordance with the landscape, but it always uses the same ideology of outside space, the classrooms are independent blocks open 24h. Although it is one school, they act like independent school unities which need just a key card access.

Together, other small plazas appear for smaller networks, complementary programs, and all of them must be self-sustainable.

An apparent all constructed city area becomes full of small free areas to use.

A place where suddenly the windows gain faces.

**Nano architecture:** An intelligent polymer is used for the floor, it takes advantage of atmospheric conditions and gives a cosy sensation on people's feet.

The fiber material contain micro solar cells, recollecting sun energy. During hot weather, a cooling floor system is triggered, by the use of sensors, working together with small water vaporizers. With cold weather, a heating system is turned on.

When it rains the polymeric structure retains some of the water, refreshing the air, and drains the rest into a water deposit.

**Resume:**

Invite people to live in the outside space, for a richer network, creative and sharing society.

More and more city life is becoming an inside life, where cars or metro make the connection between inside spaces.

It is my proposal to redesign the public space, creating an intermediate area between house and work, work and shopping, shopping and house.

Extending the "inside" house space for a common space where habitants can change and update, personalizing it.

Like Henry Lefebvre said: "The production of space is a social product".

Japan, May 2009