

# Workshops Arquitecturas Colectivas

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## ABSTRACT

The taller Creando Sin Encargos is a design collective that has developed design-build Workshops titled Arquitecturas Colectivas (WAC). WAC is an inclusive methodology that encourages the exchange of knowledge at the horizontal level. We aim to present two WAC: 2013 WAC design-build in La Perla neighborhood and the 2017 WAC design-build in the Puerta de Tierra neighborhood. The WAC looks at the ideation and construction of spaces together with students, volunteers, and the community. We would like to share the way in which each WAC develops its own approaches to participatory community engagement towards solidarity and action. The Workshops Arquitecturas Colectivas support community design projects attending to cultural and social challenges and differences; promoting equity and social justice; exploring methodologies and various forms of communication and representation to exchange knowledge and experiences between designers, students and residents; and builds in situ with *situated knowledges*.<sup>1</sup>

## Author Keywords

participatory design; community design; placemaking; design-build; tactical urbanism; workshops arquitecturas colectivas

## DESCRIPTION

The taller Creando Sin Encargos look at how design and architecture can have agency in the ideation and construction of spaces. We form long-term partnerships with, and work on behalf of, local organizations and community leadership. Also, we support local practice-based experiential knowledge of doing/making things/problem solving and develop fields of work in ways to encourage observation, solidarity, and action. Further, we aim to provide a critical thread of neglected perspectives and to document and publish the process.

Our approach based around participatory active research focuses in two placemaking methods: Creative activism and Mechanics of building. Creative activism seeks ‘thought-provoking the pattern’ by designing a hands-on exercise to address the project. Mechanics of building inquires to study material and matter within the context of the community by including local initiatives, communication strategies, and local building methods to implement undisruptive work.

We begin with a *TOOLkit: adDRESSing the agency of space* that exhibits a three-part tactic. It challenges, investigates and builds the project’s branch of knowledge: FRAMEwork, PROCESS, and METHOD of engagements.

The FRAMEwork must always be the conTEXT particularly spatial relations. In order to collaborate with communities, we build relationships and connections that are formed by interaction and time.

The PROCESS is common. As Jeremy Till has argued, “*Understanding space and its production as shared enterprise refers to an understanding of the built environment as collectively produced where some people might have and will have specific roles, but where processes, effects and buildings are recei-*

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<sup>1</sup> Donna Haraway. 1988. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3

ved, designed, built and often occupied together with others.”<sup>2</sup> Inspiring action has proven the relevance of accommodating on-site platforms. If stakeholders collectively face contextual urban challenges, they could be change enablers.

The METHOD is collective. The methods of investigation and representation which can deal with the matter of the place are tools which travel beyond the computable and position the designer within the eventualities on the community. Building local is critical to making real change. By including local initiatives, we implement undistruptive work.

### Workshops Arquitecturas Colectivas

Since 2013, we developed design-build Workshops in Puerto Rico titled Arquitecturas Colectivas (WAC) inspired by the work of the Spanish architect Santiago Cirugeda. These Workshops have a duration of one week in which a project is designed and built intensively and collaboratively, although it involves several months of research and preparation.

The first one took place in September of 2013 in the community of La Perla in San Juan (capital city of Puerto Rico) and together with residents, students, volunteers, national and international architecture collectives, three spaces were transformed for the use of children, youth and adults. To choose the intervention spaces, a scavenger hunt of photographs was carried out with the children of the community. The children cataloged the spaces according to their relationship with them (of use or desirability of use). One of these interventions, a ladder for surfers with a bench and a rack for surfboards, is still standing and in use.

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2 Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till. 2011. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. London and New York: Rutledge

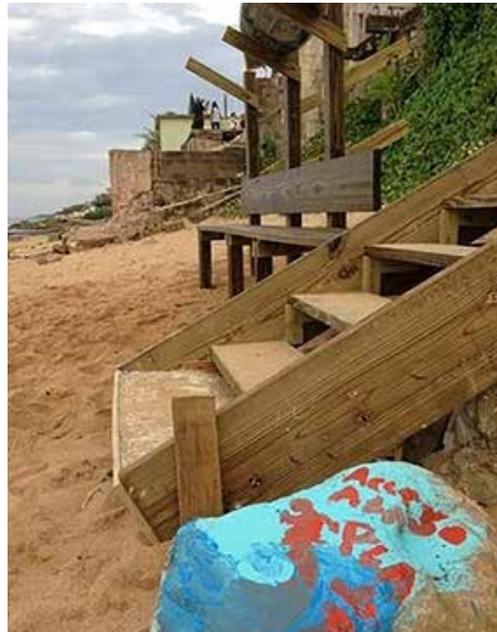


Figure 1. WAC I in La Perla: ladder for surfers (San Juan, Puerto Rico)

The second one was held in Summer of 2017, a collaboration with renowned artists and community residents. In this Workshop a bus stop, which is also the facade of a rescued structure, a reading and a rest space for community use, was built on Calle del Tren in Puerta de Tierra (also in San Juan, Puerto Rico).



Figure 2. WAC II in Puerta de Tierra: facade before and after (San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Both projects, in addition to achieving their purpose of converting remaining spaces into living spaces of their communities, have been published and presented at international conferences.

We are currently preparing our third WAC entitled “Children’s right to play”. This aims to implement a sensitive design-build project that improves the quality of life of the marginalized community of San Ciprián, in San Juan, de Puerto Rico. It will do so by vitalizing and activating an abandoned area into a new playground and community space. The methodology to be used for this workshop will be *storytelling*, for children to narrate and illustrate their current and ideal image of a space for games and learning.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We thank the students and volunteers that have been part of the WAC, because they are the heart of the tCSE. The WAC projects are not “author” works, but inclusive and collaborative.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till. 2011. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. London and New York: Rutledge
- [2] Donna Haraway. 1988. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3