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Arquitectos de Cabecera (AC) is an approach to the city born out of an assembly movement formed by students and professors in Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) in 2013. Working on the city and focusing on the collective, the methodology aims to bring the figure of the architect closer to the citizen and claims for a more committed role of the architect towards the city's social structure. Its legal shape is the one of an academic group and an association. We work along collectives, associations, municipalities and universities.

AC emerged from academia as a response to three crisis: pedagogic, social and disciplinary. In academia, there is an overall lack of contact with reality and its problems. At a social level, there is a housing emergency that began with the burst of the real estate bubble in 2008. Regarding practice, we feel disciplinary traditional tools and methods have not proved sufficient to respond to the new set of challenges emerged in the last decade.

AC questions the traditional education and practice of architects by giving the social fabric the same importance than the urban structure. We aim to empower students and to act on the existing city, both morphological and social, as a field of work. We aim to work with the existing city, its problems and contradictions. Our current research topics are focused on the intersection of social movements and architecture, the role of architect in urban transformation, new forms of architecture pedagogies and the new forms of housing within open metropolitan areas.

AC is formed by a group of people coming from different backgrounds and expertise: academia and research, municipal government and policy making, professional practice, and social movements. We share the need to endorse social movements from the discipline of architecture, the architect seen as a mediator supporting community-led processes of city transformation.

AC focuses on the subject (the inhabitant) rather than in the object (the house). It acts on the domestic in order to transform the city from the inside out, understanding that public space starts in the domestic. If the city is formed in its vast majority by

housing, a qualitative improvement of the city necessary needs to consider the domestic. Thus, everything is housing.

AC understands that architects are not the only, nor first, actors in city transformation, and therefore is crucial to work with the ones that are already working in place. We understand our position from a double condition: architects are essential in city transformation processes, but they cannot do it by themselves. Architecture is not a self-standing discipline; nothing is: human being are ecodependents and interdependents. Therefore we aim to generate synergies between universities, social collectives and administration in a multidisciplinary and long-term approach. AC method aims to be shareable with other universities and administrations as an open source tool that works in a network-base approach.

AC method is adapted to every situation differently: knowing the inhabitant is essential to understand the reality of the urban fabric. As a result, there is a starting point – the inhabitant in its domestic space – but there is not certainty of the following steps, which vary in each situation. Thus, we work with a set of flexible tools open to different scenarios. Since the city is an open city in constant transformation we understand that problems never get to be solved, but only reformulated in a new conditions that must embed an improvement of the original conditions. The key question is "for whom".

AC thinks the city as a collective project. We have collaborated broadly with several institutions and associations in Spain, Colombia, Italy and Mexico. AC contribution to architecture has been recognized locally and internationally. AC received the 2015 City of Barcelona Architecture Award and has been nominated to the 2017 Mies van der Rohe award. AC has been exhibited in the 2015 Piso Piloto Exhibition in Barcelona and Medellín, in 2017 Fringe Festival in Glasgow and in the 2018 Biennale of Venice. We are invited to lecture regularly national and internationally.

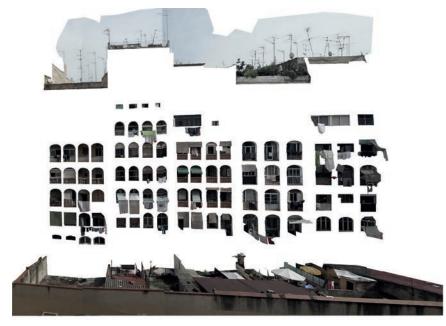
#### **OPEN ETSAB-ETSAV**

An altered pedagogy for the public schools of architecture Raval, Barcelona, 2013

The Open ETSAB-ETSAV represented the birth moment of AC, in 2013. A student assembly movement questioned the pedagogy of architecture in the midst of the economic, social and political crisis derived from mortgage crisis in 2008. Open Etsab-Etsav meant to approach architecture to denizens city from the two public schools of architecture. The first two-weeks event was supported by many studios, although only Arquitectos de Cabecera (AC) remains today as an autonomous proposal.

Together, students and tutors challenged the role of architects in urban transformations and of the academia in the city of Barcelona. The first AC workshop consisted on revisiting the site where students had been workings for a whole year in design studio: Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona's medieval area, one of the most complex urban and social scenarios in the city. While the studio approach had been morphological during the year, for that time it was social. More than 200 hundred future architects started knocking on neighbours doors: "hi, I am an architect, I come from academia and I have a knowledge that may be of your interest, can I help you?". For our surprise, the response was very positive.

For two weeks we designed projects for the "pacientes de cabecera", alongside them and having their needs and real conditions at the core of project decisions. The conclusion was an almost makeshift exhibition in Angels Square. Instead of the traditional academic event which would take place within the school, we questioned neighbours in the public space. Although none of those projects had further development, the idea of an "arquitecto de cabecera" or a "community architect" as a new kind of professional – and thus the need of a new disciplinary and pedagogical approach - was already in everyone's mind.





## **CAN 60**

preserving immaterial heritage. Raval, Barcelona, 2015

Can 60 is a building with a strong historical significance: one of the 38 "housing-factory" workshops of Raval old city neighbourhood, where the factories were placed before the demolition of the city walls in the XIXth C and their displacement to the east of the city. Can 60 exemplifies a specific typology of building: a block with a ring of housing (for the workers) plus a central void where the warehouse and productive spaces where placed. In 2015, Can 60 contained housing and a number of cultural activities. However, the whole block happened to have been bought by a foreign investment group, which aimed to demolish the factory and turn it into luxury flats for tourists. That would have had a negative impact in a neighbourhood through the loss of heritage and gentrificacion.

We drawed the cartography of the material heritage (the typological building) that contained and supported an immaterial heritage: a number of cultural institutions and associations that had a significant contribution to culture both local and international. We claimed that if the building disappeared all the immaterial heritage will be lost and with it, all the ties with the social fabric in which Can 60 stands would be broken.

With the collaboration with other associations that were already working in place we approached each of the users individually to understand their conditions. This process revealed that they were not united. We designed a short-term and a mid-term strategy to "save Can 60". The short-term strategy consisted in preparing an exhibition taking advantage of the celebration of Festas del Raval, exposing the production of Can 60 – what would be lost – and to open the hermetic building to the neighbourhood to visualize the problem. The long-time strategy consisted in the cataloguing of the building as one of the last remains of house-factory typology within the city and to produce arguments and graphical evidence in order to convince the administration to preserve the building.

After a long process of negotiation, in September 2016, the municipality bought the building, which is now under the process of being converted into a public civic centre. Moreover, all the housing-factories of Raval were listed and will be preserved as part of the urban and typological heritage of the city. That could only be possible through a collective effort of many people and associations.

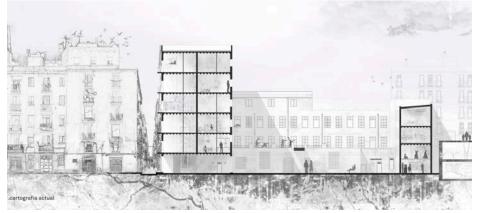
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# **GUERNIKA**, or Lancaster 24

Microprojects. Lancaster 24, Raval, Barcelona, 2015

We discovered Lancaster when Sarah came to the Citizen's Attention Office in 2015. She came from France to Barcelona in 2011, and squatted an empty building in Lancaster str,24 along with a group of people to boost a project for migrant single mothers. That project failed, and after a year the building was substandard housing conditions. While squatted houses are seen as stereotypes, what the students witnessed was a varied range of different people in social emergency ranging from single mothers to elderly people.

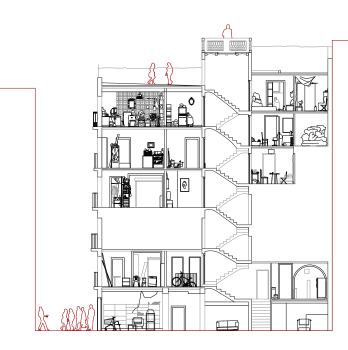
Sarah introduced us to dwellers, and the idea of restarting a new project gathered the community again. After the cartography of the building, its dwellers, and analysis of problems and pathologies we get to the conclusion that there was an urgent need to bring hygiene to the building: ventilation, sewage and water, as well as restoration works. Despite there was no budget, dwellers had the skills and are willing to improve the situation of the building.

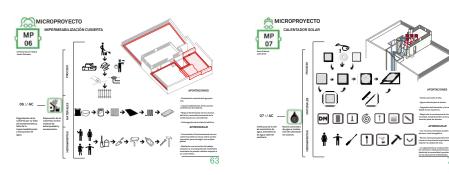
The strategy we set in this case is base in "microprojects": instead of a large single intervention we planned and designed multiple short ones that neighbours could execute whenever they had budget for the materials or time to invest. Our technical consultancy included the planning of the interventions, as well as the description of tools, people and instructions to carry them out.

The interventions included the improvement of light and ventilation of the building, waterproofing of the roof, the installation of a solar heater and its plumbing installation and the opening of a window at the ground floor that would improve hygienic conditions. In addition, a first intervention developed by the students together with the community consisted on the transformation of the ground floor space into a gathering and shared area and the painting of the facade and common areas. This increased trust in the project, to trust themselves and to gather the community together.

The building was affected by a Urban Improvement Plan (PMU) from 2002, and in 2016 a collective "Collective Mothers L24" was created in order to avoid an eviction. Finally, dwellers were relocated in public housing flats and Lancaster was demolished.

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### **BOCACHICA**

Heritatge and event San Felipe Castle, Bocachica, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 2016

This project was a direct commission from the Colombian Ministry of Culture and Heritage that consisted in preparing a colonial fortress that would host the final event of the "Emerging Heritage" week. As constraints: nearly zero budget, and the impossibility of doing any permanent change — even small as a nail — to the listed fortress. We partnered with PeiLab from Universidad Javeriana Bogotá and collective Zuloark.

During the first days the contradictions of that place were obvious: the fortress was close to Bocachica, a town of 10.000 inhabitants that felt alienated from it. They live in informal housing where streets lack pavement, lightning and any kind of supporting design of the public space. For our surprise, a gas infrastructure was under construction in a village that had no gas household appliances and lacked a public water supply infrastructure (water was supplied by tank truck). How could gas be prioritized over water? It turned out that, though public subsidies, investors where preparing the land for tourism. In other words, interventions where not targeting the actual inhabitants of Bocachica.

After conversation with the local communities, our proposal was the appropriation of the fortress by the local community for the event. The physical accommodation of the space had three strategies.: to domesticate an uncanny space turning it into a living room using broken furniture – fixing it – provided by the locals as a barter, to protect the area from the strong sun we needed shadow, that was built with cables and umbrellas, and to buy some trees with the little budget in order to provide long-term shadow (social gathering spaces) for the future.

The day of the event was successful: national authorities and locals gathered, traditional events took place and the official speeches were followed by the Bocachica Manifesto that stated some claims and allowed the creation of a number of working groups. As a result of the workshop, the government organized the Ribera Wood Workshop, which trained the population in the construction of models, restoration and building of traditional boats which were used to connect the island with the city of Cartagena, transporting people and goods.







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### **SAFARETJOS**

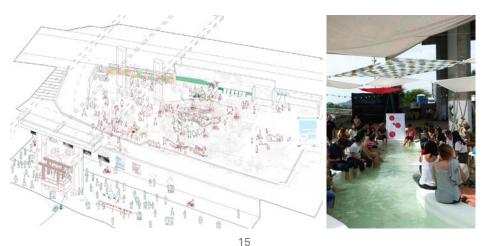
Fem Festa, fem Safaretjos. Santa Coloma de Gramenet, metropolitan area of Barcelona, 2016-2018

Safaretjos (lavatory in Catalan) represented the first long-term and territorial project for AC: we were invited by the municipality to test our methodology in a larger scale for two years. Safaretjos presents a double condition of periphery and centrality on the one hand it has a peripheral condition within Santa Coloma de Gramenet, but by other hand ii very close to Barcelona - on the other side of the river - and in front of the ring road. The neighbourhood is disconnected from its surroundings and has no public facilities. As a result, it is being depopulated due to the lack of opportunities, commerce is closing and the young population that progressed economically systematically left the area. On top of everything, a riverside masterplan had been approved and later on stopped due to the opposition of neighbours who, despite recognizing the area needed more housing to attract new population, felt it would have a negative impact as a result of its morphology. In the 2009, the new major Nuria Parlon accepted and agreed with neighbours claiming and stopped the master plan.

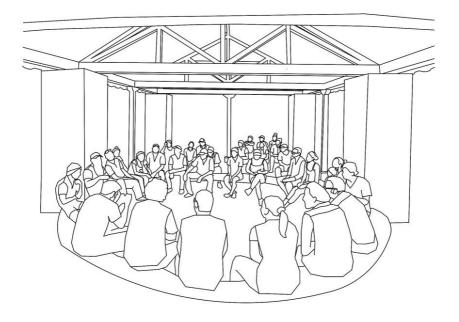
Through more than two years we developed a number of projects and strategies, focusing on topics such as borders, facilities, typological identity, elderly people, isolation, and children. The results were regularly presented under the form of "actions" which joined academic and leisure purposes, gathering academia, neighbours, local associations and the administration.

As a result of the successful event of the first workshop, we received from the municipality the commission to organize a community-building event. Safaretjos was the only neighbourhood of Santa Coloma which did not have its community year party. These are rooted traditions in Spain, and the absence of it is meaningful and evidenced the lack of social cohesion and feeling of identity. We proposed to recover a traditional "Foam Party" and organize it along with local associations, collectives and schools. The party was a media to, on the first place, cohesion the community through the construction of the facilities that would host it. Secondly, during the whole day a number of debates around the neighbourhood and its problems and potentialities took place between neighbours, politirtians and academics.









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