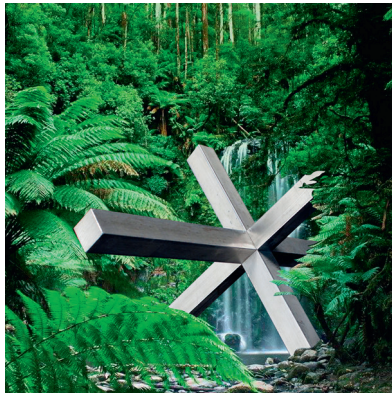


Six Buildings on an Island or Planning for the Tropics

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THE EVOLUTION OF URBAN ARTIFACTS

Further Considerations on the Nature of Expropriations



No longer painfully utopian, post-colonialism was reached as the last one was forced to leave. Unceasing decades of imposed regulations and internal corruption imploded the last hope of subsistence. The last years were the most intense ones. With warming temperatures extending the tropics beyond the limits of Capricorn and Cancer, a special unit of planners outlined the imminent destiny of the island once the entire population had been expropriated. A series of structures were erected. Some were the product of their immediate historical context. Others the result of a century of specialized intelligence.

For the first time in its history, the island witnessed precise planning. The territory was stripped of surplus modernization. Complete suburban structures disappeared, their concrete and steel crushed and collected by machines. Streets were unpaved, bridges dismantled. Automated drones surveilled aerially looking for architectural debris. It took nearly a decade. The island was razed clean. There was no life left after colonialism, just architecture. Nature and architecture, to be exact.

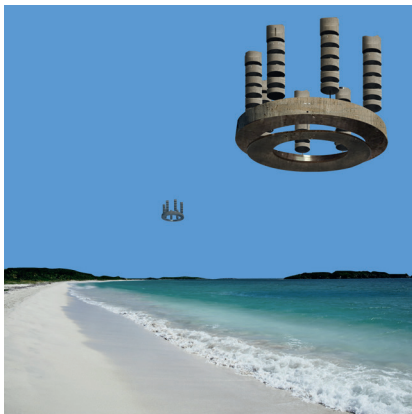
Like neoliberalism, the 'pill', and Agent Orange before it, the island became the test ground for new experiments. If the 20th century raced to Space, the frontier of the 21st century was in the tropics. The Warm War, as it was colloquially called, put hegemonic powers in technological confrontation once again. Direct attacks were out

of the picture due to recent treatises. In exchange, proxy board games were deployed on key points around the globe. The tropics were pawns on a global chess match.

Long held without any form of visionary innovation, the island finally followed the streams of the avant-garde. Six new archetypes were there future of the tropics. They were a manifesto of futuristic planning. It made the tropical Island an experimental Utopia.

Floating Fortress

The Floating Fortresses were the product of a carefully executed intelligence campaign that intercepted a plan making its way from Moscow to Cuba. Conceived in the 1920's by a cosmic architect, the *Plan Krutikov* consisted of floating architecture: a city hovering at consistent heights above the ground. After finding the secret plans, a group of architects specialized in speculative cosmonautics and quantum aeronautics concentrated on developing the project. Unable to move forward with the plans of building it due to impractical economic climate and sluggish technological advancements, the Floating Fortress finally saw the light of day once Tropicalia was awarded governing autonomy. Scaled down and cast in ultra-light Concrete, the structure hosted a fortress to monitor the coasts of the island. A floating ring contained the supporting programs while several watch towers gathe-



red and sent information to the communication posts on the shore. The Floating Fortress was equipped with an in-house prison system, detention and interrogation center.

Amphibian Fortress

Like a metallic star in a cosmic jungle, the Amphibian Fortress stood with its extended shiny, robotic limbs. Consisting of six rectangular members meeting on a common vortex, the Amphibian Fortress was able to move freely through any type of solid and semi-solid surface. The automated structure collected information on the island's soil, flora and fauna while sending waves to the communication structures on the island. The Amphibian Fortress gathered and distributed information about potential threats to the natural purity of the island. The Amphibian Fortress was a kinetic enforcer that, together with the Floating Fortress ensured the island's security while protecting its Tropicality.

The Globe and the Javelin

Another prize of meticulous espionage, the plan for the Globe and the Javelin was captured during the years of the Cold War. Resting on top of mangroves, the Globe and the Javelin monitored weather conditions while receiving signals from the Floating and Amphibian Fortresses. Built with lightweight self-regulating nano-fabrics, the Globe and the Javelin worked in combination. At night the globe floated free, lit with the rays deflected by the moon. On the mangrove, silently, the Javelin received and forwarded radio waves about the island and its surrounding sea.

Telescopic Towers

The Telescopic Towers were the largest structures erected since the island was reclaimed. Consisting of three towers anchored in the higher peaks of the central mountain range, the Telescopic Towers were connected by a series of hyper sensible fibers that created an informatics black hole (the world's most sensitive radio wave receiver). Like Suprematist icons on the virgin lands-

cape, the Telescopic Towers were the ears and brain of the agency in the mainland.

Aviary

The Aviary was in reality a Detention Center for Tropical Birds; a Guantanamo for colorful parrots. A lightweight structure assembled following simple geometric principles, the Aviary was first erected during the great Purge. Unsuspecting, the public thought of it as another zoologist project, increasingly common during those days of political austerity and land acquisitions by the Federal Government. Birds thought to possess valuable information were detained, interrogated and studied in the aviary. Some were taken from cages and trees. Others were snatched midflight. Highly sensitive sensors could detect both: birds flying thousands of kilometers away and beaks chewing on insects. In less than a year no birds remained free. More Aviaries were spotted on the newly claimed landscape. Once tried with dolphins and rats, military training shifted its attention towards birds. Tropical Birds were the new POW. Those willing converted into allied spies. All birds sang. Some birds sang louder than the others.

Camp

Like nuclear no-go zones, the Camps were areas fencing monuments, obelisks, effigies and icons of the life that used to occupy the island. On the years of the great purge, all forms of 'historically significant architecture' (a concept officially employed to identify any form of subversive structure) were concentrated on these Camps. As the Camps were quickly filled, more Camps were built. The Camps were constructed on areas of transition. Between the palm trees and the beach. The Camps were Tropical Museums: Prisons for Ideology, concentration camps for architecture.

WAI Architecture Think Tank practices architecture from a panoramic approach. Founded in Brussels in 2008 by Cruz Garcia and Nathalie Frankowski, WAI is currently based in Beijing, Taliesin and Taliesin West were both directors are Visiting Teaching Fellows at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.