PRESS RELEASE
FOR THE PROJECT:
The Archaeology of the Territory
Pachacámac, Peru

a collaboration between
Studio Tom Emerson, D-ARCH, ETH Zurich
&
Taller 5 Juillerat/Manrique, FAU, PUCP Lima

* Part I:
Pachacámac Atlas
Research and Survey, February – June 2018

* Part II:
A Room for Archaeologists and Kids
Design and Build Project, June – July 2018
The Archaeology of the Territory

Introduction

Beginning in June 2018, some forty-five students from Zurich and Lima led by Guillaume Othenin-Girard (ETH Zurich) and Vincent Juillerat (PUCP) worked together to produce a structure in the heart of the archaeological landscape of Pachacámac, Peru. The project was the culmination of a half-year collaboration between Studio Tom Emerson of D-ARCH, ETH Zurich and Taller 5 of the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, PUCP Lima, at the invitation of Denise Pozzi-Escot, the Director of the Museum of Pachacámac.

In this new structure, archaeologists make their first examination of artefacts emerging from the digs, shaded from the punishing Andean sun and in view of passing visitors and school children, who in turn, perform their own exploration in the sandpits across the courtyard. At each end, new finds are stored in rooms enclosed by woven cane walls before being transferred to the museum for permanent conservation. The structure was collaboratively designed and constructed by the students in three weeks in June and July, following a joint research project over several months that produced a new topological survey of the territory: the Pachacámac Atlas.

The Site: Pachacámac

The sanctuary of Pachacámac is a most extraordinary constructed landscape: the site was first settled around 200 AD and flourished over thirteen hundred years to become one of the biggest and most important of such city-complexes in what is today Peru, extending over roughly six hundred hectares of land. The site is host to numerous overlapping layers of civilisation. Its final role in the pre-Columbian era was as an important node of the Incan Qhapaq Nan network of trails that stretched over half the length of the continent, weaving the Pacific coastline with the Andes.

Though now situated on the southern edge of the metropolitan region of Lima, it was once an isolated citadel: a strategic point located where the River Lurin meets the ocean, from which the entire surrounding territory could be controlled; its powerful underlying hilltopography was extended upwards with adobe and stone temples and palaces to form what must have been an unbelievably impressive place — the largest hill later becoming the Temple of the Sun in the Incan era. It is no coincidence therefore, that for the Ichma civilisation (later subsumed into the Incan Empire), this site was the centre of the world; indeed it is named after their principal god: Pacha Kamaq, whose name in Quechua literally means Creator of the Universe — a figure whose powers included the ability to animate the world and to predict future. The mythology of Pacha Kamaq is embedded in this landscape and the nearby islands, and is still kept alive today.

Following the cataclysmic effects of colonisation (1533 onwards), the sanctuary of Pachacámac fell into ruin. In the centuries that followed, it was slowly enveloped by the drifting sands of the desert. Active investigations of the site only properly began in the twentieth century, led by Julio C. Tello (1880–1947), a pivotal figure in the development of Peruvian archaeology, and today much of the story of Pachacámac remains to be unearthed.
Pachacámac Today

Today, Pachacámac is one of the most visited archeological site in Peru. The sanctuary is managed by the Ministry of Culture, through the Museum of Pachacámac, an institution that both manages the site as a educational/cultural experience for visitors and as an on-going archaeological site. In 2015 a new complex of buildings by Llosa Cortegana Arquitectos was completed to house the museum and its on-going archaeological work.

The northern two thirds of the site are still yet to be excavated; open land awaiting future studies. But the monumental area of the sanctuary is a significant archaeological site with active excavations and on-going discoveries of artefacts and architectural remains. With the construction of the National Museum of Archaeology (MUNA) underway on an adjacent site, the government aims to restore this territory to its former grandeur by transforming it into a new centrality, embedded within the urban-fabric of Lima.

Yet Pachacámac is currently perceived as a void, a patch of open desert inhabited by ruins, caught between the baffling growth of the capital and the mouth of the Lurin River, the last remaining agricultural valley of the region. Its edges are constantly under the threat of encroachment by informal settlements and land invasions, the latest of which took place as recently as eight years ago.

Given the proximity to Lima and the inevitable encroachment of the city into the territory, we were compelled to ask how a culture can live with ruins; to comprehend what they represent without being suffocated by their monumental presence.

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Part I: Pachacámac Atlas

Territorial Survey: the Atlas

The first phase of the project involved a new territorial survey of the site and its surrounding landscape, drawing on a methodology Studio Tom Emerson has refined over the past decade. Through carefully made drawings and photographs, each presented in A2 format, the Pachacámac Atlas sought not only to represent the archaeological structures of the site (which are already well documented), but also the contemporary reality of the wider landscape — of coastline, industry, housing, agriculture, leisure, building culture, ecology and infrastructure — hence, the overall title of the project: The Archaeology of the Territory.

Such a survey of this unique landscape had never been made before, and revealed a new understanding of the place that enfolded its history within its contemporary condition. Together, the survey and structure that form the two parts of overall project offer a new territorial vision for Pachacámac — both in terms of projecting it forward into the future, but also in perceiving more clearly what was already there.

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Part II: A Room for Archaeologists and Kids

A Living Archaeology – the Purpose of the Structure

Even for Julio C. Tello, archaeological investigation in Peru wasn’t solely motivated by historical discovery; it was also about engaging Peruvians with their own history, renewing a sense of pride in their indigenous roots and giving them a vision for the future.

Pachacámac’s archaeological wealth represents significant cultural and historical value, yet this meaning has to be continually renewed in relation to contemporary society. In the words of Denise Pozzi-Escot, the director of the Museum of Pachacámac, ‘archaeology here can only survive in the community, not in the ground.’ As such, the Museum is active in its engagement with the local community. The design and build project was intended to help the Museum develop their existing outreach programme, providing a space within the landscape where educational and community events can take place, helping increase engagement with the people that live nearby, and those in the wider region. Reflecting the spirit of this outreach programme, the project was called A Room for Archaeologists and Kids.

It primarily serves as a place for gathering; a sheltered space to host the programme of events and workshops led by the archaeologists at the Museum. Conceived as an extension of the Museum within the sanctuary itself, the new structure had to create a space that was well lit and ventilated, and which in time could act as a form of Schaulager that the archaeologists and their workers could use to sort, analyse and display excavated material before it is taken to conservation laboratories inside the museum.

In order to restore the balance between the urban, the natural, and the cultural heritage in the city of Lima, the Museum recognises that the focus of conservation must shift from the mere preservation of physical archaeological sites, which have lost their meaning and value for the inhabitants; towards revealing and making legible the ancient knowledge embedded in their built heritage and their relation to the territory.

The Site for the Structure: Beside the Acllawasi

Located on the western side of the sanctuary of Pachacámac, not far from the Museum of Pachacámac itself, the site chosen by the Museum for the structure was on a clearly defined square piece of land beside the Acllawasi, a complex of courtyard buildings that were largely reconstructed by the archaeological efforts in the early twentieth century. Bounded on two sides by the perimeter walls of the Acllawasi and by a nature reserve on the other two. A small ditch bounds the site on three sides, and between the walls and the site lies a stone path that is part of the main visitor route leading out from the Museum.

Description of the Structure

The Room for Archaeologists and Kids, is a timber structure 37m x 16.3m and 3.6m tall, which forms a covered arcade around a courtyard. The structure is made from
twenty-eight square fields of 10m², defined by a column in each corner, and with a lattice-work roof above. The five fields at each short end are enclosed by woven bamboo panels, set vertically, with a concrete floor to provide a robust surface. These rooms contain wooden shelving that offers space for storage and exhibiting archaeological finds, as well as wooden tables that can be brought outside when required.

The revolving doors are made of timber frames filled with bamboo cane elements, laid horizontally and woven around vertical pieces. The doors rest on wooden blocks and can be locked from the outside, to keep the interiors secure.

Outside, along the side nearest to the walls of the Acllawasi, adobe blocks aligned to the walls, and marking an underground channel, form a robust surface for events, where wooden tables can be placed. On the other side, the arcade is filled with earth, to provide a space where archaeological digs can be replicated by visiting school children.

The geometry of the central patios of the Acllawasi inform the orientation of the new courtyard structure, creating an oblique relationship with the stone walls that surround it on two sides.

The columns and foundations were prefabricated and assembled on site. Fields of roof-lattices were individually prefabricated and raised using hoists on moveable temporary works. The joints were made either with stainless-steel bolts (primary joints) or nickel-plated screws (secondary joints).

Lengths of white, polyester open-weave textile commonly used in agricultural greenhouses nearby, were woven in between the upper and lower planes of the latticework, and fixed with staples. The woven canopy provides two or three layers of shade, whilst retaining certain moments of views to the landscape beyond and the sky.

A Collaborative Design and Build Process

In our view of architecture, constraints are necessary prerequisites that serve as the drivers of design rather than being limitations that diminish design. When the team assembled in June, some major parameters for the project had already been established: the site had been chosen, and the quantity and dimensions of the timber available had been determined. Perhaps most importantly, the structure was to be designed and built within three weeks.

The project began with an intensive design workshop, where the students worked in teams of three over two days. Each team developed ideas that dealt with the structure as a whole, how it would relate to the site, as well as structural and spatial ideas as to how the design could work, and how it could be made. The result was fifteen projects that were presented and discussed as a group. The challenge was how to integrate the best ideas, discoveries and insights produced by the fifteen teams into a single project.

Over the following week, the team formed smaller groups, dividing tasks and responsibilities to begin developing the design for the structure that could be described as an ‘upside-down table’; a rigid assembly of beams and columns anchored in the ground, supporting fields of lattice-work. In short: the roof was to do little more than support its own weight and stay rigid.
Choice of Materials

The principal material of the structure is wood, specifically, sections of kiln-dried Tornillo (*cedrelinga cateniformis*), a tropical hardwood found in the rainforest in Peru and elsewhere in the Amazonian basin. Tornillo is a wood with extraordinary properties: very dense (555 kg/m3) yet paradoxically extremely flexible. It is recognised as a general-purpose construction wood in South America, especially because it is naturally resistant to fungus and humidity, requiring no chemical treatment. In the persistently humid climate of the Peruvian coast, less resistant timber would begin to rot within months.

All material except for the timber was drawn from the everyday palette of building materials of Peru. Cane, cut and woven in the form of prefabricated *esteras* (ultimately not used), or woven by us into panels; adobe bricks for the floors, with compacted earth joints; and synthetic open-weave textiles, widely used for making shade, for the canopy.
Web Links

Film *Pachacámac: A Room for Archaeologists and Kids*
https://vimeo.com/306999506

Museum of Pachacámac
http://pachacamac.cultura.pe
https://www.archdaily.com/784135/museo-de-sitio-pachacamac-llosa-cortegana-arquitectos

Studio Tom Emerson
http://emerson.arch.ethz.ch

Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo
http://arquitectura.pucp.edu.pe

Asociación de Artesanas SISAN
http://www.sustainablepreservation.org/pachamac/
http://kani.pe/sisancoleccion/
Project Credits

The principal collaboration is between Studio Tom Emerson at ETH Zurich, led by the architect Guillaume Othenin-Girard and Taller 5 at PUCP, led by the architect Vincent Juillerat. The project also involves a wider network of collaborators and institutions.

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**Timber**
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**Groundwork**
Lbc Construcciones SAC

**Scaffolding**
Ángeles Arquitectura de Eventos

**Construction site**
Ángeles Arquitectura de Eventos, CEING S.A.C.
Tools
FAU Model Workshop

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Ángeles Arquitectura de Eventos, D-ARCH ETH Zurich, Erich Degen-Stiftung ETH Zurich, Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo PUCP, Swiss Cultural Embassy, Swiss Cultural Funds, Glencore International AG

Guest Lecturers
Prof. Dr. José Canziani Amico, Prof. Dr. Luis Jaime Castillo, Leo Fabrizio, Sâm Gha-vami-Dicker, Daniel Ramirez Corzo, Prof. Enrique Santillana, Prof. Dr. Sharif Kahatt

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Part II: A Room for Archaeologists and Kids
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Part II: Construction Process
Part II: Site

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Part II: Events

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