

There's an interesting new space that's recently opened in the financial district of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The project—Banco Popular de Puerto Rico Urban Hub, designed by local firm SCF Arquitectos—is composed of three main elements, most notably a pedestrian bridge that spans across Avenida Ponce de León, connecting our performance center—or as we know it here, *El Choliseo*—with Popular Center's green terrace. If you walk from the terrace through the bridge, the view opens up to a terraced plaza boasting greenery and water features, subtly descending onto street level and the proposed Urban Park. Like most people in the twenty-first century, you'll probably and intuitively dig into your pocket to take a picture with your phone, but if you do, make sure there's no security guards around. Apparently it's forbidden—believe me.

“You can't take pictures,” a guard came over to me to say when I casually found myself on the plaza a few hours after the project's inauguration. Confused, I clarified that I was taking a photograph of the plaza's landscape features, to which he replied, “It's not allowed. We have orders from *allá arriba* [“up there”],” his head tilts upwards, as he gestures to BPPR's skyscraper, “to not let anyone take pictures of the bank's property.” The security guard was just doing his job, I understood that, so I chose not to engage in a back and forth of squabbles about who *owns* the city and who has the right to urban space, but in my own bafflement I said, “But this is public space.” “Banco Popular owns this space,” he replied. Well. So much for that.

This issue of *informa* addresses the spatial politics of diverse locations throughout the world. By exploring a variety of sites, geographies, built artifacts, uncompleted buildings, existing buildings, and postcards, spanning from Arecibo (Puerto Rico), Málaga (Spain), New Jersey (USA), Vanautu (Oceania), Venice (Italy), Varosha (Cyprus), Okishima (Japan), and other

locales, we began production on the issue questioning the site conditions which govern—or don't—our built and natural environments. We received research papers, visual essays, projects, and essays responding to our Call for Submissions, which along with the essays we commissioned from experienced researchers abroad, resulted in an intriguing selection of material from an editorial perspective: work elucidating on monuments and borders, on representation and images, and critically questioning politics of bodies of water versus formations of land.

Savia Palate's peer-reviewed research article, for instance, takes readers to the waters of Oceania to discuss how its island microstates negotiate their politics, resources, and international relations. Uroš Pajović's visual essay shows us how satellite imagery—usually mistaken as pragmatic and absolute truth—distorts our environments, by taking us on a bird's eye journey in his visual essay composed of Google screenshots of glitched bodies of water. Meanwhile, back on land, Gabriella Rodríguez-Berrios talks to landscape architect Bradley Cantrell about the role of computation and our built and natural environments, where Cantrell upholds that humans need to displace and resettle in other spaces on the planet amidst climate change. Discussing the surface scars of two buildings—one in Pistoia, Italy and the other in Beirut, Lebanon—Sabina Andron tackles matters of vulnerability, of resilience, of sympathy of our architectures, describing their materiality and histories in a masterful way.

Though global in content and contributors, I have confidence that this issue of *informa* constitutes a valuable tool for Puerto Rican architectural discourse. Its discussions can each be read alongside our own site conditions to help reveal things of ourselves and our discipline, while questioning others—whether it's destruction, politics, monuments, landscapes, heritage,

landscape, modes of building, or design priorities. It's in this ambition—to project Puerto Rico outside of the Caribbean, while attracting global attention in our direction as well—that makes *informa* a necessary project for our island. We urgently need a refreshing of architectural discourse, a boom in imaginative, critical, and rigorous architectural production in every and all of its branches.

Coming only into its second issue in this new iteration as an academic journal (its first ten issues positioned it as a professional magazine) *informa* is in an interesting and exciting place. Rather than forcing it to be *something*, I see how the journal is gradually cultivating its own voice calling out to specific people. As Editor-in-Chief, my approach to the journal has shifted from “What do I want this journal to be?” to “Who is this journal for?”

Our collaborators, writers, followers, party-goers, and workshop participants have helped me understand that the *informa* reader is young of *spirit*. Hopeful, they are someone who embodies—or champions for—diversity, who is open to change, or is looking to foster it. The *informa* reader is looking to carve a space for themselves in the world. I'd also like to highlight that the *informa* reader, at a local level here in the island, is someone who's looking take their first steps into the world of architectural publishing—which has historically been a major driving force within the discipline in the West, even when we think back to the 60s with Archigram. In Puerto Rico, *informa* aims to offer a space for those who wish to have real agency over architectural discourse in the island. This is the case of the short essays written by Andrea Pimentel-Rivera, Andrea Rivera-Martínez, and José Néstor Rodríguez, as well as the visual essay by Osvaldo Delbrey-Ortiz and Gabriela Enid Dávila—all students from the University of Puerto Rico, whose contributions are greatly valued by the Editorial Board.

Obsessively, I visit every bookshop in the island where *informa* is located. I pay attention to where it stands (or lies on its back), I talk to the bookshop managers, I take pictures of it for our social media, I see whose its neighbors are on the shelf. Today, *informa* is the *only* architecture publication in Puerto Rico's bookshops. And in this sense, it fills an enormous void. But also, it's my hope that its mere existence represents a much-needed shift in the culture of architectural production in the island, where conversations, discussions, and relevant critical debates can take place and materialize through printed words which can then spark action—big or small.