

THE ETHICAL PATTERN MAKER

CULTURAL PRODUCTION
& SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Christopher Robin Andrews Architect



In 1908, almost 110 years ago, Adolph Loos equated ornament with crime.



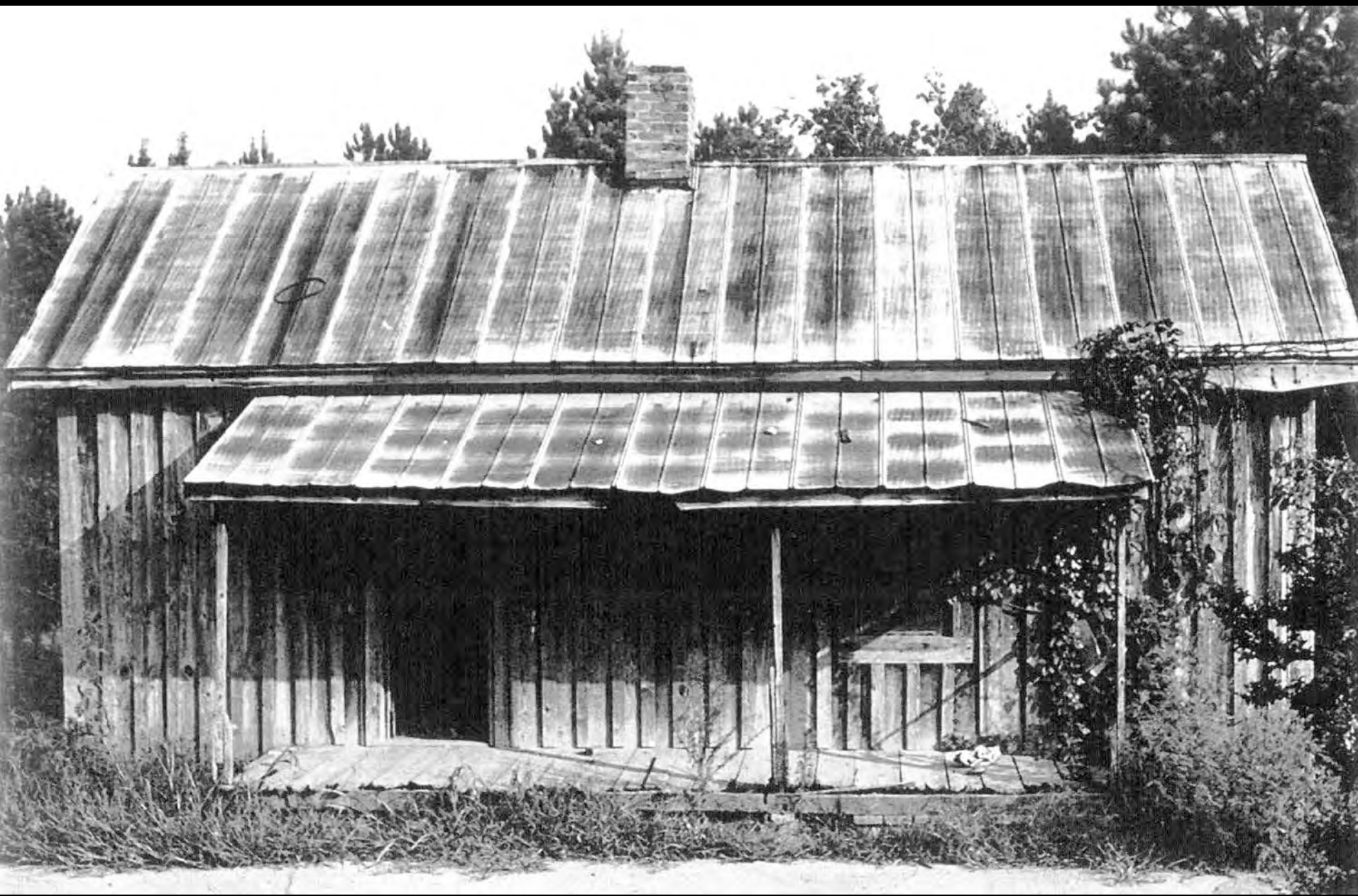
Almost 50 years ago, on April 12, 1963, Martin Luther King wrote, in a letter from the Birmingham jail: “One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty.”

Ornament and Crime was an essay and a lecture by modernist architect Adolf Loos, that criticizes ornament in art, first given on 21 January 1908 in Vienna. "The evolution of culture marches with the elimination of ornament from useful objects", Loos proclaimed.

Loos' work was prompted by regulations Loos encountered when he designed a tailor shop without ornamentation next to a palace. He eventually conceded to requirements by adding a flowerpot. In contrast to the Art Nouveau then in vogue, the essay articulates a moralizing view, which has been by some as connecting the Arts and Crafts movement, to the Bauhaus design studio and defining the ideology of Modernism in architecture.

In Loos' essay, he describes a "passion for smooth and precious surfaces". For him it was a crime to waste the effort needed to add ornamentation, which could cause the object to soon go out of style. Loos described ornament as "degenerate", and its suppression as necessary for regulating modern society. He took as one of his examples the tattooing of the "Papuan" and the intense surface decorations of the objects about him—Loos says that, in the eyes of western culture, the Papuan has not evolved to the moral and civilized circumstances of modern man, who, should he tattoo himself, would either be considered a criminal or a degenerate.

Loos never argued for the complete absence of ornamentation, but believed that it had to be appropriate to the type of material. Loos concluded that "No ornament can any longer be made today by anyone who lives on our cultural level ... Freedom from ornament is a sign of spiritual strength".



My father's house, in rural Piedmont Georgia (the American Southland)





Confinement No. 1 (by Benny Andrews)



*Chair by Christopher Andrews and George “Gee—the Dot Man” Andrews
(Permanent Collection Ogden Museum of Southern Art)*

Tacit knowledge or experiential knowledge, the wisdom slowly and incrementally integrated into the body and mind through experience, through the process of making, through the feedback loop of trying and failing, trying and failing, trying and succeeding, is how some of the most critical learning (and teaching) happens.

How can we better understand and make arts and design that learn the process of craft from traditional methods, while applying innovation in a relevant contemporary context?

"ACHITEKTI ORNEMAN NAN
KILTI AYISYEN ”

ARCHITECTURAL
ORNAMENT
IN HAITIAN CULTURE



Haitian Vernacular Ingenuity

What is the role of ornament in modern life?

Some of the functions of ornament in the applied arts (including environmental design) are:

- ◆ *Constructive (process and maintenance)*
- ◆ *Celebratory (articulation and distinction)*
- ◆ *Communicative (placemaking and wayfinding)*
- ◆ *Cultural (aesthetic production)*

How might ornament be related to “cultural agency”?

Hypothesis:

The lens of cultural agency can empower both cultural workers and citizens. Issues of power and status, and well as issues of practice and action, of social transformation can be actively addressed, and perhaps even reconciled.

The question of ornament (or lack thereof) is thus critical to modern life.

In this study we will look at:

- 1. By way of introduction, the broader patterns of traditional Haitian architecture, including settlement layout and building types*
- 2. Architectural decoration mainly as it relates to the Galri (the porch) and its various elements, and the Lakou (courtyard) as these are the principal loci of Kreyol environmental culture*
- 3. Color, as this is a critical element in Haitian visual traditions*
- 4. The Gingerbreads and their ornaments, those grand houses of the early part of the 20th century, which by many, including this author, are considered to be the signature and highest achievements of Haitian Kreyol architecture.*
- 5. The traditional Ti-kay, the humble small house of the ordinary Haitian, and its most recent manifestation in the "Bidonville", the informal urban settlements, where numerous Haitians live today*
- 6. Veve, the decoration associated with Vodun, the Haitian religion, and its relation to architectural ornament*

Finally I will close with some of my own work in Haiti, in collaboration with Haitian and international partners, and some questions about the political, social and economic aspects of this subject, especially as it relates to the reconstruction of Haiti's environment in the aftermath of the earthquake of January 2010.



Haitian Ti-Kay (little houses) photo by Gilles de Chabineix

KREYOL LIVING WISDOM PATTERNS:

To sketch a broad understanding of the Haitian environment (especially in relation to reconstruction development) over the last three years I have defined a set of patterns which encompass a full range of environmental design scales, from the regional landscape scale down to the construction (and ornament) of individual buildings. I call these patterns, which we find most clearly manifest in "traditional" settings "Kreyol Living Wisdom". For a complex series of reasons, these patterns are often invisible, individually to some degree, and certainly in sum, both to Haitians and foreigners.

Herein I will focus mostly on those that are directly related to ornament, that is the Galri, and its configuration and decoration, but I would hold it is still constructive to think about the larger patterns as well within this context.

These patterns include:

- 1. Landscape Stewardship*
- 2. Living Off the Land*
- 3. Kreyol Settlement Structure*
- 4. The Lakou*
- 5. The Galri*
- 6. The Jaden*
- 7. Rural Building Models*
- 8. Urban Building Models*
- 9. Color, Pattern & Ornament*
- 10. Kreyol Architecture*



Haitian Ti-Kay with Galri (photo by Martin Hammer)

THE GALRI:

A major contribution to the life of shared community spaces is made by the Galri (porch) arguably the actual “living room” of Haitian buildings. Albeit externally oriented, the Galri is the central room of the Haitian home.

For climatic and cultural reasons, Haitians perform many if not most of their living and social activities functions outside, in the Galri, sheltered from the sun and the rain. The interior of the house mainly serves as a place to rest and to store possessions. The Galri links the intimate private interior to the community public space of the Lakou and street. It is an outdoor family room, climatically responsive and socially connective.

In denser urban areas Galri can be two stories or more tall, wrapping around buildings, and even linking separate buildings. Their often intricately detailed ornament manifests the character and identity of their builders, owners and residents, as well as that of the cities, towns, villages and Lakou themselves. The Galri is thus not only the principal locus of the Haitian house and building, it is also the principal subject of ornamentation and decoration in the Haitian environment.



Its overall form and volume, constructive elements, materials and details characterize, distinguish and celebrate individual and family identity and their connection to the community fabric. The configuration of the Galri and its individual elements is not incidental. The various elements shape and are shaped by social spatial, material and constructive aspects that architects call “functional”, and in the decorative, finish and material details they also reflect and express the deeper themes of identity, distinction and celebration that we define as “artistic” or ornamental.

Social aspects include the relationships between private & public, community, family & individual. Spatial aspects include the character and relationships between envelope, volume, floor, roof, walls, openings. Constructive aspects include the configuration and relationships between foundations, columns, beams, & rafters. Decorative, finish and detail aspects include the configuration and relationships between: finials, bargeboards, eave return boards, braces, guardrails, wall patterns, additive and subtractive elements, color, texture, and pattern. Material aspects include: wood, metal, earth, and concrete.

The environmental patterns of the Galri and its components thus embodies the dynamic genius of Haitian Kreyol living wisdom. It is multivalent and multicultural. It is both a strong type and allows for a multitude of individual variations. Its elements are distinct and coherent. The Galri is a fertile and critical foundation for sustainable, whole systems, and culturally connected environmental design.



THE LAKOU:

In Kreyol, the shared yard or courtyard is called a Lakou. Traditionally this includes the sharing of material items, chores, food, space and child care. It has been said that the Lakou, even more than the buildings around it, is the real home of those who live there. In rural settings the Lakou is the yard of the family or extended family, the communal work space of the farm compound. In towns and cities the Lakou can occur at the interior of the block. In both contexts a more public Lakou can emerge as the center of a neighborhood, connected to, or emerging from intimately scaled streets spaces. The Lakou can also have a Vodun orientation. It might contain a Peristyle, a place where religious ceremonies can be practiced.

The relationship of the Lakou to architectural ornament includes two aspects, the first is that the Lakou is the public center from which ornament is perceived and observed, and the second relates to the Lakou as the place where a picture of the world, is manifest in the construction of Veve, the beacon for the Loa (spirit).



Rural Lakou



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOR, PATTERN & ORNAMENT

In Haitian culture color, pattern and ornament are essential elements. As overall, the approach to building and landscape is straightforward and practical, thus it is often through decoration that particular places and elements are distinguished and celebrated. Haitians employ color, pattern and ornament in their environment because it says who and where they are, and it is beautiful and celebratory. Certain colors and decorative elements can have specific meanings and significance. Consciously and skillfully employed, they can enhance the legibility of the environment.

Anyone who has spent any time in the Caribbean cannot fail to respond to the unique blend of African, European, and aboriginal culture—the “Kreyol”. This interwoven blend is a rich part of our American culture as well, perhaps most intensely evidenced in the music and food of New Orleans and its environs. In terms of reconstruction, any proposal, any vision for rebuilding Haiti that fails to fully embrace the marvelous character of the Kreyol cannot succeed or endure. And conversely, proposals and visions that build on a Kreyol foundation will be the most persistent and resilient, as this in fact is the very nature of the Kreyol phenomenon itself.

In architecture and environmental design this means we have to pay attention to the central prominence of color and ornament. As the models for this are actually quite abundant and coherent, the challenge rather lies in their application in the context of the contemporary mind-frame, as they have most recently been viewed as merely historical or vernacular curiosities.



Haitian Door (photo by Mary Ellen Andrews)



Haitian Door (photo by Mary Ellen Andrews)



Haitian Door (photo by Mary Ellen Andrews)



Haitian Door (photo by Mary Ellen Andrews)



In spite of the contemporary neglect afforded these decorative elements, many Haitians still insist on coloring and ornamenting their buildings. Every food garden has flowers. This is not just serendipitous or accidental, rather it is essential and crucial. Some might ask, what function is served by ornament and color? Shouldn't Haitians be first concerned with survival and life safety rather than aesthetics? Let's quickly look at this from the viewpoint of food and music. Let's say we have provided the basic rice and beans for a meal. Now a Haitian might ask, where's the salt and pepper, and better still, where are the onions and hot peppers? Also, might you well ask what is the function of music? Should the Haitians not listen to or play music until they have finished rebuilding their cities, neighborhoods and houses?

Color and ornament do in fact serve many inter-related and interwoven functions in environmental development, in fact, it is perhaps this multi-functionality and multi-valence that has thus far most comprehensively challenged valuation. These functions include: cultural connection and identity, place-making and way-finding, and celebration and inspiration. Or more simply put, the Haitians put color and ornament on their buildings because it shows and tells who and where they are, it distinguishes and makes recognizable specific places and parts within the larger environmental systems, and it is fun and beautiful.

Looking at the colors all over the Haitian buildings, I tried to ascertain, might there be a symbolic meaning for different or various colors?



Building Signage

NEW BLOOD

MENU

COCA. COLA. 7-UP
JUMEX. EXTRAIT DE M.
PRESTIGE. GUINNESS
TORO. RAGAMAN
RHUM BARBANCOURT
GALLON EAU. LAIT
SACHET EAU. BAKARA
PINO-GLACE G. ET DETAIL

888+25

K-FOU 4

ZINE

PAIN ŒUF

Building Signage



Tap Tap

Suzanne Preston Blie lays out some symbolic associations for various colors in the Vodun pantheon. These include:

- 1. Red: Blood, danger, desire*
- 2. Black: Strength, family, ancestors, death, fertile earth*
- 3. White: Astral light, heaven, ancestors, peace*

But most compelling is her description of the multicolored or banded "Polychrome", which represents the Rainbow serpent, vitality, and life. The Polychrome and its association with vitality and life thus describes a system or attitude towards coloring, explaining the freedom and expressivity of the use of many contrasting colors in Haitian art not as just symbolic in themselves, but altogether symbolic and celebratory of life.

The Jacmel native Albert Froger gave me a critical clue about the colors we see everywhere on buildings. He told me that the explanation was very simple--specific color combination represented various families, for example the ochre and terra cotta represent the Boucards, perhaps the most prominent family in Jacmel. Therefore whenever we saw a building that was colored ochre with terra cotta trim or door and window shutters, we could be assured that the property belonged to the Boucards.

THE GINGERBREAD HOUSES

Haiti's historic Gingerbread Houses embody an extraordinary exhibition of architectural artistry, and provide both a touchstone and a beacon. Designed and built in the early 20th century by Haitian architects who had studied in France, and utilizing a resilient hybrid of timber frame and masonry construction, called “colombage” (which did remarkably well in the earthquake). They are uniquely and elaborately ornamented and ingeniously climatically responsive. The Gingerbreads exemplify a global high water mark of African American and Kreyol environmental culture.

The simultaneously wild, yet rigorous exuberance of the Gingerbreads seem to embody some of the inherently Kreyol tensions at the scale of individual buildings, in their very structure, overall form and abundant adornment. These are buildings that almost seem to be making themselves right in front of us.



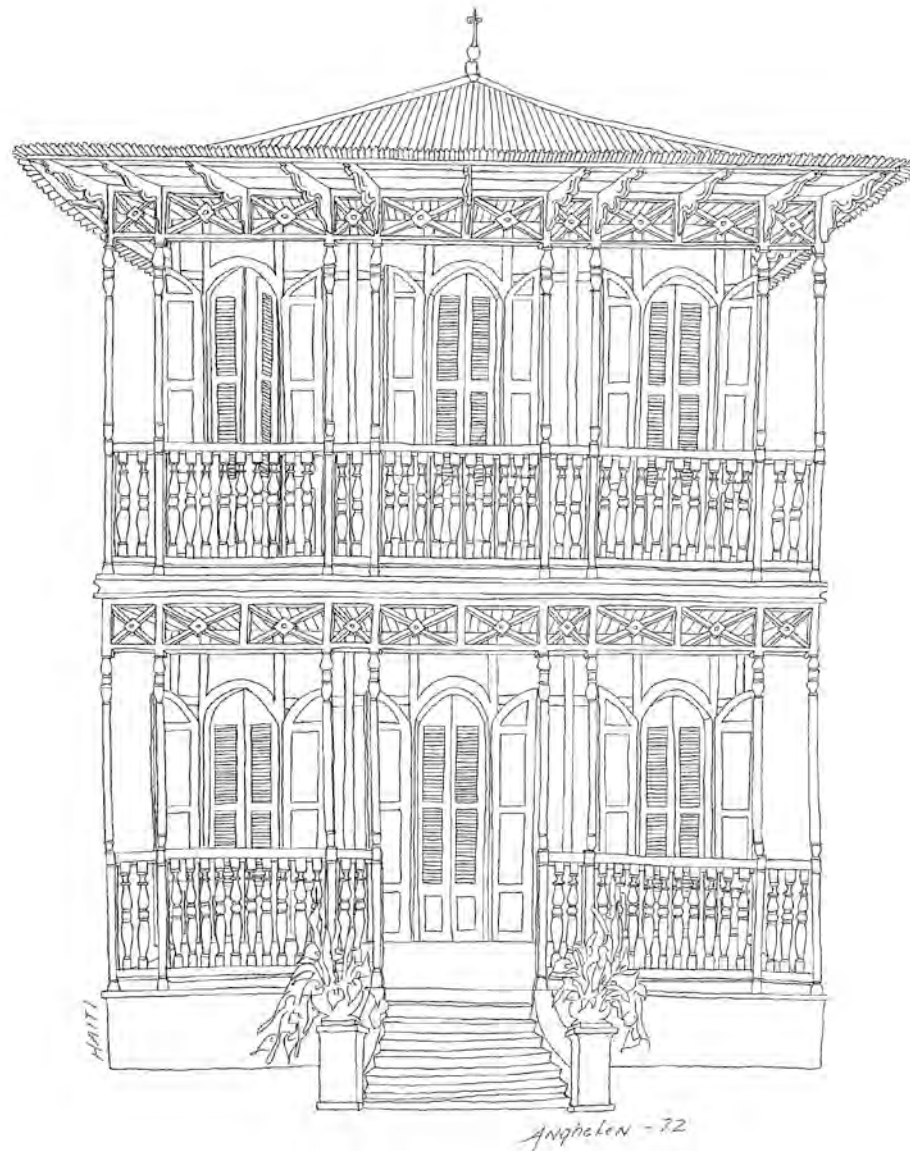
Gingerbread House in Port au Prince (photo by Randolph Langenbach)



Gingerbread House in Port au Prince (photo by Randolph Langenbach)

Although in their basic shapes, they are born of the Caribbean Chattel house types, the Ti Kay and Kreyol Cottage, these forms are stretched and rotated and stacked on top of one another so as to be almost unrecognizable. The roofs deflect and fold. Their vertical aspirations are grotesquely elegant. Ornamentation become space, as building becomes Galri, and Galri becomes brackets, balustrades and bracing.

And thus as we look at them, in front of our eyes, the buildings start to stir, themselves becoming living beings. We we can clearly see their skeletons and skins, their bases, bodies and Baron Samedi like crowns, their skirts and brows, their eyes and mouths. They are flesh and blood, and they animate the urban space around them, in a sinuous strut. Hence, these largely unsung masterpieces of African-American architecture play a decisive role in helping to help guide Haiti back to a dancing Kreyol life.



Gingerbread Drawing by Anghelen Arrington Phillips



Gingerbread Drawing by Anghelen Arrington Phillips



Roof Finial

*Barge Board
Rafters*

Soute Hatch

*Barge Board
Return*

Beam

*Diamond
Pattern
Plaster*

Shutters

Columns

*Tri-Color Paint
Scheme*

*Guardrail with
Decorative Block*

Ti-Kay—Decorative Elements of the Galri

THE TI-KAY

In "Caribbean Style", the book edited by Suzanne Slesin, with contributions by Jack Bertholet and Martine Gaume, and photographs by Gilles de Chabineix, there are numerous images of brightly polychromed and ornately decorated Ti-Kay. Many of these buildings can still be seen along the Port au Prince Jacmel Road. What is the genesis of this profusion of these brightly colored and decorated buildings? It is this author's thesis that these are popular interpolations of the Gingerbread's ornament (the Gingerbreads are uniformly and elegantly monochromatic) supplemented with celebratory and kinship group identifying color and pattern.

The small simple detached building is the basic dwelling unit in Haitian culture. We see this house form throughout the Caribbean, it is also sometimes called the "Popular House" and the "Chattel House". As has been extensively documented, it is a rich amalgam of both African and European precedents. As is characteristic of the most durable of vernacular forms, it is multivalent, serving many functions, ranging from the socially cohesive—typically built by a couple when they marry, it marks Haitian adulthood—to climatically responsive—the one room wide form facilitates cross ventilation. The basic layout is one story tall, with a simple gable roof, one room wide and one to several rooms long or deep, with the central outdoor room, the porch or "galri" oriented towards the road or Lakou. Each room opens directly into the next without any intervening hallways. It is a modular form, straightforward to add on to, by simply extending the rooflines. The basic square room shape (10' x 10' to 12' x 12') is a rational structural module for safe construction with a wide range of materials. Also, perhaps due to the remote possibility for legal land ownership by the vast majority of Haiti's population, the compact form allows for deconstruction and reassembly when required. These house types provide an excellent model of how a skillfully configured expedient shelter can transition into a durable and culturally appropriate Haitian house.



Ti-Kay. photo by Gilles de Chabineix



Haitian Gingerbread House Details



New Orleans "Shotgun" houses

This type has two basic variations—the Ti-Kay and the Kreyol Cottage—that are differentiated by the orientation of the main porch and public face. The Ti-Kay has its Galri on the narrow gable side, while the Kreyol Cottage has its front orientation on the typically longer eave side.

These buildings, deceptively simple, facilitate an array of uses, tenancies, additions, and elaborations, both in overall configuration and in detail. Usually distinctly individuated by their vividly painted bright colors and trim details, they are a rich canvas on which Haiti's cultural palette is articulated.

The apparent traversing influences of decoration between Haiti and the mainland America should not be underestimated, nor indeed the similar phenomenon within Haiti itself, for example between the Gingerbreads and the Ti-Kay.



Haitian Kay Chamhot—"tall house"

VEVE

The subject of the "Veve" and of the Haitian Vodoun religion is of course too large to really encompass within the context of this investigation. I just want to make a few quick points that relate it back to our subject of architectural ornament.

A Veve is a religious symbol commonly used in Haitian Vodoun. It is the beacon for the Loa, attracting the spirit who is appealed to during the religious practice, and also serves as the Loa's representation.

Veve are usually drawn on the floor by strewing a powder-like substance, commonly corn flour. Sacrifices of food and other offerings are usually placed upon them. Veve can be also be printed, painted or pieced of fabric patchwork as wall hangings or banners.



Haitian Vodun Veve



Haitian Vodun Flag by artist George Valri

According to Milo Rigaud "The veves represent figures of the astral forces... In the course of Voodoo ceremonies, the reproduction of the astral forces represented by the veves obliges the Loas... to descend to earth."

Although there has been some conjecture that we might find Veve in the literal configuration of architectural decoration, as for example in the balustrades and balcony panels in Jacmel or Cap Hatien, the author has seen no direct evidence of this, either in his observations in Haiti, or geographically located, in any of the relevant literature.

However, as a picture of the world, and of a particular Loa, I wonder if we can't see the Veve as a parallel to architectural decoration. It sets the stage for the dance of life. Constructed in the Lakou and Peristyle, alluding to the cardinal points and thereby an ideal of settlement structure, it is dynamic and expressive, hence a kind of picture of the world, or universe, associated with the particular spirit to be invoked.

A QUESTION OF THE RELATION OF ORNAMENT TO RECONSTRUCTION

In a way the primary focus for this investigation--the centrality of ornament and color and their potential connection to the both the reality and the constructive transformation of social, political and economic structures in Haiti is potentially the most critical aspect of this study.

One model of significant progress in terms of the dilemma of critical innovation within an emerging culture was observed by Kim Chaix of The Charcoal Project, in conjunction with Nathaniel Mulcahy of Worldstove, which leverages the landscape restorative planting of bamboo with the manufacture of a safer and more efficient cook-stove. In Worldstove's recent efforts in Haiti, another unintended but vital benefit—artistic inspiration—was realized when Mulcahy showed at a village shop to find the artisan adding decorations of trees and birds to the metalwork, as he described to Mulcahy, consciously representing what could happen with the use of these stoves—that they might actually encourage the trees and birds to come back to Haiti.

Much of what has been proposed for the rebuilding of Haiti has focused on the crisis condition, and this is absolutely necessary and appropriate, given the nature of the ongoing human and environmental emergency. But beyond this immediate predicament, in the medium and long term, many envision a Haiti that is not just surviving, but thriving, not just subsisting but sparkling. Indeed the seeds for such a society are sprouting from the artistic and cultural customs already in place, especially in Haitian music and art.

So perhaps there is also tremendous potential and necessity for this expression in environmental development as well, including in the ornamental details of the architecture and landscape?



Bidonville Acajou



Bidonville Jalousie



Regine Larouche (a Haitian architect) & Jean Luis (a Haitian builder and craftperson) discussing the Ti-Kay Pay Galri





Ti Chez

GALRI

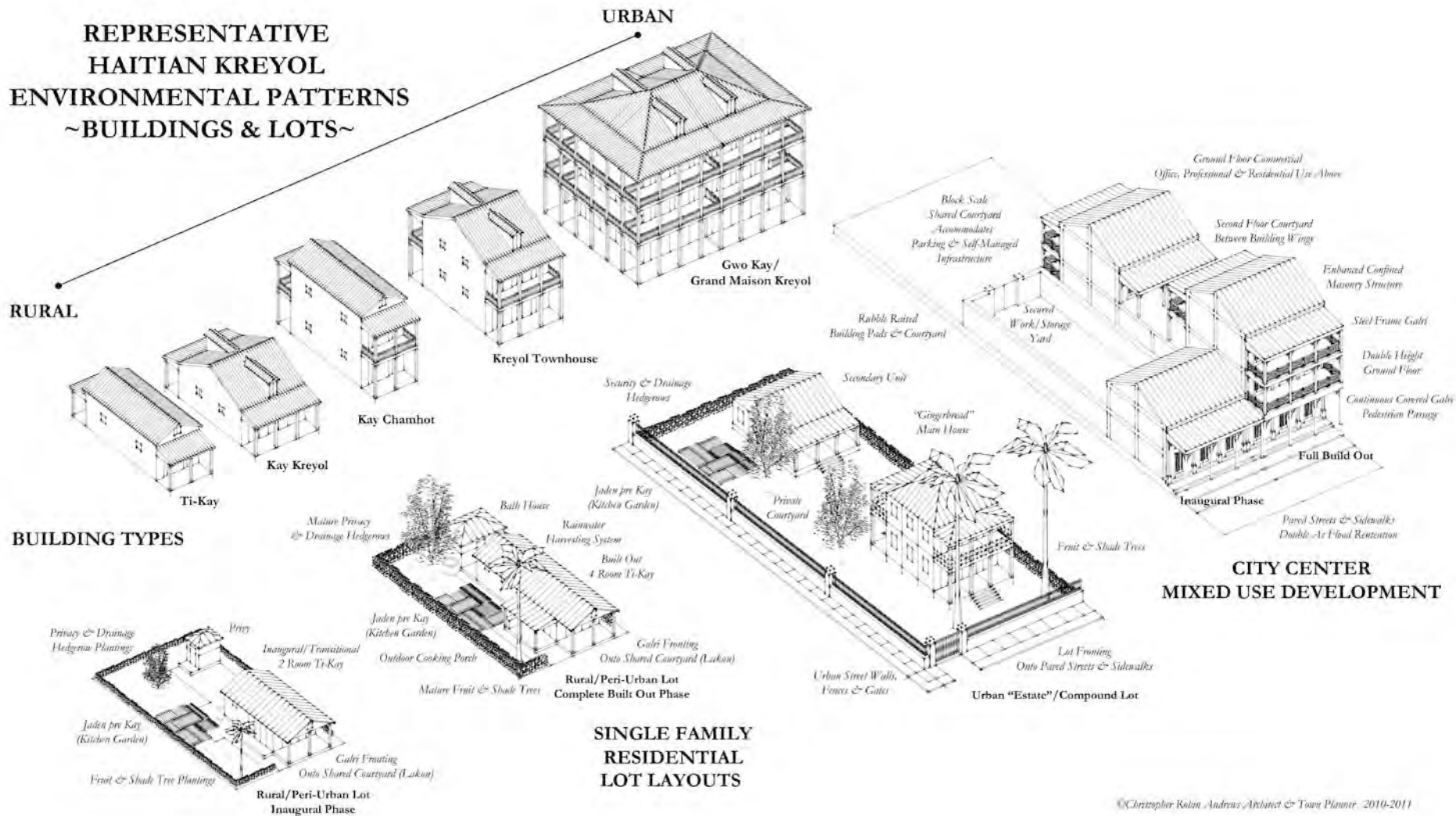
TRANSFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPTS FOR HAITI

PATTERNS & PROJECTS

TOWNS, BUILDINGS & CONSTRUCTION

www.galrigroup.com

REPRESENTATIVE HAITIAN KREYOL ENVIRONMENTAL PATTERNS ~BUILDINGS & LOTS~



©Christopher Robin Andrews Architects & Town Planner, 2010-2011



Ti kay Sante (“Healthy little houses”)



What if School



Internet Café in Terre Froide



“Legends of Haiti” Gingerbread Redevelopment

The Gingerbreads provide a wonderful model of the creative power of Creole culture, as a regional amalgam of globally transmitted African, European, and American threads, that is inherently responsive to local circumstance, including in terms of climate, materials and construction technology--in other words "sustainable".

An ambitious joint endeavor, of historical preservation and education, of conserving and restoring these buildings, raising awareness of their particularly rich cultural legacy, would re-introduce the best of Haiti, its "Legends" to the world.

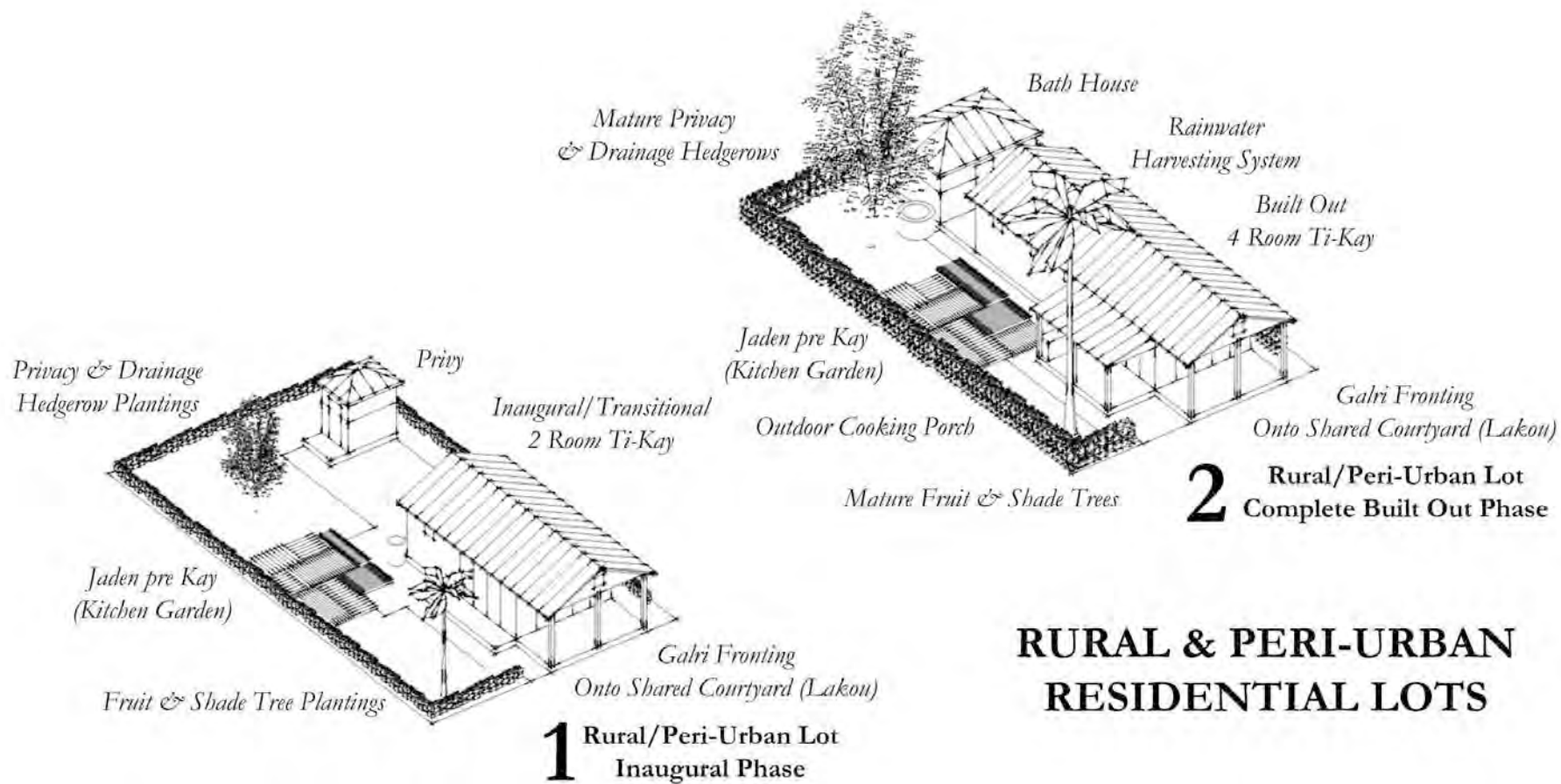
Galri is currently working with international hospitality experts on developing economic, planning, architectural and restoration plans that will preserve and nourish these "Legends" through the 21st Century, and leverage their splendor as a prime catalyst for Haiti's redevelopment.



Urban Village Model—Drawing by Christopher Robin Andrews

The "Urban Village Model" is an integrated system for developing, building and maintaining the physical environment of small self managed communities in urban settings. In Haiti, the "Urban Village" is a cohesive physical and social whole--a mini-neighborhood--primarily residential, centered around a shared open space --- "Lakou" in Kreyol.

The Urban Village Model is not a Disney-like "model village." Rather, it is a systematic method to identify, configure and build housing that creates vibrant communities. Key elements include: integrated planning, design, engineering and construction, on site prototyping with residents, independent infrastructure, and adoption of dynamic social and market channels for scaling and adaptation.



Several key Haitian Kreyol environmental patterns are manifested in the Urban Village Model, including:

"Nuovo Lakou"--a modernization of the traditional Haitian courtyard

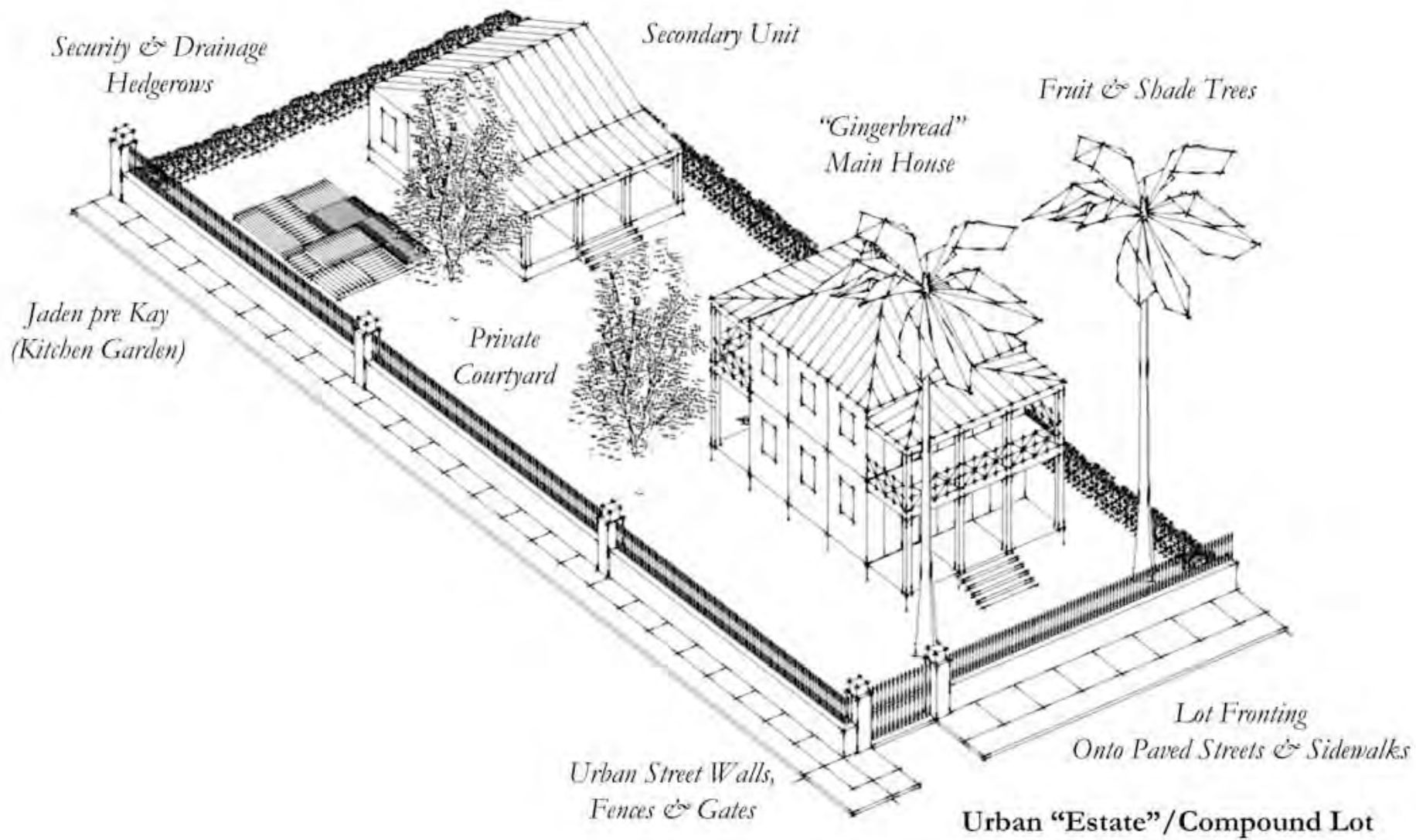
Landscape stewardship--integrating private and shared open spaces with landscape restoration

A diversity of building types, including Creole Townhouses, "Kay Chamhot" (tall house) and "Ti Kay" (small house)

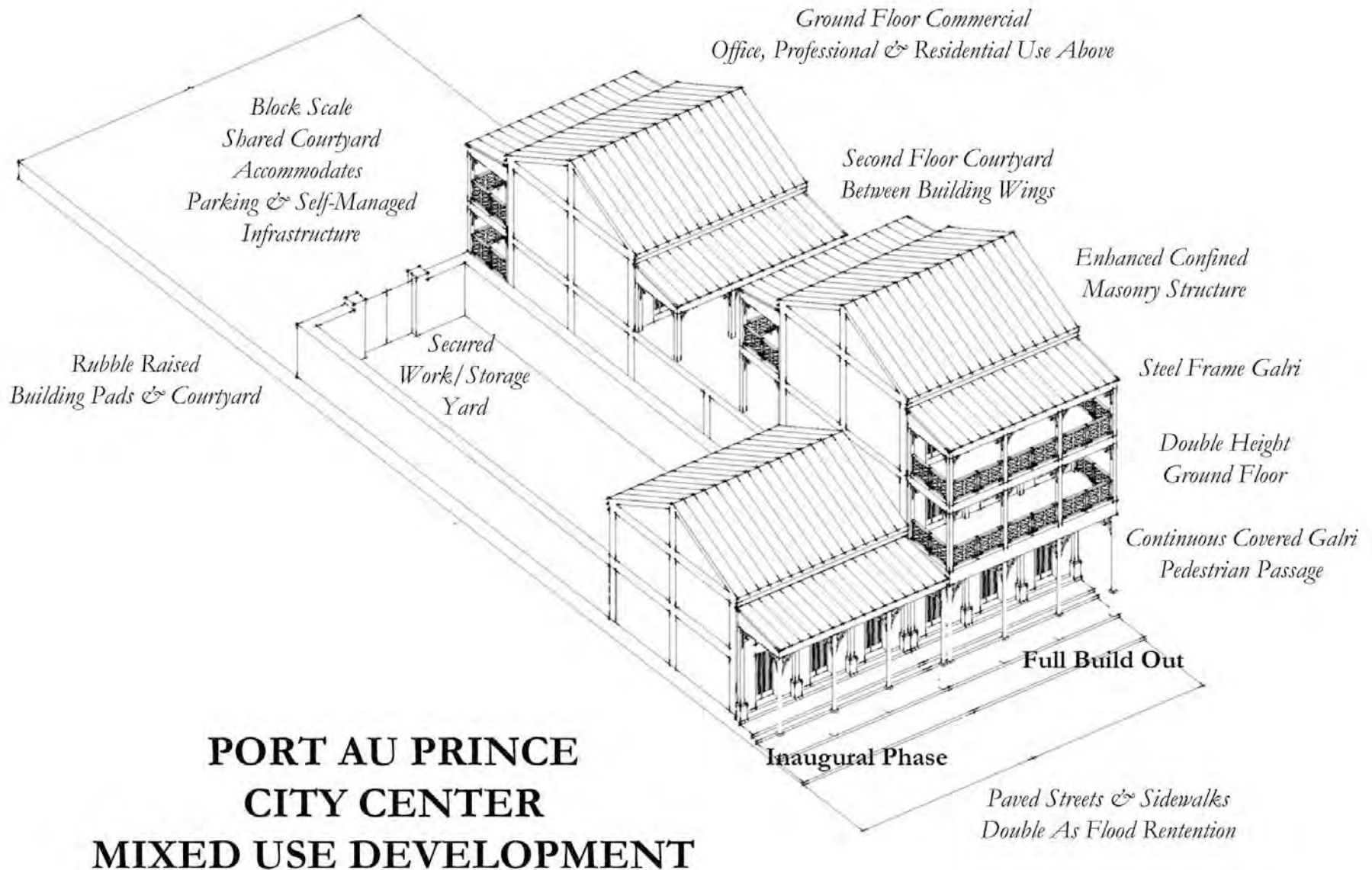
"Galri" (veranda) extended outdoor living spaces

"Jaden pre kay" (kitchen gardens)

Property line hedgerows & gates



Drawing by Christopher Robin Andrews



Drawing by Christopher Robin Andrews



Kreyol Townhouse Prototype



THE URBIMPLANT® SYSTEM

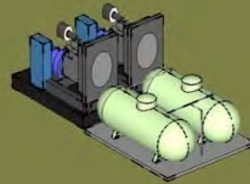


Wind Turbine

THE URBIMPLANT® SYSTEM



Wind Turbine

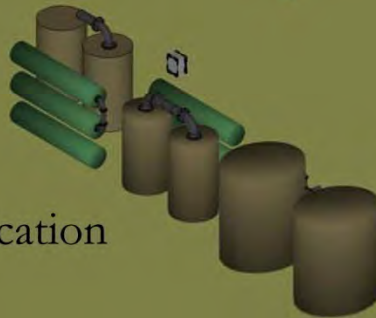


Biogas Generator

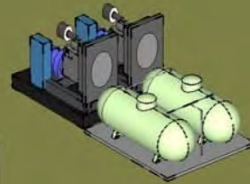
THE URBIMPLANT® SYSTEM



Wind Turbine



Water Purification



Biogas Generator

THE URBIMPLANT® SYSTEM



THE URBIMPLANT® SYSTEM



Wind Turbine

Equipment Shelter

Recycling Center

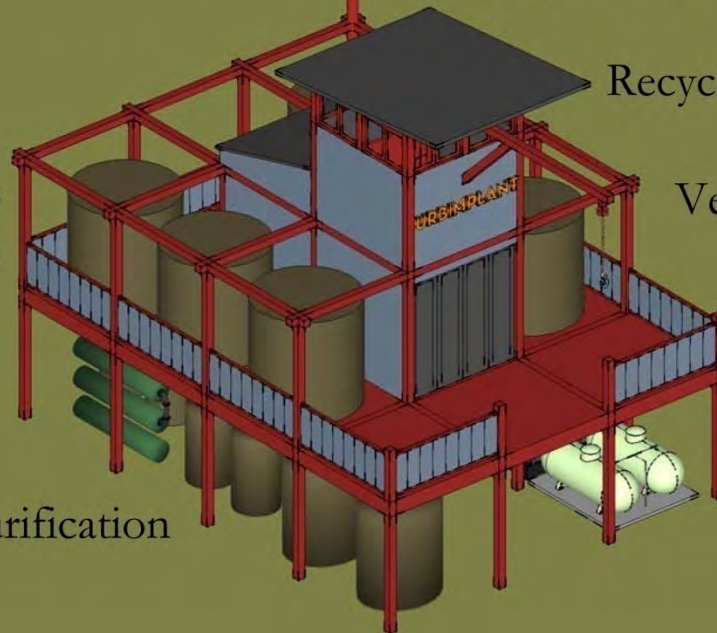
Vehicle Charging Station

Work Platform

Biogas Generator

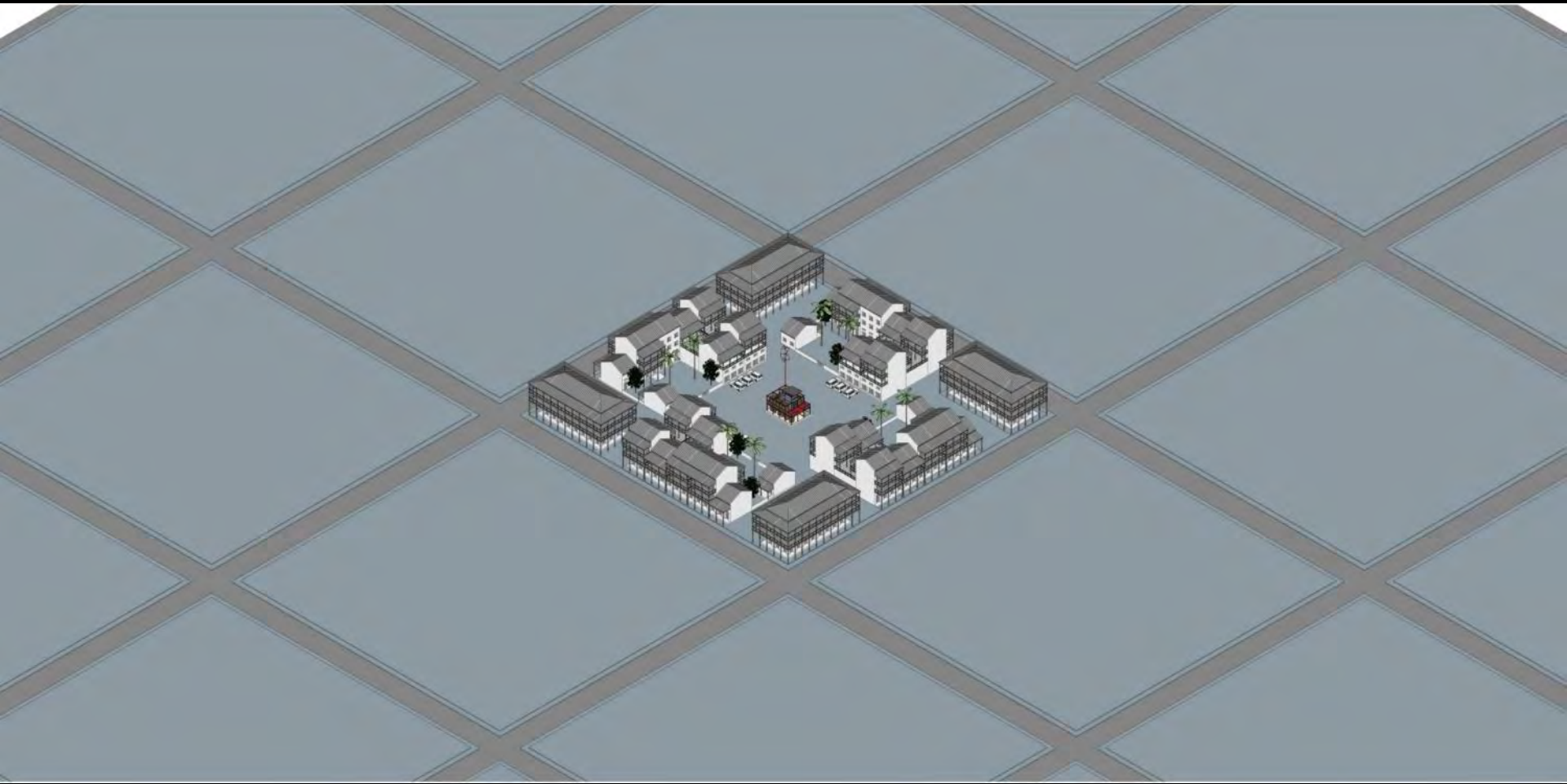
Auxiliary Tanks
(Also Underground Option)

Water Purification

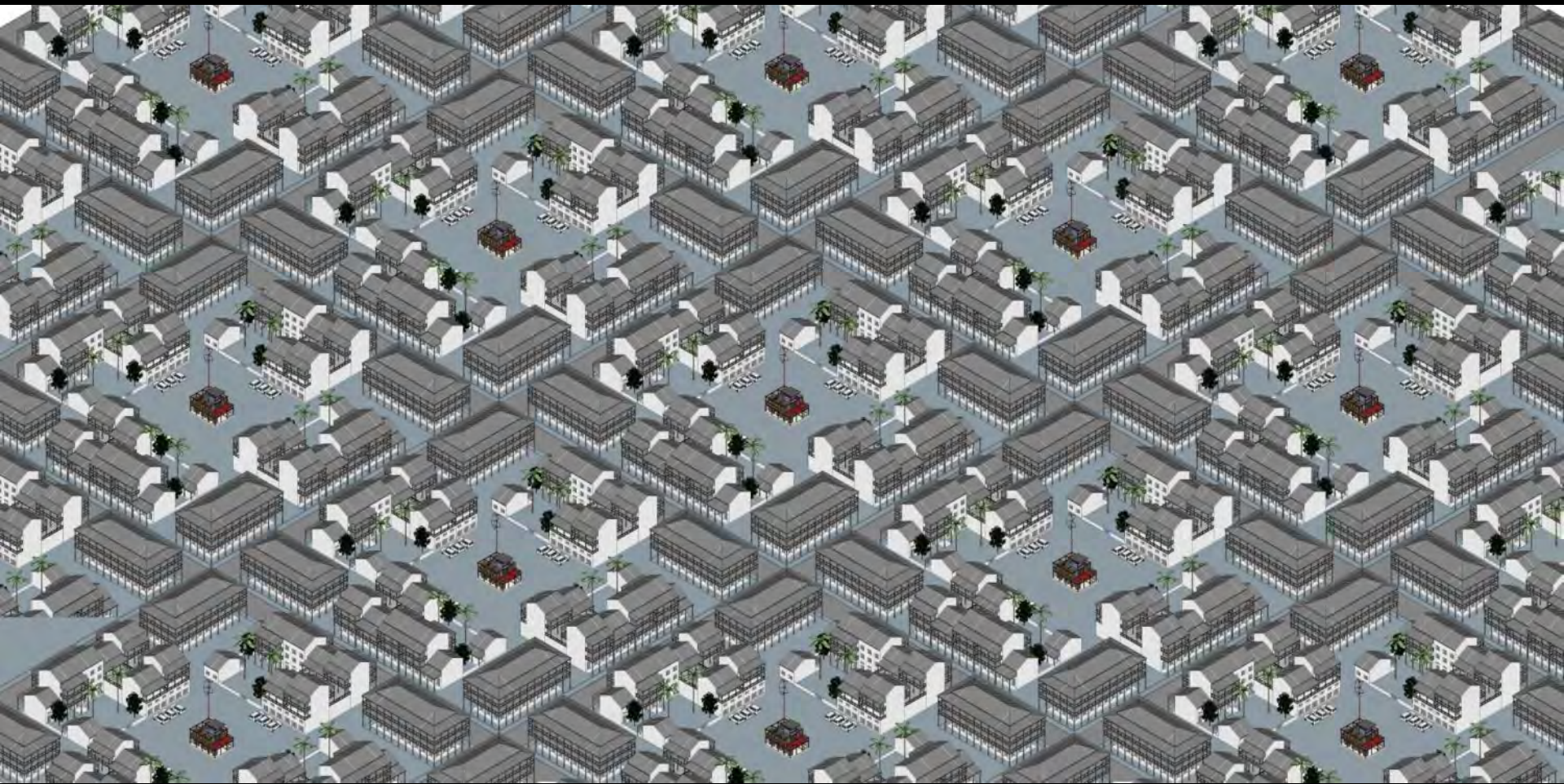




Port au Prince City Center URBIMPLANT & Kreyol Urban Townhouse Implementation



Port au Prince City Center URBIMPLANT & Kreyol Urban Townhouse Implementation



Port au Prince City Center URBIMPLANT & Kreyol Urban Townhouse Implementation

A question for me, in terms of these two terms that have been put before me—"tacit knowledge" and "cultural agency", is how can we, in a modern context, as craftsfolk, as artists, as designers, how can we produce in a way that is environmentally and culturally sustainable, is appropriately scaled and accessible, and that fully engages our neighbors and fellows?



William Morris is a critical touchstone—especially with his concerns about the relationship of industrial production to the spirit of the worker.



The I-phone, or rather its case, a tremendous opportunity for self expression of identity.



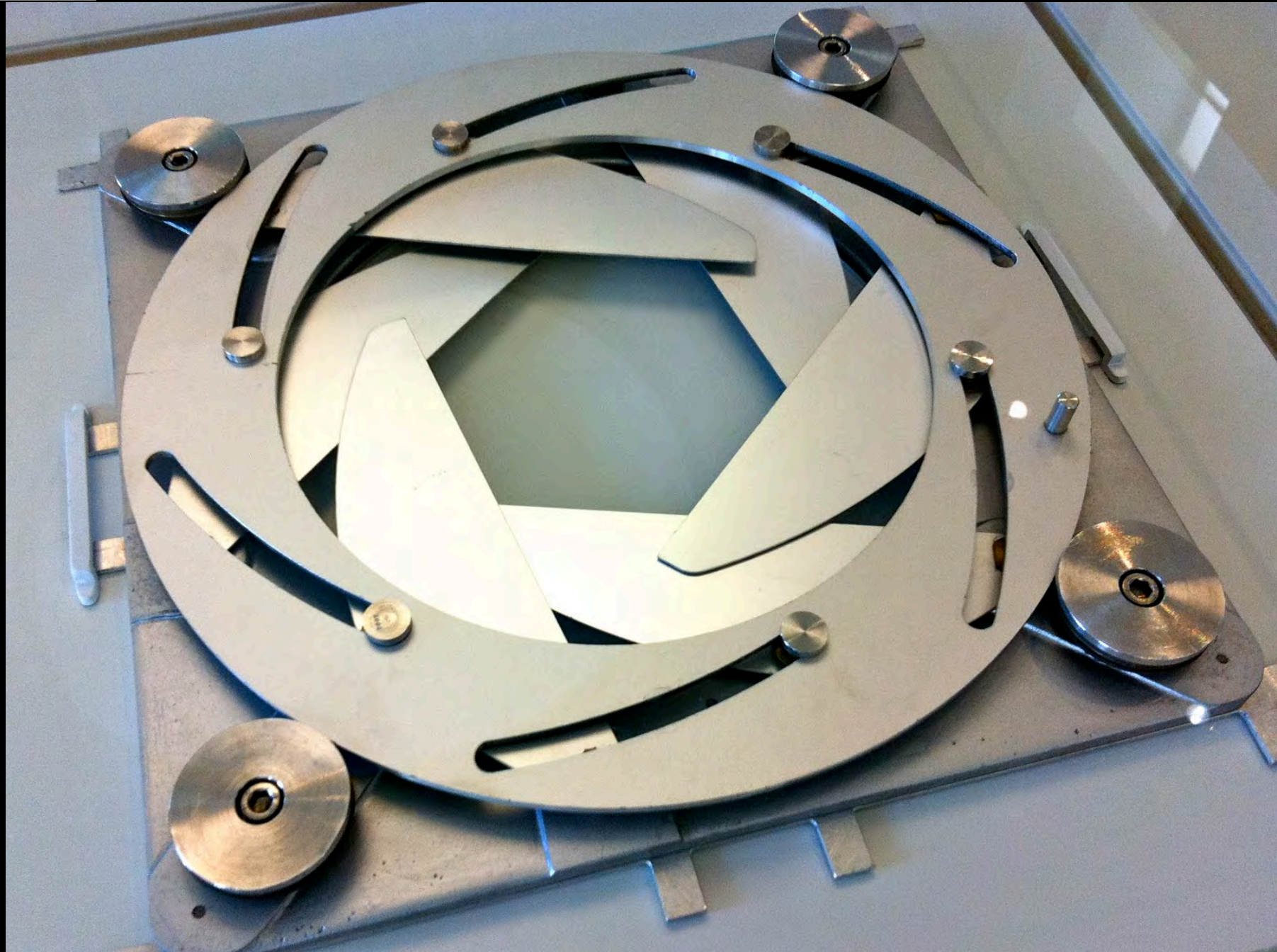
The DIY/steampunk aesthetic.

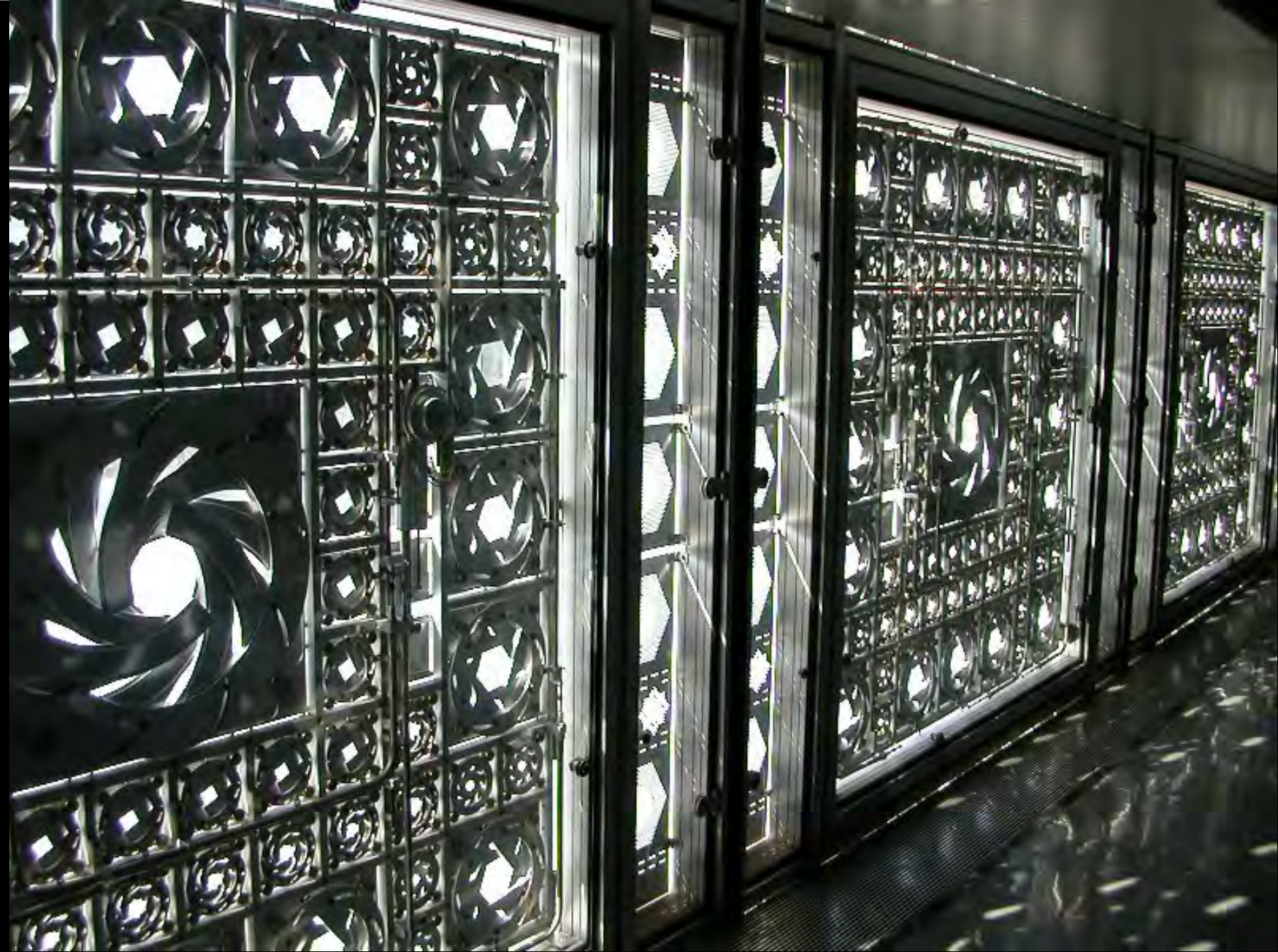


A tattooed Russian criminal. Here literally, following Loo's admonitions, ornament is crime.



In the Maori warrior, not quite crime, but a “primitve” artistic manifestation.







In Jean Nouvel's Arab Institute, a brilliant, beautiful detail, within a dead building and urbanist configuration—all too typical of late modern architecture.





In some of the earlier modernist works, we do see a clear reverence and understanding of craft along with a sense of wholeness, of aesthetic sustainability and continuity.

These modernists are riffing on tradition, like be-bop is riffing on Tin Pan alley in Jazz.

These modernists were trained in the Classical traditions, and rightfully rebelled against it, but still grounded in their professional craft lineage.

















And there are some modern architects today, who carry forth this understanding and reverence for craft, with a sense of conceptual wholeness throughout the building process, with relation to nature and context, integrated with function and aesthetics.



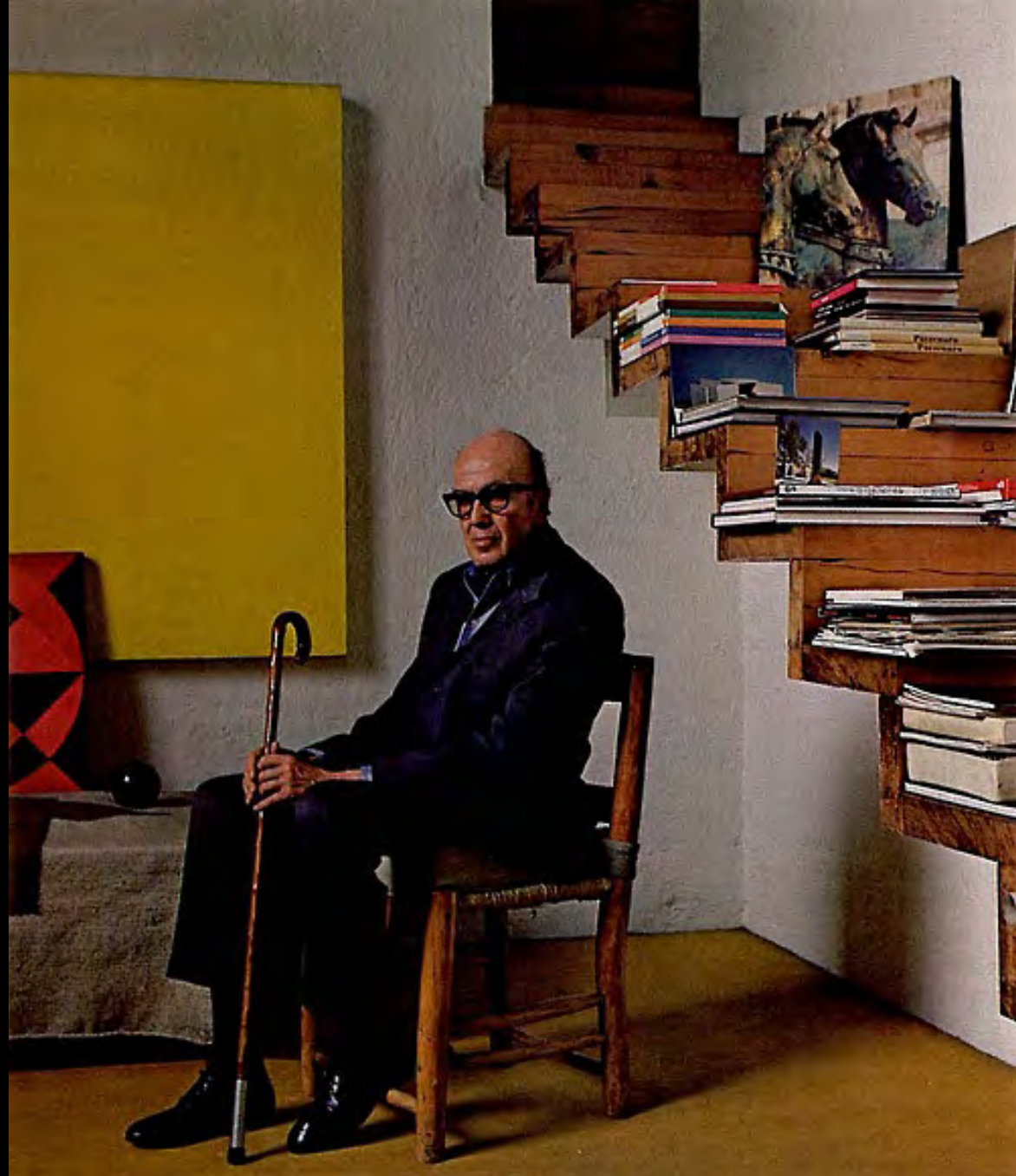




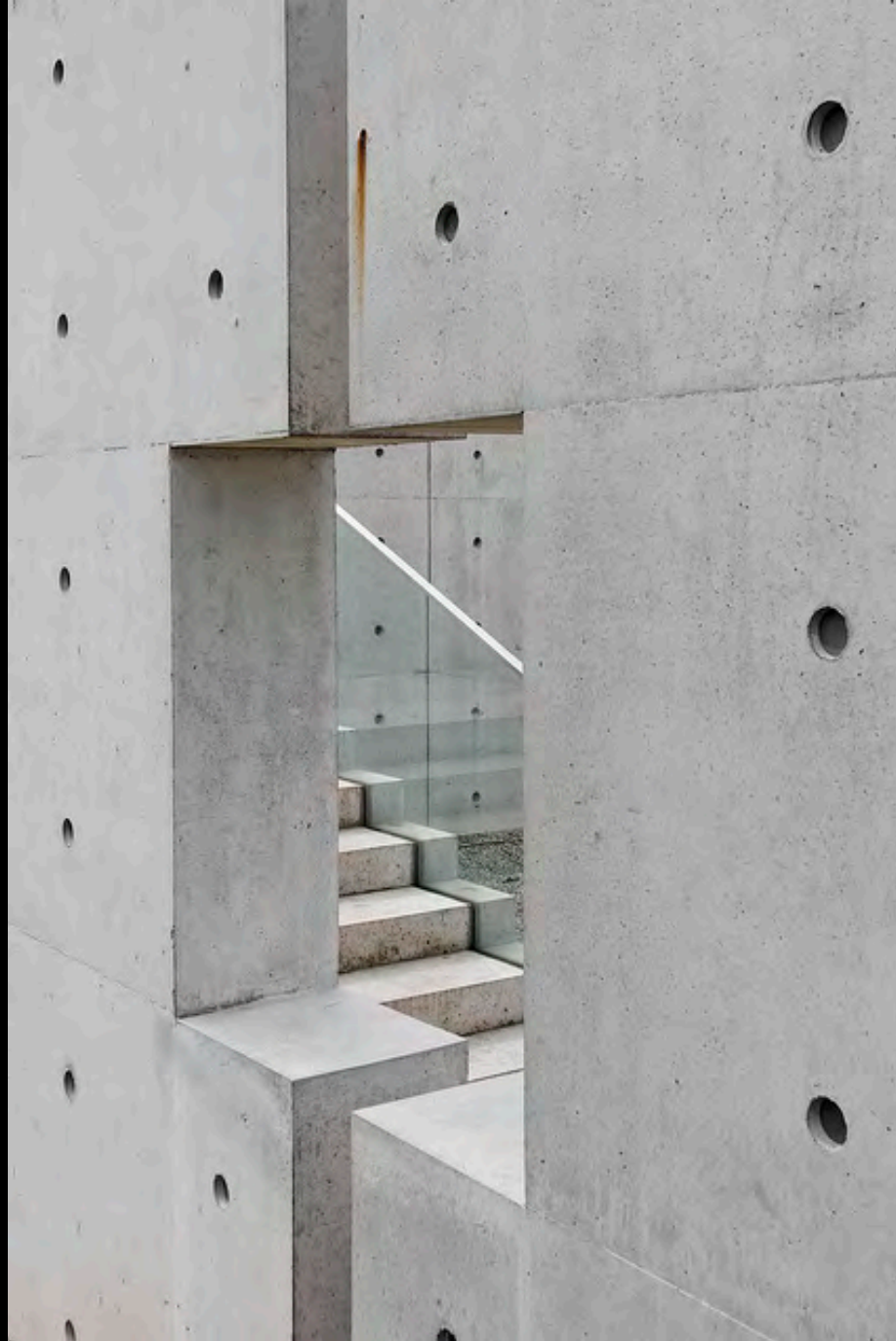
















So in response to this question—this great challenge and opportunity—in terms of these two terms that have been put before me—“tacit knowledge” and “cultural agency”, is how can we, in a modern context, as craftsfolk, as artists, as designers, how can we produce in a way that is environmentally and culturally sustainable, is appropriately scaled and accessible, and that fully engages our neighbors and fellows?

I see two critical pieces to this—based on my own experience, some of which I have been honored to share with you today. I am sure there are more we will all continue to discover along the way.

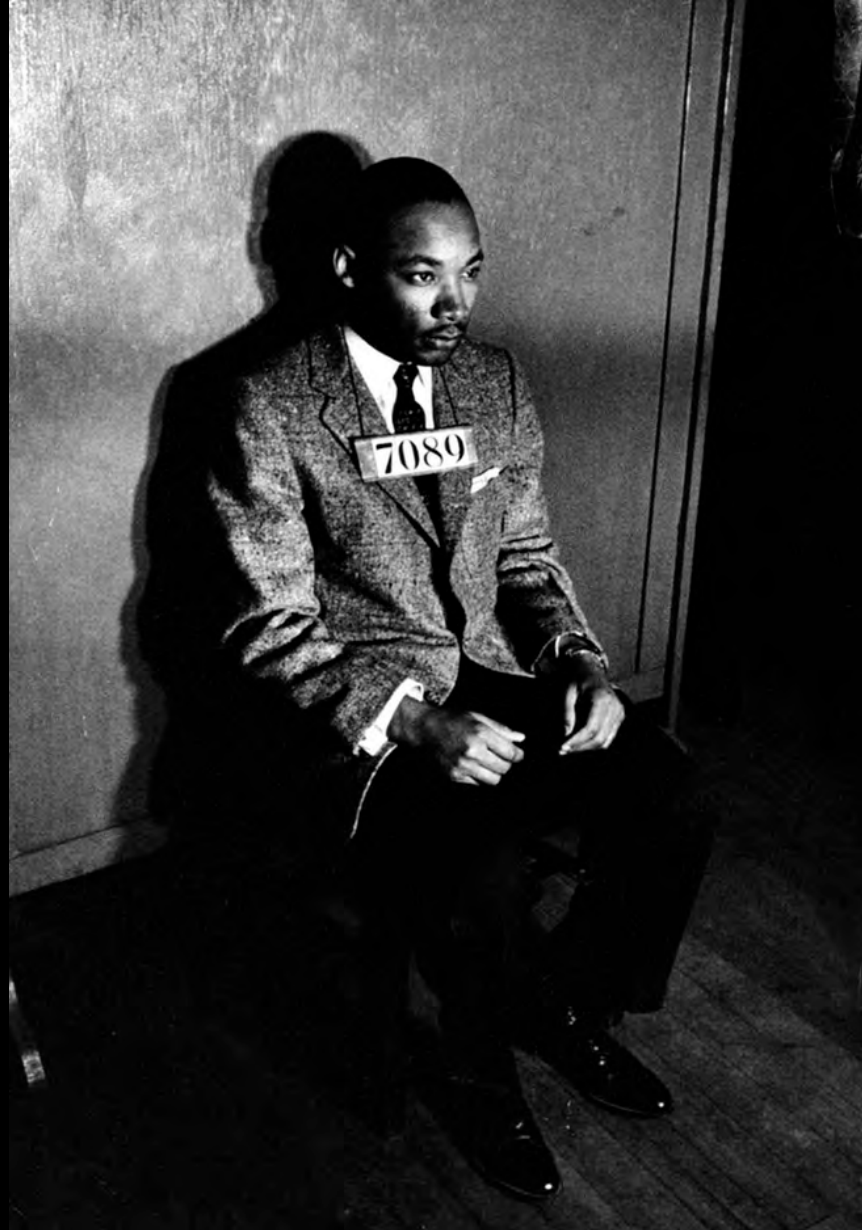
One—we must engage in the making of things, with our hands and our minds. This must start with study and apprenticeship, trying and failing, trying and failing, trying and succeeding, always with a study and understanding and reverence for the great wisdoms in our various disciplines. In other words, we must get our hand dirty.

Two—we must fully engage in the world, the messy, unfinished, dangerous world. We must not isolate ourselves in academe or commerce—we must take to the streets. In other words, we must get our hands dirty.

Thus the making of beautiful things, and the beautiful making of things, of cultural production, of “ornament”, the application of our efforts towards craft and art, includes expressing who and where we are, individually and collectively, of celebrating, articulating and nurturing, and of course, the cycle of teaching and learning, teaching and learning, and of helping others do the same.



In 1923, ninety years ago, Adolph Loos equated ornament with crime.



Almost 50 years ago, on April 12, 1963, Martin Luther King wrote, in a letter from the Birmingham jail: “One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty.”

THE ETHICAL PATTERN MAKER

CULTURAL PRODUCTION
& SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Christopher Robin Andrews Architect

andrews-chang.com

www.classicalcarpets.com

www.galrigroup.com

email: chrisandrews@sbcglobal.net