



1



2

Project description:

How to answer to a specific climate, with a limited budget in a wonderful landscape ?



3



4

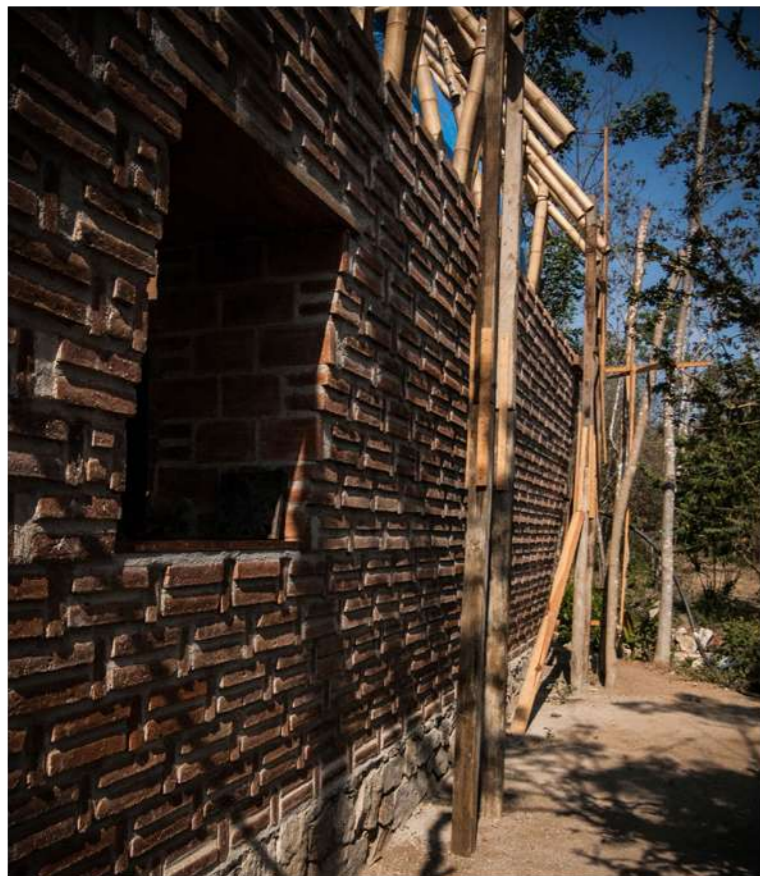
La Apoteka is a small workshop built in the tropical forest of Mazunte in Mexico for a Permaculture Center. The client aspires to develop new methods in agriculture, towards a sustainable and ethical production of food. After years of development on his land, it was the time for a new step in order to share his work with local communities. Therefore, La Apoteka provides a place for hosting workshops, guests and a storage for tools. It is a project born from the close collaboration between the client, the architect and 3 local workers.

Architecture through the act of building is a violent change in a beautiful natural landscape such as the forest of Mazunte. Understanding the local qualities was necessary to answer with a harmonious proposal. Using local resources such as energy, materials and skills, was a condition to face a very limited budget. The process of designing and building has been guided and inspired by the local situation creating a frame where logical answers transforms into poetical spaces.

WEST FACADE .1
LA APOTEKA NORTH-WEST VIEW .2
PALM LEAVES ROOF UNDER CONSTRUCTION .3
WORKSHOP SPACE .4

LA APOTEKA

ASTONE, BRICK AND BAMBOO HOUSE FOR A PERMACULTURE CENTER



1



2



3



4

INCLINED SOUTH WALL PROVIDING SHADOW FROM ONE BRICK TO ANOTHER AT THE HOTTEST TIME OF THE DAY .1
EAST FACADE .2
NORTH-EAST VIEW .3
STAIRCASE .4

2-Foster the socially responsible role of built environment professionals by stimulating social modes of practice before speculative economic profitability

We hear sometimes about an Architecture without architect. In fact the problem is how architects became design specialists instead of keeping the control and the knowledge of construction. In vernacular architecture, people had those skills and a certain logic in terms of economy.

For La Apoteka, the core of the project was the collaboration between the client the workers and the architect. Each member of this triangle had a double role interacting with the others. The client was on the side of the architect to organize the relations with local people and was a worker as well. The workers where involed everyday in the structural design because in this region, engineers and architects are not requested for buildings. The architect was a worker as well. Those conditions created a very dynamic atmosphere around the project where everyone is fully involved towards a same goal, building together an intelligent project.

As an architect, we also have the responsibility to decide where does the money of the client goes. We tried to foster labour based technics and materials. We also decided to take the risk to ask a very young team for the bamboo construction to help them start their business. All those considerations lead to a feeling of ownership by all actors of the project. This experience shows that it is not the object itself that strengthen the local community but the process of its construction. The building becomes the trace of this process which continues its development in the local community's life.

LA APOTEKA

ASTONE, BRICK AND BAMBOO HOUSE FOR A PERMACULTURE CENTER



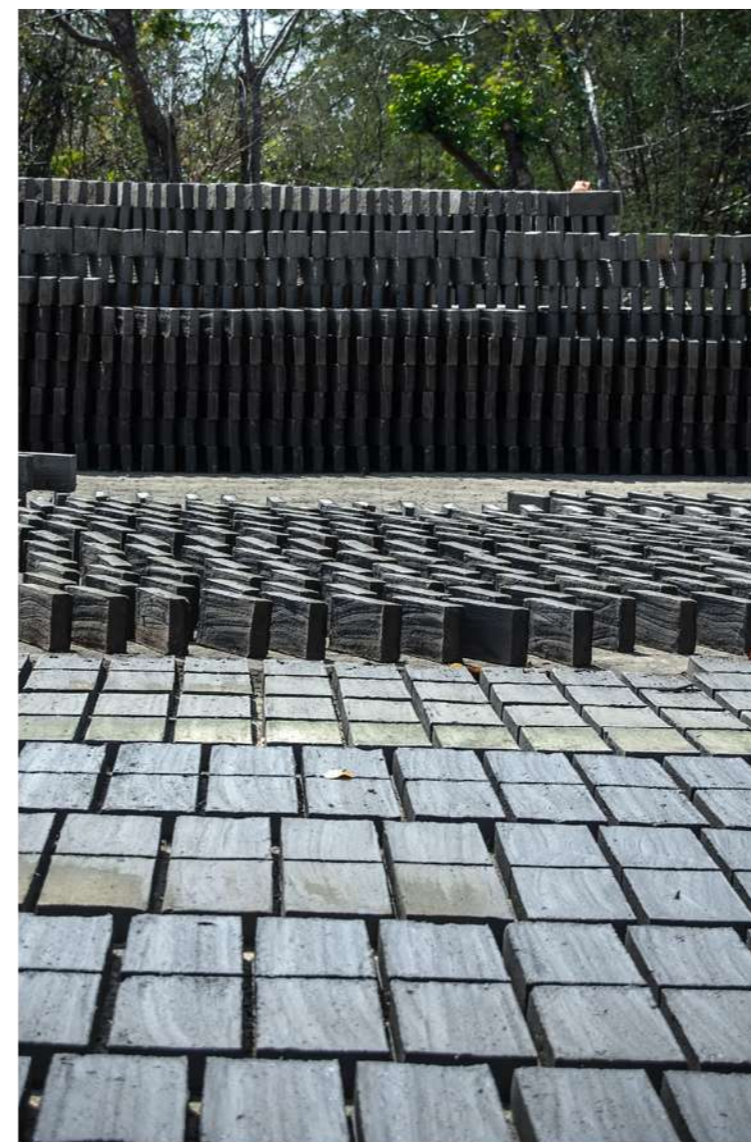
1



2



3



4

HAND MADE BRICK AFTER ONE NIGHT OF FIRING .1
 UPPER BEDROOM WITH A RAMMED EARTH FLOOR .2
 PALM LEAVES ROOF .3
 HAND MADE CLAY BRICKS SUN DRYING BEFORE FIRING .4

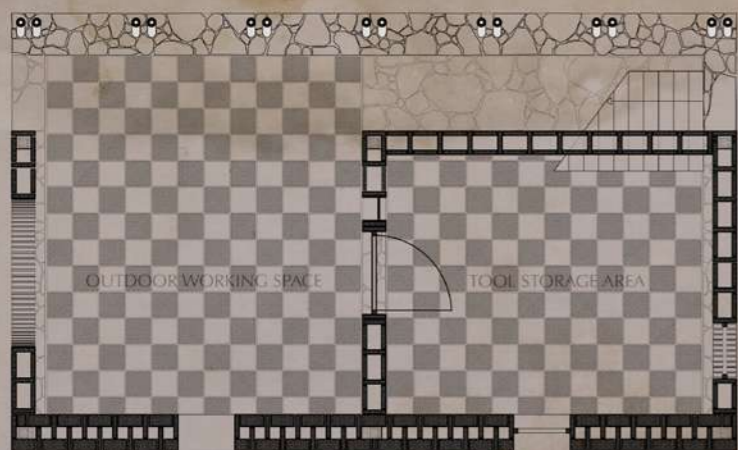
5-Facilitate the use of appropriate technologies, materials and labour adequate to local values, to the cultural specificity and responsive to the natural environment

In the region of Mazunte as almost everywhere in the world, people are building their houses with concrete pillars and an infill material. Regardless for the climate conditions, orientation, local traditions, resources or skills, this technic of building is destroying the world. In Mazunte, they use the local handmade firebricks to fill the concrete structure. By visiting the families producing it we decided to use this wonderful material and work with the skills of the mason available there. The firebrick walls of the project are load bearing and the pattern allowed us to use less material and create a more insulated walls. For the foundations, stones was an interesting solution. It took more time so more labor but is less expensive than a concrete foundation.

Very simple principles are organizing the design such as the orientation according to the wind and the sun, heavy massive wall to the south and open facade to the north, cross ventilation, breathing materials, etc. Those principles should be basic in any project because it doesn't need to be skilled, it gives natural constraints which is inspiring for a design where fashion has no longer its place.

In order to share and experiment a maximum around this project, we decided to make a rammed earth floor where young architects traveling in Mexico could participate as well as the client and the workers.

LA APOTEKA
 ASTONE, BRICK AND BAMBOO HOUSE FOR A PERMACULTURE CENTER

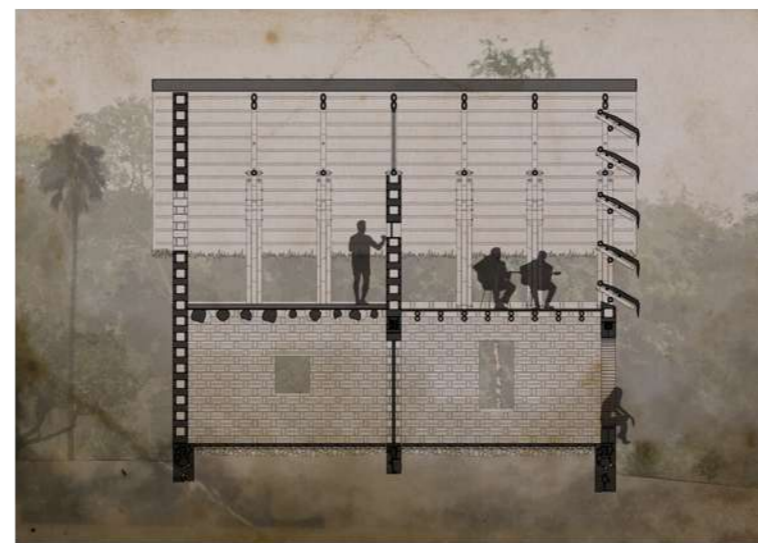


8-Support participatory, democratic, multicultural and interdisciplinary processes and approaches in strengthening community solidarity as a factor of rural and urban social development

Borders, Social role, hierarchy are the conditions of our societies. It is necessary to question and even break those limits in any situation and especially in architecture. The building site of La Apoteka was a field of experimentation in terms of everyone's role, our life style on the site, our meetings with all actors of the project.

Breaking the hierarchy is not a naive idea but a condition for a more humane and peaceful architecture. By having a double role on the field, as a worker and an architect or client and worker, the process inverts hierarchy constantly. It leads to a fundamental trust between all actors.

As the permaculture center is trying to promote a more responsible agriculture, listening to the plants needs and understanding natural processes, La Apoteka had to answer to the architectural questions with the same vision. The project expresses a vision of the society that fitted to the clients aspirations. The experimental building site has been a place to share this vision with local communities and is continuing inside of the finished building through the workshops that it will host.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN .1
VIEW OF THE WORKSHOP SPACE FROM THE TOOL STORAGE .2
NORTH/SOUTH SECTION .3
WEST/EAST SECTION .4
WOODEN MODEL BUILT FOR EXPLAINING
THE PROJECT TO LOCAL WORKERS AND CLIENT .5

LA APOTEKA

ASTONE, BRICK AND BAMBOO HOUSE FOR A PERMACULTURE CENTER