



When you import what looks like simple geometries, and then you zoom in to an arbitrarily microscopic scale and realize all the corners are actually saying, "GO FUCK YOURSELF" — at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

# MEXICALI RESISTE

By Marco Vera

Mexicali Resiste is a people's organization that has been active now for over a year in a battle to defend their water from the foreign investment brewery, Constellation Brands. In January 2017, there was a federal Mexican implementation of a 20 percent hike in gasoline prices in Mexico, which caused nationwide protests and mobilization. On January 4, 2017, Mexicali citizens blocked the Pemex distribution plant at La Rosita, leaving gas stations closed and the city paralyzed. At the same time as the federal hike in gasoline prices, the state imposed a transportation and environmental tax on license plate renewals. This combination of being hit with both a federal and state tax increase was overwhelming and caused people to block a state tax collection center. Mexicali is the capital of Baja California, and houses its civic center, where Baja California's federal, state and municipal offices are located. Nearly 12,000 people attended a protest at city hall on January 12, 2017, prompting several Congress members to flee. This gave birth to the camps that initiated a government blockade. Later that week, on January 15, as a part of the national resistance against the gas hike, another march took place and became the largest protest in Mexicali history, with upward of 75,000 people attending. After this protest, five more camps were set up, entirely shutting down the halls of government.

As the camps remained intact, organizers created multiple working groups or committees for various tasks, including research and communications, with weekly assemblies open to the public. This allowed the movement to serve as a vigilant watchdog against the government. And it was this vigilance that led to their most important discovery—namely, that the city government cut a secret water supply deal with the multinational corporation, Constellation Brands. Constellation Brands is a U.S.-based corporation and NAFTA beneficiary headquartered in New York that produces and markets alcohol (beer, wine and spirits), distributing brands such as Corona Extra, Corona Light, Modelo Especial, Negra Modelo, Pacifico, Victoria and Ballast Point. In collusion with Francisco "Kiko" Vega de Lamadrid, the Governor of the state of Baja California, they negotiated a backroom deal giving them access to Mexicali's water supply in the heart of the farmlands just south of the U.S. border. Concerns over the legitimacy and transparency of the deal were ignored, as were requests for public records and copies of the contracts.

It is estimated that Constellation Brands would use 20 million cubic meters of water per year throughout its 50-year contract. As in California, the people of Baja

California are concerned about drought and the ecological impacts such water consumption would have in the desert region. The movement has attracted the attention of farmers, hydrologists, geologists and oceanographers, all being asked to contribute relevant research to the fight. Due to increasing public pressure, however, Governor "Kiko" repealed the tax on license plates, and apparently, a vague "water law," which led many to believe outlawed the privatization of water, and therefore Constellation Brands' presence in the area. Yet, the company's facility remains under construction. As the pressure and vigilance of the movement continued, several tactics were used to break the blockades of government offices and remove the camps. In one case, shortly after a provocation by the governor and his security team, who showed up unannounced to break the blockades, members of the camps chased the governor away. His response was to order undercover police into the camps to break them up in the wee hours of the morning.

Blockades have been an integral tactic of the Mexicali Resiste movement. When Constellation Brands' machinery was spotted being transported into the city, blockades were set up at the brewery's construction site. Just like the oil companies at Standing Rock, Constellation Brands justifies its presence in the region under the worn-out discourse of providing jobs to workers, all the while neglecting legal employment regulations by paying workers under the table or hiring non-uniformed security forces wearing ski masks and bandanas. As huge water-tank containers were being brought in from Ensenada on flatbed trucks, organizers mobilized to block their entry onto the brewery premises. Seeing the determination and bravery of those on the blockade, the hired truck drivers left their cargo out on the road for weeks until police and their threat of violence paved the way for the delivery.

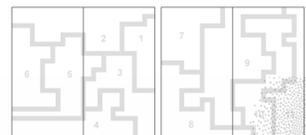
The most recent and probably most notorious clash with police forces occurred at Rancho Mena on the boundary between ejido El Chorizo and El Choropo (where Constellation Brands is being built) on January 16, 2018, just days after Mexicali Resiste had commemorated its one-year anniversary of resistance. As water defenders attempted to stop the machinery, 200 police entered the private ranch and a fierce confrontation with 50 protesters ensued. While this confrontation resulted in injuries and violent arrests, it also reignited the battle to awaken public consciousness, both regionally and internationally. Mexicali Resiste is now calling on people worldwide to join in solidarity with the struggle in Mexicali. There are now calls for an organized boycott of Constellation Brands.

One of the things that so many people do not understand about the border is how culturally porous it is. Privileged artists and the bourgeoisie envision it (as they do most social issues) as a black and white theatrical representation of poverty and inequality. The reality is quite different. Border cities feed off and exploit each other. Whether it's Juarez's crime rate in

relation to El Paso's peaceful exterior, Tijuana and San Diego's anthropological synergy, or Imperial Valley's total dependence on Mexicali's agricultural labor force, this is a relationship that is not designated by any geographical imposition. I firmly believe the approximately 2000-mile stretch of border land on both sides is its own country, whether either side likes it or not. In contrast, a particularly narrow-minded third-world artistic vision extends the corporate thinking—that people south of the border will sell out for a buck. Currently, it is artists who are being bought out and co-opted, utilized as pawns to influence the vote by not rocking the boat. The major difference that refines the border is that, in Mexico, this auction of artistic integrity is organized directly by the government, usually through offering employment, whereas in the United States artists are commodified by developers who influence policy in order to displace actual culture.



(RUNNING ANECDOTE) Boundary Representations Malcolm Rio, SMArch's Candidate, MIT



At 19:32 on Monday August 12th, 2002, Darius Corneliu pulled into the truck lane at Kiszombor, a small border post between Romania and Hungary. Beside him a limp chain link fence ran behind a line of trucks and towards a concrete cube plastered with signs in Hungarian that he could not read. In the distance, fields weakly suggested cultivation. His Renault truck, a family investment, was carrying a blue 6 metre steel container holding approximately 26,000 kilograms of cucumbers, which came from his uncle's farm near Blistretu about six hours away. No, he told the Hungarian customs officer, he did not

know how his uncle grew them, whether it was in the field where he played as a kid, or in the rusting greenhouse next to the ditch. Did his uncle practice "Bulgarian gardening"? What was "Bulgarian gardening"? His uncle wasn't Bulgarian. Really, they were not his cucumbers. Darius was only doing a favour by taking his uncle's cucumbers to a wholesaler in Szeged. Normally he did not ship cucumbers. He preferred cargo with fewer border hassles, like televisions. He did not understand why the officer—a short man with dark circles under his eyes—was irritated with his paperwork. He only had what his uncle had given him, he explained in broken Hungarian. It should be in order. He was sorry. Bocsanat.

The weary Hungarian customs officer was disappointed with this amateur importer. Sanyi Szilágyi had been working his gate since early that morning and now he wanted to go home, but this guy's forms were a disaster and Sanyi could not just let him go. He would have to impound the truck. He lifted the gate and motioned Darius to park on the right of a small building about 400 metres up the road. This building served as the office of the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard, where Sanyi had worked for twelve years, and where he would retire as long as he did not break too many tenets of Act C of the 1995 regulations

governing customs law, customs procedures and customs administration, or Government Decree No. 45 on its implementation. The office building that Darius approached was in rough shape, but Kiszombor was too small a border post to be a priority for the infrastructure upgrades that began when Hungary joined NATO three years earlier. Big crossings, some with up to twenty lanes, were getting automated disinfection stations, radiation detectors and x-ray machines. Most of them also got a phytosanitary officer or two, trained in handling suspicious produce. At small posts they could only cross their fingers. Kiszombor was 32nd on the list for upgrades.

As he closed his gate and walked after the truck, Sanyi tried to remember the last time he had been required to hold a produce shipment. He could not. Cigarettes topped the list of annual seizures, followed by alcohol, historical artifacts, animals, and finally drugs. Vegetables did not appear. Either they were not considered noteworthy, or they were confiscated in such enormous quantities that their inclusion in the statistics would have ruined the graph.

"Come back tomorrow," Sanyi said as he walked up to the truck. Darius did not seem to mind, he just shrugged and asked for a ride to Szeged.

## The Minimum Number of Lines by Sean Griffiths

"Ev'rywhere else on Earth, Boundaries follow Nature, - coast-lines, ridge-tops, river-banks, - so honouring the Dragon or Sha within, from which the Land-Scape ever takes its form. To mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon's very Flesh, a sword-slash, a long perfect scar, impossible for any who live out here the year 'round to see as other than hateful Assault."

→ Such is the complaint of Captain Zhang, a Chinese geomancer in that epic novel of the Boundary, Thomas Pynchon's Mason and Dixon. He is drawing attention to the bad Feng-Shui of the famous line carved onto the American landscape by two British surveyors in the Eighteenth century in order to separate Maryland and Pennsylvania. Zhang foretells of the Sha or bad energy, for which the line will be the perfect conduit, bringing "every kind of bad luck there is." Given the history of the Mason-Dixon line as a boundary between the jurisdictions of slavery and wage labour, and as a front line in a murderous civil war, the consequences of which still resonate 150 years later, who would doubt the veracity of the Chinaman's foretelling? On a map, the Mason-Dixon line exists as a simple vector rendered in ink, just another geometric manoeuvre of the kind that, in the words of the novelist Georges Perec, has resulted the deaths of millions of men.

→ Architects draw lines and whilst, for the most part, their lines do not create life or death situations, they are not without significance. Lines sub-divide the surface of the earth into parcels of property. They create micro-frontiers of class, race and gender. They determine what can and cannot happen in a given space. They constitute a framework of written and unwritten rules. Often it takes those from disciplines outside of architecture to unmask the apparently innocent architectural line.

→ An example is the artist, Dan Graham, whose unrealised 1978 project, Alteration to a Suburban House, proposes firstly, the removal of the front wall of a typical American tract house and its replacement by a wall of plate glass, and secondly, the erection of a mirrored wall running parallel to the newly glazed front wall along the longitudinal axis of the house. On a plan, these moves would

exist as two singular strokes of the pen describing respectively the mirror and the glass. But even these most minimal of lines are highly charged, for the glass wall dissolves—visually at least—the boundary. The main living spaces of the house become visible from the public realm and the public realm in turn invades the living room via the view through the glass wall and its doubling in the reflective dividing wall. Because a viewer in the street can now see directly into the house, a major spatial and political characteristic of suburbia—the strict division of space into public and private realms—is undermined. However, the new boundaries still resonate with the alternating current of the public/private relationship, because the viewer looking in from the outside is visible not only to those inside, but also to herself, reflected in the mirror

beyond the glass. She is therefore unveiled, to those who she can see her and to herself, as the voyeur. Thus, just as the frontier between public and private realms is weakened in its physical materiality, it is reinforced psychologically in the mind of the viewer/voyeur.

→ A few years back, in response to a project brief requesting some studies of simple geometries, a student at the University of Westminster, taped out two adjacent squares onto a London sidewalk. Between the squares was a gap of about 12 inches. There was a similar gap between the square nearest the road and the edge of the curb, such that the two squares marked out in tape on the ground traversed the entire width of the sidewalk except for the two 12 inch gaps. The student then observed that pedestrians avoided walking through the squares and would instead go to considerable trouble to walk between them, or pass by in the gap between the square and the curb, in doing so putting themselves into closer proximity with the passing traffic and possible danger.

→ On the basis of this, one might formulate a minimum definition of architecture as the drawing of a single line which changes the nature of space via the creation of a boundary, where, in the mind of the viewer at least, the rules on one side are different from those of the other. This boundary can be constituted by the most minimal of physical interventions and no rules need actually exist. Such a definition should serve to remind the architect that the drawing of the simplest of lines is always a profoundly political act.



Two Adjacent Squares on a Pavement, Matt Crawford.

# WHEN A CUCUMBER IS NOT A CUCUMBER

A story first published in *Journeys: How travelling fruit, ideas and buildings rearrange our environment*, edited by Giovanna Borasi and published by the CCA and Actar in 2010.

LEV BRATISHENKO

- DAY 1
DAY 2
DAY 3
DAY 4
DAY 5
DAY 6
(ETC ...)

I contacted Sanyi to update on the situation in 2018. This was his reply: Dear Lev, I'm retired, there is a new generation and they manage the border differently. That business about cucumbers seems silly now.

But your email reminded me of something strange that happened last week at Tibor's daughter's wedding. She is marrying a fleshy kid. His buddies run import-export and they laughed all night about "olives," what temperature keeps them from rotting, how many you could fit in what car and etc. This made me curious, because olives are not so expensive. So they explained that they were talking about Libyans. And they laughed at me because I did not know. — Sanyi

- DAY 1
(DAY 2)
(DAY 3)
(DAY 4)
(DAY 5)
(DAY 6)
(ETC ...)

The rest of the story continues at: http://cca.cc.ca/cucumbers

# GROUND

03/31

A dozen first years headed on a Saturday field trip to Ansonia to learn about solar panel use.

04/1

Intramural Architecture debated and discussed A House For Essex and Abbey for the Production of Mustard, Pickles and Pickled Vegetables in this week's conversation. The Abbey won in double overtime.

04/2

It snowed.

Joel Sanders hosted a pre-conference Brown Bag Lunch for his Non-Compliant Bodies Symposium to initiate conversation on equality prior to the actual conference. Turns out, Rudolph 322 is not ADA accessible.

Dimitri Brand (a.k.a. PizzaBoi Carti) is the cheesy hero YSoA needs but doesn't deserve. Brought to you by Wall Street Pizza.

A NOTE ON THE DESIGN: EACH ARTICLE IN THIS ISSUE WAS DESIGNED BY A DIFFERENT DESIGNER ACCORDING TO ZONES DRAWN BY THE EDITOR.

ON 03/29

DESIGNERS KYLA ARSADJAJA HYUNG CHOI EMMA GREGOLINO WILLIS KINGERY DAVID KNOWLES ZHONGKAI LI THERESA LIU DANIEL PIZARRO STEVEN RODRIGUEZ HAEOK SHIN MATTHEW WOLFF WENWEN ZHANG

As part of the Brown Bag Lunch series, William B. and Charlotte Shepherd Davenport Visiting professor Alan Ricks of MASS Design Group talked with students on the logistics of his non-profit firm. Step 1, Raise two million dollars...

# THE

Luis Callejas delivered the Timothy Egan Lenahan Memorial Lecture, "The Nature of Image" followed with an aguardiente based cocktail for reception. We must cultivate our gardens.

Aaryoun Lee is selling her mayline for \$50. Can't have enough of those.

03/30

In the wee hours, concerned YSoA citizen Deirdre Plaus spotted a tiny mouse scurrying on the 6th floor bridge. She was immediately transported to the 3rd grade as she played "the ground is lava" for the rest of the night.

Ann Sussman talked about emerging insights from neuroscience as part of the BE'2 lunch talk. Look out for eye-tracking software on Paprika's new website.

Jorge Otero-Pailos delivered a talk on "The Ethics of Dust" as part of the Yale Contemporary Architectural Discourse Colloquium. It turns out it's NOT all dead skin.

"James Wines (SITE) does Shake Shacks now... not so interesting anymore" - Bob Stern.

We were out on the 7th floor roof for the first time this year with the SoM-SoA mixer. Cold, but we were outside at least.

"Are you going to find a sugar daddy tonight?" - Laelia Vulout (to an undisclosed person)

Rhea Schmid defaced Justin Lai's yellow trace. "You have nice hair."

03/31

Alexander Garvin along with guest speakers talked real estate and urban planning in "Creating a Sense of Community in Mixed-Use Development." In related community planning news, in 1970 Yale disbanded its Department of City Planning in response to the department's decision to admit a class with 50% students of color. Luckily a radical planning tradition has continued at Yale regardless!

As part of the Yale Environmental Humanities Initiative's spring lecture series on Landscape and Memory, Caitlin DeSilvey presented "Curated Decay: Inevitable Loss and Other Opportunities."

YSoA Career Development presented a panel discussion "Perspectives on Practice: Technology and Innovation" with Anna Dyson and Ellie Cunningham.

"I was only lieutenant jr. at the time... I had power" - Kyoung Sun Moon