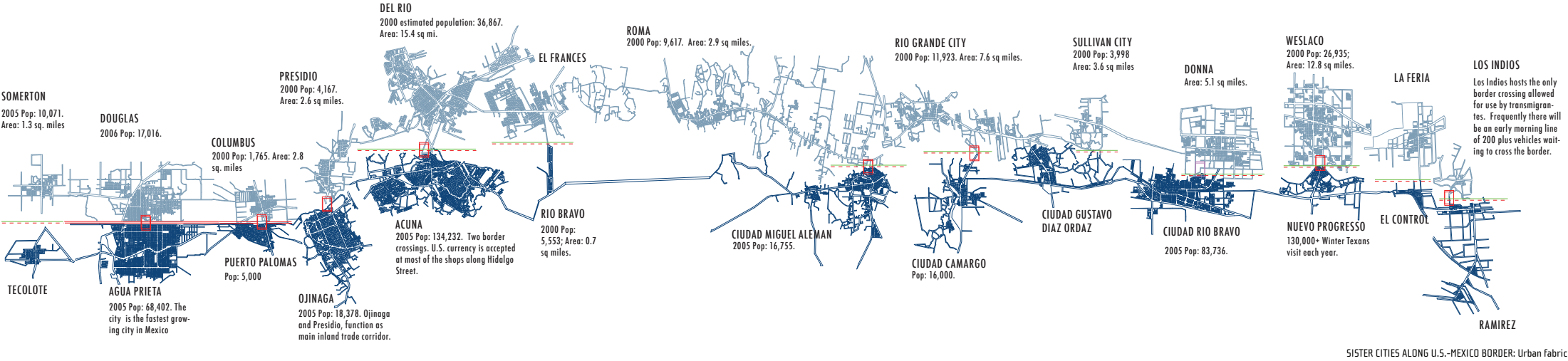


APPENDIX

But when one draws a boundary it may be for various kinds of reasons. If I surround an area with a fence or a line or otherwise, the purpose may be to prevent someone from getting in or out; but may also be part of a game and the players be supposed, say, to jump over the boundary; or it may show where the property of one man ends and that of another begins; and so on. So if I draw a boundary line that is not yet to say what I am drawing it for.—Wittgenstein¹

The area along U.S. / Mexico border is one of the fastest growing regions in the Americas. 90% of the entire border population resides in 14 principal sister cities abutting this boundary; and these populations are expected to more than double in the next ten years.³ Currently the “longest contiguous international divide between a superpower and a developing nation,” this region contains three of the ten poorest counties in the United States, with twenty-one of the border counties being designated as “economically distressed.”⁴ Rapid urbanization and industrialization on both sides of the border have led to ecological degradation and limited access to basic health and sanitation services. The erection of the U.S. / Mexico border fence has exacerbated these conditions, dividing families and communities and rupturing urban continuities.

Borderwall as Architecture is an ongoing project lead and conceived by California based Rael San Fratello Architects. The project exists currently as a targeted and varied series of studies and physical designs for specific conditions along the U.S. / Mexico border wall. The proposal has been presented to leaders in the design community and to head policy makers in Washington D.C. While these initial conversations proved incredibly fruitful, the



need to continue advancing the project and to address the problems and possibilities surrounding the border wall and border communities continues to be ardent and pressing. We would use the great opportunity to participate in the Rotterdam International Architecture Biennale as a forum to expand the conversation internationally and to bring the design propositions to the border constituents themselves. As part of our ongoing research and development we plan to focus on three major sister cities -- El Paso, TX and Ciudad Juarez, MX, Nogales, AZ and Nogales, MX, and Calexico, CA and Mexicali, MX -- whose urban populations have pushed up against the border fence and whose urban challenges could be directly mitigated through a designed relationship to this massive mural divide. Through on-the-ground research and conversations with the communities, local government officials and border patrol agents we will re-interpret and expand our designs through the filter of the community. It is our belief that the notion to act on the fence as a positive and productive force must derive directly from the communities needs and desires. By opening up this conversation around the wall, we hope to encourage local officials and even the parties involved in the construction of the wall to reconsider what it means to live with the fence and to foster new ways to act upon it as a piece of productive urban infrastructure.

For the Rotterdam Biennial we propose an installation that is an accumulation of these many voices and a series of more developed and responsive design propositions for --and by-- the communities involved.

Artifacts included in the display would be an ongoing catalogue of site specific design interventions discussed and developed through research in each of the three sister-cities, renderings, plans, sections, data sets, and diagrams of the border wall and these proposals highlighting the feasibility of implementation, a series of descriptive maps of each sister-city denoting strategies to link the existing urban fabric into the functioning of the wall, and a set of physical models and animations depicting the character and impact of the ideas laid out in the design catalogue. Existing materials related to *Borderwall as Architecture* include a series of design interventions (briefly highlighted in the attached dossier), animations further detailing these design strategies, studies of various social and ecological conditions affected by the border wall, historical and statistical research on the wall and the border region as a whole, and documentation of how these site specific strategies for the U.S. / Mexico wall relate to a larger system of global border fortification in urban areas.

While at present none of these design proposals offer ready-made "solutions" to the problem of international border zones, the global proliferation of physical barricades along international borders necessitates the participation of architects and designers. These walls are among the most heavily funded and socially, historically and ecologically impactful building projects of modern time, yet they are generally the least thoughtfully considered or responsibly erected. To date, architects are markedly silent in such discussions. "It's a silly

thing to design, a conundrum," said Ricardo Scofidio of Diller Scofidio & Renfro in New York. "You might as well leave it to security and engineers."⁵ While this position rightly points up the troubled, and well-explored Foucauldian relations of design to state security, we intend to recast Scofidio's "silly conundrum" as a dire chance: "as architects, we begin with very local, real conditions. Conflicts between military bases and environmental zones, between formal and informal urbanisms, between political and natural conditions -- that's where architectural practice *should* position itself."⁶ *Borderwall as Architecture* re-directs the conversation away from immigration and state sovereignty, using the wall instead a catalyst for healthy and productive bi-national urbanism.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Genova, Judith. Wittgenstein: a way of seeing. Psychology Press, 1995. 122.

² While there are a number of architectural definitions to define the barrier, Chertoff describes the intervention as a "tool" see: Chertoff, Michael. Homeland Security: Assessing the First Five Years. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009. 42.

³ Romero, Fernando. Hyperborder: The Contemporary U.S.-Mexico Border and its Future. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, p. 42

⁴ United States - Mexico Border Health Commission (http://www.borderhealth.org/border_region.php)

⁵ William Hamilton, "A Fence with More Beauty, Fewer Barbs," The New York Times, June 18, 2006. sec. Week in Review.

⁶ Paul Laster "Interview with Teddy Cruz," Artkrush, issue 93, September, 2008.

DESIGNERS:

Rael San Fratello Architects, established in 2002 by partners Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, is an internationally recognized award-winning firm whose focus on emerging technologies and ecological design lies at the intersection of architecture, art, culture, and the environment. As practitioners and academics, we seek to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of ecological thinking through design and are committed to innovation through research, analysis and artistry. Rael San Fratello Architects is proud to be considered among the few young architecture offices in the country that merge the social/ecological project with digital practice.

Borderwall as Architecture has evolved over the course of the past three years under Rael San Fratello Architects. The project team includes: Ronald Rael (principal), Virginia San Fratello (principal), Emily Licht, Brian Grieb, Nicholas Karklins, Plamena Milusheva, Colleen Paz, Molly Reichert.

For video presentations of *Borderwall as Architecture* visit:
-- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dM_fOKv8QI0)
[embedded&v=dM_fOKv8QI0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dM_fOKv8QI0)
-- <http://www.vimeo.com/8549290>

SCHEDULE:

- APRIL - JUNE 2011
- Research and preperation for travel to sister cities
- JULY 2011
- Site Visit: El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico
 - Site Visit: Nogales, AZ and Nogales, MX
- AUGUST 2011
- Synthesize materials collected from site visits, refine designs, conduct additional research
- SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER 2011
- production of deliverables, renderings, maps, models, animations
- DECEMBER 2011
- Site Visit: Calexico, California and Mexicali, Mexico
- JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2012
- completion of catalogue of design charettes along the border
 - completion of animations and models
 - Packaging and finalization of Biennial presentation
- MARCH 2012
- Materials arrive in Rotterdam

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