

4,790 lbs.

TIMOTHY STENSON (w/ Timothy Bragan and Ivan Valin)
University of Virginia

As global politics change, so too does the political context of architecture. The ever present and all encompassing tension which was the cold war glue has dissolved - and so the world is unbound. 'Balance of power' equilibrium has been replaced by localized, yet intense, conflicts and catastrophes. Our attention is drawn to, and held by, these ethnic-territorial-postcolonial confrontations only until the conflict is resolved. However, for the displaced populations and despoiled places, the problem is far from over. Refugee camps and ad hoc relocations are becoming a permanent existence for an alarming number of people throughout the world.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia resulting in the recent conflict in Serbia is a well publicized example of just such a long simmering, multifaceted, multiphased problem - a problem which, although the shooting has stopped, is far from over. The project depicted here is a submission to a competition which called for solutions to the resettlement challenge faced by the Kosovar Albanians returning to the ravaged landscape of Serbia. The basic intentions of this competition are in many ways admirable, but in one aspect unique - while the brief required that the resettlement dwellings be general in form (replicable), it also suggested that they be *buildable by the resident population on the sites of their ruined homes*. Thus, these requirements establish the immediate, and the political, contexts for the architecture.

dwelling / shelter

With the delivery of 4,790 pounds of crated material, four individuals (family, friends, others) will have all the pieces, tools, equipment, and instructions required for the assembly of a temporary dwelling on the site of their once home. Employing simple building techniques, working in teams of two to four, this group can construct their new dwelling in one week.

dwelling / place (in place)

With the ruins of their home, a family can reclaim place - remake place - through the construction of a rubble wall which will serve as the first wall (the "foundation" wall) of their dwelling. Once they have rebuilt and reoccupied their ruined home, and disassembled their temporary dwelling, this rubble wall will remain as a permanent mark - a memorial of resettlement.

dwelling / community

With three independent yet related systems (fence / wall form, structural panels, cladding), a community of families and individuals can construct a variety of different dwelling configurations in response to specific needs and circumstances, thus maintaining, intact, community populations.

This project for temporary housing is conceived of as an assembly of systems which are adaptable to a variety of conditions and situations. The design product is not a singular artifact, but an (a catalytic) ingredient to be added to complicated and disrupted mixtures of indigenous populations and inhabited landscapes - an agent which reenables the constructed relationship between the making of shelter and the occupation of place.



