

EXPERIMENTAL ARCHITECTURE

OPEN THRESHOLDS



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di Architettura

ARCHITECTURE
BEYOND BUILDING
volume 3

Marsilio



1. Ball-Nogues Studio, *Liquid Sky*, 2007. CNC cut reinforced. Mylar, utilità poles, sports nettino, cable. 1100 square meters. PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, USA. Photo Mark Lentz

2. Ball-Nogues Studio, *Maximilian's Shell*, 2005. CNC cut reinforced Mylar, cable. 14x17x7.7 m. Materiale & Applications, Los Angeles, USA. Photo Neil Cochran

3. Ball-Nogues Studio, *Unseen Current*, 2008. 3000catenary strings, inkjet print on mesh. 7,5x5x4 m. Extension Gallery, Chicago, USA. Photo Michelle Litvin



A proliferation of ephemeral structures endlessly blossom in our built environment. If the city is a river delta and architecture its slow moving main channel, then swirling through it are eddies of party tents, scaffoldings, festival stages, and holiday street decorations. These environments reflect the community's desire for happiness. Rescue logistics camps and mass temporary housing address humanitarian emergencies. As designers, we have the opportunity to create and adapt these structures as opportunities to influence expectations between people, the built world and the challenges we face daily. Viewing temporary structures as rapidly-executed speculations enables us to ask

questions. How does a new material or fabrication process perform? How do people interact with a space as opposed to how we anticipate they will react? Temporary environments and structures provide opportunities to explore and construct the effects permitted by architectural encounters, while working outside the limiting constraints of architectural practice. The traditional preoccupations of the architect—structure, materiality, assembly systems, organization of space, human occupation—can inform temporary structures in novel ways. Temporary structures are proving grounds for materials, fabrication processes and ways of thinking about design. They provide opportunities to rapidly test ideas that might

otherwise remain on paper while these ideas ripple through design discourse. Adapting the design process to these opportunities, suggests a master builder model of production. Capitalizing on this response, Ball-Nogues is committed to the building process from concept through fabrication. Ours is a design methodology that tightly integrates conceptualization, computation and fabrication. We cultivate communication and influences between these aspects of the process that are too often kept distinct. By designing the tools and methods of production, we control production. Making these tools available to the builder and user of the structure, separate from the designer, is an aim of our practice. It is a Do-it-Yourself

ethos that enables us to manifest ideas that would otherwise remain untested. In the culture of experimental architecture, where speculative images have eclipsed building and human experience as the lingua franca, temporary structures are a way to bring materiality and use back to design discourse.

BALL-NOGUES STUDIO