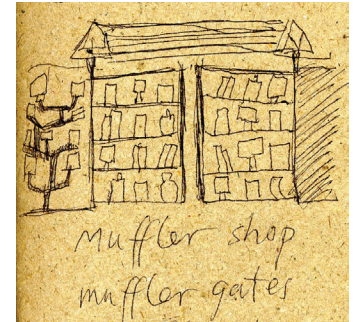


Corona Plaza/Xchange: “este no es refugio para jornaleros” (this is not a day-laborer shelter)



The 103 st. 7 station connects Corona to the train known by some as the Immigrant Express. I want to put a a small camouflaged wedge-shaped shelter close to the foot of the subway entrance stair. Like much of my work this is an art object bordering on functional design. Raised up a few steps from the ground, near where the moving trucks park, the shelter would be painted to look like part of the EI structure including the views under it.

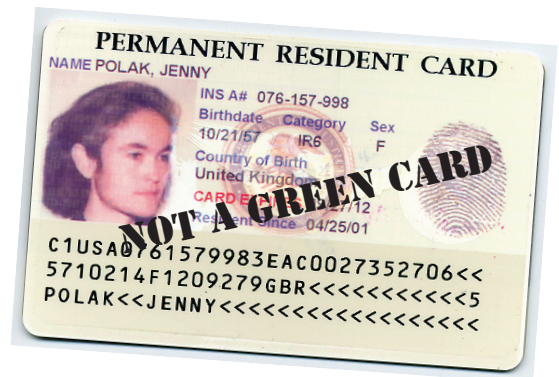
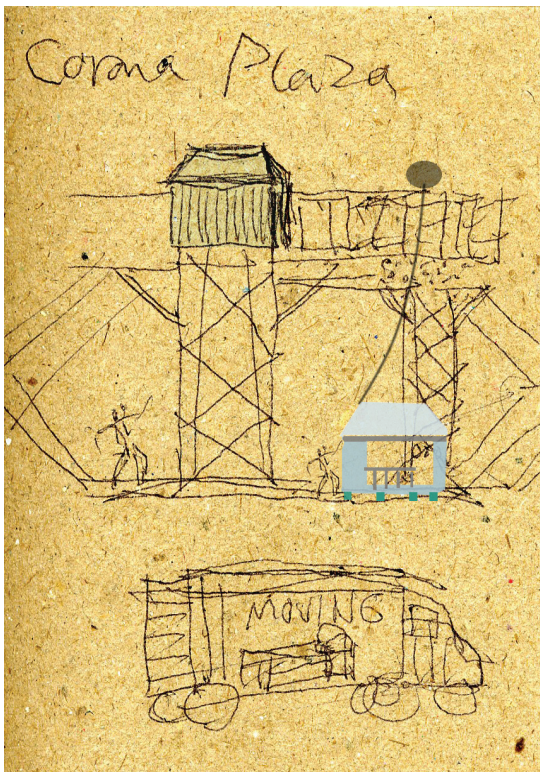
In this open-sided pavilion-like shelter people can pause in the shade and find information on immigration issues, especially relating to documents. For example a warning about the recent increase in detentions of long-time legal permanent residents from the area when they travel, described by a local immigration lawyer. On the festival days there will be an interactive performance in the shelter. This will involve the making of a specially designed Corona ID card for any Corona resident, to promote community over nationality. Interestingly, I learned (see Junction Blvd blog) that many of the Dominican residents of Corona have the last name Corona. I would also like to invite residents to teach me their language(s), and document this.



Above on the track level is a grey-green signal house. The shelter below will echo its proportions, drawing a relationship between the world passing above and the Plaza. A small cloud-like inflatable tethered to the shelter that floats at the platform level alerts those above to the world below. From above the pavilion will be triangular, repeating the shape of the Plaza. I would commission the maker of the gate of the Muffler Shop on 102nd st. and 43rd Ave to make one side of it, emphasising the artistry of local people.

The need for ID's among people without immigration papers has grown acute, with everything from jobs and housing to insurance and drivers' licences depending on immigration status. The issuing of a Corona ID is not an attempt to solve this problem but a gesture that by its evident inadequacy raises awareness about the need to press for justice in immigration legislation.

Even so the Corona ID may not be useless. I have heard a presenter from Queens Museum describe how students in a program there were given ID cards. Two students had been stopped by police on



THE CARD WILL BE DIFFERENT ENOUGH FROM
THIS ONE NOT TO SEEM LIKE FORGERY.

their way to the class
once and, not having
any other had shown
their museum ID's:
the cops had let them
continue on their way.

Corona Plaza is not a day labor site. But last October ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) conducted a frightening street raid several blocks West on Roosevelt arresting (amongst others) people without immigration documents who wait for work there. Community leaders, like Queens Community House and DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving) denounced the raid as harassment and racial profiling. Progressive architects like Public Architecture in San Francisco have recently designed and promoted Day Labor Stations but wherever there is a need it is accompanied by an intense ideological battle. My ambiguous, sculptural shelter (off the grid with a solar powered lamp I have worked with providing lighting), and Corona nation concept engage this debate. I recognise it's hard to get permission for a freestanding structure: an interesting alternative would be to convert one of the moving trucks by the station into the shelter.

Jenny Polak 2008