

# THE ANTI-URINATOR *by Supersudaca*

El Agustino, Lima, Peru. 2005  
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About 1 million people live in San Juan de Lurigancho, the most populated district in the capital city of Peru. It is surrounded by mountains and a river, which means that it is connected to the rest of Lima by only 2 points: Acho and Puente Nuevo (New Bridge). These two points suffer from permanent traffic congestion. The Puente Nuevo crosses over the Rimac River and below the elevated Panamerican Highway, becoming the 'front door' to San Juan de Lurigancho from neighboring district el Agustino.

The social responsibility of architecture is to make better cities. Alas in general architects vastly overestimate their capacity to actually affect change. They don't see the multitude of outside forces that actually shape the production of the urban fabric. The results are nice color representations of never built projects in architecture magazines and a lot of 'what if...' discourse -- but not more.

Perhaps there are some spaces where our limited power could make a difference. If we cannot control the train that will transform the city, maybe we are capable of driving hundreds of auto-rickshaws. Using this strategy, we find there is great potential in operating in the blind spots of traditional architecture and urbanism. At a scale smaller than the building but at which effects can have urban proportions nevertheless. At a scale where nobody claims competence, there aren't any responsibilities nor is there guilt. There we can exercise the knowledge of architecture by practicing a no-budget urbanism of minimum resources but maximum impact. A space where the main tool is ingenuity, where projects are executed without means or intermediaries: Direct Architecture.

Since 2001, as the collaborative Supersudaca\*, we have been working with student teams and citizens on different Direct Architecture interventions in Paris, Talca, Caracas, Buenos Aires, Lima and Tokyo. First we study the components and interrelations of a given urban system, then we define the spots where with minimal effort, the maximum amount of change can be achieved. Finally, a real intervention is made with a minimum of resources. Chairs, plastic bags, yellow lines, banners, paint, balloons, flyers, cardboard etc. trigger virtuous cycles in the urban realm: the awareness of neighbors, the cleanliness of a street, the animation of a vague terrain, the sense of safety on a dangerous street, the construction of a landmark, etc. All these interventions have profited from the acknowledgement that it is the relationships between urbanism and citizens which matter the most. It is the simple ordinary issues that impact our quality of life.

Here we present an example of Direct Architecture, made in Lima in 2005 with the architecture students from the Universidad Católica del Perú.

But that 'door' has turned into a public urinal. Pedestrians, merchants and drivers who pass by, urinate mercilessly on one of the walls under the highway. Local authorities –unsuccessfully– have tried different means to avoid such improper habit (It seems, building a toilet hasn't been considered yet).



Not even threats to arrest the pissers, have been able to make a difference!

Could it be that there is no solution for this? The architects decide to face it...

\*Supersudaca is a network office for architecture and urbanism, established in 2001. Its members are: Juan Pablo Corvalan (Chile), Elena Chevtchenko (Ukraine), Martin Delgado (Uruguay), Victoria Goldstein (Argentina), Pablo Guerrero (Colombia), Felix Madrazo (Mexico), Ana Rascovsky (Argentina), Manuel de Rivero (Peru), Sofia Saavedra (Bolivia), Juan Alfonso Zapata (Republica Dominicana) and Max Zolkwer (Argentina). more info: [www.supersudaca.org](http://www.supersudaca.org)



jesus



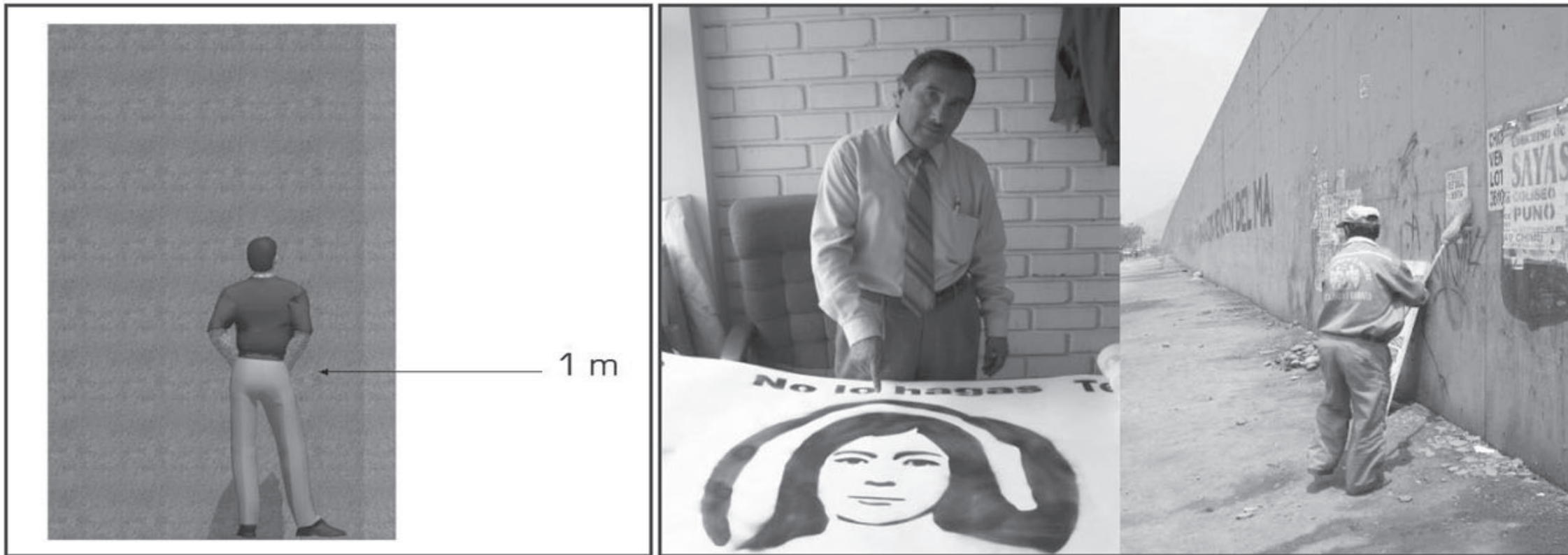
sarita colonia

...carefully studying the place, they realize that, since law is not enough a dissuasive element for controlling incontinent bladders, more powerful forces will have to be appealed. Nothing is more respected in this city than Jesus and Sarita Colonia, the informal Peruvian saint which protects those who operate outside law. The combination of such holy powers should assure its operability both on formal and informal believers.



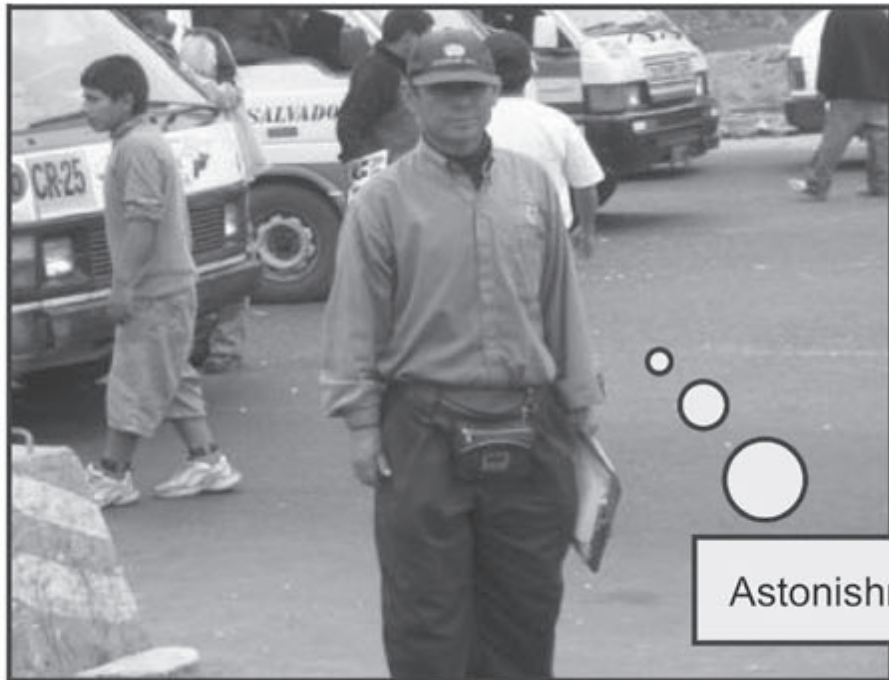
A banner glued to the wall at the right height would be dissuasive enough: "Don't do it, I am watching you"

The plan is presented to the authorities, who are surprised and skeptical but nevertheless authorize its realization.



Part of the banner is left blank to test how far divine influence will reach.





Astonishment! They are watching me! I'll better not do it.



They are watching me... they will protect me.

Some merchants organize themselves closer to the wall to sell safely with the divine protection.



The urinal, moved.