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## All You Can Eat

Market hall by MVRDV

Housing the poor in  
the land of the free  
**USA**

'I give silence a  
physical presence'  
**Jan Versweyeld**

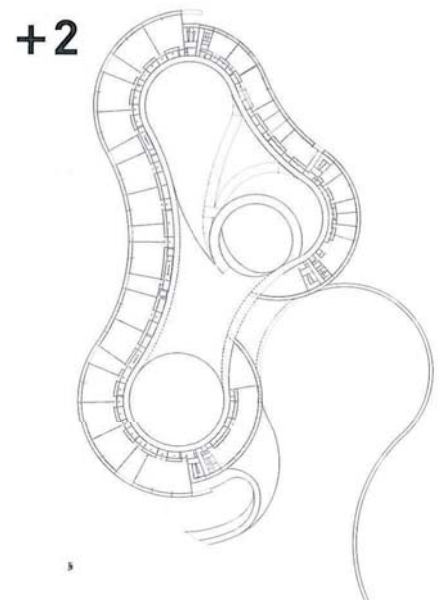
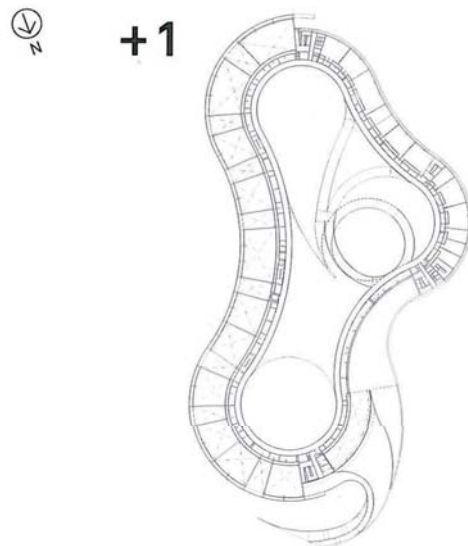
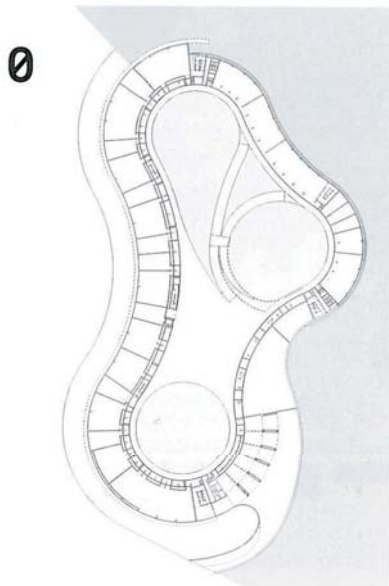
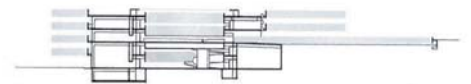
'Architecture is about  
excitement and surprise'  
**Tsuyoshi Shindo**

Turning a high-rise  
inside out  
**Elemental**



# GPY sandwiches flexibility

Cross Section





Text **Peter Smisek**  
 Photos **Roland Halbe**

The Faculty of Fine Arts that GPY Arquitectos realized for the University of La Laguna – a forbidding ribbon snaking through the volcanic landscape of Tenerife – provides little clue to its function, being more reminiscent of a large land art installation than a usable piece of architecture. It is not difficult to appreciate the autonomous nature of a building that stands at the edge of a university campus, removed from other buildings.

‘The outer skin corresponds to the scale of the surrounding territory,’ says company cofounder Juan Antonio González Pérez, commenting on the textured concrete bands that envelop the building. An inner courtyard at the core of the complex – just as abstract as the ribbon – is a dramatic backdrop for gardens of palm trees and black soil. Sloping ramps form shortcuts and add a sense of dynamism.

In the words of the architect, the two lay-

ers define ‘a flexible space that was designed to be versatile and to meet all programmatic needs’. A good example of its versatility is the double-height studio that runs the entire loop of the building and is punctuated at regular intervals by tall sliding panels. Daylight filters through frosted glass behind rough outer balustrades to produce a diffuse glow.

In addition to straightforward solutions, González Pérez points to the use of ‘basic, low-cost, locally available materials’ and says that although the project was drafted during Spain’s construction boom, the subsequent crisis and the reduction of annual budgets affected only the schedule, causing inevitable delays. ‘We have not seen a crisis in qualitative terms. There is no shortage of good ideas in contemporary Spanish architecture, which is important for our country’s cultural expression.’

[gpyarquitectos.com](http://gpyarquitectos.com)



A continuous band distributes workshops and classrooms using a flexible organization that makes use of a modular structure of mobile dividing walls.