

Áftēr Beļòņgínġ

The Objects, Spaces, and Territories
of the Ways We Stay in Transit

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Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016
Lars Müller Publishers



The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit

ON RESIDENCE

IN RESIDENCE

Bördər Dəfjnitjōn ĩn Oşlo Äĳrpört Gardermoęn

Rēsoūrce Negotiāţjòns in Kirkēnes

Fūrņışhing Äftēr Belongĭng

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Self Storage Facilities In New York

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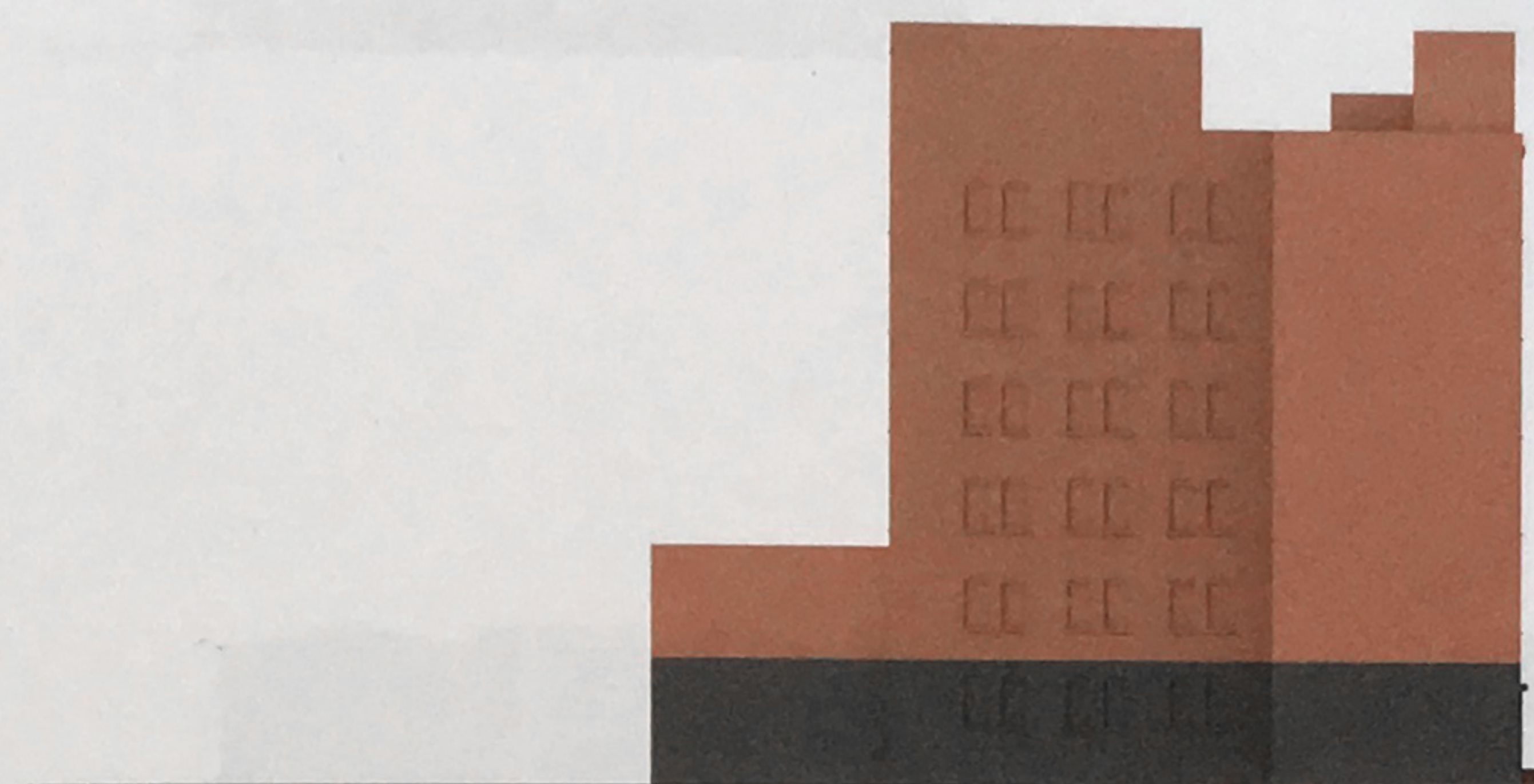


Manhattan Mini-Storage building in New York City,
Photograph by Brett Beyer, 2015. Courtesy of the author.

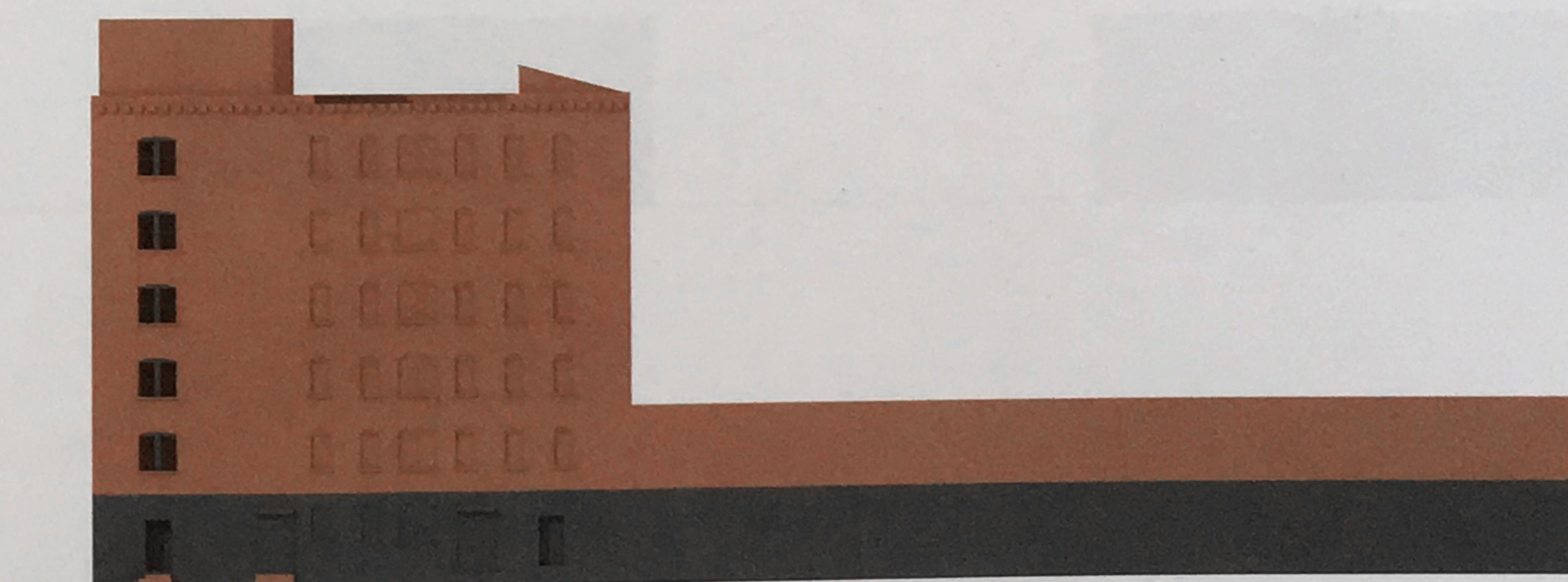
Blocks of Blabla

First Office (Anna Neimark and Andrew Atwood)

Despite the traditional image of Manhattan as a city of monuments, some beautiful buildings in New York are not monumental. They do not stand out or stand on pedestals; they do not speak of a company's power or an architect's will; they do not proclaim autonomy. They are perhaps unique precisely because they do not exhibit any unique character. There are no specific qualities that distinguish these buildings from their contexts; and so they tend to blend, quite literally, into the background. It is because they are so common that they so deeply impress themselves upon our minds. We use the word "impress," because they produce something of a relief. Relief in both of its senses: mental and material. We feel relief when we encounter these blocks, when we find ourselves in front of their ordinary façades. They exhibit a weak attitude; they are like architecture in size only, or so it seems at first glance. They have windows, once in a while a door, and sometimes a fire escape. But these architectural parts rarely perform any function. Windows are hardly ever glazed; entrances are often filled-in with block or brick. The details that do remain appear now as extravagances. Meaning—if we can still use that term to refer to architectural syntax—has been stretched over the elevation: the purpose of each component now seems to be absorbed into the thin surface of paint. What was once an articulate foreground becomes a mute backdrop. So we come to the second sense of relief. The building is a relief: a continuous surface of paint that does not distinguish among the materials it coats. The addition of paint subtracts delineations between one part and another, between one detail and another. It fuses all possible meanings into one—but it is a meaning that no longer speaks to us. These buildings might be our Towers of Babel, except that they defeat language without a monument: they are not towers, they are multiple, and they are indistinguishable. There are so many of these blocks that they become mere presence; they just fill space. Rather than Towers of Babel, perhaps we can call them blocks of blabla. We thought we should make a map, or at least jot down some addresses for you; make a list, so to say. But someone beat us to it, on Google maps, under "self storage." Go ahead, take a look; everything is there.



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Project Team: First Office team includes Aubrey Bauer, Brooke Hair, and Jon Gregurick in collaboration with SCI-Arc students who participated in the workshop: Deborah Garcia, Connor Gravelle, Daniel Hapton, Alissa Lopez (Princeton University), Kyla Schaefer, and Tidus Ta. With the additional support of University of California Berkeley and Southern California Institute of Architecture.

1 261 Walton Avenue, Bronx: South Elevation.

2 261 Walton Avenue, Bronx: East Elevation.

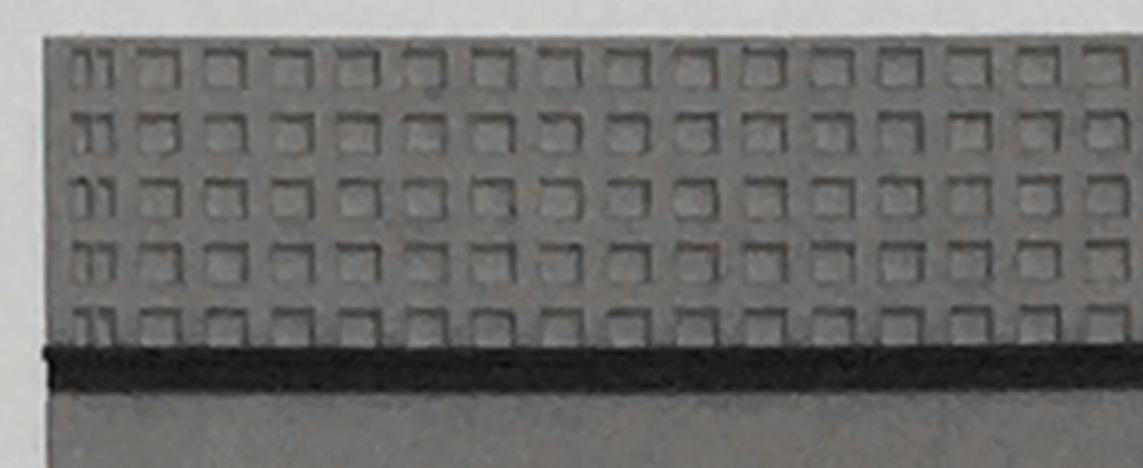
All images by First Office, 2015.



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1 261 Walton Avenue, Bronx: East, South, West, and North Elevations.

2 29 Review Avenue, Long Island City: East, South, West, and North Elevations.

3 30 Starr Avenue, Long Island City: East, South, West, and North Elevations.

4 541 West 29th Street, New York City: South, West, North, and East Elevations.



Sheltering Temporariņēšs

Texts