BACKSTAGE ARCHITECTURE

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During the consolidation of Kuwait’s post-oil society, the definition of public/common space evolved in two ways: (1) when it was dictated by the need for accumulation, in order to foster an acceleration in development (“Kuwait Town Development”, from 1951) or to concentrate and mobilise the means for oil extraction (land reserve for oil extraction, from 1975), public property was expanded; (2) Although, after Saddam Hussein’s invasion (Gulf War, 1991), the need for the exercise of territorial domain, beyond the city limits, became an argument to “occupy” – among other forms and types, the shoreline with the “chalet”, weekend houses, became a common pattern in the country’s coastline, from Al-Khiran in the south to Al-Maghasi in the north.

The Star House by AGI architects, emerges within this context, predicting the unpredictable: the reclamation of an old land provides the opportunity for a new lifestyle. Therefore the house responds to the ambition of a new relation between the Kuwaiti contemporary Man and the nature of his territory. In Bnaider, they call them “chalet”, the weekend houses where the post-invasion generation “first played over the sand” (Paul Virilio, 1975).

Along the plot, the construction of different levels of domesticity, inverting conventional programmatic features, is the surface and texture. Meandering down to the sea, the star house goes far beyond the noble vernacular that stands at Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber rest house in Failaka island. A strange awareness of the moment provides AGI with different ways of translating common and conventional domestic uses into hybrid forms - alternative images to what some named as the “welfare aesthetic”.

The needs of the programme, together with an extreme ability to operate in larger spaces outside the primitive domain of “the house”, provide those with experience and knowledge to enable a wide range of architectural characters and tasks. In Bnaider, the Kuwaiti/Spanish team produced a sort of “machinic proposition” where each builds on the other: resident-residence, plot-house, seaside; as a “system of horizontal complementary re-territorialisations” (Deleuze Guattari, 1980).
The main facade overlooking the sea

Kuwait's coastline

Night view of pool and guest house

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View from the Boat Loading Dock

The Main Entrance from the Desert

Main family living room

The private side

Three-way stair

View from the roof of the Office looking into the bedrooms