



La Habana Nueva

By Laura Olivier
Master Thesis Project

This degree project began with a trip to the fascinating island of Cuba, which is currently undergoing grave changes politically as well as economically. As most of the economic infrastructure is state governed, the question of how small businesses could look like in the future, and drawing up a typology of a building that could hold such a programme in Cuba's capital city Havana, became a topic that I wished to pursue.

As the current political situation in Cuba only allows for a restricted amount of businesses in the private sector, this building typology is based on an increased democratic and lenient government, which would allow for the realization of such a building typology, which I have named "La Habana Nueva" – the new Havana, as it represents a possible future for the country.

The building is multi-layered, allowing for various business opportunities to happen in the same setting – therefore increasing the chance of success for the various small start-up companies that will inhabit the space to flourish. The key element of La Habana Nueva is the courtyard, which is highlighted by a plaza on the ground floor and a structural box and "loop" that connects the middle floors of the building, which hold the workspaces for the businesses. Another key element of the design proposal is the translucent mesh façade, that acts both as a climate barrier, as well as an aesthetic element that brings the building together in a clear finish.

In addition to this, there are several public spaces that allow the building programme to engage with the colorful lifestyle of Cuba, whilst giving the building another layer of complexity and use. These public spaces include a rooftop terrace, restaurant and bar, as well as the public open plaza on the ground and a interior market area.