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Interior Design Studio | Prof. Joseph P. Friedman

## BACKGROUND

The course dealt with interior design, from the 'wework' kind, in the historical "Shuk Talpiot" market building which is located at Hadar Ha'Karmel neighborhood in Haifa. From our research and exploration of the neighborhood, we discovered its diverse population with inhabitants from different religions, communities and origins. During the day, the entire area bursts with life; the market spreads across several main streets and attracts people from nearby neighborhoods. At night, however, the streets change in atmosphere and become a center of exploitation and prostitution. We have found it in our best interest to acknowledge these women, who are usually considered as outcasts, and design a safe place for them.

## PROGRAM

"Wecover" is a rehabilitation facility for women in the prostitution cycle. There, they can specialize and work in the fashion design industry, receive professional guidance and have immediate employment. The process is accompanied with mental and social support, aiding the recovery process in hope to become once again a part of the society. Even though the facility was designed exclusively for these women, it serves the rest of the inhabitants of the neighborhood as well. This allows the women to keep a certain degree of anonymity, giving them the benefit of immersing with the rest of the people in the building.

The entrance to the building is made through several filters and screens, allowing each woman to choose the degree of exposure that she prefers. The ground floor is open to everybody, providing a range of services, such as sewing and repair services, textile and clothing stores. The display windows facing the street present the products, and provide a peek inside as to what goes on inside. An elevated main space is used for display and provides viewing access from each part of the facility. In the basement floor is a functioning food market, commemorating the original function of the building.

The top floors are exclusively for the girls. In the second floor a learning space is operated and includes workshops, classes and work spaces, enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills. In the third and top floor the treatment center is located, where the girls are provided with the mental care needed for recovery, and where they can also stay the night if needed. The studios, designated for the women, are spread through the three floors.

## DESIGN CONCEPT

Shuk Talpiot is a monumental building, designed in the 1930s by the architect Moshe Gerstel and inspired by the international style. As of today, the building is mostly deserted and neglected. When exploring the site, we found beauty in its neglected parts. The peeled walls, exposed parts and cracked elements inform us about the building's history and function. All of this inspired us when choosing the approach of design for the interior space. We chose a language that will combine the old concrete and peeling plaster, with a new system of scaffolding. The system we designed consists of steel pipes, connecting elements and surfaces which can be reconstructed in many different ways and forms.

This flexibility enables each user to adjust her creative space according to her needs. The placement of the work surface, the way of hanging the fabrics and the private spatial design are a part of a large variety of options that the setting allows.

We chose to use the colourfulness and the texture of the textile to create a warm and vivid environment as a contrast to the cold, stiff and exposed concrete. The steel pipe system is used as a constructive base for hanging the variety of fabrics and colourful plexiglass screens on the gray concrete and peeling plaster background.

**IN CONCLUSION**, we chose this unique program which derives from the environment itself, and tried to approach the design with the utmost sensitivity for this delicate yet complex subject. We took the similar approach for dealing with the building and chose a designing concept that, on the one hand, exposes the scars and on the other, wraps them in warmth.