What A Sight

"Troubled times down in Trinidad", the words of David Rudder in his 1990 song "Hoosay". The 1990 Coup attempt in Port-of-Spain left a mark of distress on the twin island. Trinidad and Tobago's democracy, defense and people were simultaneously attacked, making this arguably the most impactful yet unsettling event in the nation's history. ACLA architecture welcomes this unprecedented opportunity to commemorate this infamously historic moment through architecture.

The concept that drives our pavilion's form is the notion of Resilience and Renewal. It takes precedent from the dexterity that the country and its leaders had during such a devastatingly violent attack and the peace and growth that followed. This was philosophically documented by David Rudder;

"Strange dogs were barking deep in the night…But somehow the rhythm continued, oh what a sight".

The goal of this pavilion is to remember those lost and victimised, commemorate the leadership and bravery of our people and to impart a lasting sense of pride in visitors. It serves to interact with the public and preserve the memory of this historic event for the benefit of generations to come.

To facilitate the most meaningful patronage, we believe that the ideal site for this pavilion is Woodford Square. The square has a strong historic relationship to this event with its direct connection to the Red House, a site of part of the Coup attempt, as well as a closeness to many significant Civic buildings such as the Hall of Justice and National Library. During the day, pedestrian traffic is heavy at this site which forces the pavilion in the path of many who will be inclined to pause and observe. The pavilion is placed in the central south segment of Woodford square, sensitive to the many strong axes of the square.

The pavilion's form evolved through our desire to represent the dynamism of the Coup attempt through geometry. It's simple triangular form seems to explode, forcefully projecting from the grass below. The lines are intentionally sharp, creating a visually striking form within the trees. It is comprised of 6 points, representative of the 6 days of the Coup and is arranged to create 3 main forms, which represent the 3 target points of the coup: The Red House, the TTT Building and the Police Headquarters.

Each form has a specific purpose and a unique way of interacting with it. The smallest form is designed as a place to sit, but can be particularly enjoyed by children. The second largest form is devoted to memory, below its second point is a sunken space for contemplation where etched into its vertical plane are the names of the twenty-four innocent victims who lost their lives during the Coup attempt. The largest form serves as a moment of release. When standing in its center the inhabitant is meant to experience a sense of expansion and freedom, embracing the views of our nation's progress beyond. The display on the pavilion's largest point should be adorned with a mural by a local artist nodding to this notion of the freedom of resolution.

Detailed information regarding the specificities of the events can be accessed by visitors through interactive QR codes that will be positioned throughout the forms. Persons can use their phones and interact with the pavilion and engage with written history and imagery of the coup, allowing the younger generations to engage with the structure in a more relatable medium. Under its canopy, the largest form also offers its very public site a shaded opportunity for lectures, discussions, performances and recitals.

The memory of the Coup attempt is popularly surrounded by distress and trauma but the pavilions seek to symbolise Trinidad and Tobago's Renewal and Growth that was birthed by this painful and difficult event. The form's angular and sharp edges intentionally create a feeling of discomfort; tight passage spaces, awkward seating and tight angles. This sharpness, however is juxtaposed by the soft, refreshing and reassuring prevalence of life through plants and greenery. Segments of the site are landscaped and some faces of the pavilion have planters to further encourage plants to eventually cover and completely soften the sharp form. This all seeks to reinforce the concept of resilience and renewal: the rhythm of peace in Trinidad and Tobago will always prevail.

"Wear something red" was the popular cry…