In the process of finding a topic for the first edition of the re-birth of Telesis, we came across many different ideas. Talking about boundaries, ruins, starchitecture, isolation, static architecture, and others, we realized that what we were aiming for was a way to re-think the design process. In trying to think about issues that stimulate us to think beyond, and coming up with a topic that was broad but concise enough, we decided that our topic be the new process itself. Thus, Design Against is a methodology developed partly based on our own process and on historical references, that allows us to define the never ending aspect of the design process. Design Against is a lens through which we want to look at our context, that calls for finding a problem before claiming a solution. It feeds back on new problems this solution might arise, striving for a constant development of our now static context, which does not reflect the processes we constantly go through as humans living in society.

Then, in following this methodology, we first need to identify the problem. As aforementioned, for Telesis the problem was the current design process. As students, we have too many times encountered projects that call for us to design something without a basic analysis of the community and physical context of the site. Too many things are left aside. We see that in our own context, both in the profession and throughout in the world, there is a growing tendency to create architecture that is either iconic for the sake of being iconic, or tries to solve problems without accounting for the needs of humans transcending basic function. As designers, as humans, we believe that there is more to a process. Today's society demands a context that is ever-changing and developing hand in hand with our communities. It is exactly here, in the post-modern society, that Design Against comes in.

In the lack of a theory pertaining to the XXI century, designers as well as other disciplines are in free roam. Since the beginning of time and art, there have been waves of style. Each responded to changes and needs in society at the time, or guided society to look a certain direction. One of the most recent examples was the switch from the enlightenment to modernism, in the rise of industrial societies. At the beginning of the XX century, with the first big wave of technological development, big cities started becoming bigger as they had to welcome migrants from the countryside. This major shift posed many questions, and the people living and designing in that era had to respond them. Thus, today we see skyscrapers, highways, suburbs, and basically life as we know it.

For us, what the early modernists did was designing against. They understood the problems industrial society was causing, and visualized a future that back then was completely out of the box of normal thought. Through examination of the current state of architecture, its values, principles, and meanings, we can question beyond any definition. All the things we take for granted, we want to take out from their very roots. From the clothes we wear, to the spaces we inhabit: we want and need to understand what makes our environment habitable and what could be changed.

The development of this process happens through pushing, pulling, and re-defining boundaries. Going beyond dualities or oppositions, Design Against asks us to consider how design might be activated as an agent of change in the world. By asking questions on specific issues that force us

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On Design Against
The Telesis Team

to imagine new conditions, we can create utopias and dystopias, or as we prefer calling them: thesis and antithesis. In creating new environments based on our context, we bring to light relevant aspects of our society, be those good or bad. From this, we can come to a conclusion, a synthesis. The synthesis helps us understand how we understand these issues as related to our contexts and lives, and thus what we can do to design against them.

As humans, we tend to sink in our own status quo biases. Though, as societies we tend to do exactly the opposite. Thus, it is the so called visionaries who get the first say as to where or how society will change. These visionaries do not have any skill that others lack, but they have the the foresight to find solutions to problems others have not even thought of. These problems, and thus their solutions, affect all of us. It is therefore that we believe that in order to create something meaningful, we must all learn something from designing against. We want to encourage everyone to think of time, scale, culture, and function. Think of these aspects of context that transcend waves of style, and how they affect our context as a whole. What effects do societal changes have in us, and how we can affect our environment.

The current design process circumvents the definition of a process by instead designing for a solution. This limits its abilities as a methodology to respond to changing societal conditions. The purpose of reimagining our ideology as design against is the provision for a critical design process that transcends scale, culture, time, and function. Design against transforms the collective psychology and redefines itself to avoid its current negative stigma. Through a renewed methodology of critical thinking, designing against aims to break the mental status quo. This is applied to all things in our context, as we believe architecture is everything and it transcends disciplines. We define the built environment, as the built environment will define us.