

MEXICALI REVISITED

In 1984, Dorit Fromm and Peter Bosselmann, disciples and collaborators of Christopher Alexander in the Mexicali Experimental Project, returned to interview the five participating families. The “Alexander Method,” as critic Philip Tabor called it, was seriously questioned in the years following the completion of the houses, especially for the alleged imposition of aesthetic, functional, and technical rules. Fromm and Bosselmann found that residents had subdivided the common area, fenced in their houses, and significantly altered the shape of the complex. Despite these transformations, they expressed satisfaction with their homes, with the application of the pattern language, and the leadership provided by “Chris.” The so-called “builder’s yard,” a series of structures built as a model building on a plot of land belonging to the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) across the street, was a “physical anchor point” for the project and “a source of information, tools, equipment, materials, and guidance.” It was soon abandoned and later became home to squatters. Subsequently, UABC offered architect and professor Mario Vargas the opportunity to move into the building, which he occupied for more than a decade with his wife and children. One of them is Pastizal Zamudio, an artist featured in this exhibition. In 2006, the complex reopened as a community care center for the School of Nursing, and in 2025, its operation was transferred to the School of Architecture and Design.