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“Beyond the National Art Schools: Thin-Tile Vaulting in Cuba after the Revolution”

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We commend this article’s diverse accomplishments: its collaborative research process and construction of material archives, the imbrication of qualitative and quantitative data, a nuanced historical and humanistic framework for a building technology, and the articulation of an epistemic South through its interpretive potential. Extending the reader’s view well beyond the iconic Cuban National Art Schools, the article reveals the comprehensive use of thin-tile vault construction in housing and schools in a highly experimental moment on the island (1960–1965). Within a deftly unfolding narrative, the authors intentionally quiet the political implications of the 1959 Cuban Revolution in favor of foregrounding the effect of Cuba’s economic isolation on subsequent vernacular material innovations, producing a remarkable image database and genealogy of vaulted projects. The construction of field-based archives, acute visual analysis, and accessible prose bridges material, craft, and historical interpretation through specific examples that speak to broad themes in architectural history. The article’s methodologies provide a model for studies of architecture and environments of any time or place.

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