AIRSPACE TOKYO

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In collaboration with Sean Ahlquist / Proces2 in San Francisco
Building design by Hajime Masubuchi Design in Tokyo
(In construction 2006-07)

The project creates an extensive building site for a new four-story multi-family dwelling unit with photography studios in Tokyo, Japan. Located in the Fakunigawa Otsuka district, the site was previously occupied by a low-rise structure with residential units and a 2-story building. Since the site is to be used to accommodate construction for the new larger development, the design focuses on an architectural system that performs with similar attributes to the demolished green space and creates an atmosphere within the site.

The site is considered a transitional environment, the articulation of the new open-ended waiting room and reception area is embedded within the new works of the building's program. Airspace is a place where the artificial layers with natural sunlight is enriched along its vertical surfaces transitions between new transparency allowing the camouflage actions, and interior views are shielded behind its integrated foliage-like covers.
Airspace Tokyo is designed to establish a screened buffer zone - a thin, super-compact artificial "yard" that protects the building's occupants from the pressing context of the dense urban environment outside. The new white, minimalist four-story building, designed by a Tokyo architect, is a stacked four unit multi-family dwelling with a garage and two large professional photography studios for lease on its ground floor. Located in the Ota-ku area of the city, the site was previously occupied by the owner with a sprawling residence that was wrapped by a layer of dense vegetation, and was unique in a city where open space is rare amidst the high demand for built space. Since the entire site is to now be razed to accommodate construction for the new and much larger development, the design intention for the screen is to invent an architectural system that performs with similar attributes to the demolished green strip and creates an atmospheric zone of protection. In effect, the demolished two meters of setback width of open ground space is now to be reduced into a new zone with a width of only 20 cm.