In the immediate postwar boom, housing was a critical issue. There were many explorations of affordable housing concepts including the already established Sears catalogue house and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonia. Catalogue houses managed to deliver houses affordably but lacked significant customization and personalization, producing ‘cookie-cutter’ housing. Usonian homes provided tailor homes but routinely cost two to three times original estimates. The Case Study Houses mostly managed to achieve affordability and personalized homes through clever and intuitive use of new materials and construction methods. However, each home still required an architect to deliver an expression of the client’s character, limiting it’s mass market potential. With the emergence of DIY/maker movements, spatial expression is even more sought after than in past iterations of housing. Theater of Life seeks to expand the potential of housing in a dense urban environment with blank canvas units for custom turn-key renovators to thrifty minimalists to live-work artisans.

“...we only want for the most simple and modest of dwellings, to recover a quality in accordance with its mission: to be an Elemental piece of the city and the stage of daily life.”

Rodrigo Perez de Arce, Architect and professor at UC School of Architecture