Disastrous events interrupt people’s lives with little warning. No matter what their situation before a catastrophe, a disaster reduces individuals to their most basic needs. Certain natural events unleash disasters, but man-made factors play an equally important role. (...) A disaster can thus be considered a combination of natural and man-made factors that leaves people destitute in varying degrees. In this context, both disaster victims and political refugees who find themselves displaced within or beyond the borders of their own country may share similar needs for shelter in the form of temporary housing.

“The Dutch project for the Architecture for Humanity competition (...) the ‘do-it-yourself’ approach is more of a non-solution than a true effort to assist distressed people. The proposal implies that architecture has become irrelevant to the post-disaster situation, instead of showing how an organization like Doctors without Borders can incorporate architectural solutions and sensibilities that realize the importance of people’s right to shelter. The universal shelter has worked on a limited basis. Now is the time for architects to concentrate on the notion of universal methodology that incorporates fundamental design decisions such as Gans and Jelacic’s decision to place the shelter onto the disaster site and not in a refugee camp.