



HOME | BODY | CITY



GSAPP portfolio

Master of Science in Advanced Architecture Design

2022-23

Ukti Kulkarni

Ines Weizman

“Tuning into the Void: The Auralty of Adolf Loos’s Architecture”

“Bauhaus Modernism across the Sykes-Picot Line”

It's interesting how Loos had a relationship with architecture through his own sensory experiences. He built an environment around himself which he could relate to and navigate within.

How do you make architecture for your own body? Is it influenced by the current cultural and social construct or does it remain devoid of it? Does it comprise the past or does it comprise the future?

The text on Bauhaus modernism spoke of “stripped bare” during the process of renovation of the Max Liebling House. From the readings on modernism we know that exposing materials like concrete, brick, steel was evidently seen as one of the strong factors of the movement.

Are cladding and paint considered modern while we renovate buildings? If not, how do these techniques change the architecture and its effect in the past and the future?

Joan Jonas

“Rivers to the Abyssal Plain, 2021”

Challenging the role of an artist as a socio-economic or environmental activist broadens the imagination of what art can do to make space or change the way in which we make space.

What is art beyond the confines of a gallery? Art as Autonomy of Artists: What is the space that art needs in society?

Jonas created art, collaborating with experts and scholars in the field of marine biology, sound, film making etc.

How can architecture create an interdisciplinary space for art and drive a collective action?

Emanuel Admassu

“Architecture without measure: Notes on legibility”

“Black Compound”

As I read both the text, it majorly throws light on how immeasurable and intangible circumstances decide the architecture at the instant. Architecture is the culmination or juxtaposition of time and instances from the past or that is yet to discover and not something that is pre planned, decided or stagnant, it is incremental.

Is architecture confined to planning the world around it or is the world planning its own timeless form?

In ‘Black Compound’, Admassu, in the early parts of the text mentions the use of screens and social media as a way to connect or get exposed to the outside from being inside during the pandemic and also he explains how the lifestyle or the architecture still remains unchanged and makes him do the same things as he did before the pandemic. Is the media getting the world closer or exposing the world faster than what architecture is doing? Is architecture lacking the ability to convey its ability to be rational, inclusive or evolving or is it flawed in its incremental and timeless form.

Frida Escobedo

“Domestic Orbits”

Domestic space is configured around orbits of exclusion that shape the trajectories of the domestic workers. Domestic workers inhabit most of the space in our houses and for most of time in order to maintain/regulate it.

Does that mean that they own the space? Who owns the space? The ultimate user or the owner?

Frida Escobedo said in her interview, “I don’t believe in finished buildings. I think it’s always an open work of art.” Can we look at buildings as a timeless piece of infrastructure, open for people to define its use?As Frida Escobedo stated in the text, “my interest in architecture lies in its capacity to be a snapshot of a particular moment in time, but also in its ability to be continuously changing.” When does architecture seize its program? Does it remain timeless when its ownership comes to play?

C. Riley Snorton

“Black on both sides: A racial history of Black Identity”

To me, the excerpt Black on Both sides was intriguing, to find out what the black /people of race identify themselves as. As I read the text and the way the stories are narrated shows that the injustice and discrimination against them is told through the lens of race and identity.

Coming from a different part of the world I wonder if it's valid to identify yourself as black? What does that mean? Does it mean that it's your identity/past that you own or a title? and should you own it or continue to feel discriminated against?

The text springs up ideas and stories of violence against black and trans community. There is a need to identify spatial injustice when it comes to public accessibility for these people.

How should architecture identify gender? What can be the permutations and combinations of programs in planning when we start considering different gender identities? What is a public and private space for different gender identities?



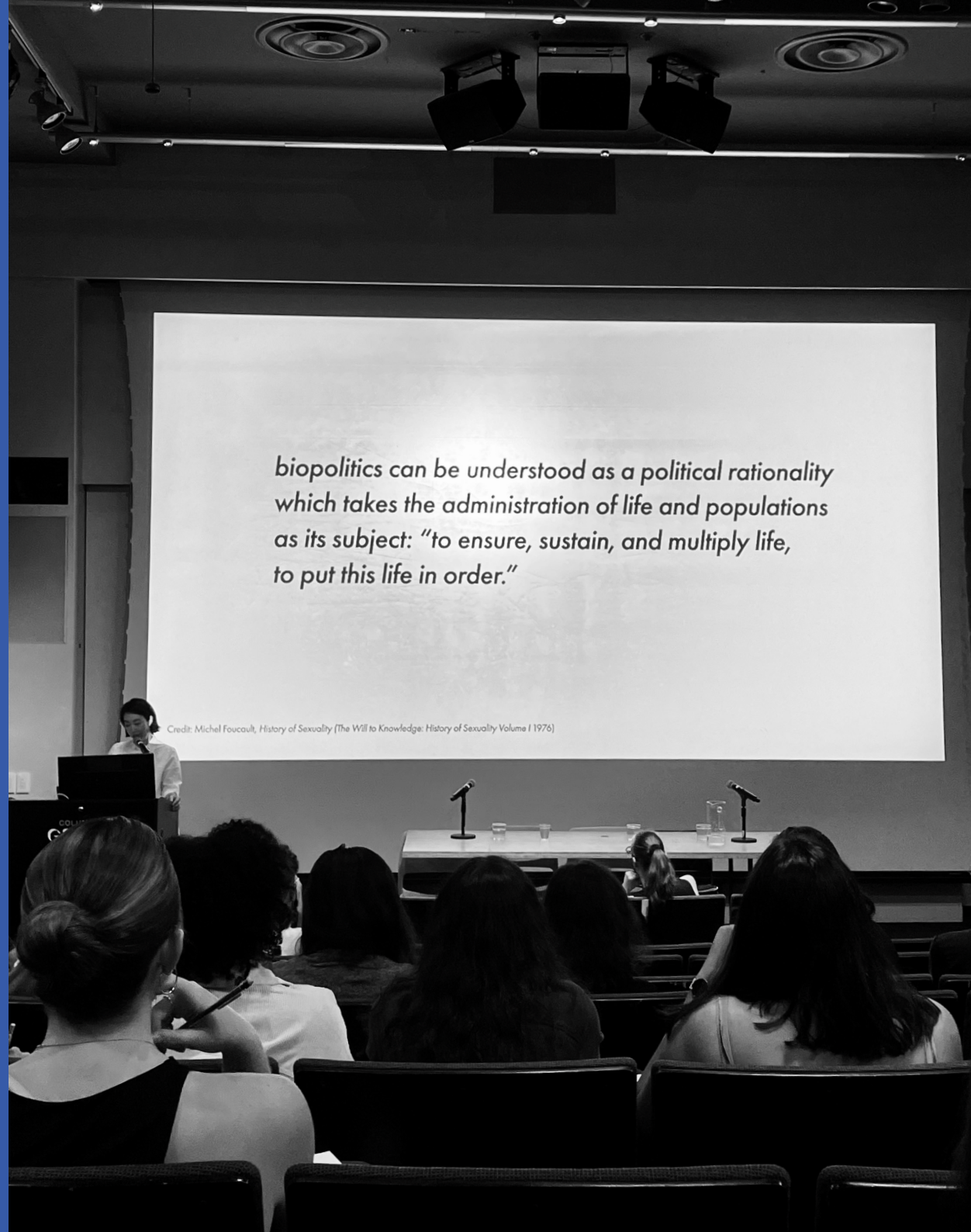
growing up: gendered toys

Arguments| Summer 2022
With **Guillermo S. Arsuaga**

Artificial Intelligence is a simulation in today's world of data driven design. If not replaced, AI is reimagining humans and its association to its surroundings by becoming one. Used for mass production, AI is making a myriad of possibilities in design and creation of products for and around the body.

Amidst extensive globalization and the world coming closer, AI indeed is responsible for provision to the masses, hence design can be standardized, as a result of it. Does it mean that design gets generalized and reinforces the society around it or does it allow for more possibilities to human form?

Ani Liu's work with AI toys is fascinating as it exposes realities around how identities are formed. She touches upon many areas that shape our identity including media, market, play and everyday products. The act of play is an important tool to shape and make identities. One of the many tangible ways of engaging and learning that start early on as a child is through toys. It is a constant act of making and breaking, learning and unlearning, shaping the psyche in the child. They inculcate



values and ethics and are a very first way of expression for the child.

Liu in her experiment trained a machine-learning model with data from toys. The toy data set was taken from online stores (Amazon) and their algorithm that had a binary label as 'boys' and 'girls'. The toys show distinct stories of expectations we hold from both genders. This data was fed to the AI model to create new toys, and to see striking differences in girls toys being set in a pink, domestic/homely setting and boys toys being objects in electronics and automobiles. They serve as a reflection of the gendered societal values taught through objects of play.

As we talk about play, we adults don't give the child a choice of play versus how we decide the toys that the child will play with. The practice of allowing children to choose from the available toys will be crucial to transform the preconceived idea of gender. The responsibility lies with adults, parents and institutions the child engages with to be inclusive, interactive and nurture while at play with the child. It's important for institutions, kindergartens and schools to be aware of the fact that every child is given a choice and not a chosen toy to play with.

Ani Liu's methodology of analysis and creation of AI toys is exposing the gender-centric bias in toys. Beyond merely showing how gendered toys are, the form of representation she uses challenges the designer to reimagine and redesign the very idea of a toy and the opportunities it offers. The question that further got me interested after being critical of Liu's work is, Can we as designers create toys/ architecture that unlearn identity or that disintegrate the binary sense of gender, what is a toy for an adult that holds a strong and evolved identity, with which he can engage with his child and not inculcate preconceived biases he/she holds?

Traditionally toys nurture one's cognitive development during childhood years. They became an important method for the child to build relationships to its surroundings and culture. The experiment by Liu proves that the culture influences the design of the toy. Societal values are so deeply rooted in the making of the toy that these are reflected in the upbringing of the child who plays with it. Societal values nurture strong ideas and activities around a boy and a girl respectively and that eventually sets the algorithm for the media we live in. We see what we believe in and that reinforces our belief to no other. This is extremely scary as we see media/online

stores are offering a variety of options but in fact reconfirming the demand. The booming example for it is Instagram and facebook who show the user what they should want. This creates a big data set that shows patterns in demand of the product.

The world is building so many different conceptions of identity, including the LGBTQ community and it's important that the toys we design cater to all of them. Let the toys not be inducing duties and social values but become tools of exploration, inclusivity and acceptance. Let them be a lens to look at the world and a prosthetic that the kids can keep wearing to explore which one they like.

As a speculative experiment, AI can be used to make a manifesto with "toys for all". A manifesto that uses the act of play and permutations of identities to create opportunities of inclusivity. The manifesto should encourage parents and teachers to change the way they introduce gender centric toys to kids and allow them to choose from many iterations of toys, allowing different kind of play. They should be toys for the parents and adults too who unlearn the ways in which their preconceived gender bias pertains. Toys for adults are important to break away from the notion of binary gender and for them to remain open to their child being free to incline to any conception of gender and identity. I wonder what these toys will be in materiality and ways in which they will make an impact. It is amazing to imagine the redesign of toys that will be a mere act of play, engagement and sharing with each other and possibility in form and content that will really shape identities.

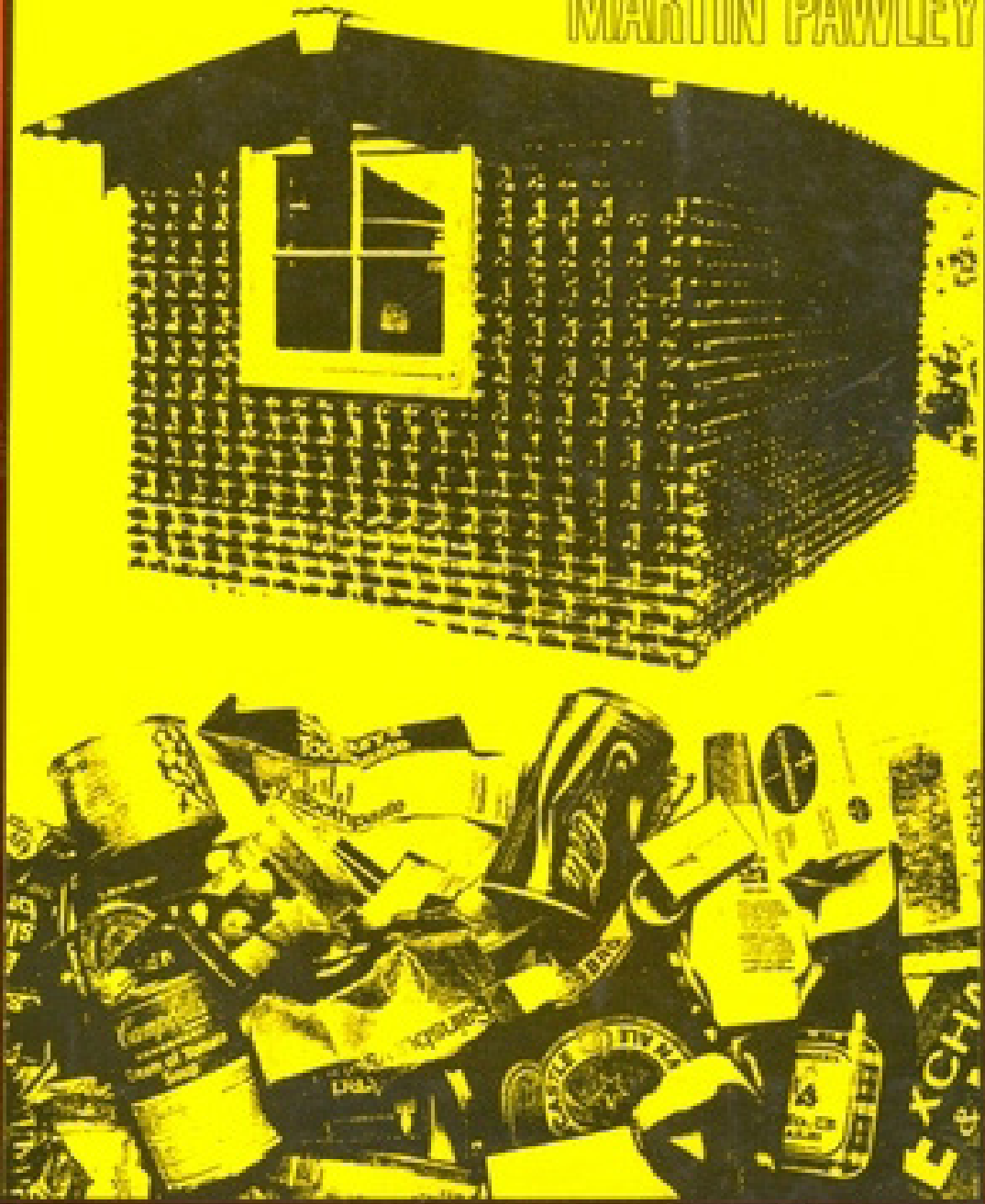
AI toys as a method can be used to understand the system on which toys are built. I wonder if it is a way to customize toys for self or will it continue to contradict the purpose it serves of simulating production. The experiment serves as a catalog for future designers to learn from and inculcate in their design and ways of thinking. It explores the idea of customisation of toys for each child or by each child to create interesting possibilities in design and creation.

Standardization of the act of play is standardizing gender identity.

Can AI produce toys to unlearn identity?

GARBAGE HOUSING

MARTIN PAWLEY



garbage housing for all

Transculturalities| Summer 2022

With **Alex Kim**

Architect and critic Martin Pawley, through his work, explained the state of decline of public housing by providing an experimental solution to the issue with his book, *Garbage Housing*. Through a series of design studios and research programmes, from the beginning of the 1970s until the early 1980s, Pawley aimed to address the housing shortage by transforming consumer waste into building materials for low cost construction.

Pawley expressed *Garbage Housing* as a manifesto towards cultural and political construct around waste. According to him, the reuse of consumer waste for housing challenged the assumptions made by the housing policy around trash and its reuse. He proposed a concept of secondary use of Garbage, imagining that consumer products and packaging could be remodeled (put to use). By combining the ideas of trash and housing, Pawley challenged the ideal of privately owned, permanently occupied housing. It extended ownership to users by proposing that they build their own houses with composing trash. As an affordable model of making houses, this method encouraged making building

materials easy to procure, use and discard.

Pawley designed a system that set a pedagogy of reuse and it let the users customize their space of living. It encouraged consumers to save and segregate the trash they produce and use it for space making. However the question goes back to why he started with this proposal? The proposal tried to contribute to an environmental agenda of reuse and also an affordable alternative of housing for the user but it failed to address the government housing policy that pertained in that time. Pawley in his initial writings explained the land politics and the government tactics of selling most of the public land to private owners and hence failing in wise distribution of land for housing. Housing was not an availability issue but a land issue that existed due to unequal distribution of land. There wasn't enough land available for housing masses. The garbage proposal indeed does not cater to this main issue with the government.

In a speculative perspective if we imagine the proposal in practice, only people who own a piece of

land and resources would be able to make a space with reused trash for themselves and not otherwise. In doing this, the government's agenda to ensure housing for all will never be addressed and remains unresolved.

Instead if we reimagine the proposal, it could have been a manifesto proposed to the government that amend and challenge the policy and rights of housing for all. Built with the idea of reuse, the housing proposal would be for the government to follow. The proposal could provide a design/typology that is multiscale and incremental to accommodate and ensure an affordable house to every citizen by using available land wisely. The design could be based on the concept of reuse of waste, a material for construction, that contributes to waste management in the city. And thus, the proposal will be in the interest of both the government and the public and could be a feasible idea of implementation that works as a model, that remains relevant for a longer period of time and could be used as a model to plan cities and neighborhoods.



man plus: timely cyborg

Transculturalities| Summer 2022

With **Alex Kim**

The essay “MAN PLUS” by artist John McHale explores the relationship between humans and technology and how it has evolved over time. McHale was a member of the Independent Group, a progressive artists association in London known for their Pop Art. His work went beyond traditional galleries and studios, using images to provoke change and hope with a wider reach. Many contemporary artists from that era aspired to think like him.

The main focus of the essay and McHale’s work is to examine human development, including the stimuli that drive our minds, the reflexes that shape our everyday experiences, and our broader sensibilities. McHale looks at the human body through a lens of its social construct, supporting systems, institutional associations, and historical context. He then explores new forms of man/machine relationships and examines human performance in this context. McHale is particularly interested in machines, both large and small, and expresses concern about what is happening to users of machines, what is currently happening to them, and what may happen in the future.

After examining the human body and its relationship

with technology, McHale further explores the concept of human performance through new forms of man/machine relations. He is particularly interested in machines of all sizes, and expresses concern about the impact of machines on their users, as well as what is currently happening and what may happen in the future.

“The early simple tools from Stone age, which physically extended the limbs and amplified the hitting and leverage power of the arm and hand, have now become complex assemblies of tools that amplify many-fold the combined limbs and energies of many men. The automated factory is not only a series of augmented hands but also of extra eyes, brains and other sensing and control capacities.” by JOHN MCHALE

John McHale was a product of a time when industrialization, nuclear power, and production were gaining control over mankind, particularly after the Second World War. Despite the despair that the world was facing, his work depicted hopeful images of man in an urban context, with a utopian understanding of what man could become and the relationship he could develop with technology and innovation.

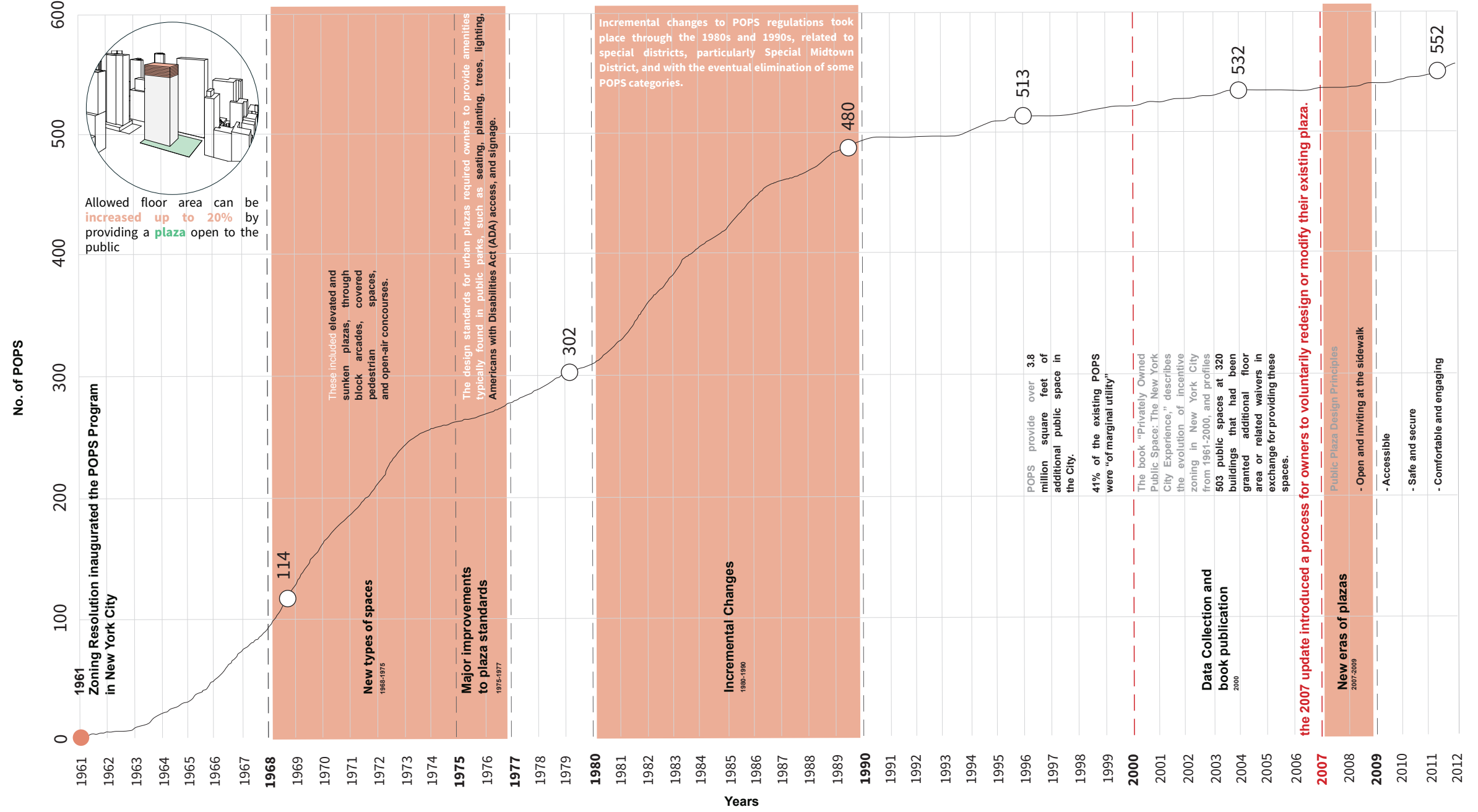
McHale’s technique of composing an image from fragments of other images worked well with his analysis of the experience of urban existence and the strategies of modern media. He positioned man in settings of different scales, ranging from a home to a city, and juxtaposed layers of technology to understand what was constant and what was changing with time. According to McHale, the bombardment of different stimuli on individuals living in the city or consuming media was not traumatic but a natural and desirable condition of man in the modern world.

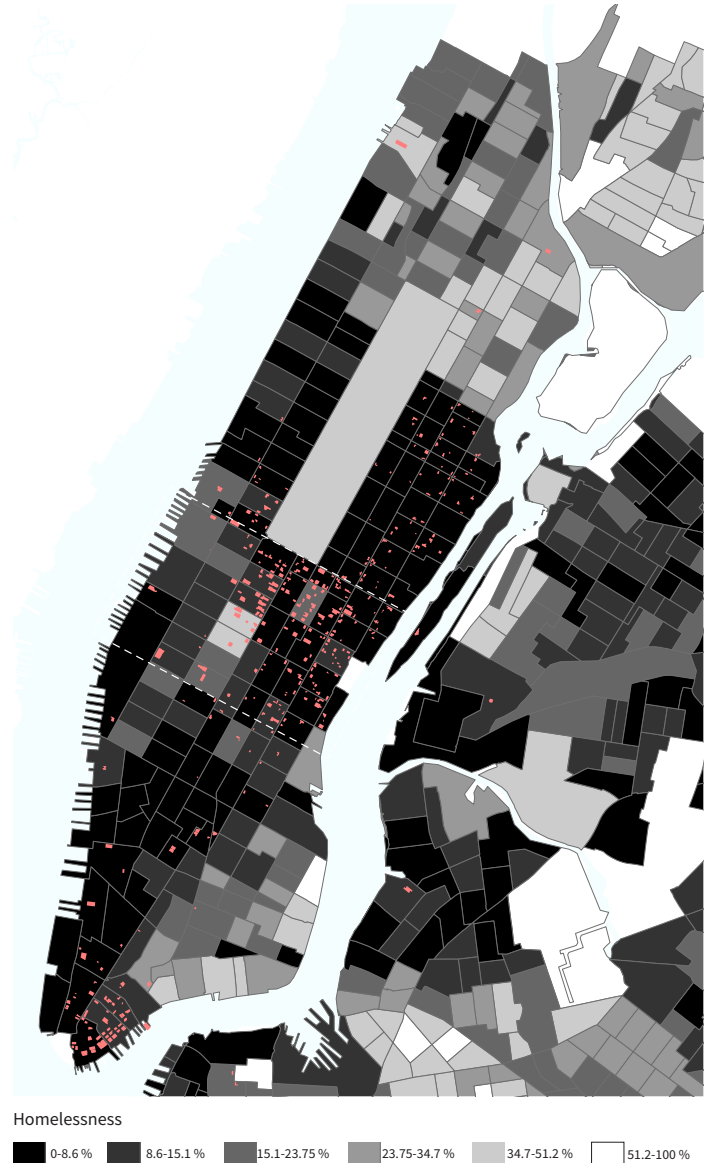
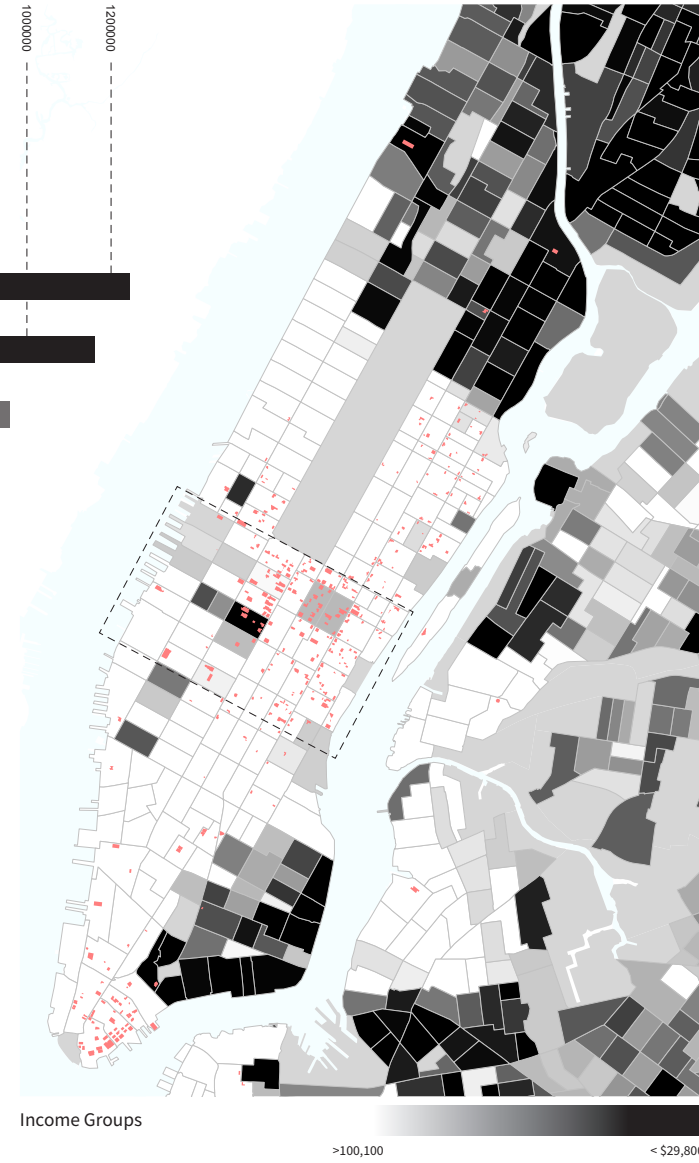
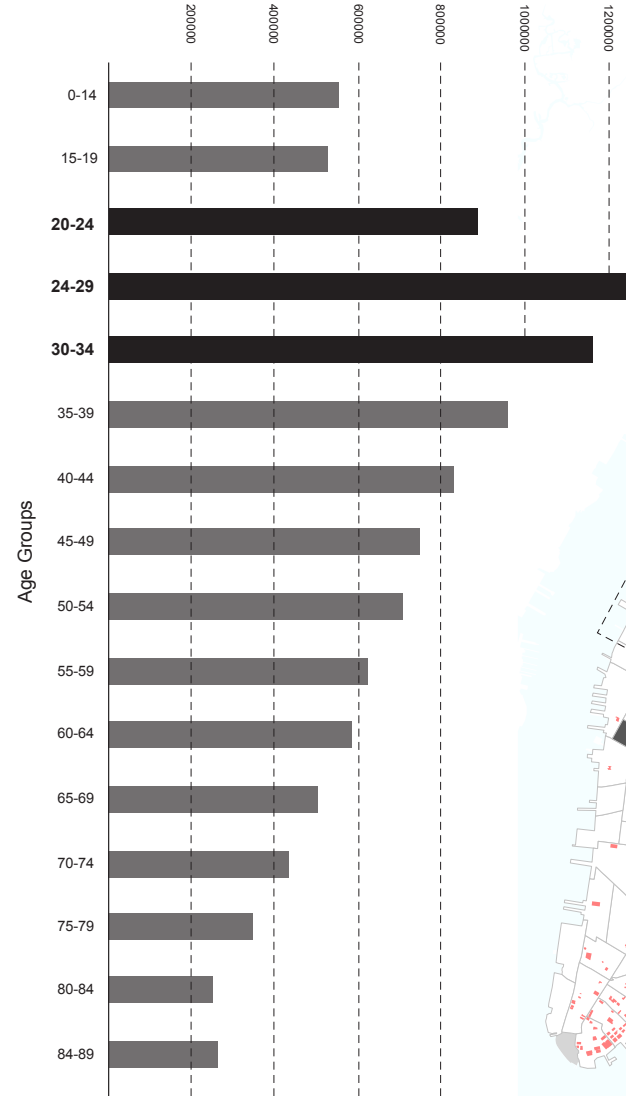
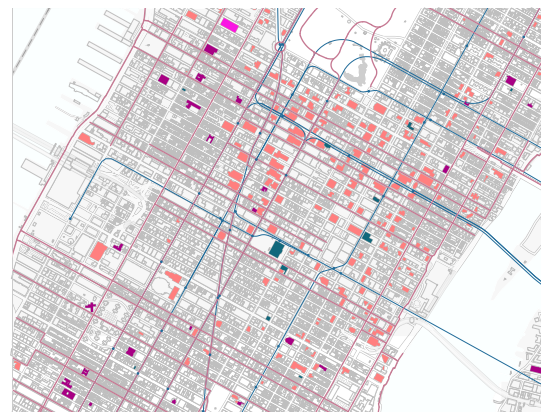
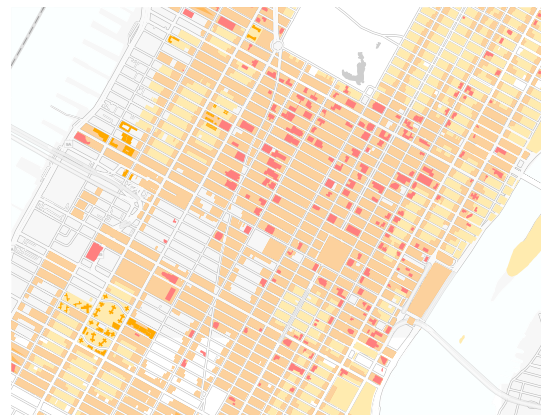
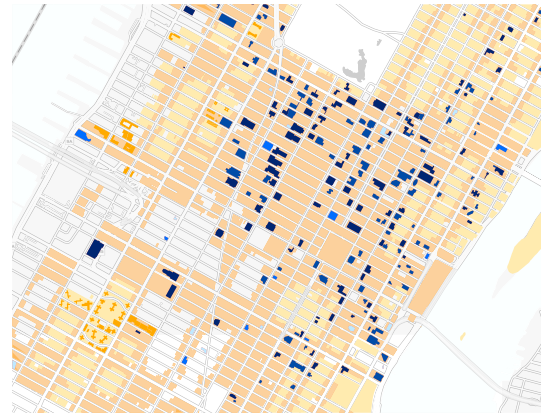
*The collages by McHale were powerful and his technique for representation was intriguing. Eg. In *Furhead* fragments of magazine and postcard images are arranged to construct a central head motif, onto which McHale has drawn a pair of eyes, a mouth and a nose. The images function both as formal elements in the composition of the head and as referents to the things that they depict; for example, the perimeter of the head is made up of images of Mediterranean coastal towns. It shows the association of the brain and senses with landscapes either from the past or in imagination. Hence the main actor in his works was the man and his associations.*

Purifying POPS

Site: Midtown, New York City
 Studio: **Signature Urbanism**, Summer Semester, Columbia GSAPP
 Guide: **Stephen Mueller and Ersela Kripa**

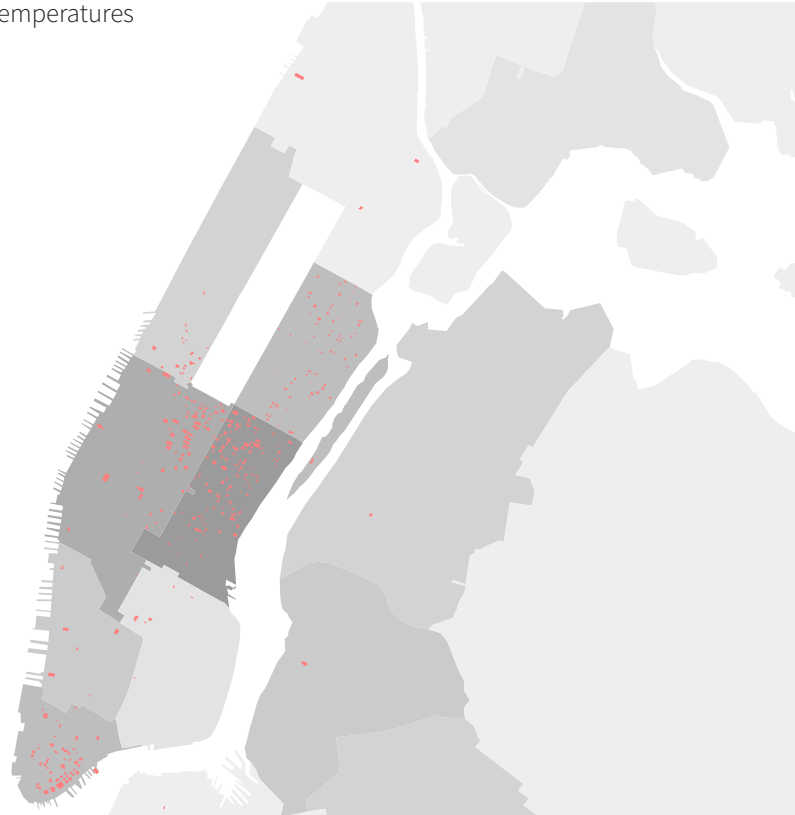
Privately owned Public spaces in New York are buildings under the Zoning Resolution 1996. These buildings are allowed 20% more floor area by providing a plaza on the ground level that is open to the public. Over the years of their existence there were amendments in the policy structure of the resolution and new additions were initiated in the public plazas in order to increase the level of publicness of the POPS. Eventually in 2007, the policy update introduced a process for private owners of the building to voluntarily redesign or modify their own public plazas. Hence, each building administration started to impose different rules of conduct respectively and decide regulations for their own property. Somehow, POPS failed to abide by the resolution policy and some of these neglected, gated and in accessible spaces started to degrade the public environment of the plazas



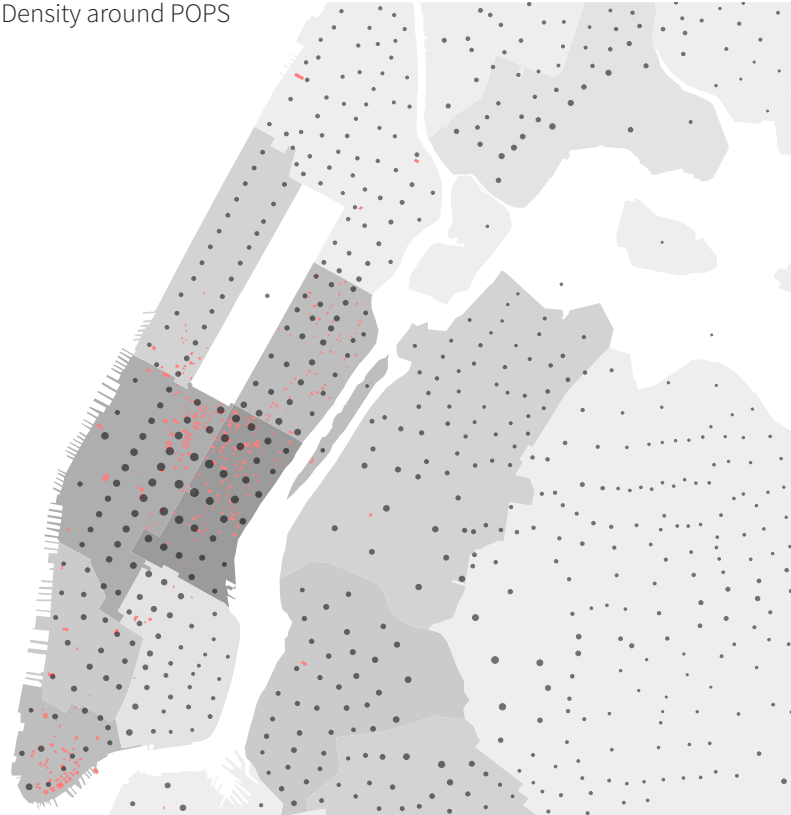


According to New York City Planning Department, maximum POPS are concentrated in Midtown. Surrounded by high income demographics, POPS in the midtown are used by age groups ranging from 25 to 35 years. It being a highly commercial zone, we see maximum POPS that were built in the initial years of the resolution.

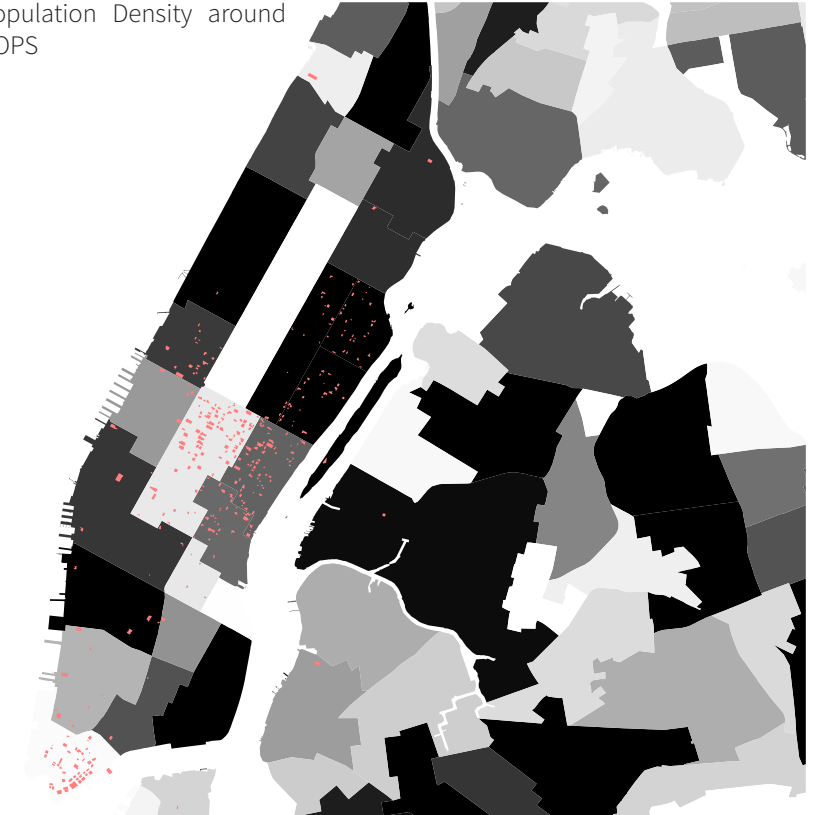
Air temperatures



Air Density around POPS

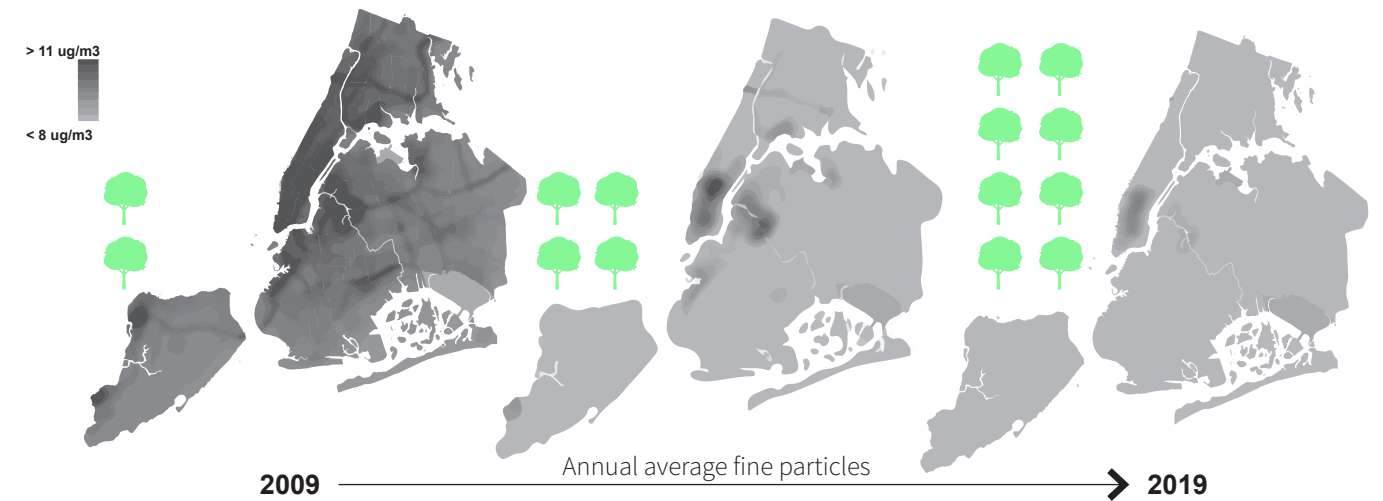


Population Density around POPS



The research looked at the environment around POPS. Starting to layer the data, Midtown shows high level temperatures throughout the day in the summers, 71 to 76 F, and denser air quality as compared to the rest of the city. Though it is a less populated zone in the city it remains to be the most polluted. Air Quality is generally determined by the presence of particulate matter in air called the aerosol. Aerosol are tiny particles that are produced when coal and bio fuels are burned. They are heavy particles within the ground-level ozone which include carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and lead. The Community air survey in the Newyork city recently

showed a considerable decline in aerosol levels since 2009. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders New York City has developed progressive clean air policies that have resulted in increasingly healthier air for all New Yorkers. This includes the ONENYC green deal. Its aim to plant one million trees by 2017 was exceeded and they were planted by 2015. As the air quality in the city improved, Midtown still has more particulate matter, above the mean compared to rest. Thus, Midtown remains as an intersection of the two data sets that show the concentration of Privately owned public spaces in the highly polluted zone of the city.



2009

Annual average fine particles

→ 2019

Who owns the air in the city?.

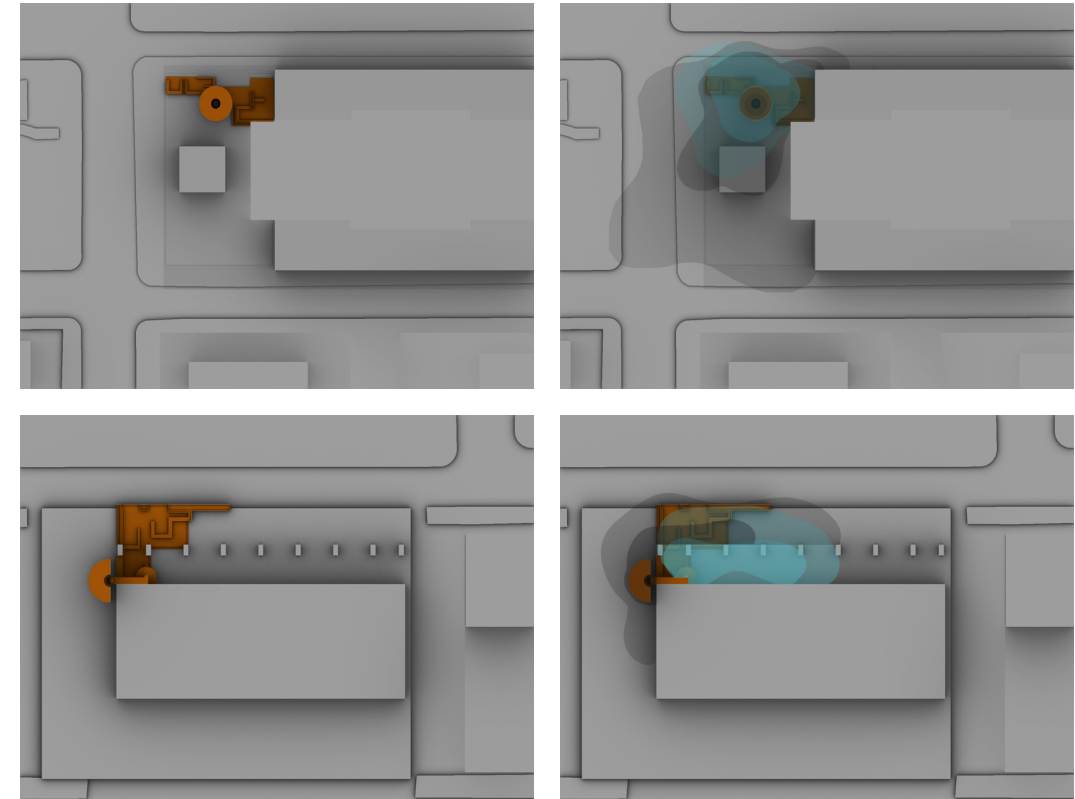
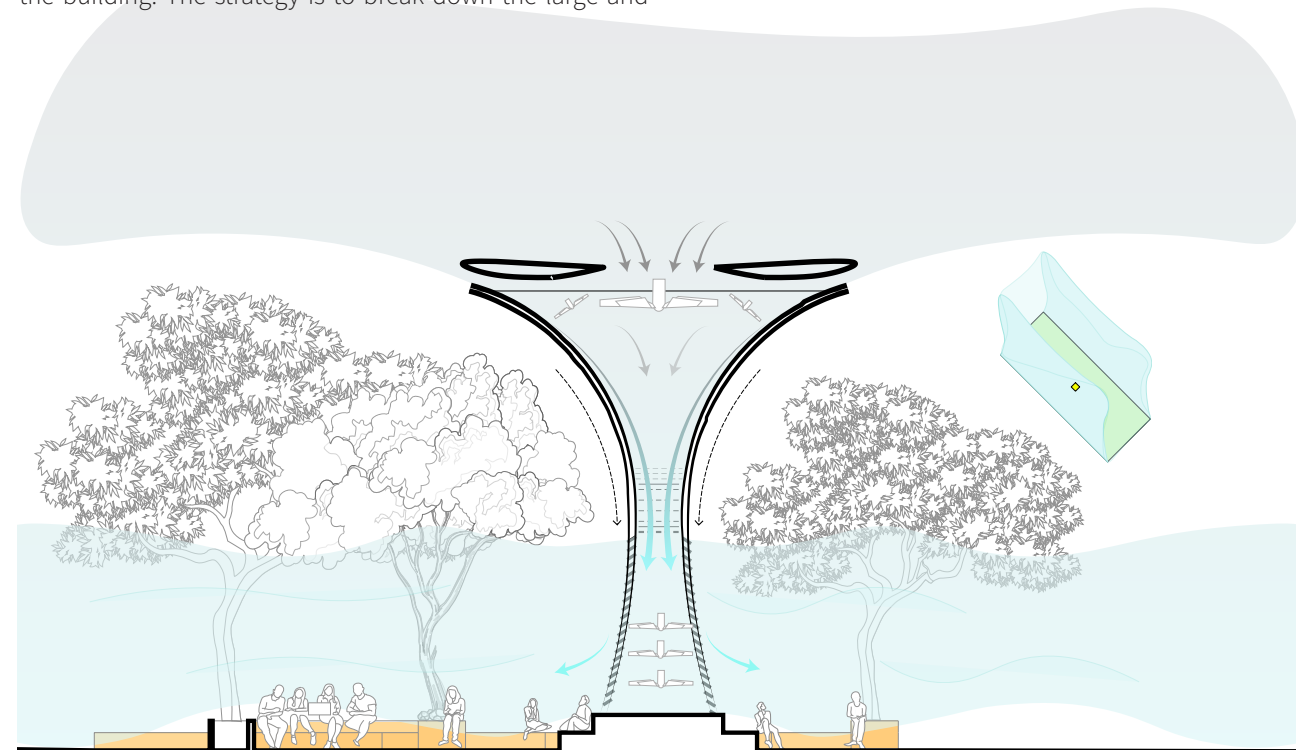
Airspace is property and retains developmental rights which can be sold or transferred. Thus in a dense midtown area, each building owner has the right to thirty-five stories of airspace above his or her own property. Therefore the question is how can a privately owned public space contribute to the privately owned airspace?

Zooming into each building, I chose two types of POPS, one with an open plaza and the other with a semi covered plaza. In order to detect the air density around the building a drone-based remote sensing with a hyperspectral image sensor (i.e. more than 4 bands) drop down to capture the density of aerosol around the building. Thus an architectural intervention will be a plugin that is customized for each POPS that engages in improving air quality around the building. The strategy is to break down the large and

open public plazas into smaller spaces of publicness that improve air quality and space quality within public plazas.

The air purifier purifies the polluted air around the building and releases clean and cool air on the ground level. The form allows for easy air flow. The vents on the funnel get in contaminated air and the 7 layer filtration system filters the contaminants in the air to release clean and cooler air. The vegetation within the plug-in contains the air to its seating areas.

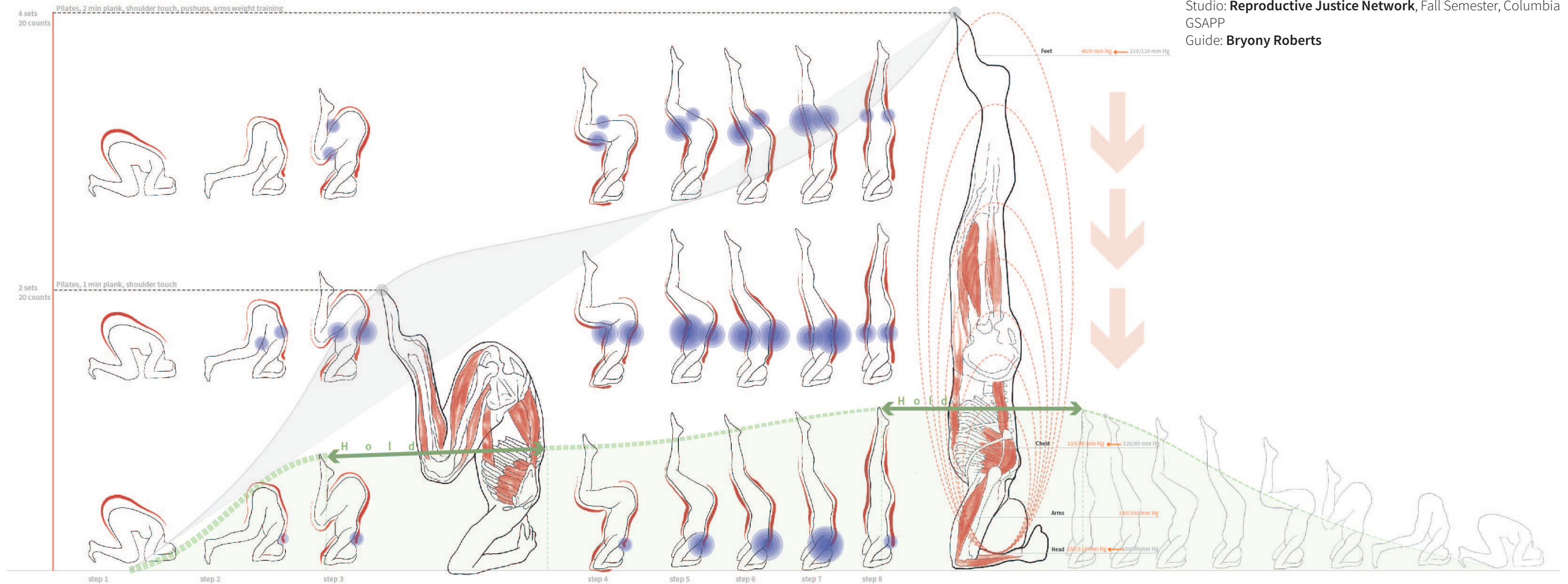
This model can be incorporated into every privately owned public space and contribute to its airspace and public space. It will add to the level of publicness of Pops. Collectively these POPS will contribute to increase air quality of Midtown and match the aerosol levels to the rest of the city.



Reproductive Justice Network

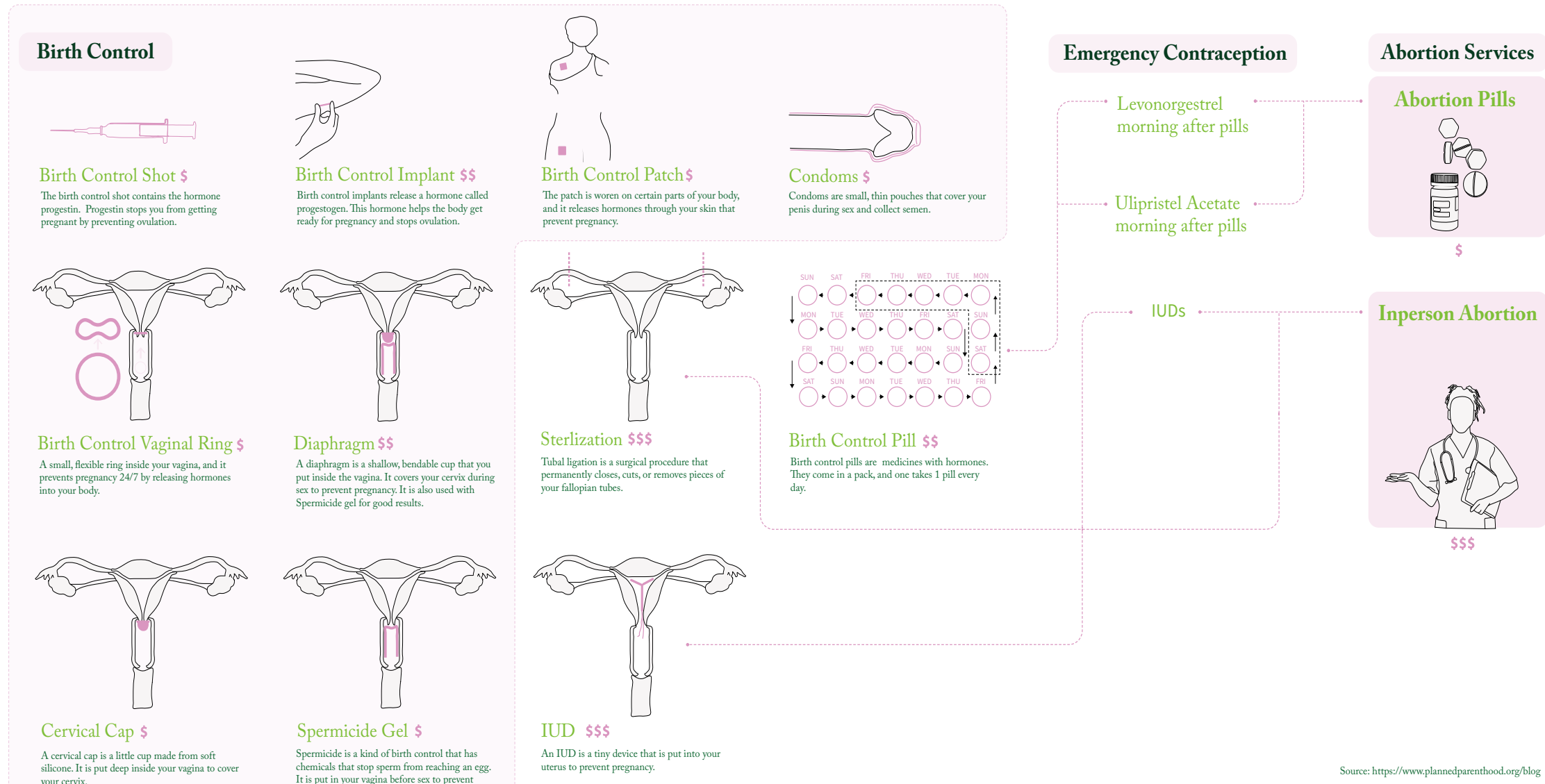
Studio: **Reproductive Justice Network**, Fall Semester, Columbia GSAPP

Guide: **Bryony Roberts**



The typology network of reproductive care looks at primary care, which includes personal health and sexual health, then it looks at technologies around pregnancy testing and importance of awareness and patient education. These services are accessible via healthcare clinics, hospitals, NGOs and Self-help groups by women and they provide financial care whenever required through donations and fundraiser programs.

• 15- This diagram is a manual of different technologies available for Birth control and Emergency Contraceptives and they are compared across affordability. They lead to two main Abortion services, ie are Abortion pills and Inperson Abortion.



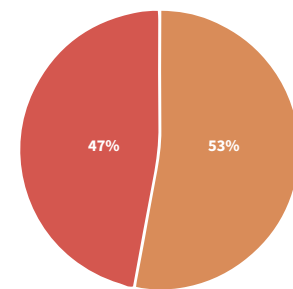
Only 11% have used a pregnancy/STI prevention method.

Sexually transmitted diseases are also a concern in the state, with one in three cases of an STI diagnosed in a patient 19 years or younger.

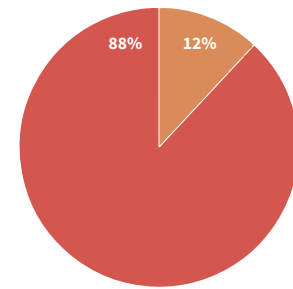
New York schools are not required to teach sex education.

45 percent of males and 40 percent of females in New York high schools describe themselves as “sexually active.”

Only two in three males say they use condoms and one in five females take oral contraceptives.

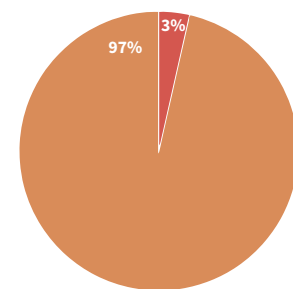


More than 50% of High School Students have engaged in Sexual intercourse. 12% of middle school and high schools have



no instructors assigned to teach health.

- No Instructor assigned to teach health.
- Certified or non-certified instructor teaching health.



97% of teachers assigned to teach health did't have license for health instruction.

- Teachers assigned to teach health, not licensed for health instruction.
- Licensed health instructors.

A 2017 report on New York City :

96% of surveyed parents think it is important to have sex ed in high school,

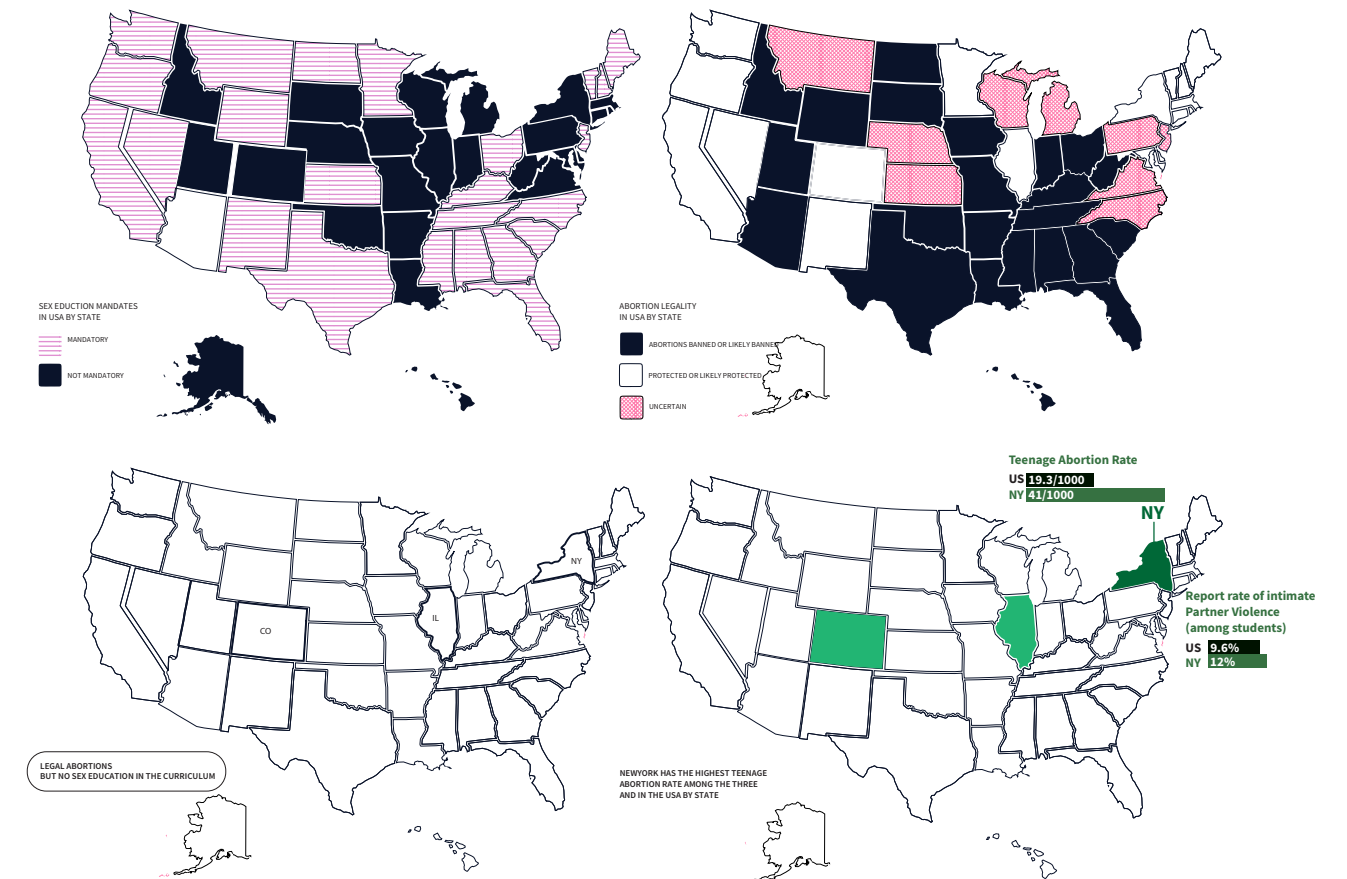
and 93.5% thought it was important to have these curriculums in middle schools. A later survey revealed that 98% of likely voters think it is important to have sex-ed in high schools. These statistics show that this is an issue with wide support.

Sex-Ed School

Site: Morningside Park, New York City

Studio: **Reproductive Justice Network**, Fall Semester, Columbia GSAPP

Guide: **Bryony Roberts**



As I analyse the research we did as a studio, I was intrigued by the affect denied sex education in schools has on Abortion rates in the country and realise the need for awareness to enable reproductive justice. Sex education is not a mandate in all the states in the USA, but Abortion rights are fully protected in a few. When I layer these two maps I realise that Colorado, Illinois and New York remains as state who follow legal abortion policies but sex education is not provided or is not a mandate in school curriculums. Among the three, New York State has the highest teenage abortion rate in the states.

I was interested in addressing schools with racial diversity and looking at the city, Harlem is at a great intersection of White, Hispanic and African americans communities. It also has a mix of different public and private schools.

The 4 Historic Harlem Parks in the vicinity are collectively know for their recreational facilities for these school kids and communal activities. They have a vibrant history Of 150 yrs and surrounded with spectacular natural landscapes they account for 40% of Harlem's public space.

The Friends of Morningside park, WestHarlem Development Corporation, Boys and Girls club of Harlem are organisations that work with the schools for development of the kids in the neighbourhood. They fill the gap between a school and a home by providing a positive environment where kids and teens come together, they have summer camps and programs in art, music, fitness and participatory gardening. They are held in the Harlem parks, and one such is the Morningside park.

It is a 30 acre public park in upper west Manhattan. This landmark is a big public space which has layers of history and heavy sloping

White Majority
Hispanic Majority
African American Majority
Asian Majority
Public Schools
Private Schools
Community Institutions

Jackie Robinson Park
Noted for its strong connection with the community. Originally built as a neighborhood playground to encourage organized play for city children, Jackie Robinson Park's history is steeped with efforts to bring the neighborhood together in recreational fun. Continuing in the park's theme of "play," a bandshell within its boundaries hosts bushels of concerts throughout the warm season, keeping Harlem's tradition of fostering local music alive and well.

St. Nicholas Park
This spacious park is named for St. Nicholas of Myra. It is located at the intersection of St. Nicholas Avenue, 127th Street, St. Nicholas Terrace and 141st Street, bordering the Manhattan neighborhoods of Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville, and Harlem.

Morningside Park
Morningside Park blends dramatic landscaping with the pleasures of a community park. Built on a steep incline, multiple playgrounds nestle at the bottom of its cliff-like hillside, and visitors pause along its heights to take in a unique view. Winding paths bordered with flowers and trees lead to a cascading waterfall, across from which local teams play on its baseball fields. Parents bring their children to play in its playgrounds and learn in its after-school program, and on Saturdays local farmers sell their goods in an outdoor market.

Friends of Morningside Park

Morningside Park
NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
HARLEM YOUTH GARDENERS PROGRAM
• SPRING SESSION: MARCH 27 - MAY 15
• \$18 PER HOUR
• SATURDAYS, 8 AM - 4 PM
Work in all four historic Harlem Parks - Jackie Robinson, Marcus Garvey, Morningside, and St. Nicholas - where you learn about horticulture, landscape architecture, and sustainable gardening.

Harlem Park Community Canvass
SATURDAY APRIL 10TH | 4PM
1314 HARLEM AVE
Join us in Harlem Park. Ballotbox to canvass with neighbors! Gardening, music, crafts and snacks will be available. Please wear a mask.
RSVP: bit.ly/MDPPCApril10
MARYLAND PAUL POUND'S CAMPAIGN

West Harlem Development Corporation
Summer Sports Camp Lottery
Summer Leadership Camp
\$150 PER WEEK
WHDC is sponsoring scholarships for CB9 residents

Boys and Girls Club of Harlem
Since 1980, Boys & Girls Club of Harlem has proudly served the youth and community of Harlem. BGCHarlem fills the gap between school and home by providing a positive, welcoming environment where kids and teens can have fun, participate in life-changing programs, and build supportive relationships with their peers and caring adults.

Marcus Garvey Park
A park that nurtures its entire community, Marcus Garvey provides pastimes for children, teens, adults, and the elderly. The two playgrounds are built for all children, including those with disabilities, giving the neighborhood's youngest members hours of fun on the park's slides, fountains, and drawbridges. On summer days families and friends swim and sun in its outdoor pool, and in the warm evenings they gather to watch plays and concerts in the park's amphitheater.

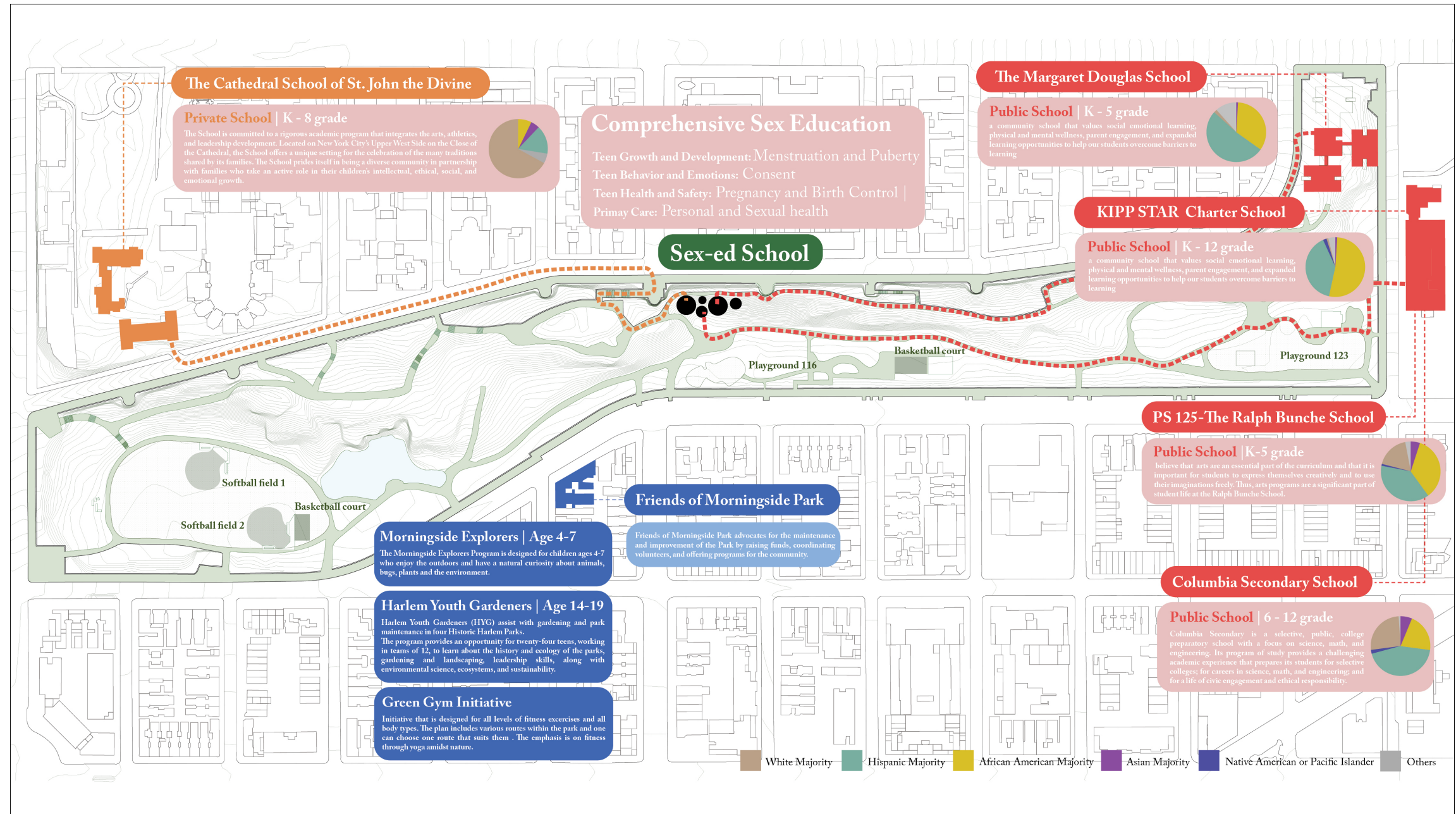
Breaking Down Barriers
The Boys & Girls Club Community

Back to School Giveaway
NYPD 5TH DISTRICT
Back to School Giveaway

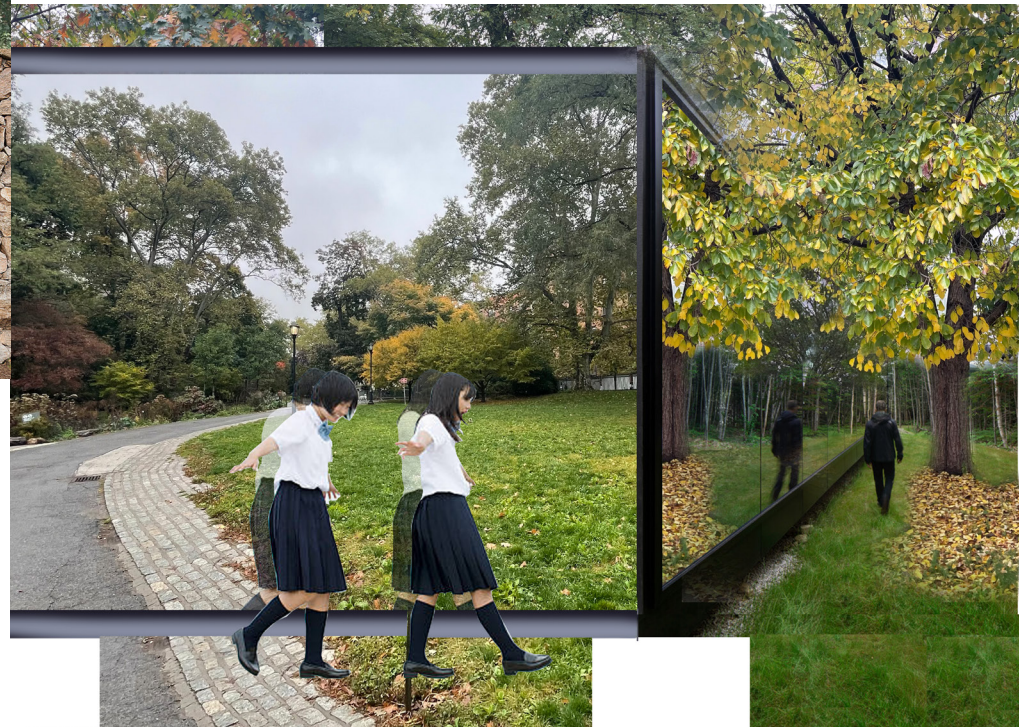
SUMMER CAMP 2022
Scholarships available
Must reside in CB9
Contact: (Newark) (202) 282-6770 Ext 507
Apr 9 - August 12
Ages 7 - 12 years old
Deadline: June 25

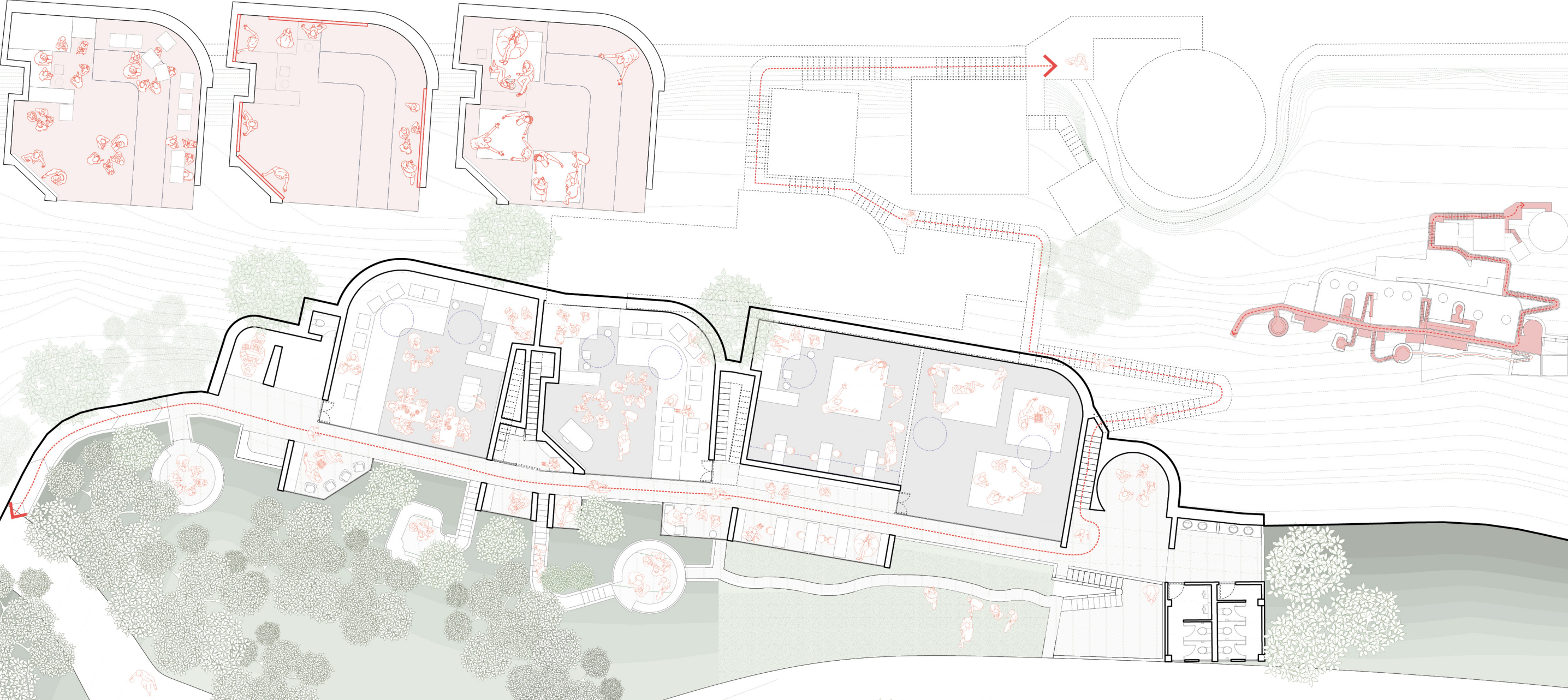
ARISE! 2022
Manhattan Community Board 9
The West Harlem Development Corp
28th Precinct Community Affairs
CPSA
Manhattan Community Board 9
The West Harlem Development Corp
28th Precinct Community Affairs
ARISE! 2022
Sikanska

landscape. It was proposed on this location to avoid the expense of expanding the Manhattan street grid across extremely steep terrain. The park is surrounded by a mix of public and private schools from Kindergarten to 12th grade. The public schools do not conduct sexed classes and the private school partial have a partial curriculum towards it. We can see dominant hispanic and African American demographic in public schools and white majority in the private school. The park becomes an opportunity to get these kids together to learning and sharing experiences. Friends of Morningside park is an important organisation that work with youth from age 4to 19 in the park and provides a space for collaboration in this public space. They contribute in the maintenance and functioning of the park. My proposal is indeed a space of collaboration between these schools that talk about Sex and well being. Situated in the public park it redefines the tabu and notions around the subject and is a radical practice that get kids to sharing experiences around health as they are growing up, it is a Sex-ed School which is a part of their everyday schooling. The school is divided in to intraschool and interschool classes. Intra School classes are dedicated to comprehensive sex education separate for middle school and high school. Interschool classes are participatory activities like gardening, cooking and fitness. The school is also a mental health facility that initiate conversations between parents, teachers and students.



In order to provide comprehensive sex education to every individual in New York city, what is a **Public Sex-ed School**?
What is the sense of visibility /approach to sex education in a public space?







Blending in to the landscape the project is using the stone from its rocky terrain and reflective facades that capture the dense trees it is situated in. The interior is in partial contact with its outside through mix of transparent and translucent materials, keeping the privacy the classes need but also experiencing the nature outside.

Coming to the site, my building is situated at equal distances from the the schools. It has two parts ie the school and the mental health care.

Amidst the landscape, the building is climbing on the site. It opens on the main street and indicate the presence of a sex ed school in the locality and is a formal gesture to situate a tabu subject in a public park. The architecture of the building redefines a classroom and imagines conversation outside the confines of a classroom. The pathway that connects the classrooms becomes a space that stitches through various programs and allow for an intimate dialogue. The first level is a Intra School. The classroom for middle school and high school are larger spaces to imagine hold lectures which are broken into smaller intimate conversations that are connected by the pathway. Classroom are studios of expression with walls to draw on and provision for bodily activities. The pathway is space to pause and talk, it has smaller niches for sitting and reading, a library nook and storage spaces, spaces of play and interaction.

The second level is an Inter school collaboration that happens for all schools and include subjects like gardening, food nourishment and immunisation. The third level is the Mental health care centre, with counselling facilities for students, and parents and training programs for teachers.

Finally the mass is blending with the topography and the school is potentially carving through the site, almost hidden but loud and radical in its function.

incendies:

1+1=1

Arab City in Films | Fall 2022

With **Yasser Elsheshtawy**

Team: **Amiti Singh, Andy El Set, Ukti Kulkarni**

Abstract

A 2010 Canadian film, Incendies talks about the concept of evoking memories for war and memories from displacement due to war. Two Canadian siblings travel to the Middle East to unravel their late mother’s past hidden amidst the civil war of an unknown city. The film was majorly shot in Amman, Jordan but is based or influenced by war events that happened in Lebanon. The director induces the emotions of displacement, separation, and generational trauma through architectural cinematography of Middle-Eastern warfare. Through anonymity in the city selection, the director constructs a collective memory of a generalised notion of war.

Dennis Villeneuve is the director of Incendies. The film’s opening scene establishes Villeneuve’s position, who deliberately wanted that scene to feel awkward (has an unfamiliar soundtrack in the background), to underline the fact that it’s a movie about the Middle East made by a foreigner, having a generic understanding of war and its affect. The music is very important to stress the Western point of view, to allow himself to remain neutral and apolitical, and to talk about the taboo of war without raising anger using fictional cities. Consistently through the movie, there is sense of belonging that the main protagonist hold for her past and memories, that effectively induce feelings of displacement and separation. The lens of the first generation is used as a frontier for warfare narratives in the Middle East. The second generation, on the other hand, reconstructs this narrative and looks at the trauma that is produced post-war.

The report reconstructs the cinematic themes of “Incendies” to understand how memories play a role in remembering and constructing the idea of a war-torn city. Additionally, it analyses the effects of war on the urban landscape of cities in forming dual cities within the same city and discusses the universality of war by comparing the urban landscapes of Amman, Jordan, and Beirut, Lebanon. The analysis concludes with research on the architecture of war and healing in postwar cityscapes.

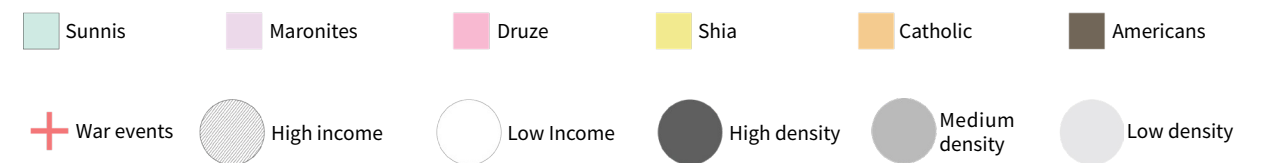
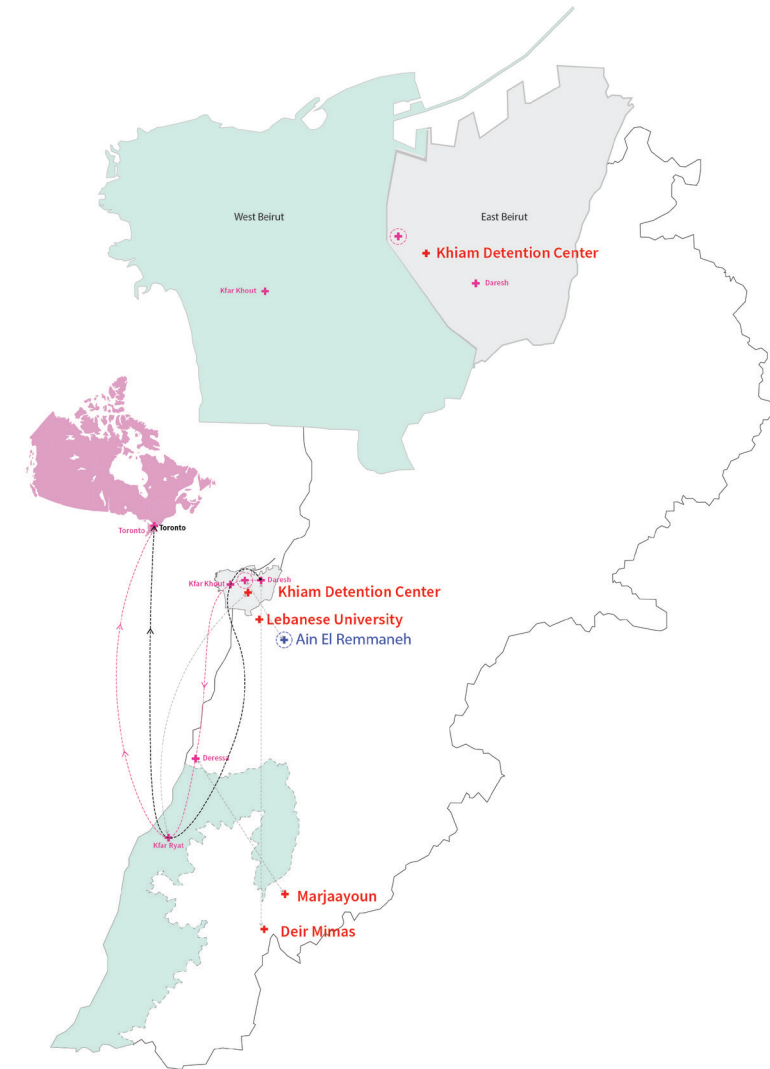
City within a city: Beirut

The movie is based on actual events during the civil war in Lebanon, and the diagram tries to understand how the movie travelled in its plot, ie. the locations based on the real political conditions against what is the actual geography of the locations. The plot is constructed on the separation of the areas in Lebanon based on ethnic, religious, cultural and political backgrounds and the separation of the west and east Beirut.

Divided by war, the separated areas occupy the same geographical space but via volition of their citizens, they are perceived as two different cities within the city. The separation is defined by its religion, culture, tradition, ideologies, and the way citizens of each city generally carry themselves.

Elaborating on the idea of a city within the city, Lebanon comprises of cities on the coastal area spanning from the north to the south, most prominently Beirut, while the east of the land is mountains.

Before the civil war , although Lebanon was perceived as the



Switzerland of the east that holds many religions living in harmony, Christians had privilege and were wealthier than muslims as a result of french colonialism which created a filtered separation within Beirut and Mount Lebanon. The dynamics within cities like Beirut changed after the civil war. There was a segregation based on religion within the city, the west dominated by Sunni and Shia muslims and the east by Maronites and other Christians. There was an evident separation, when we look at the population densities that were reset and also change in income levels of people.

City within a city: Amman

A similar story and geographical condition was observed in Amman, in Jordan and potentially that's the reason why the movie was filmed in this context and yet it could tell the story in Beirut.

Amman is one of the only densely populated cities in Jordan along with many smaller settlements and rest is majorly a desert. Amman is too separated as west and the east by the red line. West is predominantly sparsely populated and houses high income groups and the wealthy against the east of the line is densely populated with smaller settlements of the lower income groups. We see from the diagrams that both the cities have many islands or cities within them.

They have comparable conditions, geographies and densities that the film maker could tap upon and show in the film. There is familiarity in the mountain areas shot in Amman for the movie and the rural areas of mount Lebanon few km away from Beirut. While the urban areas shot in the east part of Amman, they were staged in the movie to resemble war scenes perceived in Beirut during the civil war.

Conclusion.

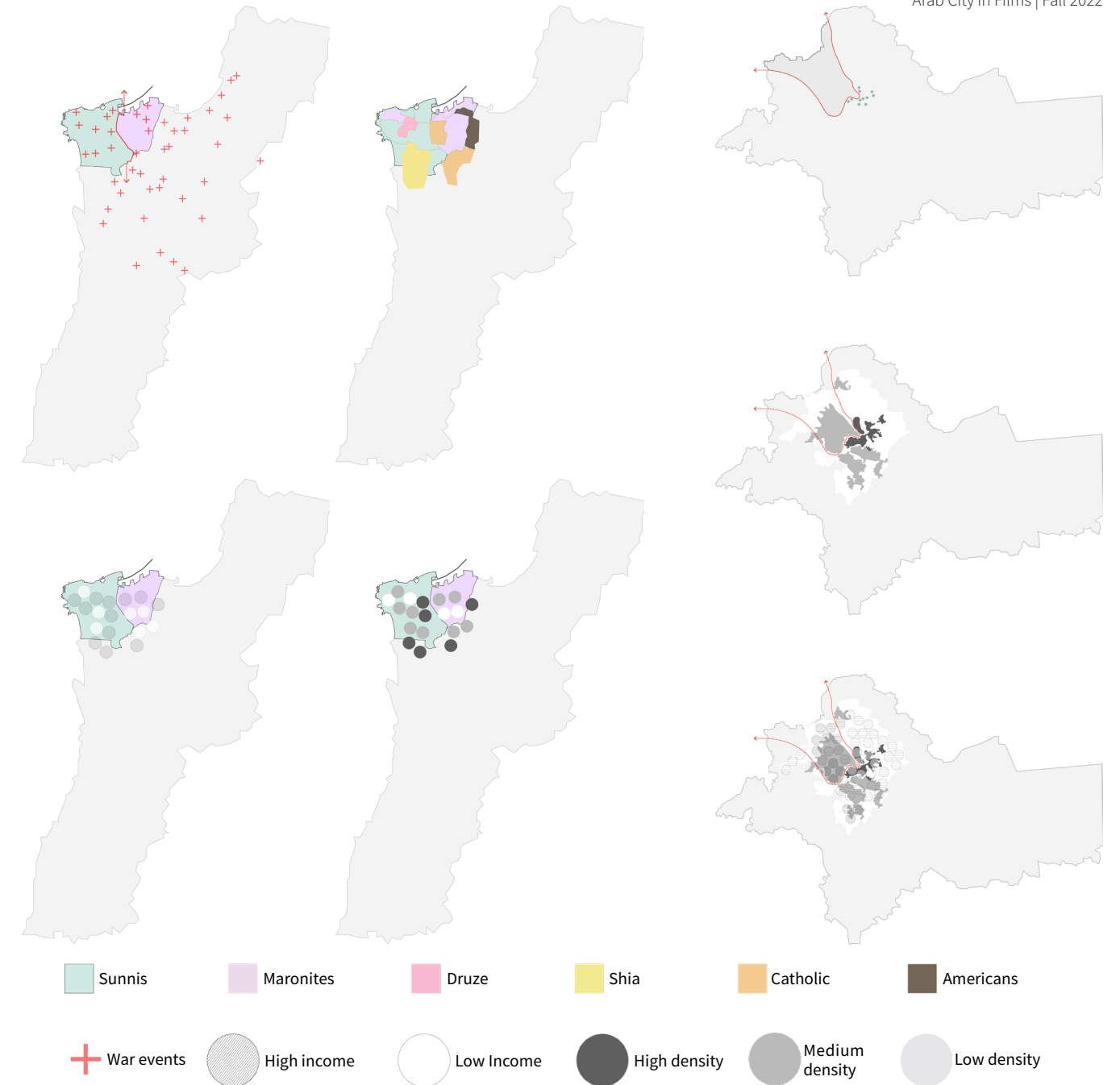
As designers and planners of today's world, the movie intrigued us to question what is a city in a city? And how do we integrate the divide and separation among cities while we design for them? How do we dissolve separation, trauma and remnants of war from cities and reimagine homogeneity?

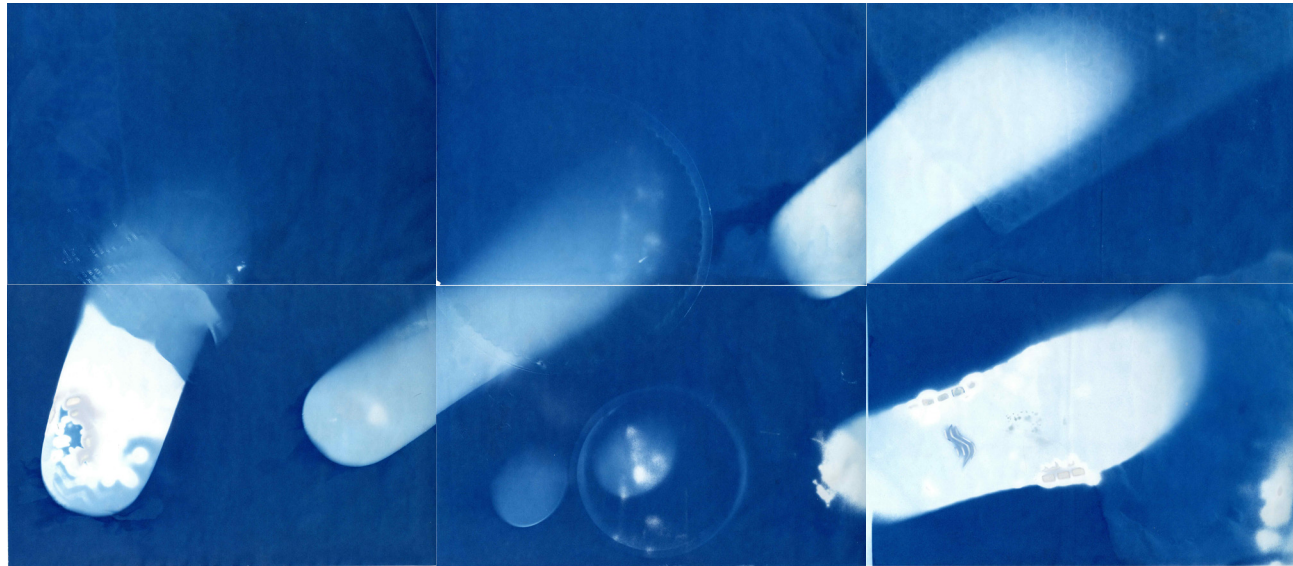
The movie highlights war, displacement and trauma. War which is a result of conflicted geographies and land result in displacement of thousands of people. What is left behind is trauma and memories of uncertainty, hope and conflicted ownership of land. Cities are build organically on these ideas, by events that take place over time. Cities are formed by layers of time, people, war, cultures and religions and hence are ephemeral in nature.

It is challenge to design for the ephemeral and set standards for a city so dynamic in it socio political context.

There are different approaches taken towards inclusivity and homogeneity within cities that led to better resolve the divide. The public spaces in cities are great opportunities to identify and disintegrate differences. Parks, gardens, museums, schools, community centres are public institutions that can help break the segregation due to war and disintegrate the divide and bring people and communities together, they are nods to spring conversations and understanding of warfare situations, sharing of experiences and healing via community care.

The research around the movie helped us to envision healing methods of design for a war torn city and hence reimagine the provisions made into planning of regions with dynamic histories that still affect the everyday of people living in them.

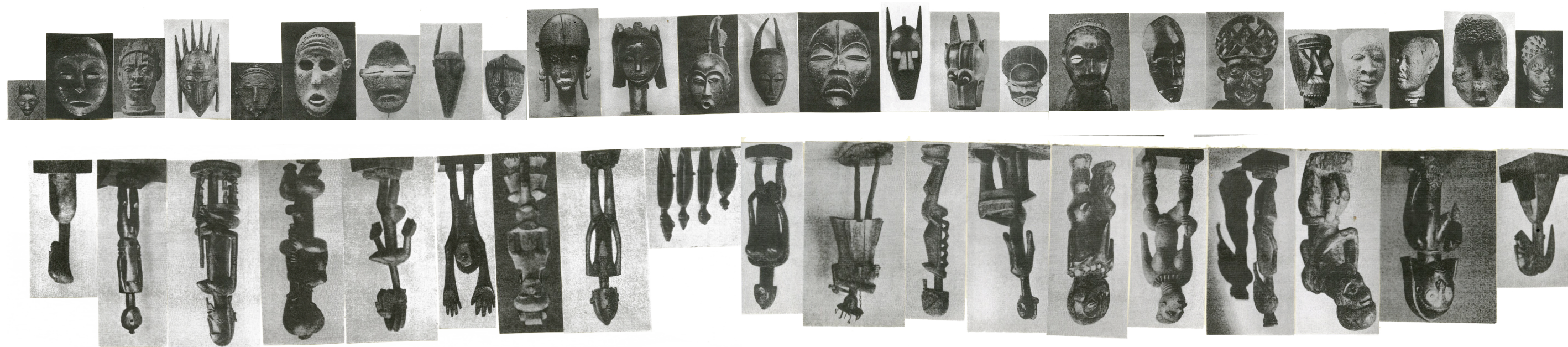




Marching museum o f liberation

Site: Museum Mile, New York City
Studio: **House of Liberation
Studio**, Spring Semester,
Columbia GSAPP
Guide: **Ilze Wolf and Tianyu
Yang**





The marching museum of liberation is a protest in a museum that challenges the 'DO NOT TOUCH' signs in a museum.

As an introduction to the House of Liberation studio we all started with reading the book , Harlem is nowhere by Sharifa Rhodes. The last chapter, 'We March because...' spoke of the African American Parade that takes place in Harlem every year. The parade is an amalgamation of people, identities and different communities that exist within Harlem. Together, they march every year to celebrate

their history and culture which is rooted for so many years.

Museums as a way of representing the African American Community.

After this reading I was curious to know of ways the African community is represented in the city of NewYork. Further looking into museums as a way of representing this community, I found the archives of the African Negro Exhibit that was curated by MOMA in 1930s. This was a travelling exhibition in the USA and cataloged the various masks and figures from the African continent.



Differences and commonalities between a parade and a museum (two ways of representation).

Both the parade and the exhibit represented people from Africa, one is an informal act of celebration on the streets v/s the exhibit is confined to the walls of MOMA.

Control by the NYPD x control by the museum.

According to Sharifa Rhodes, the chapter ends with a description on the culmination of the parade. Though a act of liberation, the parade is controlled by the NYPD.

The parade ends with getting manipulated and redirected by the police. The police ultimately show resistance to the marching parade, questioning if this was originally a parade or a protest?

Similarly, MOMA is in control of cataloging the African Negro exhibition, limiting the layers of information that come with the artefacts from Africa. To start with, the question here is what is the life of the object beyond the confines of a museums?

Hence I started placing these objects in a public realm and reimagined the museum and as part of the liberating parade. I took photos by Ernest Cole and layered them with the object and the parade to start intervening.

*We return.
We return from fighting.
We return fighting.
Make way for democracy.*

HOW MANY MORE WILL IT TAKE?



between 190th and 195th as if according to a script. The chants of Black Power! soon transform into choruses of Fuck the Police!

You better not betray us! You better not betray us! He shouted agitatedly, making demands whose urgency was obvious only to himself.

We don't trust you!













Object in the parade and parade in the museum.

What is a protest in a Museum? The provocative act of this project is a protest that is travelling on Newyorks 5th Avenue and occupying museum space and objects.

The project is trying to reimagine the life of a object in a museum in a contemporary world.

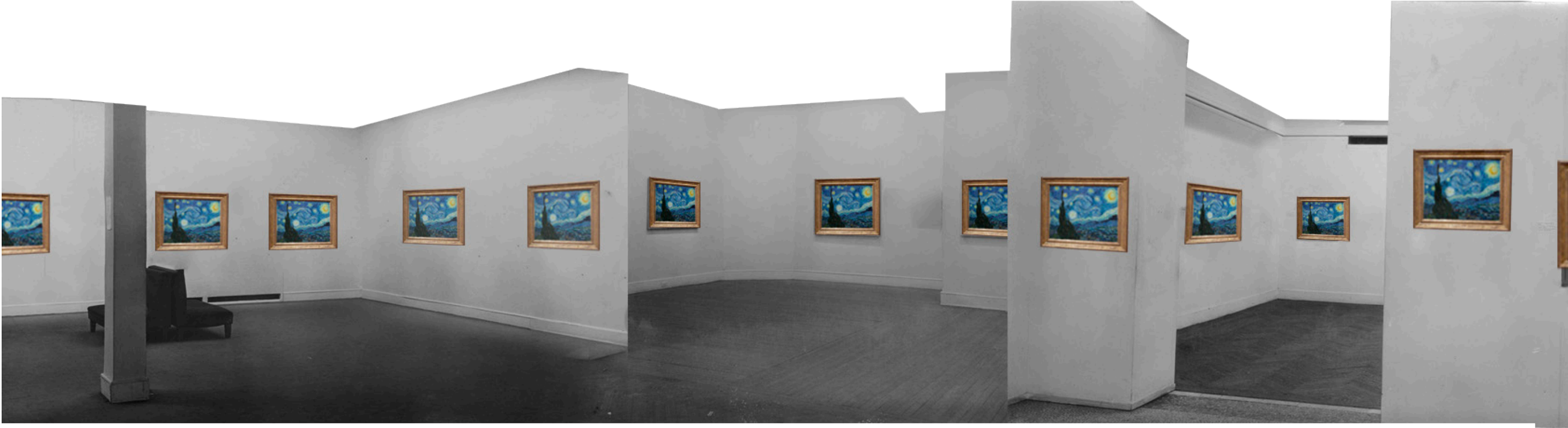
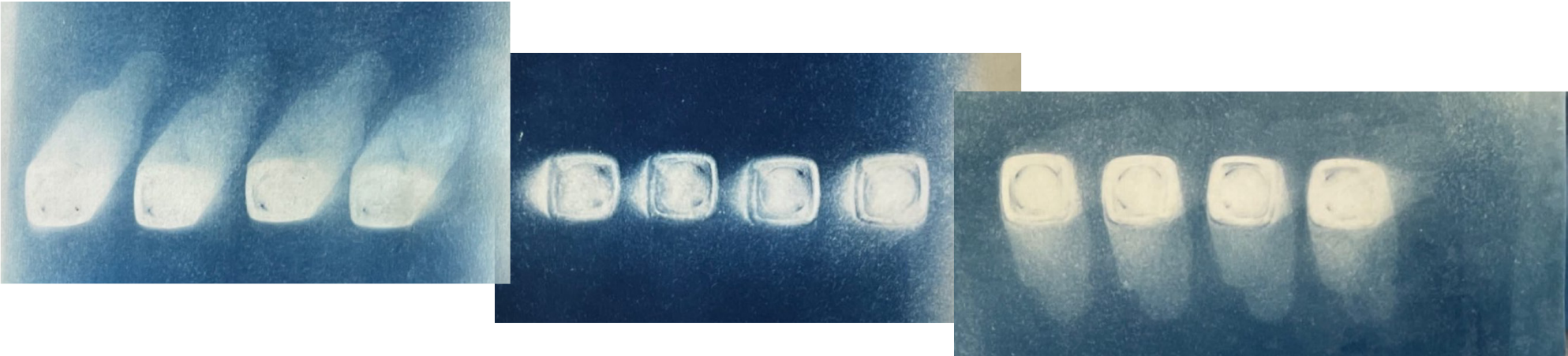
It will participate with the object inside the museum to create a march within the museum questioning the repository control of a museum over its objects. It travels from the street into the building to touch, smell, pick,

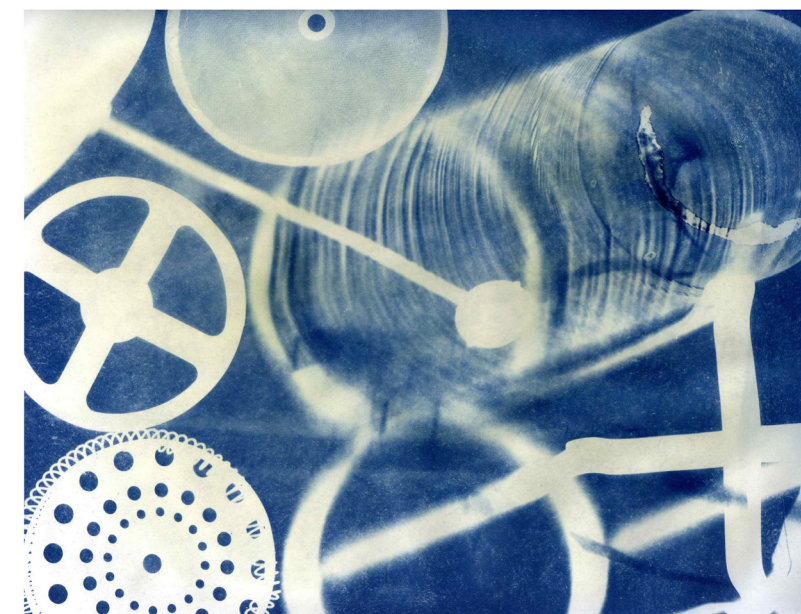
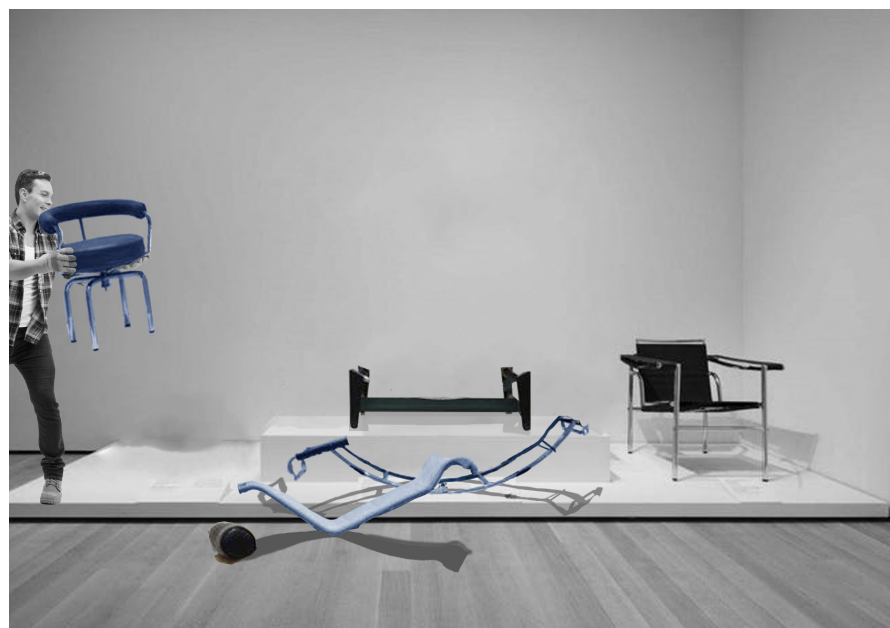
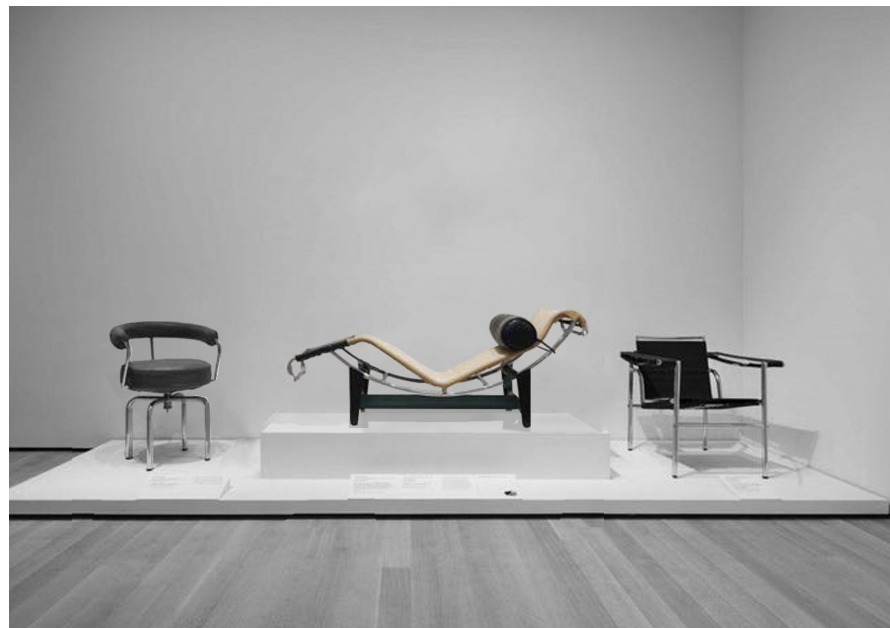
return, replicate or dismantle the objects on display. This one is a imagination of replicating the artwork in a space to hide the original.

Or dismantle a object to question the defunct nature of a object in the museum.

Or ultimately break it as a provocation to questioning its origin .

And finally, I want to end with a audio clip that I put together on our trip to Cape town. Its a voice of a curator and the architect on putting an exhibit together.





architectural photography:

With Michael J. Vahrenwald

