# Reimagining Human Habits
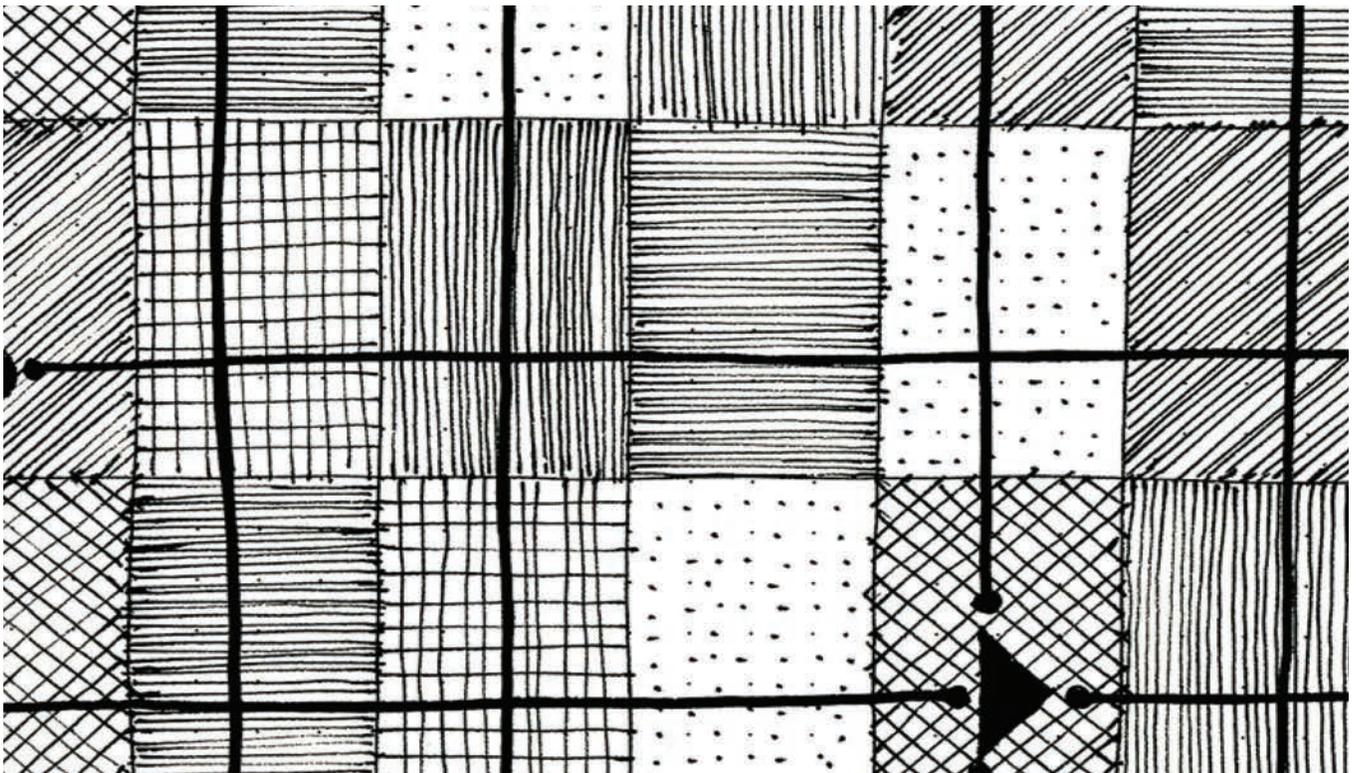
Seid Burka

Preface

In the spirit of a narration of series agendas in this collection, I embrace the multiplicity of ways of addressing humans, to its Darwinism, and to its ecology. Columbia GSAPP, as a site of knowledge building, we dwell in the space between cultivating utopia and practicing dissent.

Propositions are always in and ideas are presented as questions: How is architecture acting? What can our work enable?

From inventing a fictional architectural collective to think through discourse on disinvestment, to visualizing a difficult and evolving situation to understanding and engage a politics, to testing new mediums and telling old stories, this act draws together projects that think through the tension between the desire to act quickly and the decision to resist the problem solving tendencies of architecture.

The Projects gathered here activate the space of speed and reaction, of making one's voice heard. They imagine new ways of testing potential and architectural interventions. They assume a variety of attitudes, from earnest to cynical, realistic to optimistic–and deploy pragmatic and speculative tools in the likes of haiku, manifesto, narratives, drawings, and conversations.

This collection serves as more than a portfolio. These are strategic, site-specific and deliberate interventions–a repertoire of arguments and tactics. Each action articulates a position on a potential means of engagement. Each is a means to produce an effect.

Seid Burka
Columbia University GSAPP- May 2020

Liminal Ecology

Advanced Studio - Urban Palimpsests
Partner: Kabir Sahni

Karla Rothstein - DeathLAB
Columbia GSAPP
Summer 2019

I fed from this Earth
Belly full of fruit and leaves
Now you can have me

Outside their stelae
We orchestrate new stories
Some rest, others play

"A fragment of the world is already the whole world." The strata of this fragment are heterogeneous but not immiscible timelines. They interact with each other, forming interstitial compounds with unique properties. This fragment of the world, or fragment of time, is unfortunately run by a singular geophysical force – human. Attributing evolutionary cerebral development to the highest status, mankind defines the condition of the present and future tense of this timeline. Unfortunately, the timeline looks short in this anthropogenic era. It has corrupted all strata leading to their degradation. Mankind calls itself as a resource – the human resource, capable of mental/cerebral applications and the ability to endure labor to manipulate its surroundings. Mankind is not wrong to consider its evolutionary cerebral development a strength. But under its arrogance and self-proclaimed superiority it has let its weakness, its finiteness, plague its surroundings. The complex overlays of time are degrading under the finite rule of the human. In its finite chronology every unit of human being has consumed resource and space, laboring the ecology, locality and even corrupting the healthy state of the world's timeline. Memory, a subset of the world's palimpsest has somehow become an expression of every unit of human. Is memory a function of loss or can it be of life and progression? Can space for memory represent chronology of the world and its complex overlays or does it still have to follow a framework of reminiscence? Do we reminisce the past or can we contribute to the progression of time and add ourselves back into the system instead of corrupting its properties? The fragment of the world is the representation of systemic temporal overlays looking to prolong it - urbanity, locality, ecology and of course memory. Reminiscence, remembrance, preservation.

[i] soliloquy

[ii] intent

[iii] labyrinth of Anthropocene to 'Arbopocene'

i_fragment salad

ii_ridiculous anthropogene

iii_irreversible damage

iv_current human resource

vii_reminiscence x remembrance
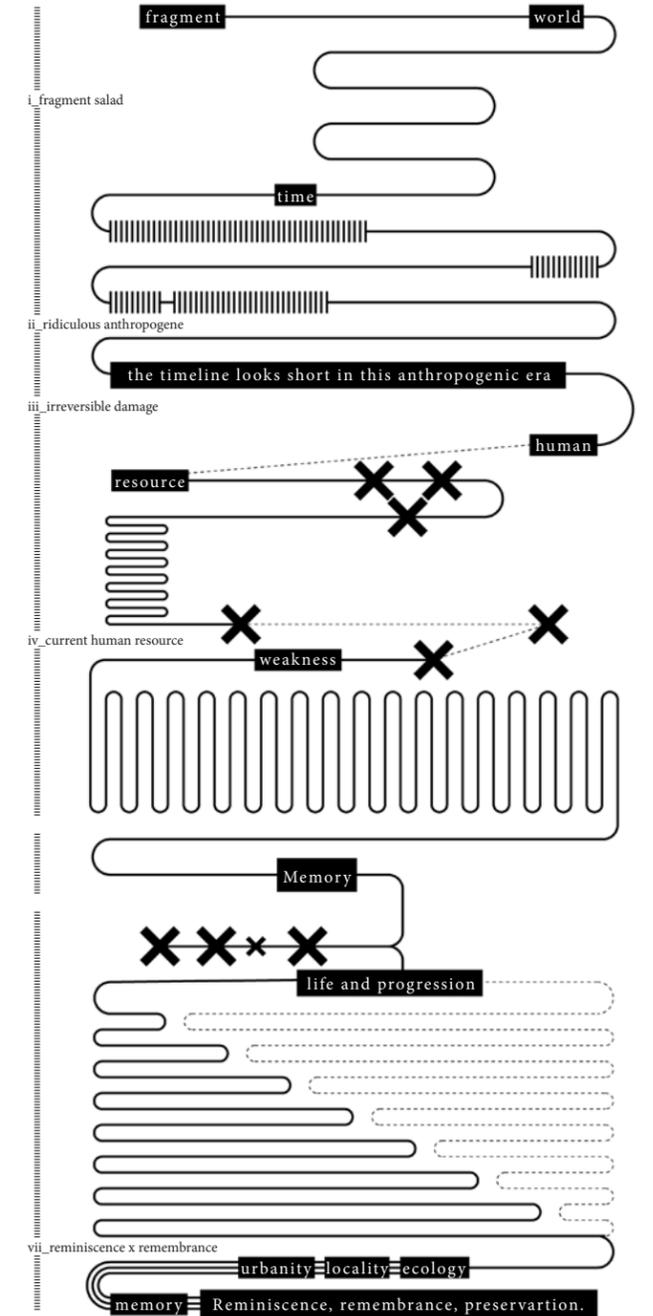
[iv] liminal ecology

People draw and consume resources from the Earth throughout their lives. Acknowledging the human corpse as biological material, an urban and architectural field performs liminally - coalescing resources, spaces, experiences and programs of life and death. Through the composting of the deceased, death contributes to the lives of future flora, and eventually future fauna. In the age of human Anthropocene, humans could positively contribute to our shared ecology rather than being a geophysical assailant.

new memories

remembrance

reminiscence

old memories
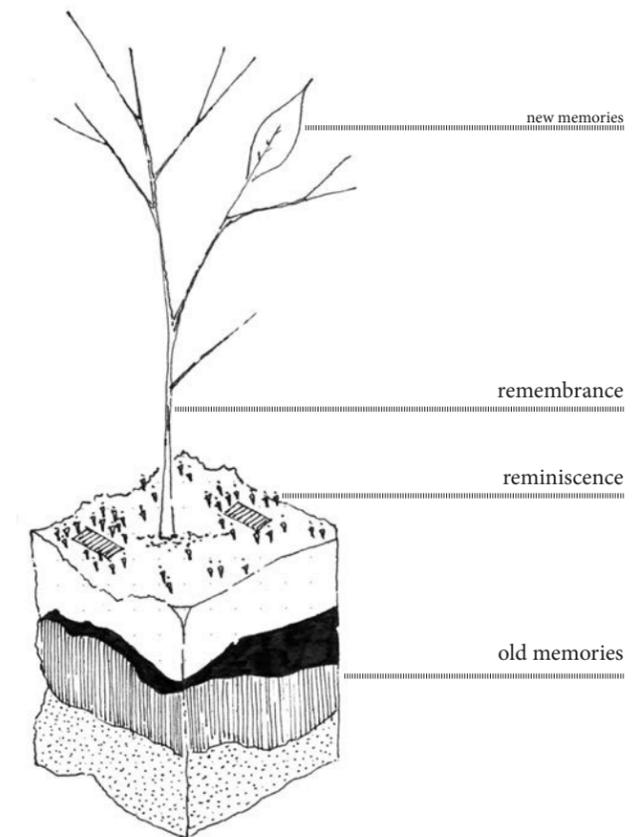
The cultivable countryside is a tessellation of recognizable plot shapes. Clusters of heterogeneous crops, following time, seasons and food culture. The urban transposition is a collection of polarized fields made to fit within the fragments of locality, urbanity, ecology and memory. And soon, these cultivable follies become locality, urbanity, ecology and memory themselves of the urban ecosystem. From linear movements between crop aisles, the urban folk move with a little more personal discretion - walk, cycle, run, drive, ride, crossover layup, Cryuff turn, skateboard, slide, chase bubbles, swing, lie, sleep. Spaces become specialised for functional isolation and yet under the rule of diversity, remain democratic to incorporate the imagination of the public - play, dance, sleep, workout, work, gamble, narrate, mime, fight, wed, watch, eat, entertain, make a living. And finally, with time accruing over the lifespans, stories and remains of people and place, what is left is the palimpsest of the world and the time capsules of human, ecological and spatial legacy.
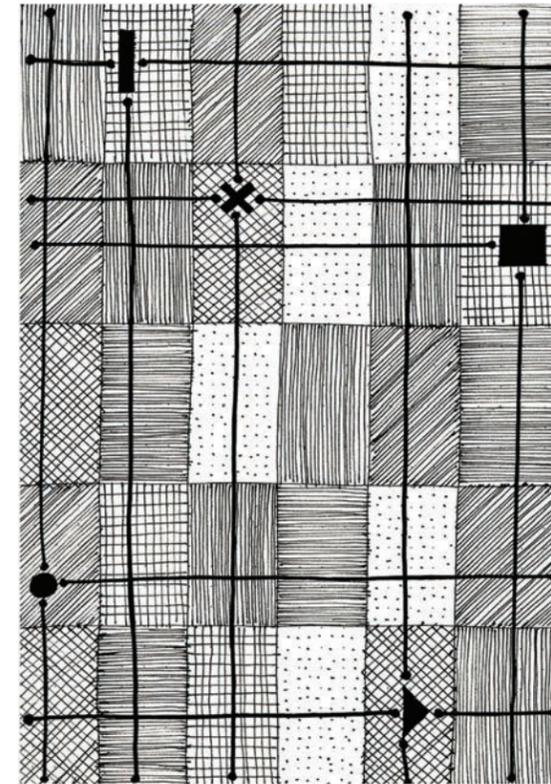
[i] cultivable rural
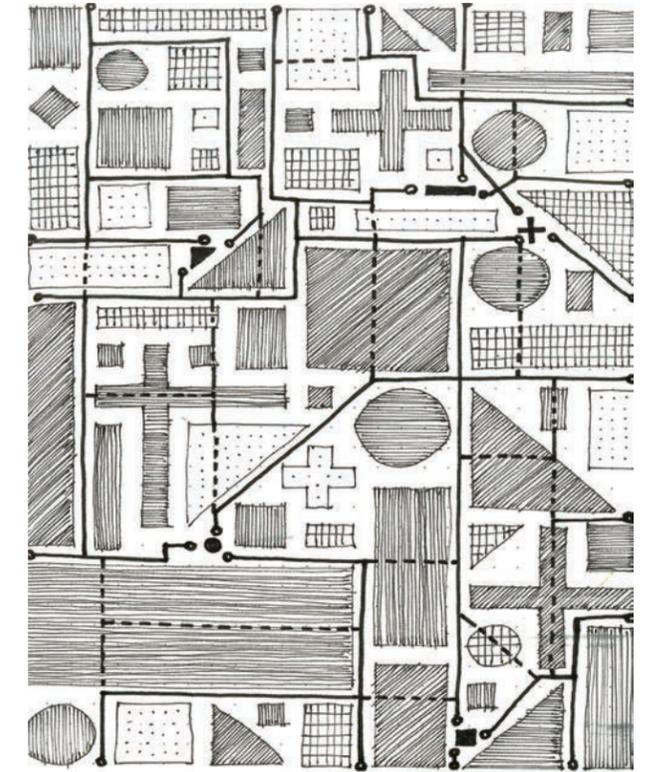
[ii] urban polarization
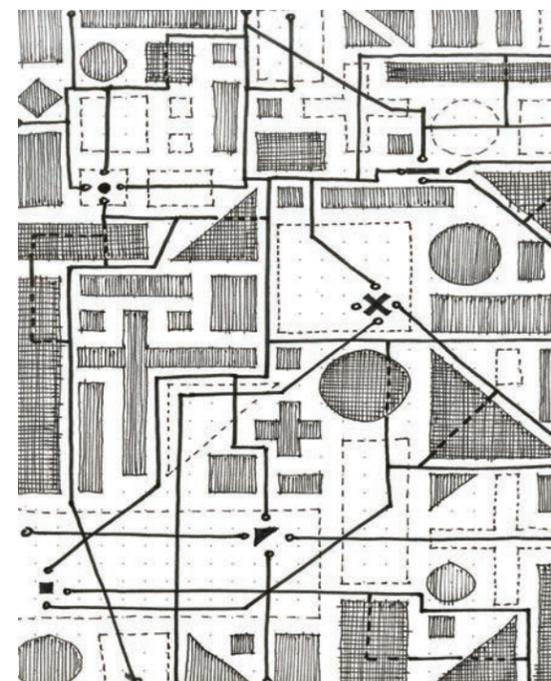
[iii] urban living roomW
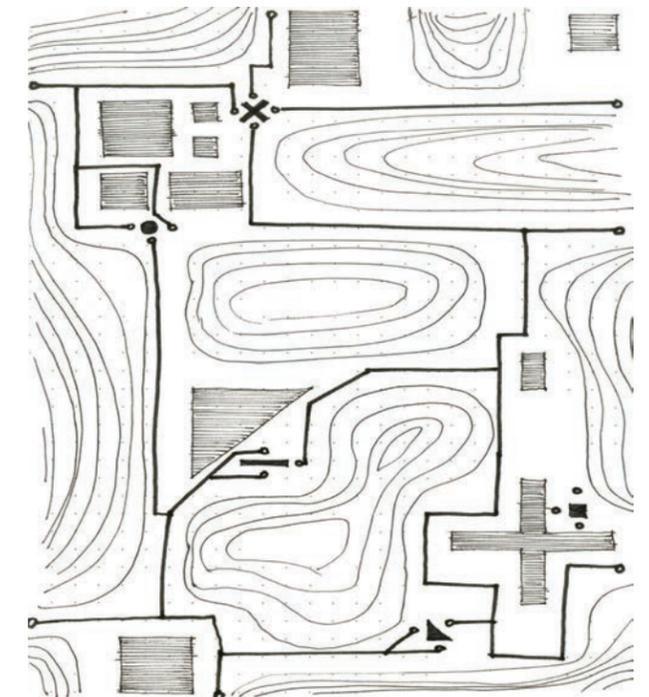
[iv] time capsules

A human is a sum of its physical construction, actions, health and cerebral activity. Similarly, the world is a collection of the same fragments - locality, urbanity, ecology and memory. The locality is a fragment of everything physical and systemic - roads, builtscapes, monuments, walkways, waterways, sewers, subway tunnels, playgrounds, airspace, lamp poles, dustbins, materiality, tonality, textures, fragrances, odours, noise, rules, regulations, sensibilities and laws. The urbanity is what we make of this locality together - play, sit, eat, fight, cycle, read, dance, listen, cook, vandalize, rest. The ecology is the life expectancy of the world. And finally, the memory is the collection of all palimpsests - stories, reminiscence, hindsights, remembrance, lessons learnt, wisdom transposed, and legacies. Together they make up the physical, intangible, intentional, systemic and memorable. The structure of any palimpsest is the interaction of all subsets, singularly and in groups, that together mark a past, live a present and move on to a future. The fragments is the world itself. Similarly, this palimpsest, is a fragment of fragments. From here we begin to record, design, manipulate and portend and maybe even amend, by building a fragment desirable for the longevity of the world.

memory   memory   urbanity   ecology
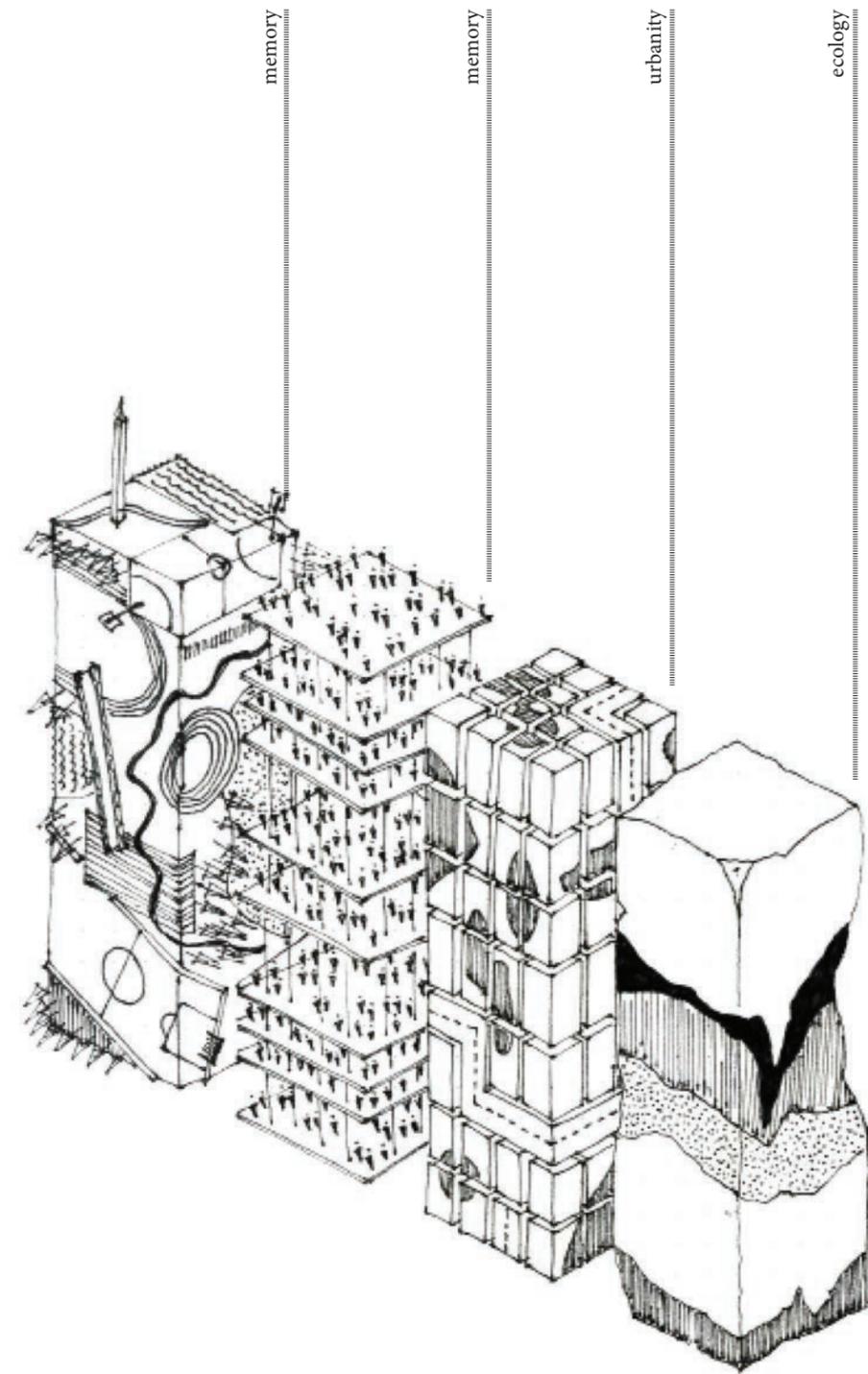
fragments of world

[fragments]	past	future
[loc]	morphological spacing	anthropocentric to arboreal grid
[urb]	collection of playgrounds	new living room of urban utility and imagination
[eco]	flora and fauna species	urban cultivation and nurseries
[mem]	people [reminiscence]	soil [remembrance]

[PART THREE] [FRAGMENT]

"A FRAGMENT OF THE WORLD IS ALREADY THE WHOLE WORLD"
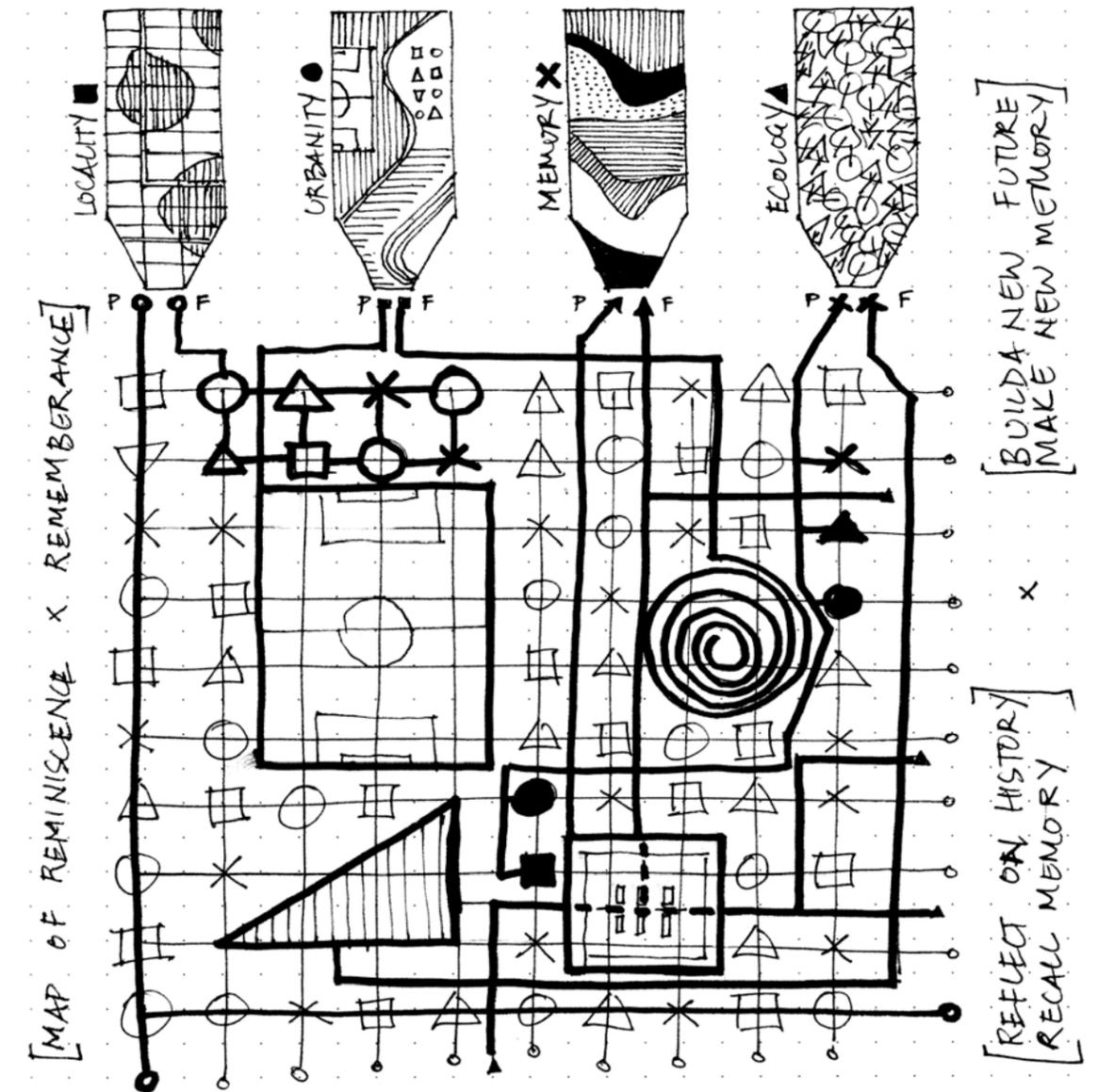
Each fragment has a past [a memory] and a future [aspiration] to build a coalescence of REMINISCENCE and REMEMBERANCE in one map.

fragments of fragments
[map of reminiscence and remembrance]
P - past | F - future

The established programme of the urban living room is sequenced to acknowledge the diverse labyrinths of its users–human species of all ages and intents, soil, ecology, memories, and other species of the fauna. Some labyrinths are linear or rectilinear [users pass by], others are playful yet intentional [like a series of skills in the playground as one dribbles up to the goal post; or stationary as one sits and reads; or chaotic as the child runs freely; or the farmer moving along alleys of crops and tending to them], or just illogical [aimless walk intended for introspection]. Some are fast [the runner], some leisurely [the old couple]. Together they map the present tense [routines, goals, conversations] of all fragments and users.

A path can be multicursal. A network of interconnecting routes intended to disorient even the cunning. It may contain multiple branches and dead ends, specifically designed to confuse the occupant. This is a maze.

A PATH CAN CONTAIN A SINGLE, MONOCURSAL ROUTE. ONCE EMBARKED UPON, THIS MAY FOLD, TWIST AND TURN, BUT WILL REMAIN CONSTANT, ULTIMATELY REACH A DESTINATION THIS IS A [LABYRINTH.]

The [LIVING ROOM] is a bundle of [LABYRINTHS].
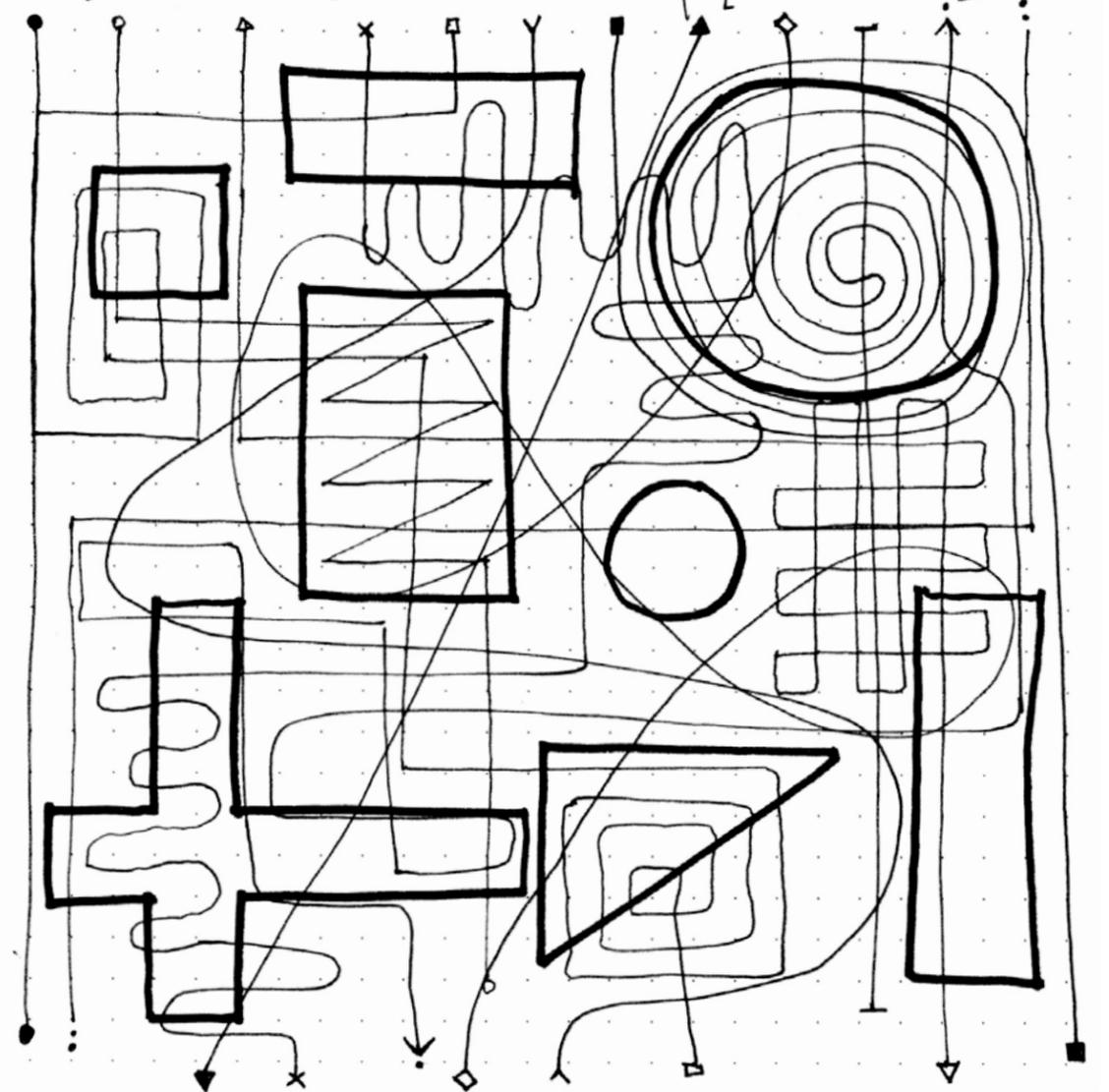
labyrinths in the living room

[loc] ■   [urb] ●   [eco] ▲   [mem] ✕

sports playgrounds		public nodes		nurseries		silos	
i	basketball court [x6]	i	room for stories	i	grains	i	silo.01_12 bays
ii	soccer pitch [x2]	ii	play room I	ii	medicinal	ii	silo.02_6 bays
iii	handball wall [x2]	iii	kitchen	iii	fruits + vegetables	iii	silo.03_12 bays
iv	running track [200m]	iv	fountain	iv	fruits + vegetables	iv	silo.04_6 bays
		v	library	v	edibles	v	silo.05_12 bays
		vi	theater	vi	fungi		
		vii	play room II	vii	house plants		
		viii	agora	viii	house plants		
		ix	classroom	ix	edibles		
				x	house plants		

forests [x8]

gardens
i   songbird garden
ii   hummingbird garden
iii   pollinator garden
iv   butterfly garden
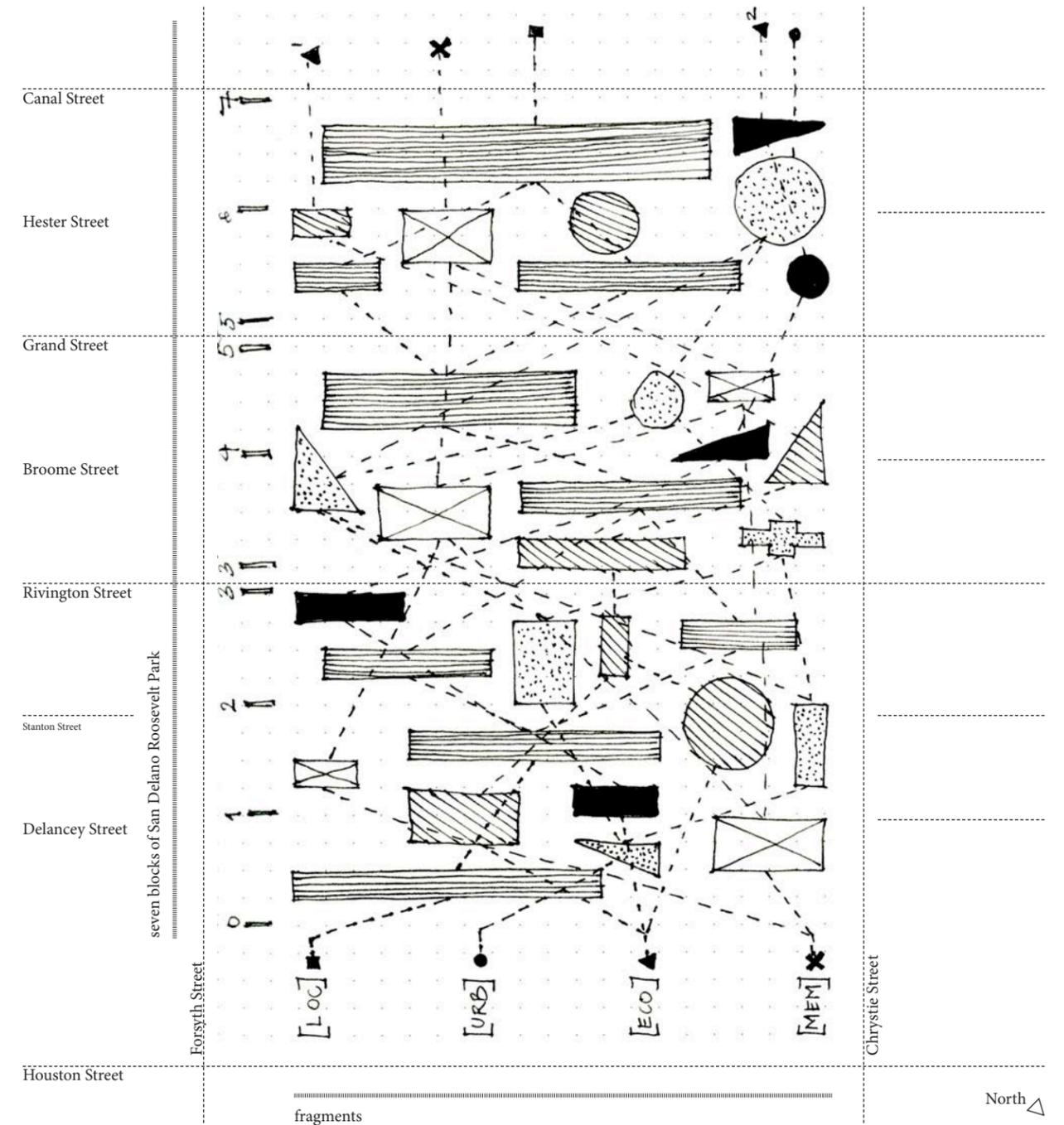
programme of the palimpsest
[components of the liminal ecology]
LOC/■ - locality | URB/ ● - urbanity |ECO/ ▲ - ecology |MEM/ ✕- memory |
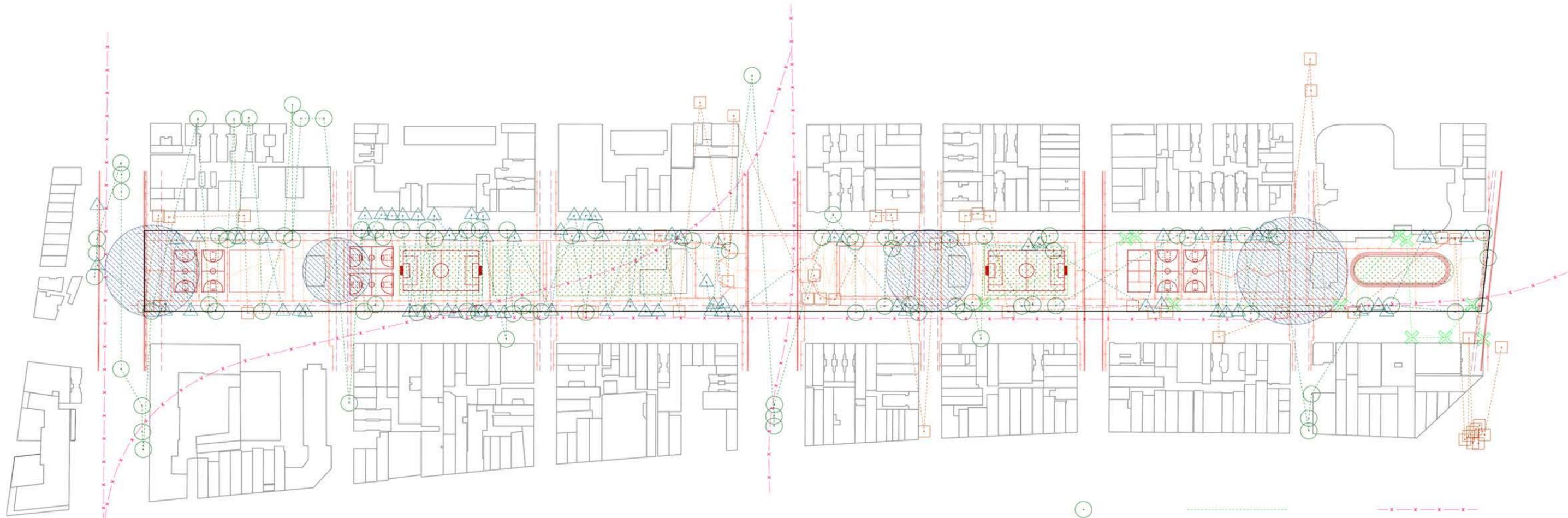
[loc]	[urb]	[eco]	[mem]
01_built morphology	01_pedestrian routes	01_trees	01_people
02_roads	02_sports grounds	02_foliage density	02_stories
03_cycle ways	03_play grounds	03_softscapes	03_flora
04_subway	04_public nodes	04_tree properties	04_fauna
05_sidewalks	05_soundscape		
06_demographics	06_density		

London Plane Tree

Ginkgo Tree

Kentucky Coffee Tree

Japanese Pagoda Tree

ecology network

San Delano Roosevelt

urban nodes

soft scapes

subway line

cycle ways

roads

pedestrian routes

San Delano Roosevelt Park
[fragments of the past]

San Delano Roosevelt Park
[map of the present]

cultivable urban

living room

composting silos

[San Delano Roosevelt Park]

Houston Street

Stanton Street

Rivington Street

Delancey Street

Broome Street

Grand Street

Hester Street

Canal Street
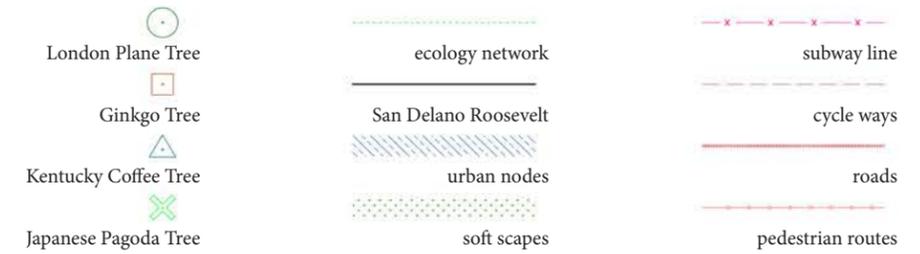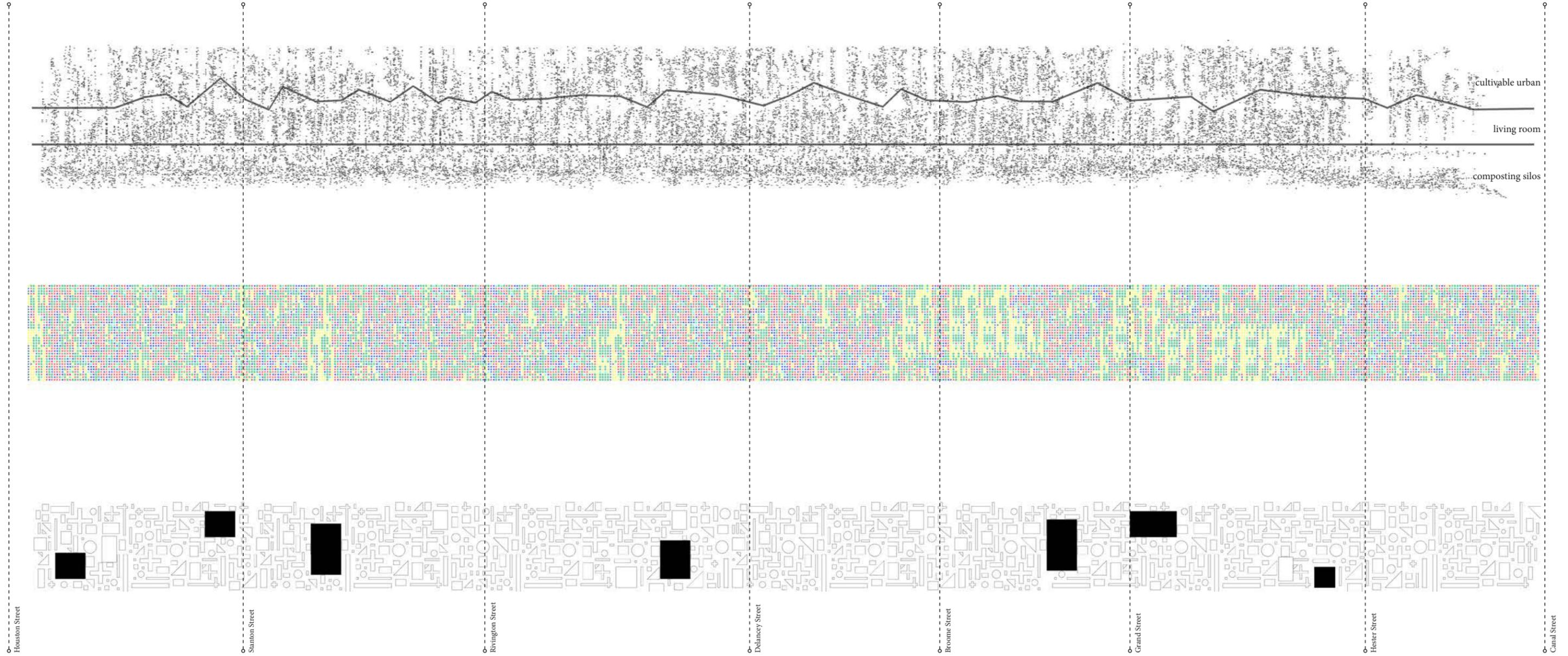
i_urban spectrogram
ii_mean frequency soundscape
iii_urban polarization

above 16 levels · 16-16 levels · 9-12 levels · 5-8 levels · 1-4 levels · ● vehicles_moving · ● vehicles_parked · ⊗ cyclists · ○ pedestrians · ⊙ sound · morphology x movement x sound
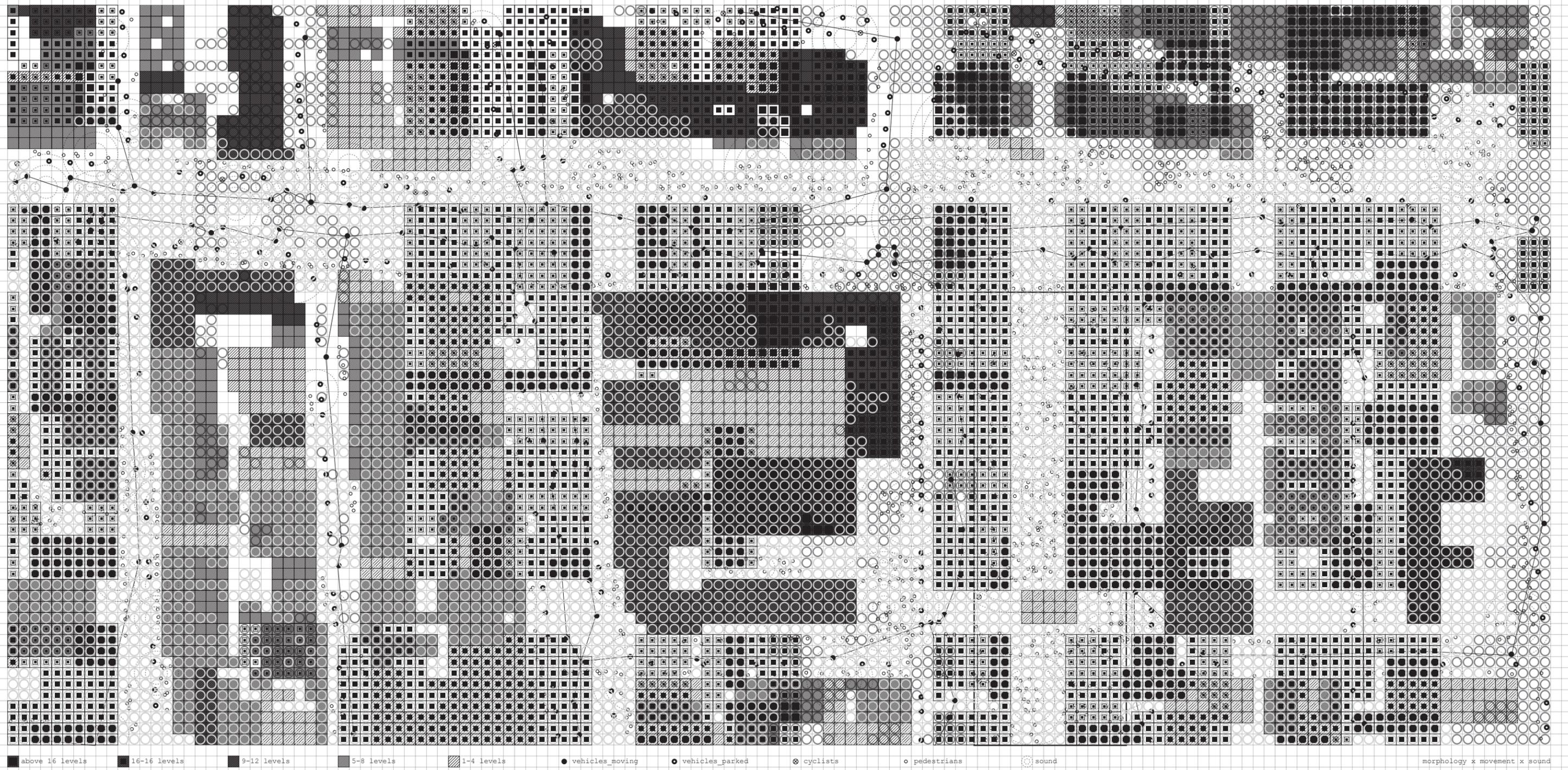
detailed site datascape_Seid Burka

[San Delano Roosevelt Park]

Block i_between Houston Street and Stanton Street

[parameters]

i_built morphology

ii_movement patterns

iii_soundscape

London Plane Tree · 01_grains · 01_songbird garden · forest · 01_songbird garden · 02_medinal · 01_songbird garden · forest · Kentucky Coffee Tree · 03_hummingbird garden · 01_fruits + vegetables · 02_hummingbird garden · forest · 04_fruits + vegetables · 02_hummingbird garden · forest · 05_edibles · 06_house plants · forest · Ginkgo Tree · 03_pollinator garden · 07_house Plants · forest · 03_pollinator garden · London Plane Tree · 04_butterfly garden · 08_edibles · forest · 04_butterfly garden · 09_house Plants · Japanese Pagoda Tree · forest

basketball · basketball · basketball · silo_01_12 bays [open] · room for stories · Stanton Street · play room I · silo_05_6 bays [covered] · basketball · basketball · kitchen · Rivington Street · fountain · Forsyth Street · football/soccer · Delancey Street · library · silo_03_12 bays [covered] · Broome Street · theater · handball · Chrystie Street · silo_04_6 bays [open] · Grand Street · basketball · football/soccer · basketball · play room II · silo_06_12 bays [open] · Hester Street · agora · running track 200m · classroom · Canal Street

nurseries	seasonal gardens	forests	existing arboreal composition	map of reminiscence and remembrance	composting silos	public imagination	playgrounds	streets
[eco]	[eco]	[eco]	[eco]	[living room]	[mem]	[urb]	[loc]	[loc]

swath details

Anthopocene / living room
world / palimpsest
basketball x soccer
seasonal garden
nursery tholos
time capsule
observatory
burial silo
burial bay
composting back of the house
forest
agora
liminal field

[remembrance]
average term memory

[preservation]
long term memory

[reminiscence]
short term memory

sectional swath details

Inhabiting is a Habit
Advanced Studio V - Protocols_of Repair

Mabel O. Wilson & Jordan Carver
Columbia GSAPP
Fall 2019
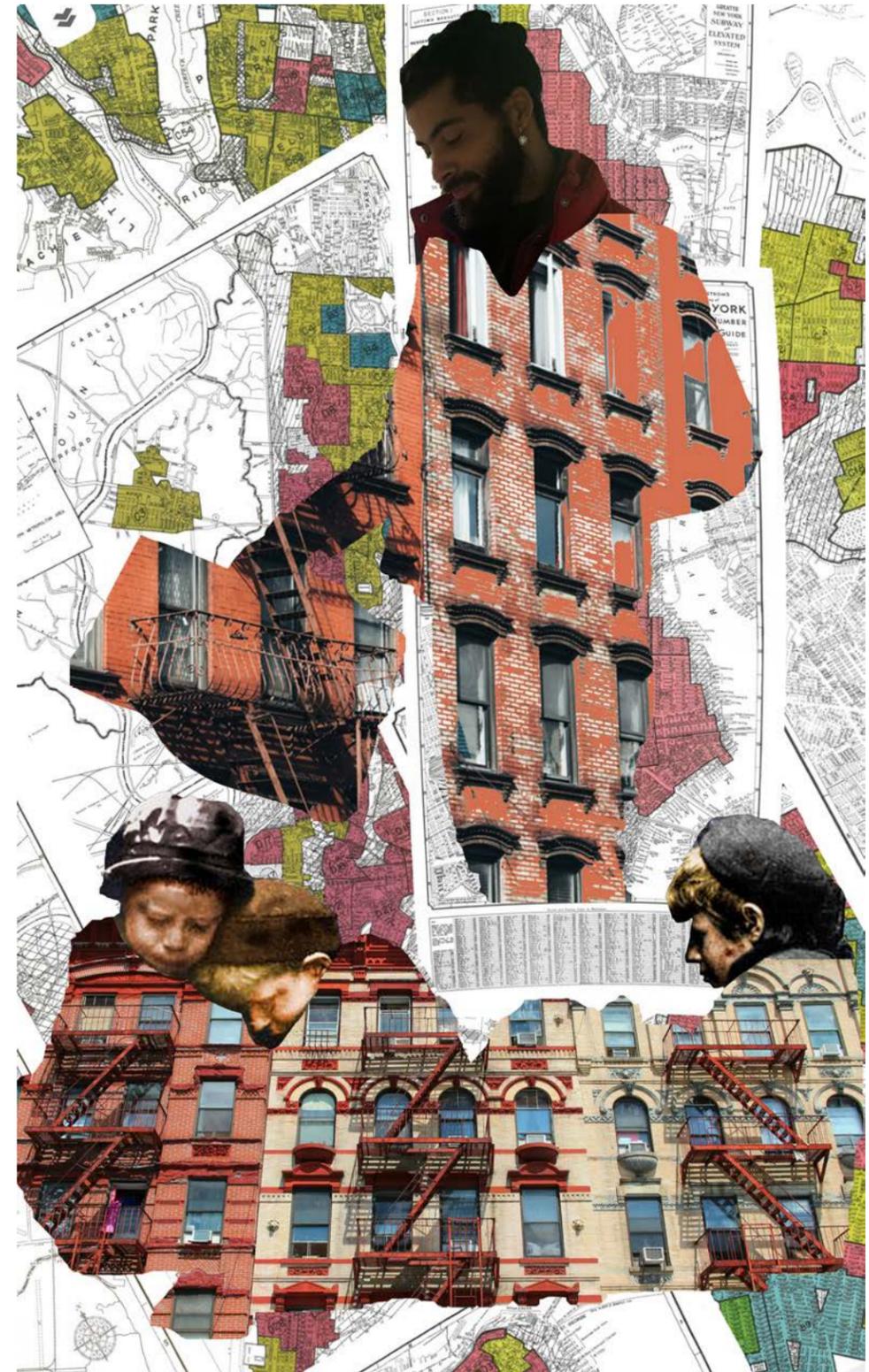
scale of inhabitation

Over the past few decades, the Lower East Side of Manhattan has become a destination for some wealthy individuals and families. One outcome of gentrification has been rampant speculation on property, with local people being priced out of the market and a rise in homelessness. The 1988 Tompkins Square Park protest, sparked by a 1am curfew that closed of the park, was symbolic and showed how gentrification resulted in homelessness. By obtaining permanent housing through squatting beginning in the 1960s in the Lower East Side, people found alternatives to these forms of displacement, as well as a powerful weapon in the fight against injustice. By analyzing, reorganizing and transforming squatting practices, this project attempts to destigmatize it and develop protocols of repair by introducing new self-built structures as places to live and work in a nearby abandoned school building. As a method, these interventions uses collective spatial tactics to transform vacant premises, to reuse construction materials, and to conserve historical buildings. Body and the City we human's exist within the spatial and linguistic constraints defined by capital, and architecture embodies the truth that cannot be said aloud. We enter a limbo of dead but still haunting controversies, of old and ghostly dogmatisms, which effectively darkening our world. It is time that these specters were laid, or else, by whatever necessary libations of exacter thinking, brought honestly to life. Their is a connotations associated with the blight that surrounds human body and who still call the city my home.

manifesto
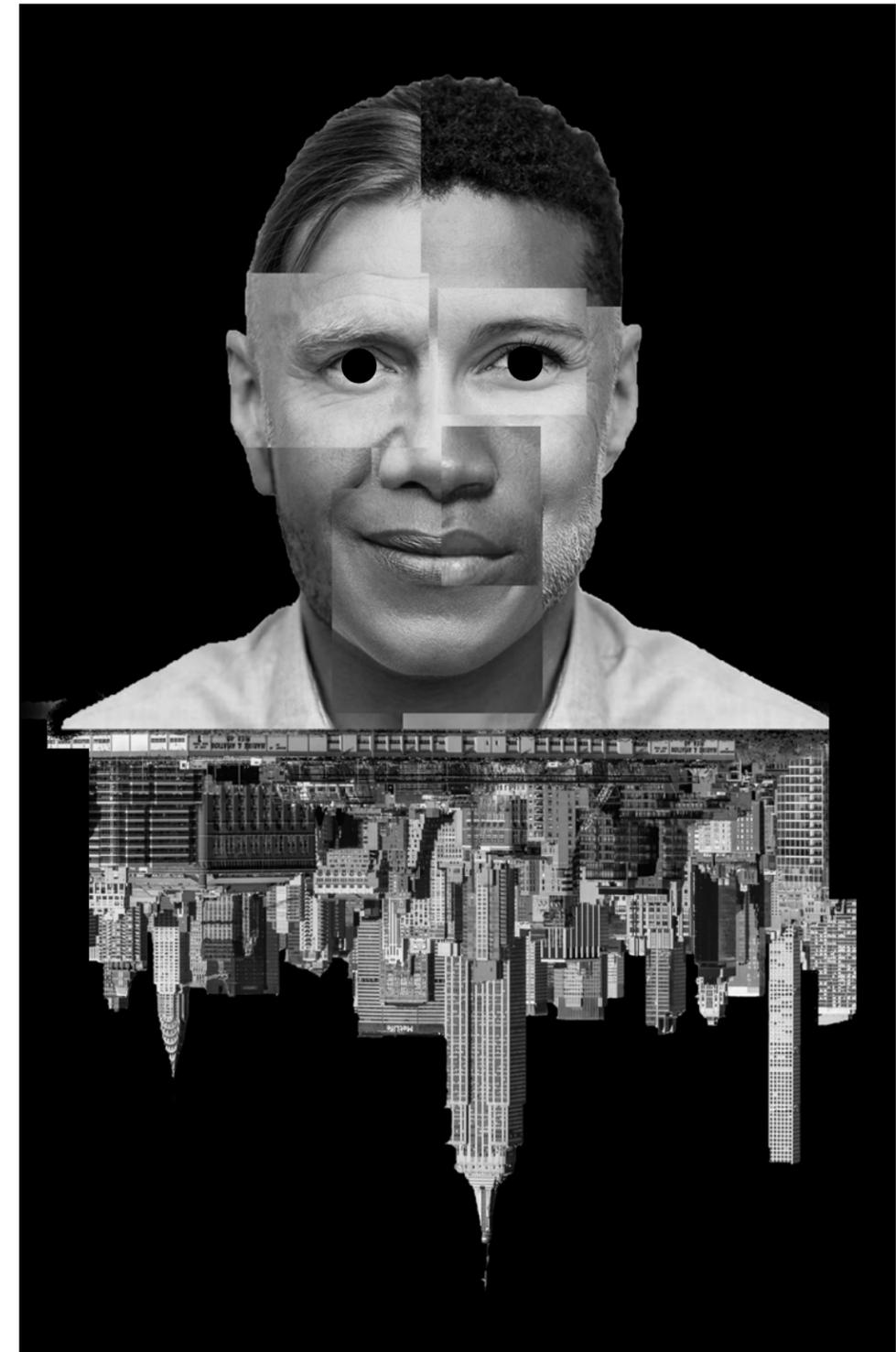
manifesto in polemical collage

MANHATTAN

LOWER EAST SIDE

TOMPKINS
SQUARE
PARK

PS 64
CHARAS CC
C-SQUAT

SERENITY

LA PLAZA
CULTURE

RAINBOW
COOP

UMBRELLA
SQUAT

BULLET
SQUAT

AVENUE A

AVENUE B

AVENUE C

N

12th St

11th St

10th St

8th St

7th St

6th St

5th St

4th St
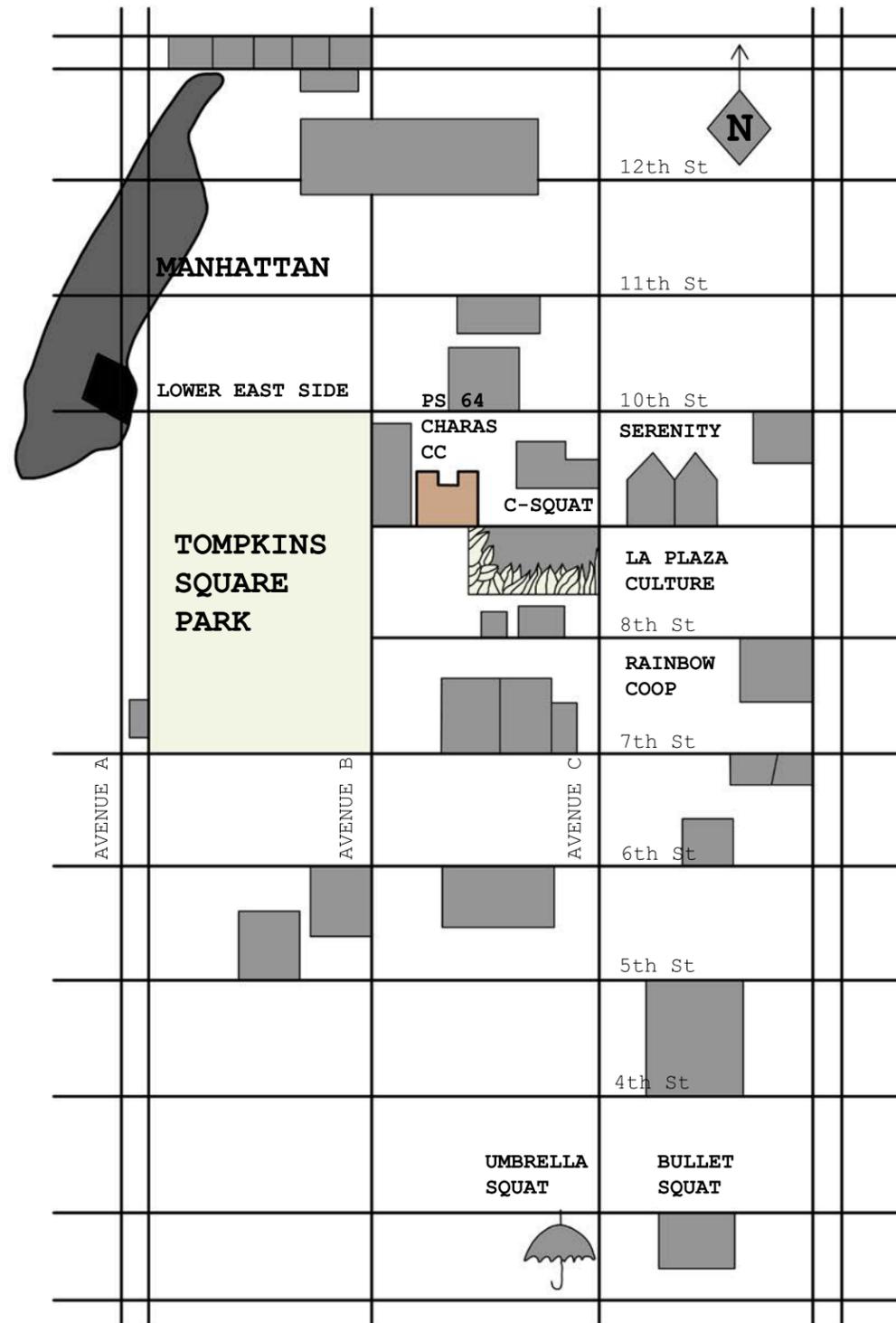
squatting_sites

squatting_protocols
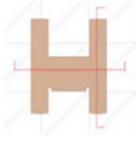
adverse possession
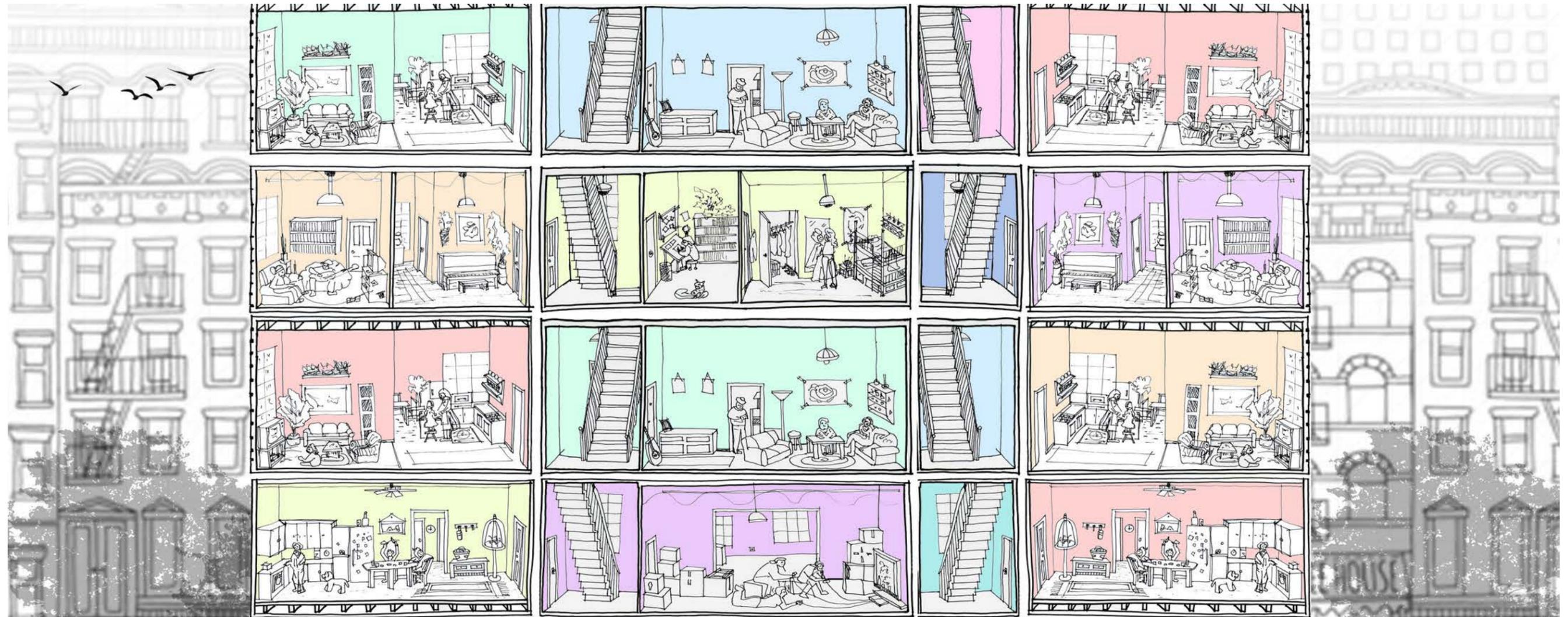
adverse possession processes
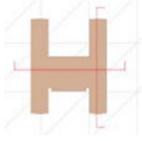
squatters activity
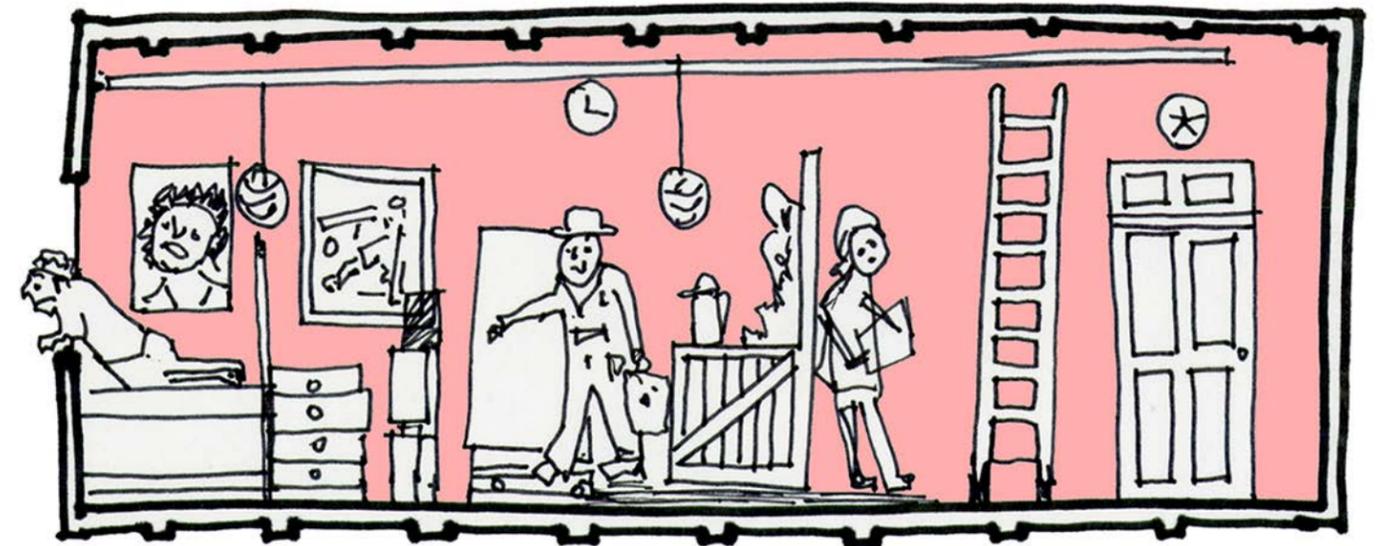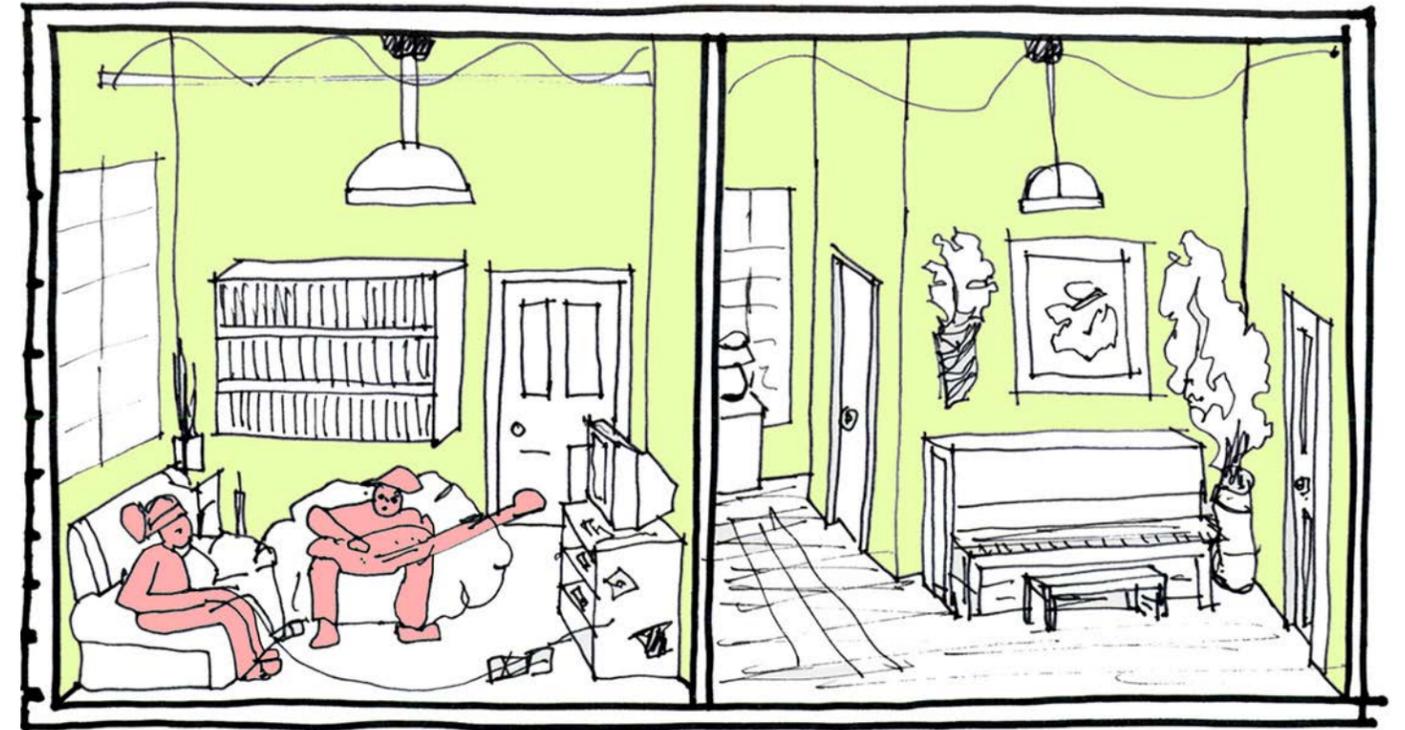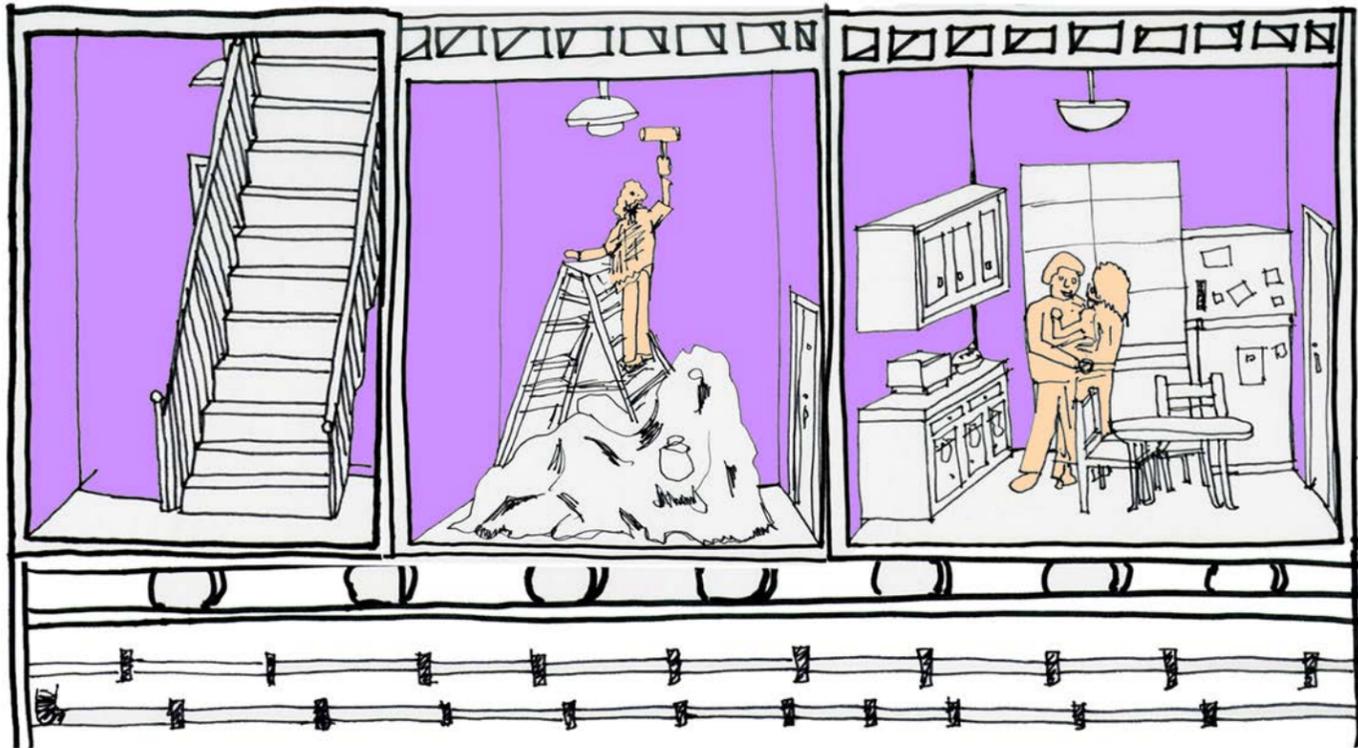
showcase squatters claim spaces

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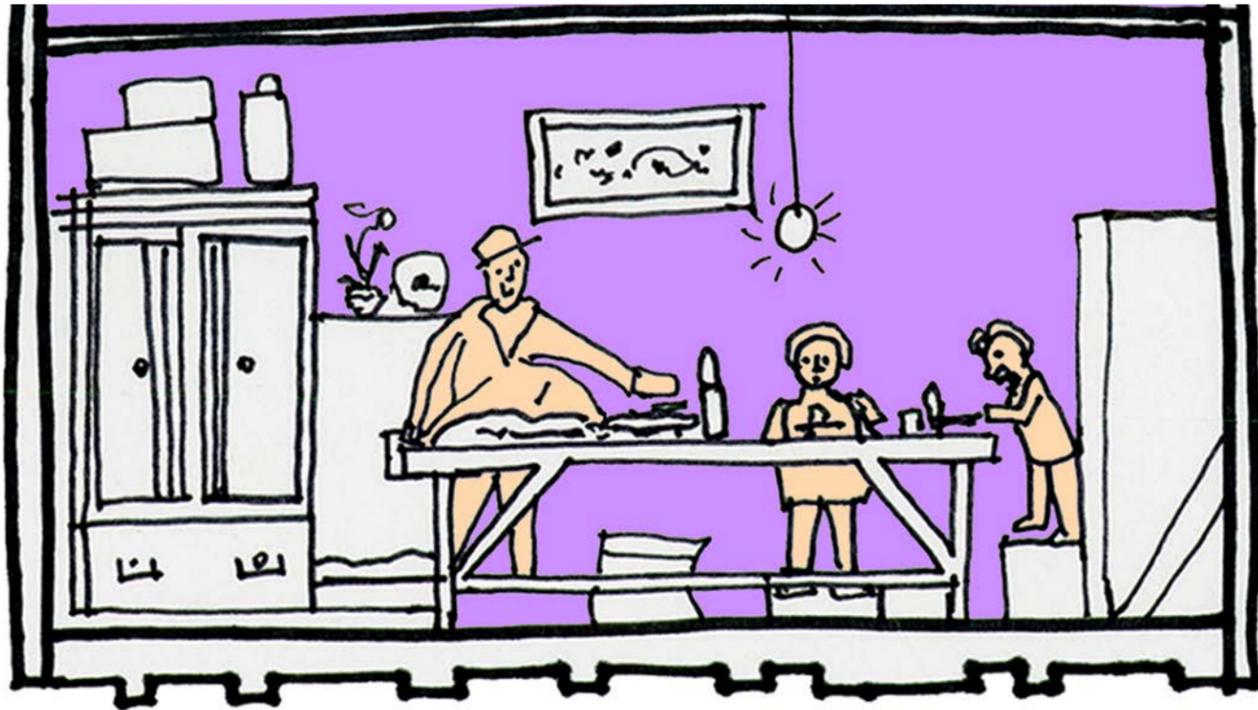
showcase how squatters claim spaces

A man so far becomes degenerate, and declares himself to quit the principles of human nature and to be a harmful creature, there is commonly damage done to some person or other, and some other man receives damage by his transgression, In which case he who hath received any damage, has, besides the right of punishment common to him with other men, a particular right to seek it. Generalized of the human groups to a society pathetically accommodated, to all the levels, is destroyed instantaneously by which of subversive way, commit such acting that beyond producing changes in structures they may do it, so we suppose a critical parodia that demonstrates the incapacities of the same ones to limit the complex reality. Architecture embodies the truth that cannot be had aloud or spoken within the spatial and linguistic constraints defined by capital, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. We enter a limbo of dead but still haunting controversies, of old architectural truisms, which effectively darkening our world. It is time that these specters were laid or else, by whatever necessary libations of exacter thinking, brought honestly to life. My desire is to decolonizing the pattern languages of the colonizer. Urban space of assembly for whom needed most. Architecture should act as a social art. Architecture should be a tool to urban and social renovation. Architecture should be available for all human kind and creature. Highlight the value of humanity and disvalue the norms and structural biases on which architecture produced.

how else would we come to know ourselves?

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a man so far becomes degenerate & declares himself to quit the principles of human nature & to be a Harmful creature

A man so far becomes degenerate, and declares himself to quit the principles of human nature and to be a harmful creature, there is commonly damage done to some person or other, and some other man receives damage by his transgression, In which case he who hath received any damage, has, besides the right of punishment common to him with other men, a particular right to seek repair. The alienation generalized of the human groups to a society pathetically accommodated, to all the levels, is destroyed instantaneously by which of subversive way, commit such actions, that beyond producing changes in structures that accredit and control suppose a critical parodia that demonstrates the incapacities of the same ones to limit the complex reality. Architecture embodies the truth that cannot be said aloud. Because we exist within the spatial and linguistic constraints defined by capital, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism. We enter a limbo of dead but still haunting controversies, of old and ghostly dogmatisms, which effectively darkening our world. It is time that these specters were laid or else, by whatever necessary libations of exacter thinking, brought honestly to rest. My heart is to decolonizing the pattern language of the colonizer. Creating spaces of assembly for whom needed most. Architecture should act as a social art. Architecture should be a tool to urban and social renovation. Architecture should be available for all human kind and creature. Highlight the value of humanity and disvalue the norms and structural biases on which architecture produced.

there is commonly damage done to some person or other &and some other man receives damage by His transgression

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in whuch case He who hath received and damage, has besides the right of punishment common to him with other men, a particular right to seek Repair

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my desire is to Decolonize the pattern language of the colonizer. Creating spaces of Assembly for whom needed most

architecture should act as a Social Art architecture should be a tool to urban and si-cial renovation. architecture should be available for all Mankind

A man so far becomes degenerate, and declares himself to quit the principles of human nature and to be a harmful creature, there is commonly damage done to some person or other, and some other man receives damage by his transgression, In which case he who hath received any damage, has, besides the right of ~~punishment~~ common to him with other men, a particular right to seek repair. The relation generalized of the human groups to a society esthetically accommodated, to all the levels, is defined relatively by which of subversive way, commit such actions, that beyond producing changes in structures that accredit and control suppose a critical parodia to elements, passing mainly old-time ones to limit the symbol of any Architecture impose the truth that cannot be said aloud. Because we exist within the spatial and linguistic structure defines the capital, it is time to ~~illuminate~~ the dead contradiction; the magic bubble of capitalism. We enter a limbo of dead but still haunting controversies, ~~which~~ controversies ridden, massively darkening our world. It is time that these specters were laid or ~~happy~~ with these, does deserves some ~~blessing~~, brought honestly to life. My desire is to decolonizing the pattern language of ~~the market,~~ Create good spaces of assembly for whom needed most. Architecture should act as a social art. Architecture should be a tool to urban and social renovation. Architecture should be available for all human kind and creature. Highlight the value of humanity and disvalue the norms and structural biases on which architecture produced.

i seek to highlight the value of Humanity and disvalue the norms and structural biases on which architecture produced.

Hidden Architecture
The Geography of War
Advanced Studio VI - Cultural Agent Orange

Mark Wasiuta
Columbia GSAPP
Spring 2020

When she dug the tunnels, her hair was still brown.
Today her head is white as snow.
under the reach of the guns she digs and digs.
At night the cries of the partitidge record the past.
Twenty years, always the land is at war.
The partigridge in the night cries out the love of the native land.
The mother, she digs her galleries, defenses,
Protecting each step of her children.
Immeasurable is our native land.
The enemy must drive his probes in everywhere.
Your unfathomable entrails, Mother,
Hide whole division under this land.
The dark tunnels make their own light.
The yankees have captured her.
Under the vengeful blows she says not a word.
They open their eyes wide but are blind.
Cruelly beaten , the mother collapses.
Her body is no more than injuries and wounds.
Her white hair is like snow.
Night after night
The noise of picks shakes the bosom of the earth.
Columns, division, rise up from it.
The enemy, sized by panic, sees only
Hostile positions around him.
Immeasurable is out native land.
Your entrails, Mother, are unfathomable.

Duong Huong Ly - Cu Chi, Vietnam

cultural concentration

The underground tunnels of Cu Chi were the most complex part of a network that–at the height of the Vietnam War in the mid-sixties–stretching from the gates of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) to the border with Cambodia. The tunnels stretching 125-mile connecting villages and held living space, storage, clinic, HQ's, and almost every facility that was necessary to the pursuit of the war by South Vietnam's Communists and that could be accommodated beneath the surface. "no one has ever demonstrated more ability to hide his installations than the Viet Cong; they were human moles." General William Westmoreland The tunnels evolved as the natural response of a poorly equipped and mainly local guerrilla army to mid-twentieth-century technological warfare. Aircraft, bombs, artillery, and chemicals obliged the Viet Cong to live and fight underground. Ironically, by becoming an army of mole pitched against armies winged into battle by helicopter, the VC guerrillas, and later the North Vietnamese army, protracted the war to the point of persuading the US that it was UNWINNABLE. And once the US began disengaging itself from Vietnam, a complete victory for the communists moved irresistibly nearer. This project referred, engaged, and augmented the hidden architecture and the geography of warfare, as a tool and develop an argument to scale up the narratives of the tunnel architecture and develop an interpretative center to showcase the discourse of how the tunnel function.

CAMBODIA

CU CHI

SAIGON

Tunnel Complex

Medium Tunnel

Large Rice Cache
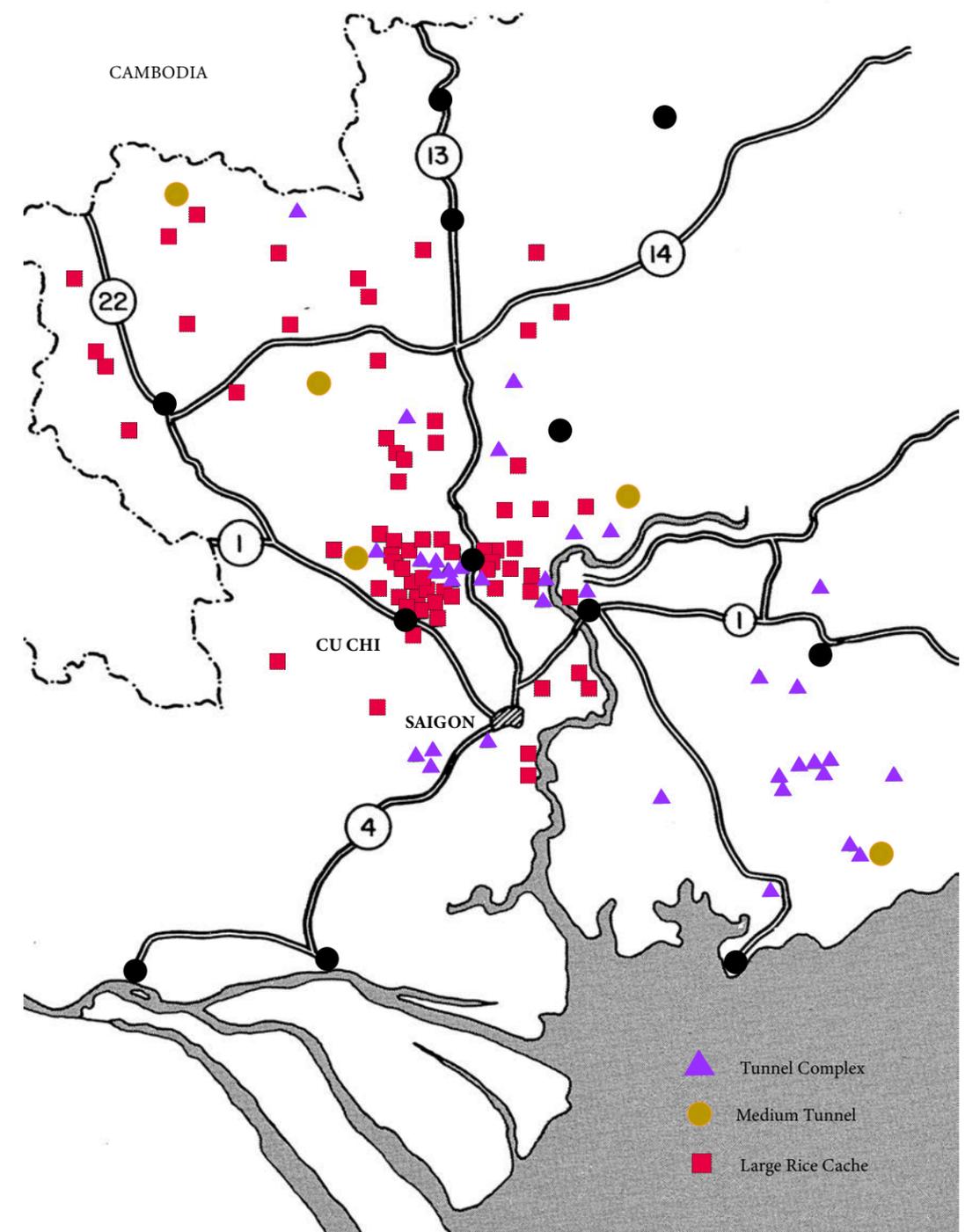
125-mile the pattern of cu chi tunnel vietnam

hidden architecture the geography of war

firing post

airtight trapdoor

punji stake trap

first aid post

reinforced sleeping

storage for weapons

bamboo ventilation tube

US GI

underground shelter

water exit/entry
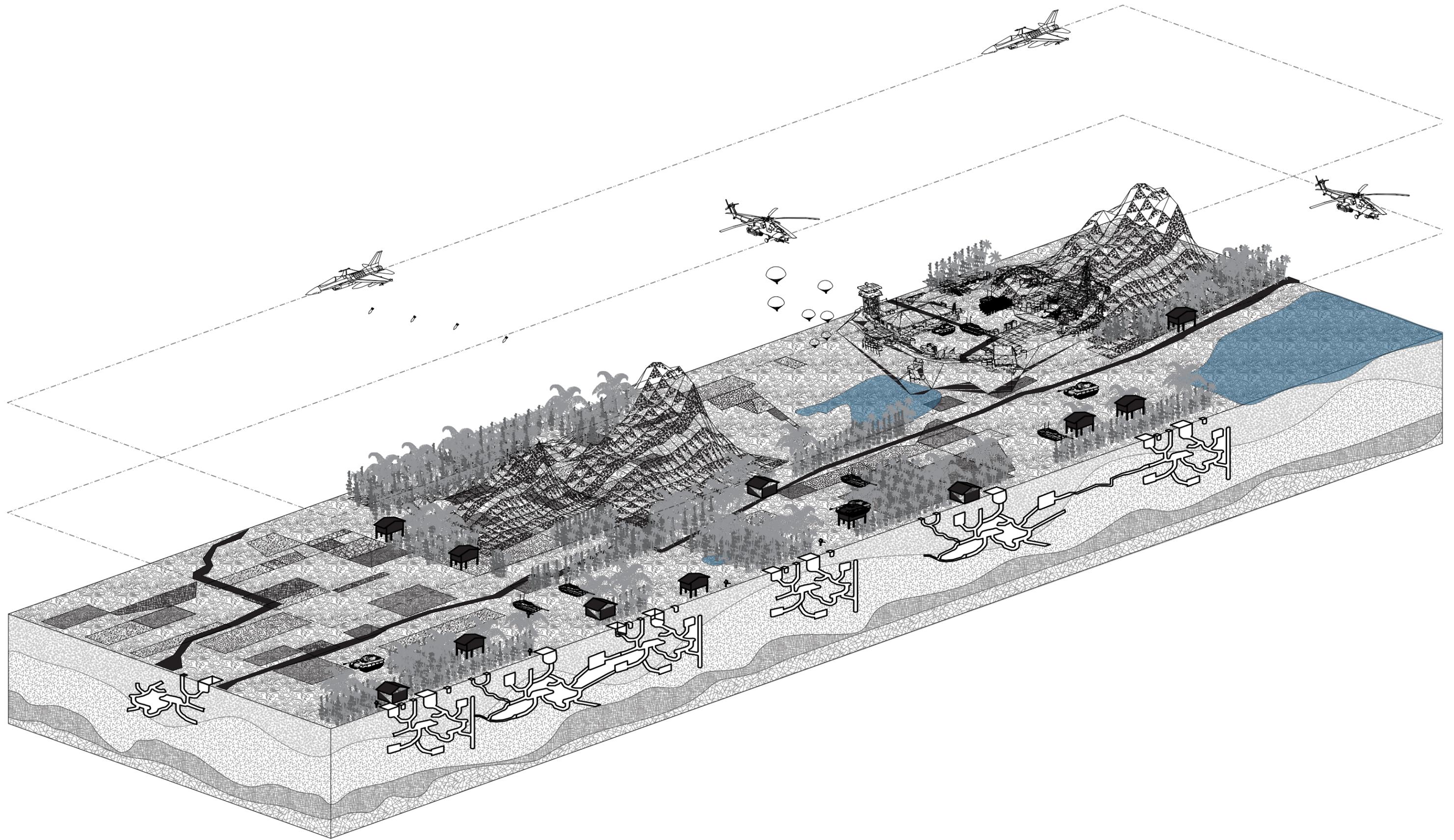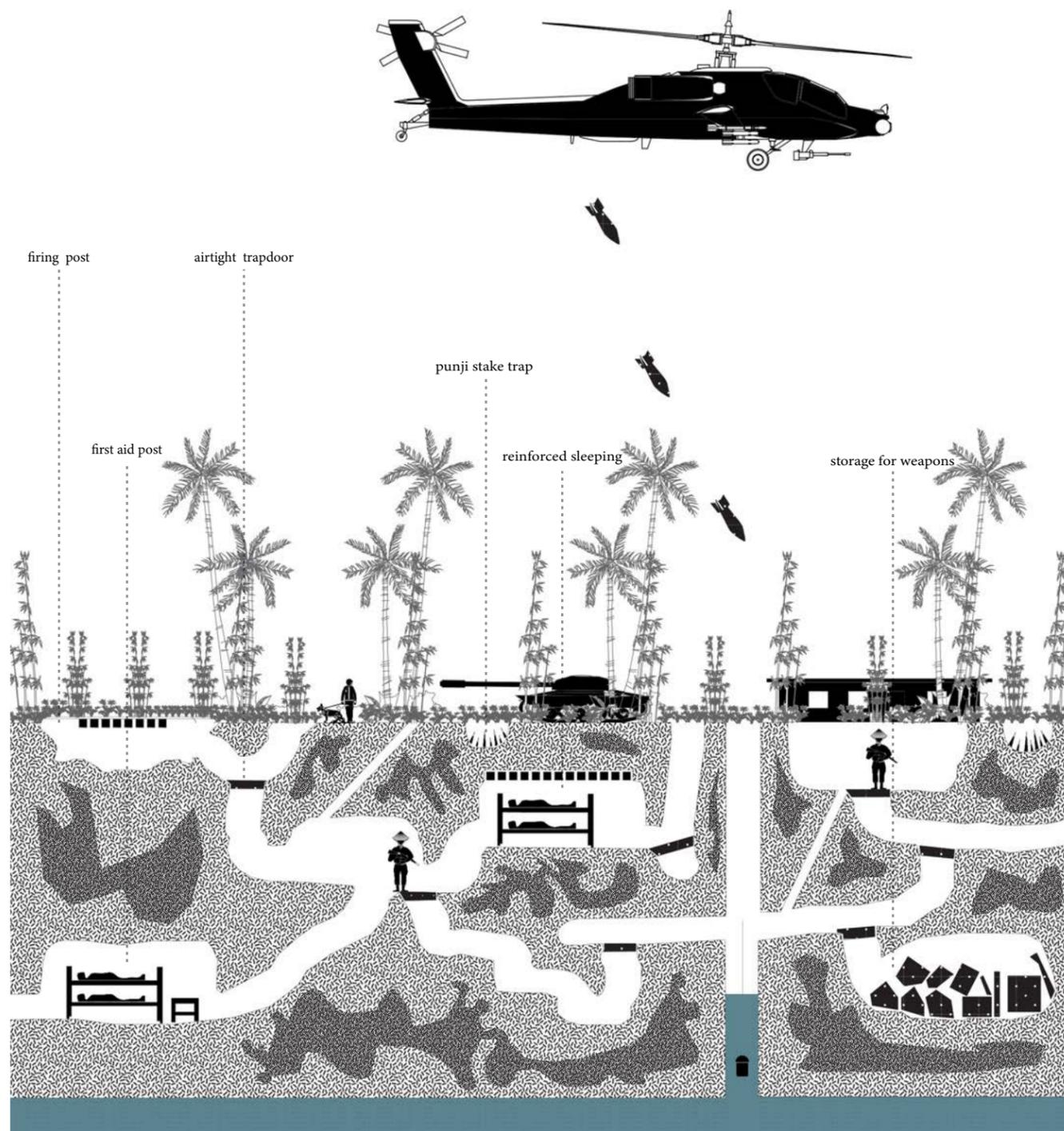
VC - tunnel programs

tunnel ergonomics

trees   houses   tunnel trace   hedge row   ❶ exit   ❷ entrance   ❸ road   ❹ trace uncertain
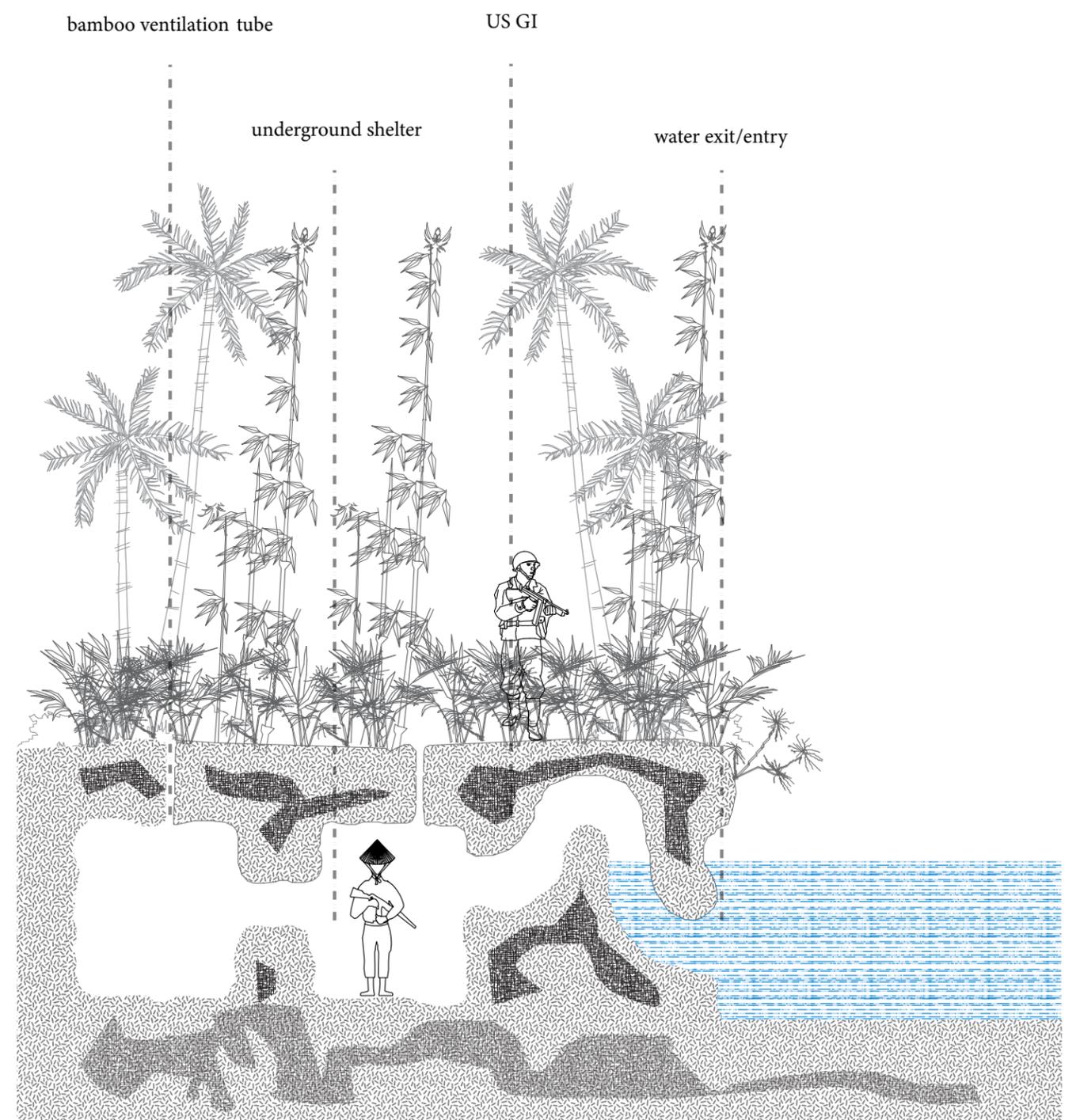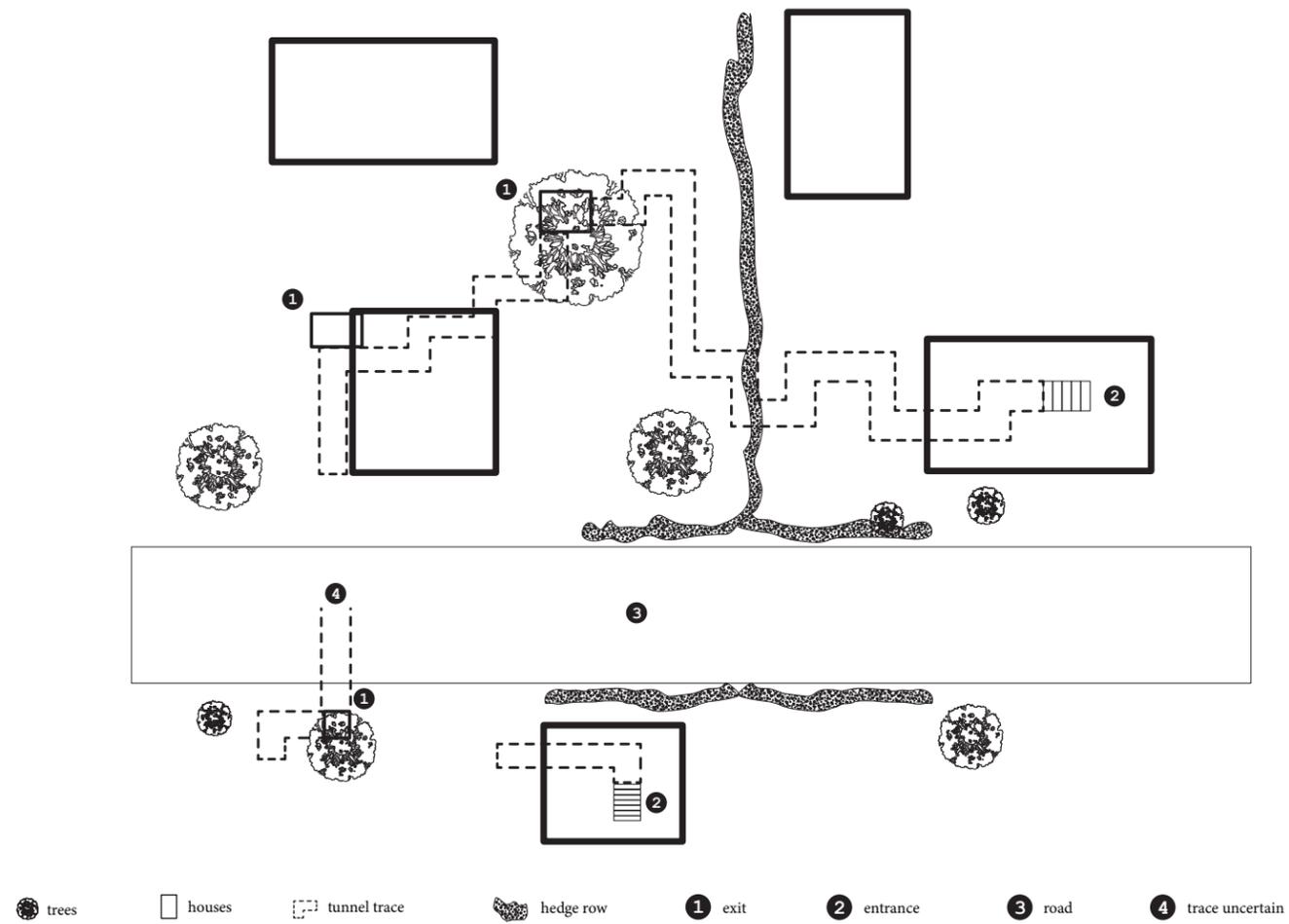
tactics of warfare spatial camouflage

10M

5M

[i] comouflaged to bed room

15M

5M

[ii] comouflaged to cooking area

15M

7M

tunnel

[iii] comouflaged to living area

20M

15M

[vi] housing sizes
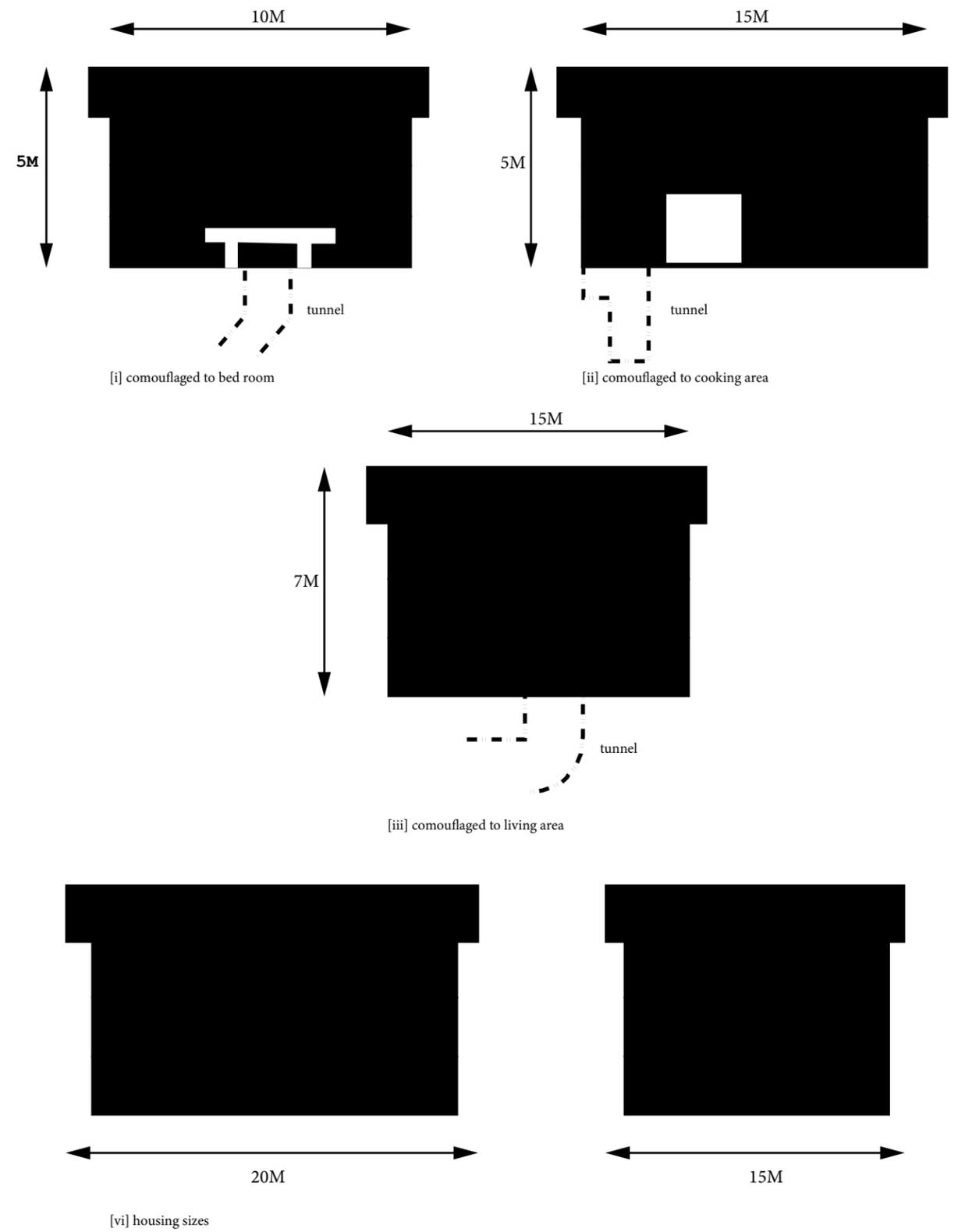
structures camouflaged to tunnels
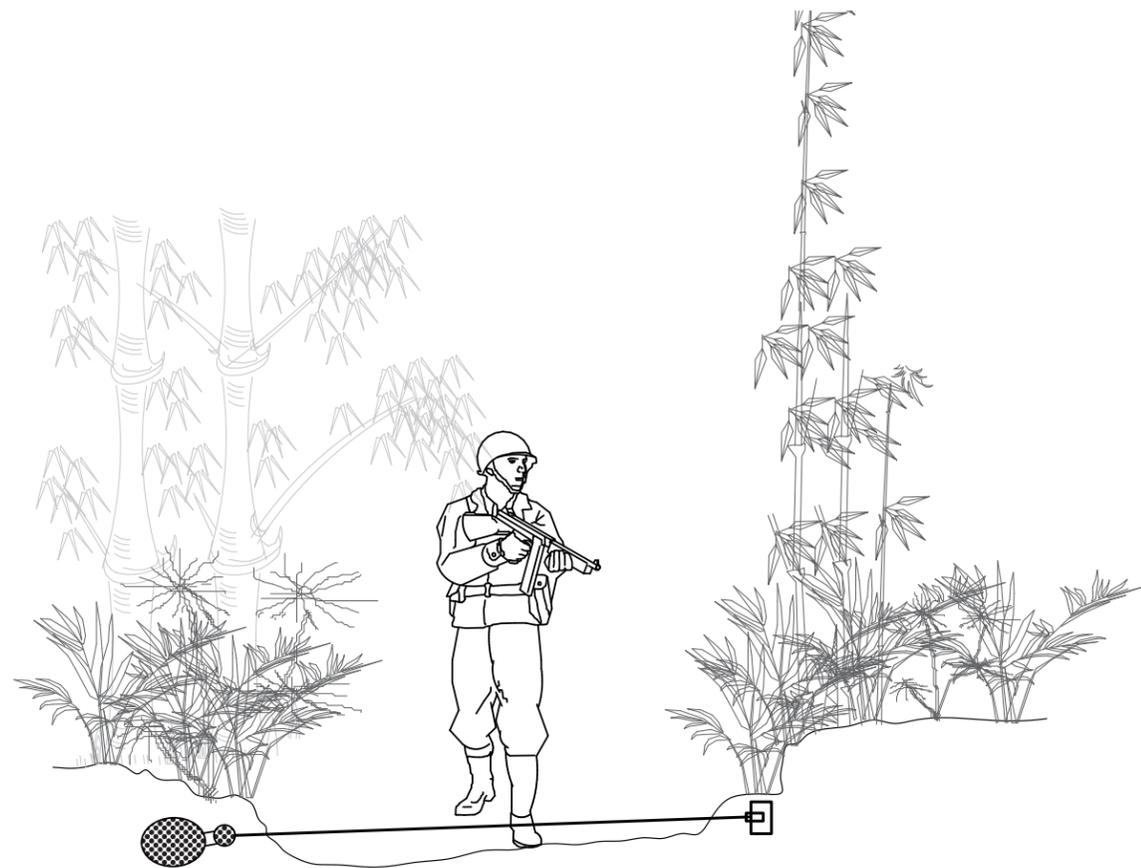
grenade on trail - booby trap

vc bunker   vc bunker   artillery shelter   entrance
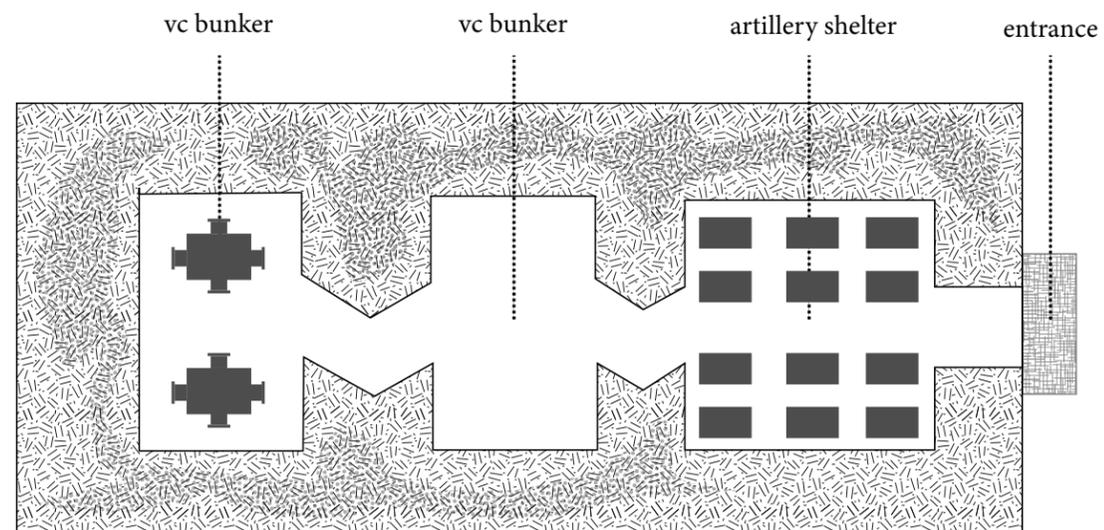
a multi-bunker tunnel, each bunker has space available for up to 4 people

bunker camouflage
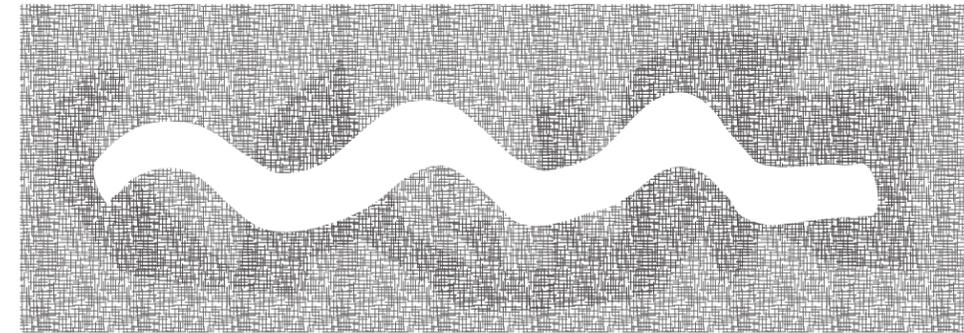
[i] serpent like trench
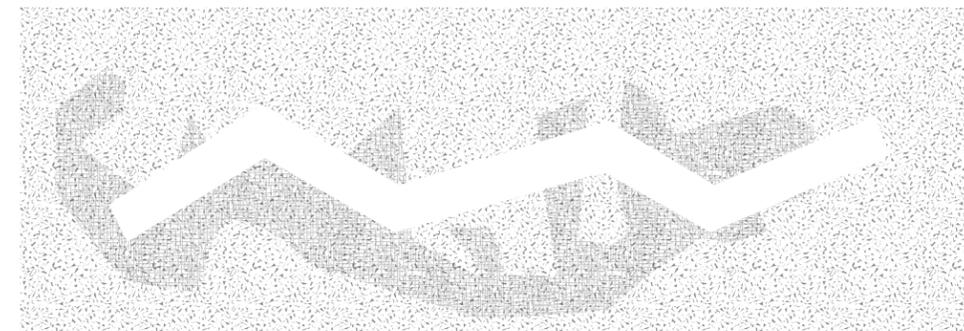
[ii] zigzag trench
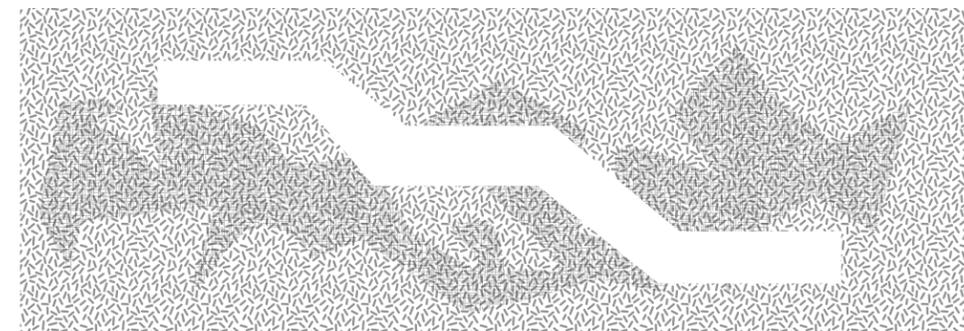

[iii] stairway trench
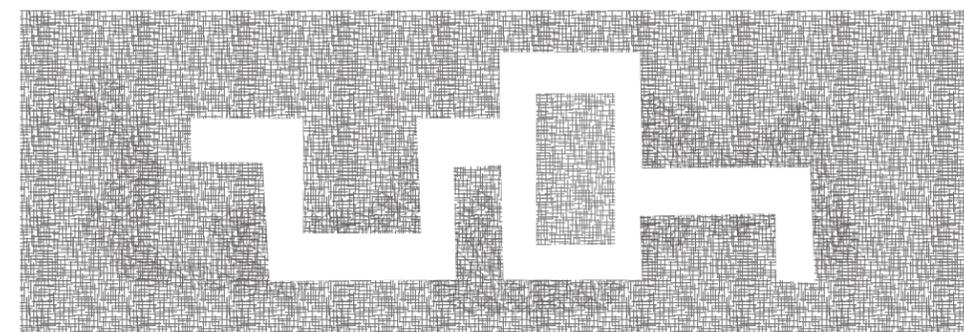
[iv] seal shaped trench

field fortifications trench systems

interpretative center

interpration of the four typological trenchs
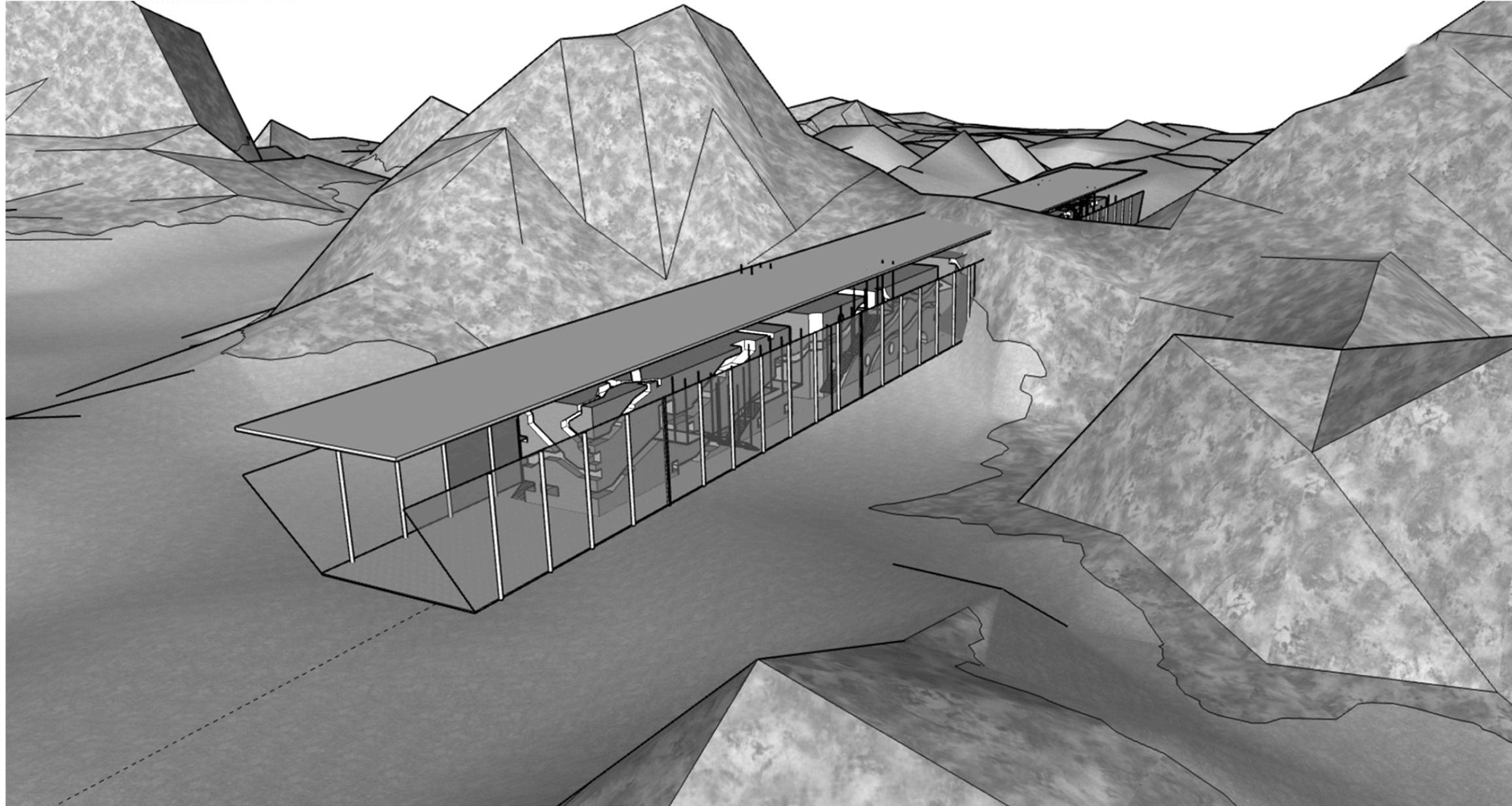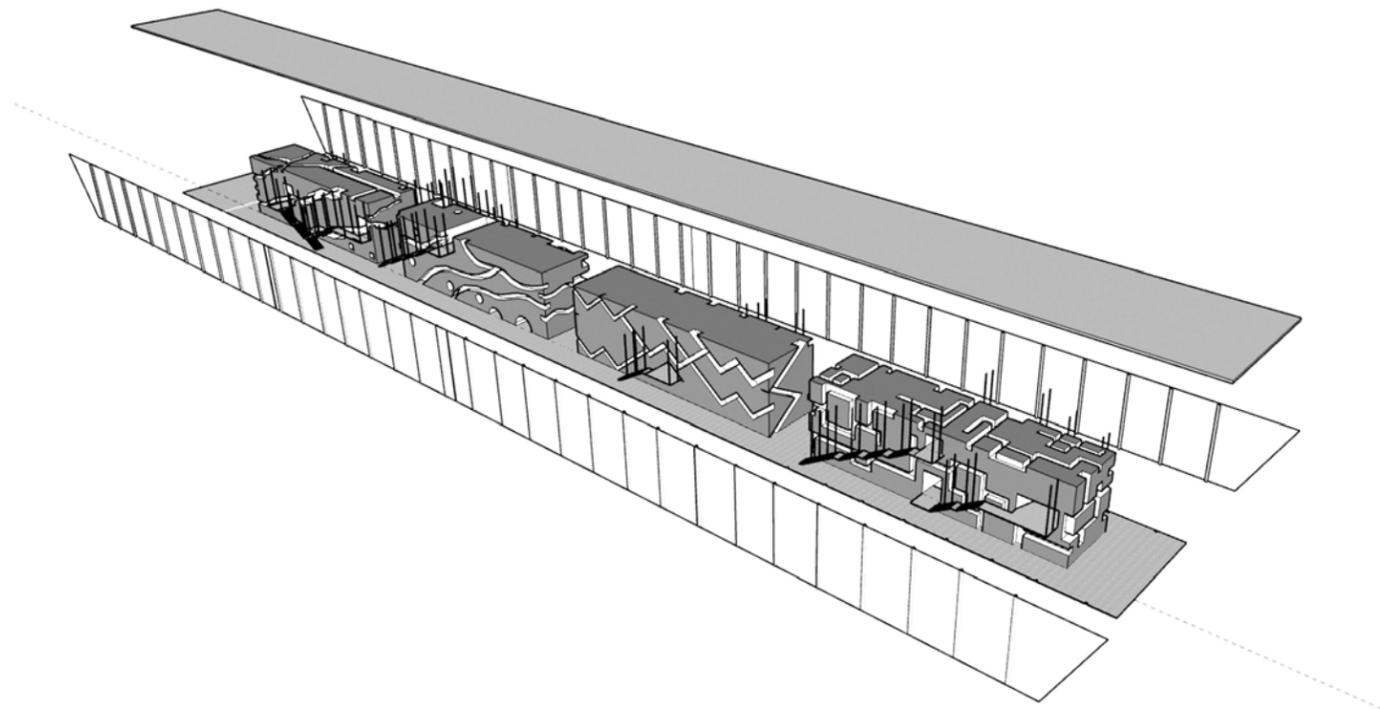
interpretative center - axon

interpretative center - interior