

# ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

FARAH MONIB

GSAPP // 2020



# Protesting

urban and cultural

**01** Civic Speak  
Studio Fall 2019

**02** Gym Crow  
Transcalarities

**03** Siegel and Angelidakis : A Conversation  
Arguments

# Policy

through & spacial intervention

**04** Rural Retrofit  
Studio Spring 2020

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Arab Modernism

**06** Gradient Economies  
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**07** Check The Mic!  
Metatool

**08** Decolonizing an  
Imperialist Archive  
through nature-cultures  
Studio Spring 2019

# 01 Civic Speak

The Bronx is a site of recurring violence, where its resident's voice has been suppressed in the past and remains unheard today. Civicspeak catalyses local repair tools by translating the Bronx's soundscape into a spatialized platform. Repurposing found materials on site, the project uses digital and physical interfaces to bring socio-political discourse back into the public sphere. Hacking infrastructures of transportation and land, the elements of this platform operate within the Bronx's system. The project transforms the public's input into repossession of their borough through the purchase of communally owned property that residents then having voting rights over. This wealth is generated by tolling the Cross Bronx Expressway that then initiates these protocols of repair. As land becomes scarcer over the next century, Civicspeak captures the value of the land and keeps it within the Bronx for its residents.

**Project Course :** Studio

**Semester:** Fall 2019

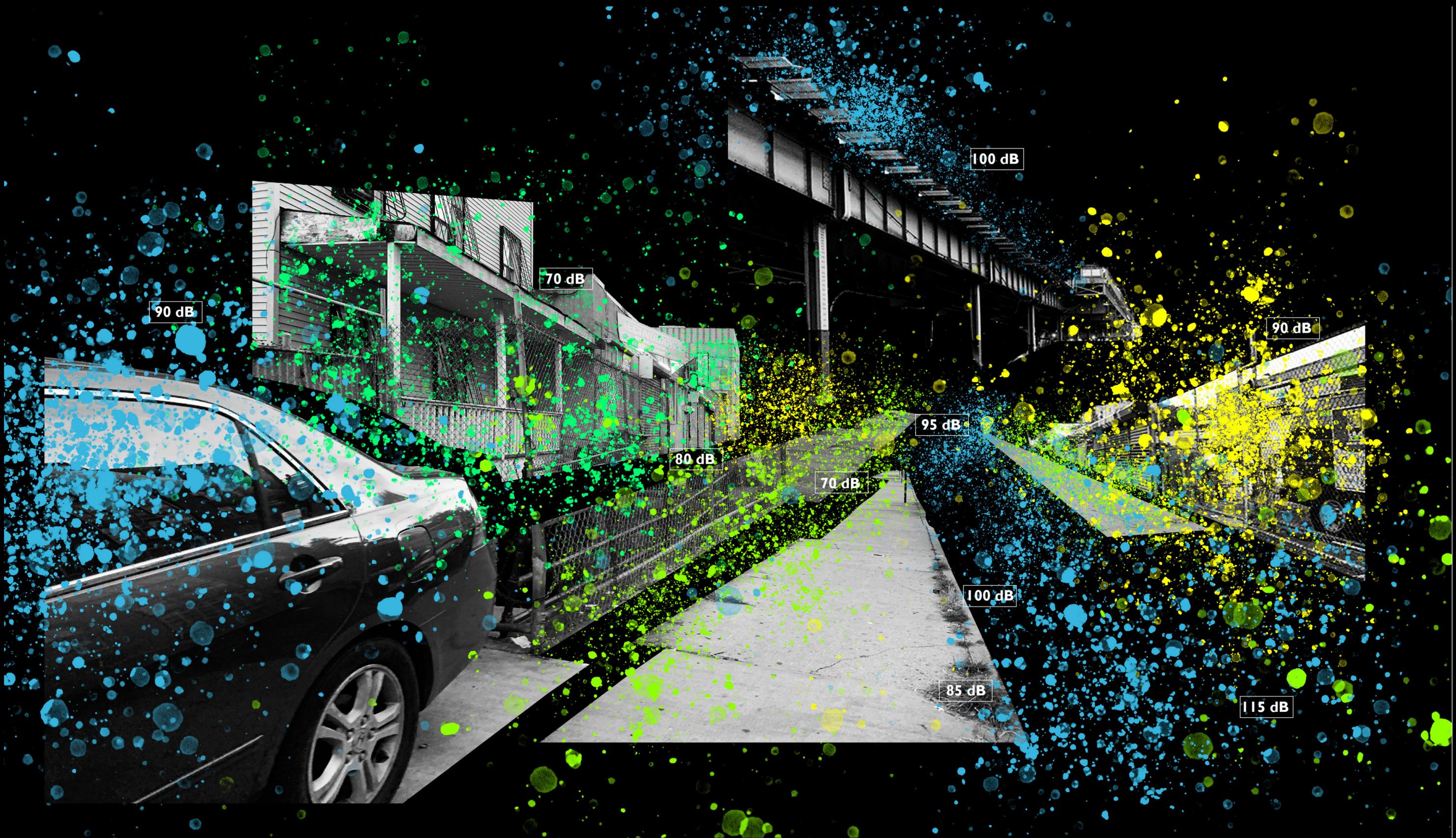
Professor: Mabel Wilson + Jordan Carver

**Partner :** Uthra Varghese

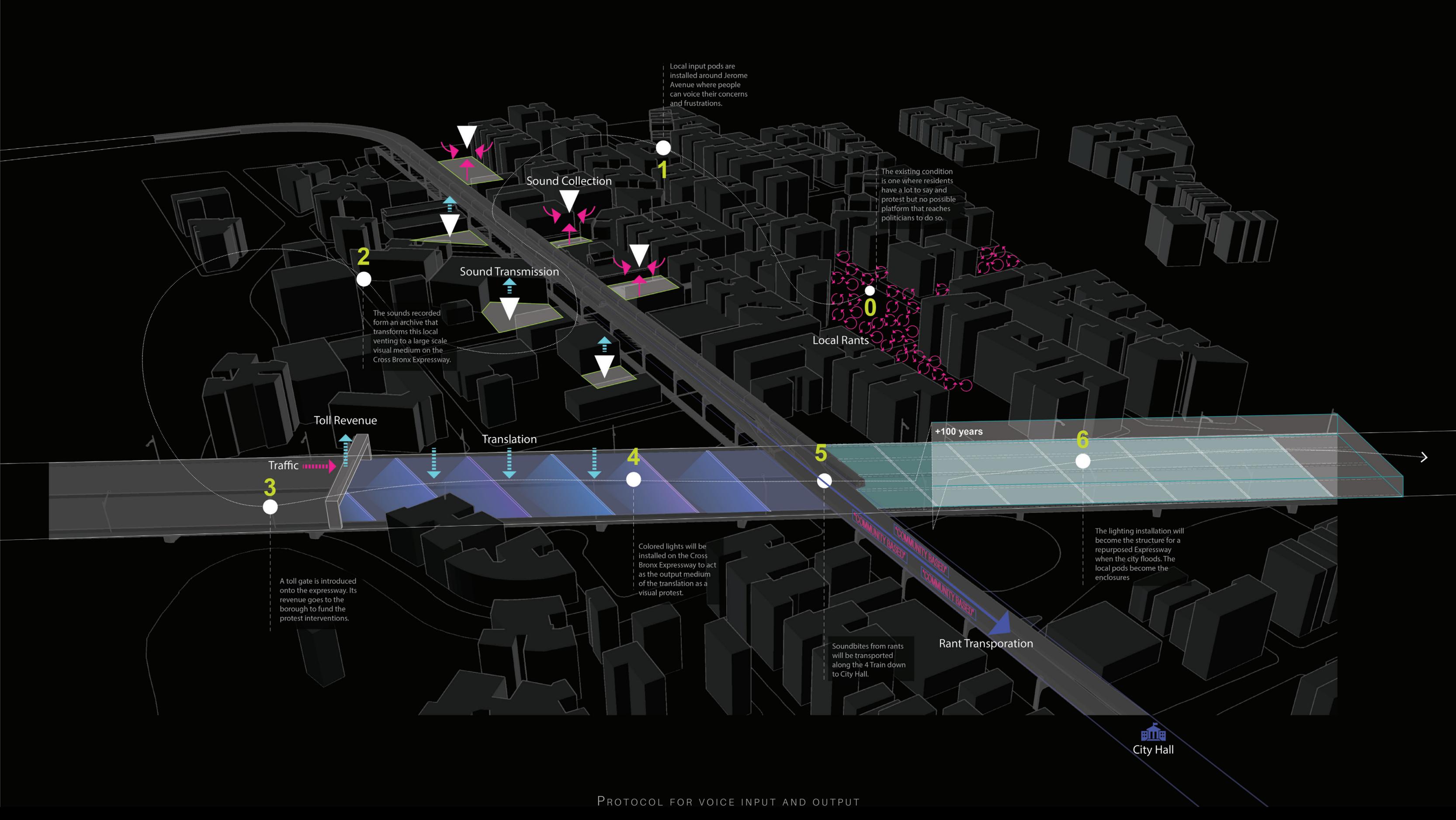
**Site :** Bronx, U.S.A



Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation



SOUNDSCAPE BY SOURCE AND DECIBEL LEVEL



Local input pods are installed around Jerome Avenue where people can voice their concerns and frustrations.

The existing condition is one where residents have a lot to say and protest but no possible platform that reaches politicians to do so.

Sound Collection

Sound Transmission

Local Rants

The sounds recorded form an archive that transforms this local venting to a large scale visual medium on the Cross Bronx Expressway.

Toll Revenue

Translation

+100 years

Traffic

Rant Transportation

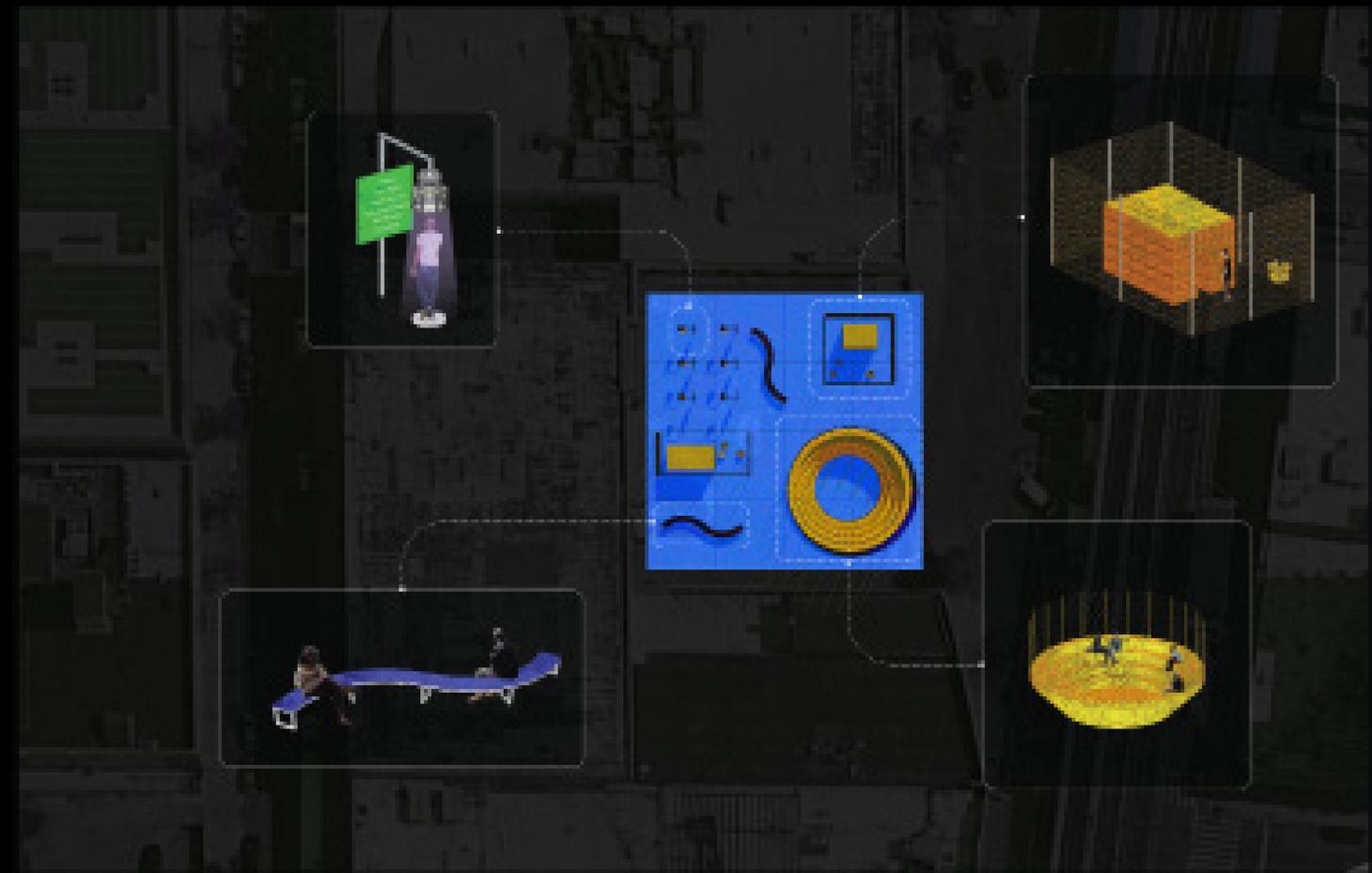
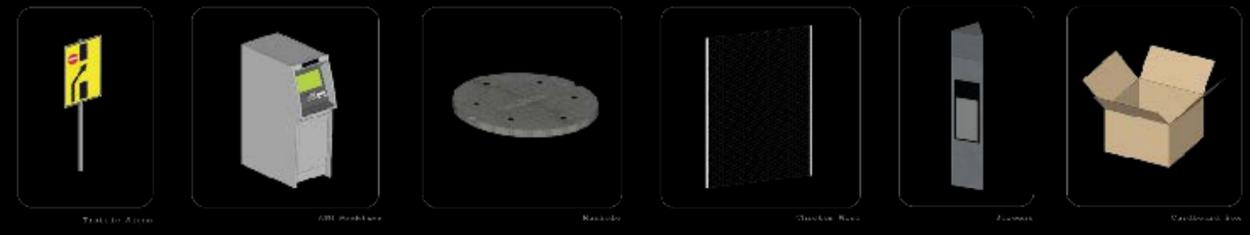
Colored lights will be installed on the Cross Bronx Expressway to act as the output medium of the translation as a visual protest.

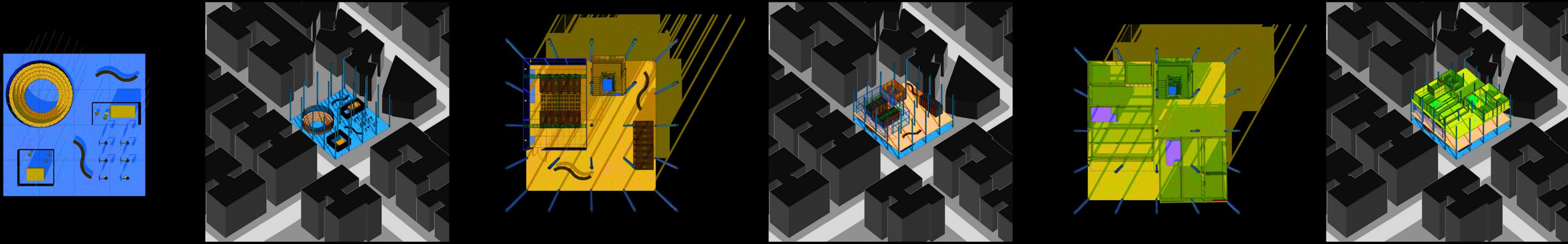
The lighting installation will become the structure for a repurposed Expressway when the city floods. The local pods become the enclosures

A toll gate is introduced onto the expressway. Its revenue goes to the borough to fund the protest interventions.

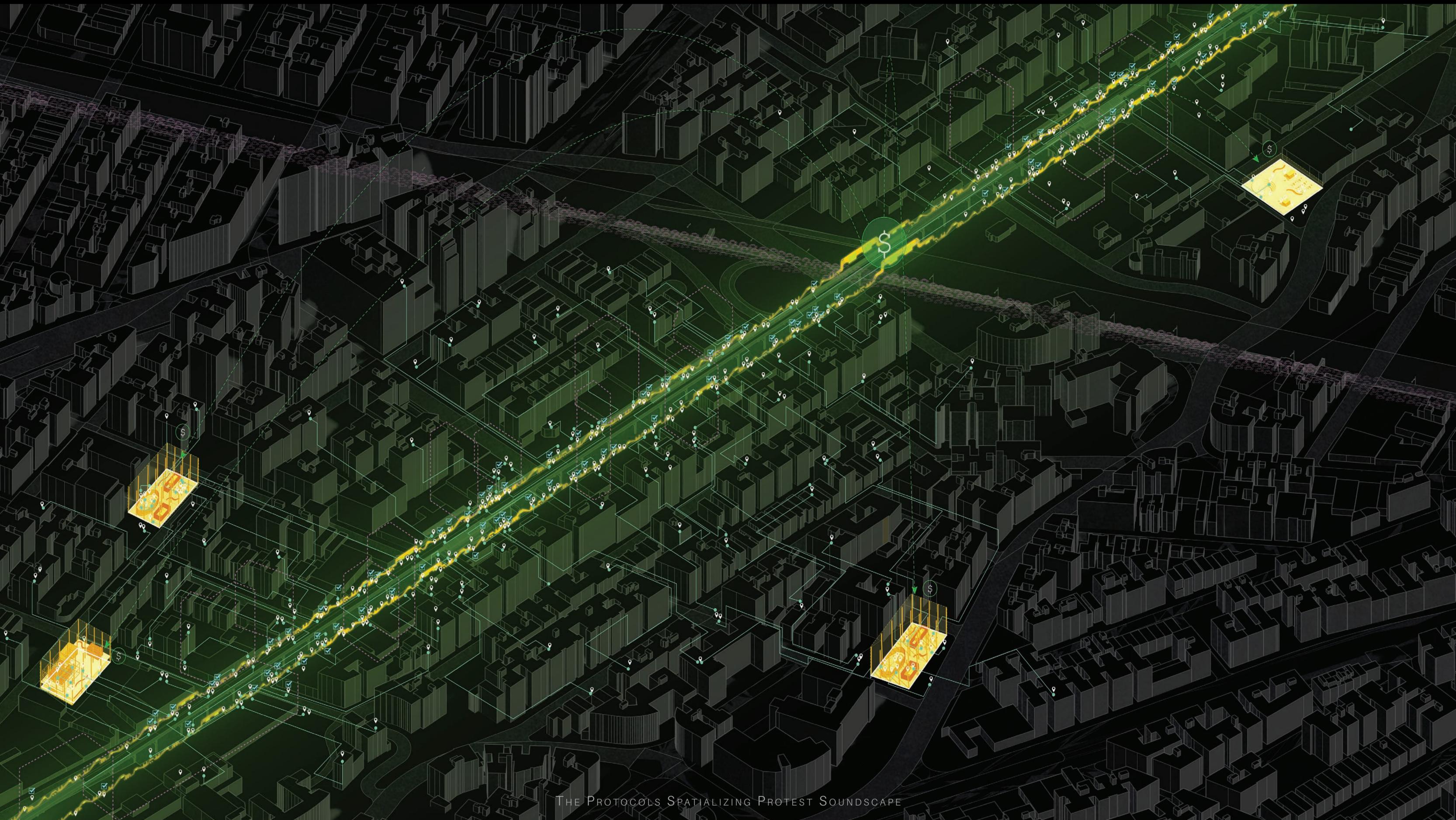
Soundbites from rants will be transported along the 4 Train down to City Hall.



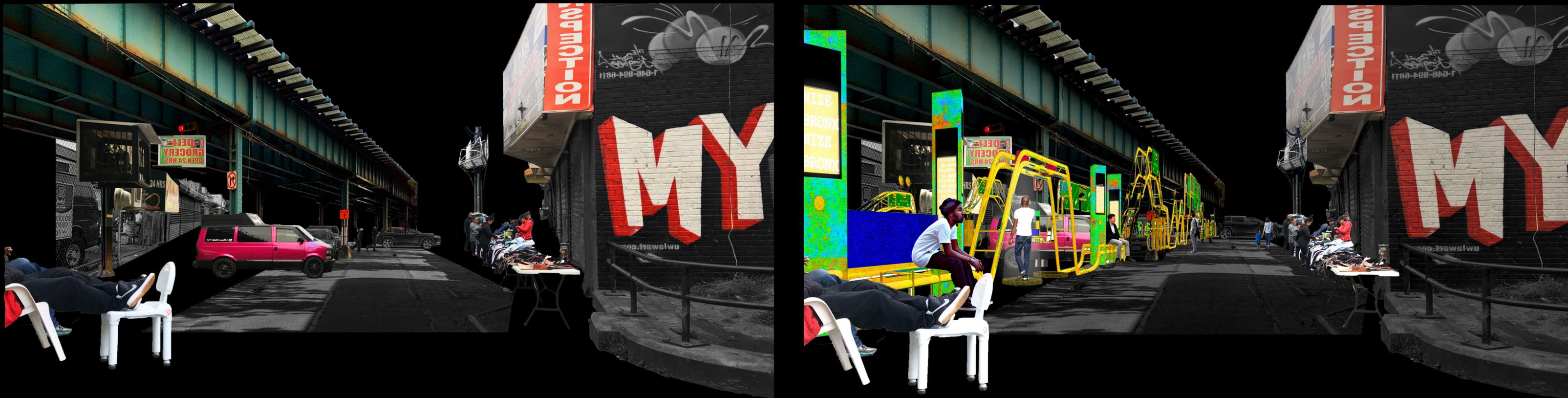




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THE PROTOCOLS SPATIALIZING PROTEST SOUNDSCAPE



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HUMAN SCALE OF INTERVENTION ACROSS SUBWAY LINE



RE  
GS  
ES  
RE

99c  
&  
MORE

BOB'S  
DISCOUNT

99c

HEALTH & BEAUTY

ELECTRONICS

GIFTWARE

SHOES & BAGS

RESTAURANT

WHO'S BRONX?

NO REZONING

NO REZONING

RATTO BROS  
HYDRA-COOLERS



NO REZONING!  
NO REZONING!  
WHO'S BRONX?  
OUR BRONX!

AVERAGE TRAVEL TIMES  
Whitestone Br 14 MIN  
Throgs Neck Br 24 MIN

Vegano Shipping  
TEL: 712 547-0020

CROSS BRONX EXPRESSWAY HIJACKED WITH TOLL GATES AND VISUAL SOUNDSCAPE

## 02 Gym Crow

The Dodge Fitness Center is founded on the grounds of tension, both within the institution itself, and its immediate surroundings. The 1968 gym proposal was located in Morning-side Park, taking away scarce public park land from the community and only allowing public access on weekends. Angry at the consequences the Morning-side Park Gym proposal would have, the students marched to protest. This project explores the layered history of this one week. It collapses the weeklong timeline of the protest with the centuries long timeline of racism to uncover how the human scale doors become key to this narrative. This case study materializes a moment in a tense history that's a much bigger issue than the architectural drawings they manifest themselves through here. The expansion of the community and the campus bring out deeper segregational injustices that become easier to pinpoint through architectural drawings and construction sites.

**Project Course :** Transcalarities

**Semester:** Summer 2019

Professor: Ultan Byrne

**Partner :** Mingyang Aki Yu, Bassam Kaddoura, Jiacheng

Wang

# Stop Columbia's Gym Crow

The big steal is on. Last week, without notice, Columbia moved its bulldozers and chain saws into Morningside Park to level the land for construction of its planned new gymnasium.

This is the latest step in an eight-year-long path of high-level, closed-door political maneuvering by Columbia administrators to get the city to give it over two acres of public park land at the token rent of \$3000 per year. On this site, the University hopes that athletes will play, NROTC members will drill and spectators will cram into a gym which is already obsolescent.

As a sop to public relations and community pressures, Columbia plans a "Community Gym," administered by University employees, in the basement of the building, with a back-door entrance. Over four-fifths of the building is to be completely closed to residents of Harlem and Morningside Heights - in fact, only Columbia undergraduate men will be allowed to use it.

JOIN THE COMMUNITY GROUPS PROTESTING THE LAND GRAB  
 RALLY ON CAMPUS AND DEMONSTRATE AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE  
 GET COLUMBIA OUT OF THE PARK

WEDNESDAY NOON  
 WEDNESDAY NOON  
 WEDNESDAY NOON

SUNDIAL RALLY  
 SUNDIAL RALLY  
 SUNDIAL RALLY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
 THE LIBRARIES  
 COLUMBIANA

Cit Council  
 SDS  
 QFSC

## Harlem vs. Columbia University

**Black Student Power in the Late 1960s**

Stefan M. Bradley



PAUL CRONIN, EDITOR

# A TIME TO STIR



# COLUMBIA '68



A drawing of the recently named Francis Levia Gymnasium.

## Gym To Be Named After Marcellus Hartley Dodge

By IRA BRESKIN

The new university physical education center, which will formally open in December, will be named the Marcellus Hartley Dodge Physical Fitness Center. The university used a bequest of \$225,000 made by Dodge, to help finance construction of the \$3 million facility, the largest donation used for the project. The bequest was made to the university upon Dodge's death in 1963. Dodge had a long association with Columbia dating back to 1903 when he graduated from the college. At that time, Dodge, a millionaire, provided funds in cooperation with his aunt for the construction of Hartley Hall. Dodge was a trustee of the university from 1907-1959 and served as trustee emeritus from 1959-1963.

The late trustee, who inherited his fortune from his father, served on the corporate boards of the Remington Arms Corporation, the Union Metallic Cartridge Company, and the Bridgeport Gun Implement Company.

The donor's name will appear in cast bronze letters in two places in the structure and a bronze tablet in dedication will appear on the second level.

The gymnasium will be named in honor of Francis Levia C '26, Lav '28, and the swimming center in honor of Percy Uris who was a trustee from 1960-71 and a graduate of Columbia College and the Business School. The Uris donation was made by his brother, Harold.



DODGE FITNESS CENTER PROPOSED AS A COLUMBIA EXPANSION INTO HARLEM PROTESTED

## Community vs Campus

On April 23rd of 1968, a few weeks after the death of Martin Luther King Jr., a student protest erupted against Columbia University for two reasons: Institutional racism and Columbia's involvement in its weapon research that's linked to the Vietnam War (Cronin, 2018). The community and students' frustrations took form in opposing the Ivy League university's new gym proposal that was to be built on one of Harlem's few public parks, Morningside Park, which separates Harlem from Morningside Heights both geographically and topographically. The gym was called "Gym Crow" by protesters, referencing the "Jim Crow" racial segregation laws that started in 1877 to keep freed slaves from having voting rights. The last of them have only been declared unconstitutional in 1967, a year before this gym proposal went public (Sollers, W., 2000). As well as a study of the Morningside gym proposal, this project is an analysis of many doors that define accessibility: Chained doors, doors with different elevations, unbuilt doors, doors with limited access and hidden doors. They all have the potential to help connect or segregate.

Founded in 1754, Columbia University is located in Manhattan's upper west side, adjacent to Harlem, which started off as a place for refuge hosting poor Jewish and Italian communities. In the 1930's landlords were unable to find White American tenants, so there was a drastic increase in Black Americans and Puerto Ricans (Flamm, M. W., 2016). This was the beginning of the geographical and racial divide between Harlem and Morningside Heights.

Robert Moses' racist planning left Harlem at more disadvantage: out of 255 playgrounds, one was placed in Harlem and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge exited into Harlem, resulting in a traffic clogged neighborhood, while the wealthier areas benefited from being low in congestion (Jackson, K. T., & Dunbar, D. S. 2002). Low income and an increase in unemployment due to the Great Depression amplified the economic and social divide that eventually led to the 1964 Riot which initially started as a non-violent protest and ended with one man killed, over a hundred injured and over four hundred fifty people had been arrested (Flamm, M. W., 2016).

Columbia had been expanding based on its increase in student population at that point, but with a documented agenda to keep Morningside Heights segregated from surrounding communities. In a letter

from Columbia president Nicholas Butler to Columbia's trustees, he wrote "...but we should also protect ourselves against invasion from Harlem or from the North. Morningside Park is, so far as it goes, a helpful protection, but the pressure upon Harlem is very great and at any time we might find an apartment house on Morningside Heights has been purchased to be occupied by Harlem tenants...we should achieve that unity of Morningside Heights which I have had in mind for a half century" (Dieg, M., 2018). The 1968 gym proposal was located in Morningside Park, which separates Columbia from Harlem, taking scarce public park land away from the community and only allowing public access on weekends. Although the built fitness center today does not allow anyone outside its students access, it does not take away public park from neighboring communities.

The morning of what will become the first day of the occupation, students protested peacefully and legally on the campus plaza. In an attempt to take matters into their own hands, the crowd marched towards the construction site where digging was already taking place. It quickly turned into an occupation when the students felt helpless, frustrated and unheard (Bradley, S., 2009). That is when the students decided to march back to the campus and occupy Hamilton building instead. The protest started with a mixed group of students of around 700 Caucasian students and 100 African American students.

During the first day of the protest both the SDS, (Students for a Democratic Society), and the SAS, (the Society of Afro-American Students), occupied the Hamilton Building. By the end of the day, they had decided to split up, with the SDS occupying Low Memorial Library instead, so that the goals of their occupation would be clear and distinct. While the SAS, mostly African American students, was protesting against the Morningside Heights Gym Proposal, the SDS, mostly Caucasian students, were protesting against Columbia's involvement in the IRS's Vietnam war defense research (Young, J., 2012). By the end of the day, communication between the two activist groups ceased and their list of goals diverged. They still agreed on one main point though which was the opposition to "Gym Crow". By the end of that week, Columbia decided to yield to both of the protestors' major demands: to stop "Gym Crow" and to cut ties with Vietnam war defense research (Mann, E., 2018). Although many of the students were arrested, all charges against them were dropped by Columbia. This day became monumental to the agency that

students and the community had against a power like an ivy-league colonial university.

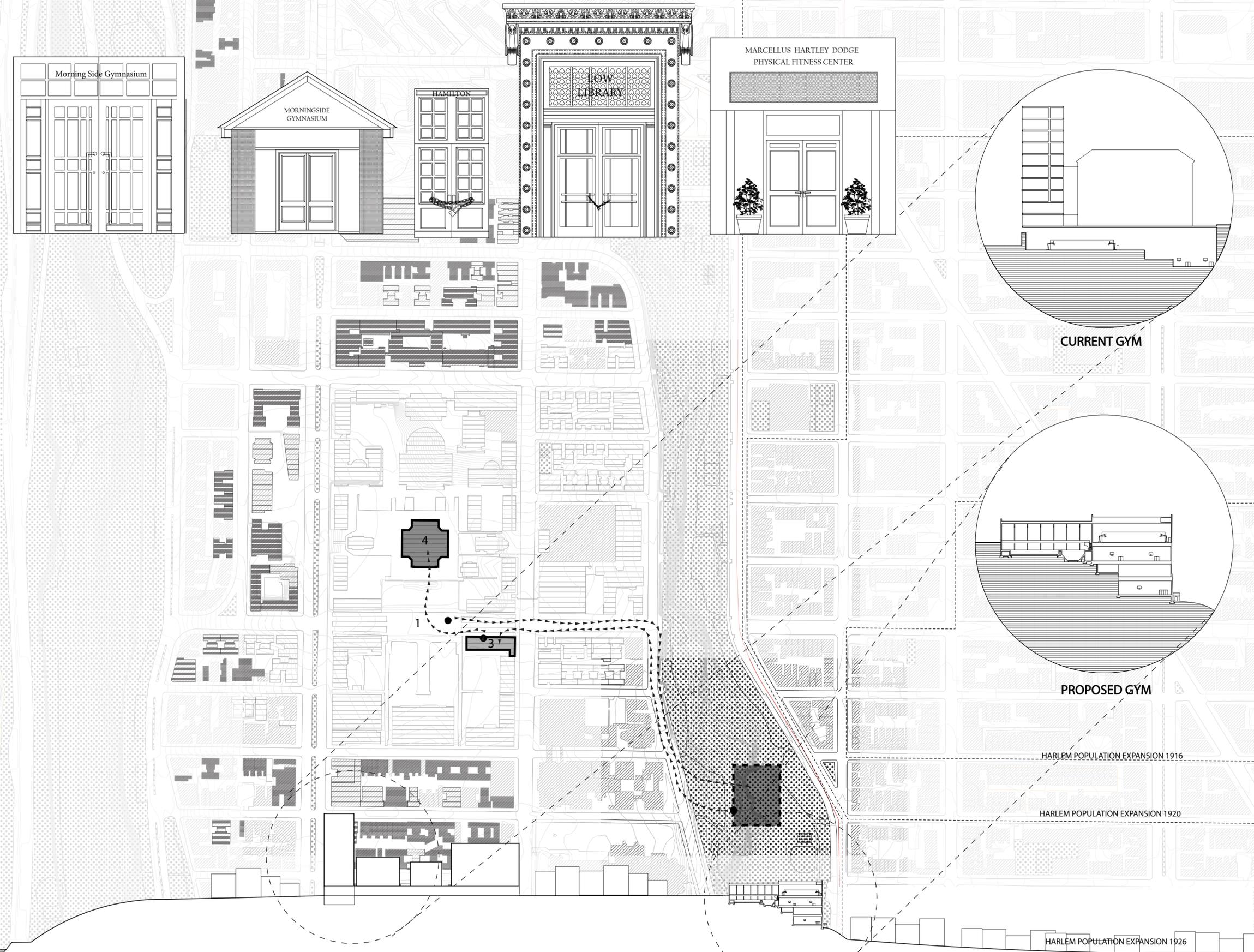
NY Times titled this protest "A Protest 'Forever'." to illustrate how long and complicated the protest was, and also the head of the protest Mr. Rudd urged the group to remain in Hamilton Hall and outside Mr. Coleman, the dean of Columbia College's office, until their demands were met, and made public that students would stay forever in Hamilton Hall if the demands were not met. While demonstrators filled the corridors of Hamilton Hall, some students were playing guitar while others sharing blankets and engaging in discussions, shortly after around 1AM on April 23rd, 50 counter demonstrators gathered around a statue of Alexander Hamilton and sang courses of "The Ballad of the Green Berets," a song extolling the heroism of special forces troops fighting in Vietnam (Bird, D. 1968).

The current design was moved back into Columbia land and tucked-away underground where it can no longer be invasive or political. The downsides of this design is that it is more expensive than the original proposal and it provides nothing to the Harlem community as opposed to the limited access people would have had then. These downsides were nowhere near enough to offset the power move that was expanding into Harlem's public park and gentrifying the neighborhood after a history of evictions and geopolitical racist agenda (Blakemore, E., 2018).

This moment in time is symbolic of the social injustices that were affecting both the surrounding communities and the students themselves. It's a moment that went beyond student protests and community disagreements because of its placement in history. It shows the power that an architect's site plan can have in maintaining systemic injustices that are not made visible in drawing.

### Legend

-  Buildings
-  Street Border
-  Contour Lines
-  Occupation Sites
-  Columbia Buildings in 1960
-  Columbia Property in 1960
-  Columbia Campus
-  Contour Lines
-  Water
-  Columbia Buildings in 1926
-  Columbia Affiliates in 1960
-  Harlem Expansion



MAPPING THE GYM CROWD PROTEST FROM TIMELINE OF RACISM TO INTERACTION DETAILS



## 03 A conversation

An exaggerated fictional conversation between and discussing analytical versus emotional design processes. The discussion is inspired by their work and their talks. A contrast between these two is created to explore the relationship between the individual and a body of work in relation to how different minds process information and turn seemingly objective facts into design.

**Project Course :** Arguments

**Semester:** Summer 2019

Professor: Aaron White

## Question:

**Siegel:** Both bodies of work are critical and interested in challenging ideologies.

**Angelidakis:** That's the most generous anyone can be in finding similarities between the two of us. The differences between you and me would be much easier to count.

**Siegel:** Probably. It could be the reasons behind the art.

Angelidakis: Well I arrive at my art through my discontent with architecture, my curiosity about the narratives and that I have something to say about it. There is something about a gesture that an artist can make that can be analysed in many ways. I use my fuel to express things that can then be analyzed.

**Siegel:** Works like 'Quarry' almost do the opposite in that they are founded on investigations and research and the art comes out of that.

**Angelidakis:** That is exactly what I found repulsive in architecture and what made me realize that it is not for me. An architect has to go through many drawings and supporting documents to get to one idea. That they build holds them back. I, on the other hand, am inspired by the stories of my past experiences and how this personal perspective relates to the perspective of the cities that architects build. How I express that is just the fastest cheapest sexiest way I can.

**Siegel:** More refined works are layered in many backgrounds and use the process as another layer of criticality to deliver a synthesised work. What architecture is to 'Quarry', for example is a foil, which is a specific method in photography to use a subject as a way to highlight another. The work uses architecture to criticize sociological issues in a way that relates to the wealthy commercial scene. There is a thought out reason for every actor and situation.

**Angelidakis:** My priorities are different from yours. For me to explore similar topics, I'd need to have an instinct towards them. Taking the topic further, I'd also consult my gut more to communicate the idea in the most accessible tactile way so that my work can be open to people. Something about the accessibility of my work allows people to interact with it, the human touch that I bring in by relying on my instinct is what can make it relatable. I wonder what it would look like if we switched projects or collaborated on one together. Would we be able to reconcile between the two different design approaches? How would they relate and work together?

## Response:

**Siegel:** It would disturb the process to rely on baseless instincts.

**Angelidakis:** Would you not say that the richness of the work comes from its poly perspective? This human perspective layer already exists through you, the artist, as a medium of ideas, analysis and expression. It might as well be recognized and used.

**Siegel:** Consulting the artist would take the place of the realities being framed and would bring a critique down from an intellectual self evaluating method to an irrational level where ideas lose clarity and questions' values become diluted. Only the art and the questions it poses are relevant. Artists have no business in entering the equation because it would reduce big phenomena to the small individual scale. In the case of artworks like 'Quarry', the ideas portrayed are motivated by highly specific social issues that relate to histories such as our origins in caves, but also the current socio-political fabric that causes situations such as the ones that the work juxtaposes. Who are you and I in the face of such phenomena?

**Angelidakis:** We are the humans that digest such phenomena and convert them to art that is communicative to other humans. There is plenty of untapped reason embedded in human instinct. Giving voice to such instincts is recognizing that factor that exists regardless. Also when art is sexy, it attracts more consumers and when it is fun and accessible, it is more relatable so it will reach more people. They might not take anything from it or they might be inspired. In any way, they learn something new about art and exhibition. This accessibility could be what emotive design has to offer, allowing an emotional connection to art that cannot be established using detached art.

**Siegel:** That loosely fitted foundation and open-endedness is non-specific and would take away from the questions that art has the potential to pose. It is true though that one of the relationships that could be interesting to be critical of is the one between the artist as a sentient human with inherent biases and instincts and the art that is supposed to relate back to a set of other sentient humans with inherent biases and instincts. Considering both the phenomena and the individual might still blur the clarity and delivery of ideas but it has the potential to communicate richer ideas.

## Reformulation:

**Angelidakis:** Everything is an opportunity to learn, no matter how seemingly insignificant. While I'm opposed to the forced necessity to completely rationalize an idea before it can be born, I support using many sources of inspiration and research beyond myself. I find personal experience to be the strongest as it is the way that the world is most accessible to me. It also means that might extend to other people's collective human experience of a city for example, which would lead to a different interpretation than studying the buildings as materials without considering the experiences embedded in them.

**Siegel:** That is the kind of information that can be collected through interviews and discussions with the relevant people. Responses can be analyzed to extract a reading that's inspired by all of the opinions and experiences. The value of the artists themselves extends only as far as their personal accounts tie to the subject at hand, and even then, it is not enough to encompass social movements and economic disparities.

**Angelidakis:** There is a difference in the way that analytical design such as the art that you produce that is top-down and analytical while the personal emotive way I approach design is down-up and expressive. There must be something to be learnt from both that even architecture can learn from, being such a dominantly top-down hierarchy.

**Siegel:** How would you do that through design methodologies then?

Angelidakis: I'm not trying to take a stand on that beyond an educational approach but maybe we can collaborate on a critical top-down/bottom-up hybrid project one day and both learn from the process. Siegel: Let's agree to disagree on that.

# 04 Rural Retrofit

Rural Retrofit is a series of typologies that build on Buendia's architectural history of collagic structures to weave a technological layer into it and use alternative independent water resources. The hybrid structures would create interlocking spaces that capitalize on the culture of the existing and make jobs more accessible. The retrofits are designed based on the existing condition and the matching program to compliment it. This leads to hybrids that can be used throughout Buendia, and other villages as the project grows.

**Project Course :** Studio

**Semester:** Spring 2020

Professor: Juan Herreros

**Site :** Buendia, Spain

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

WORLD | EUROPE

# Europe Logs Record Heat, Struggles to Conserve Water

Facing high temperatures and drought, the continent is scorched again, sparking rare water emergency

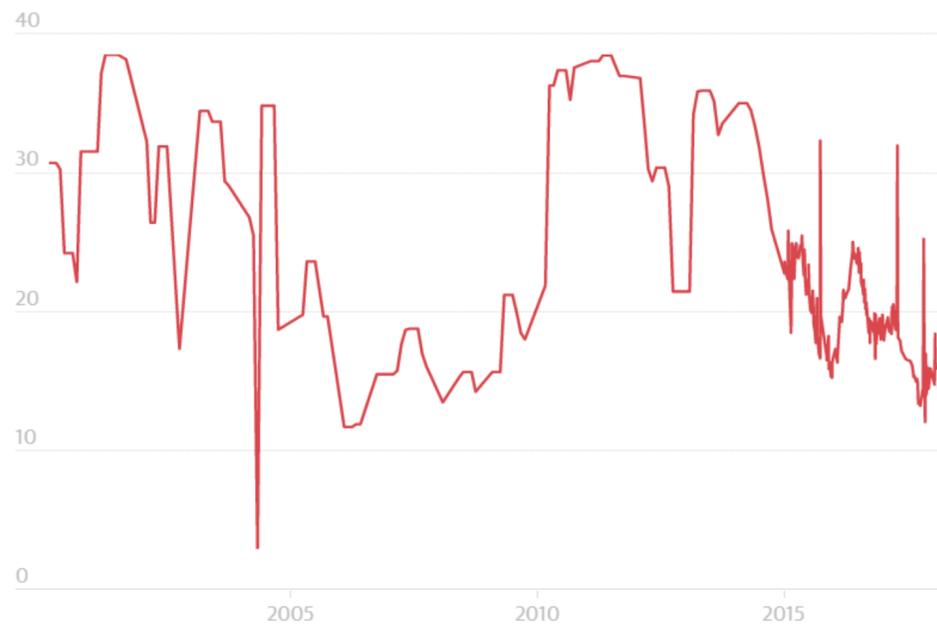
By [Scott Patterson](#) and [Lee Harris](#)

Updated July 25, 2019 1:26 pm ET

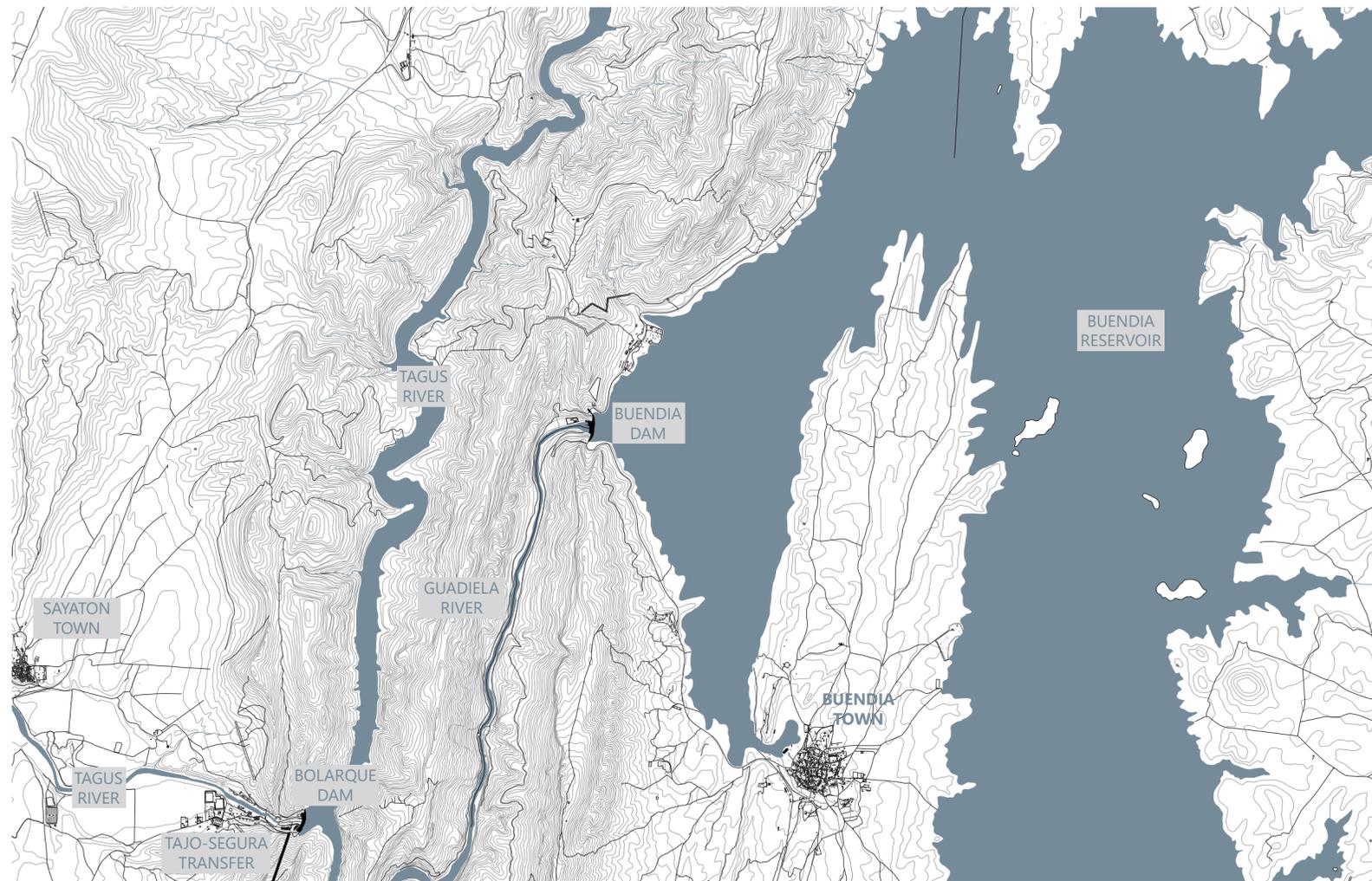


## Water levels at Buendia Dam (Spain)

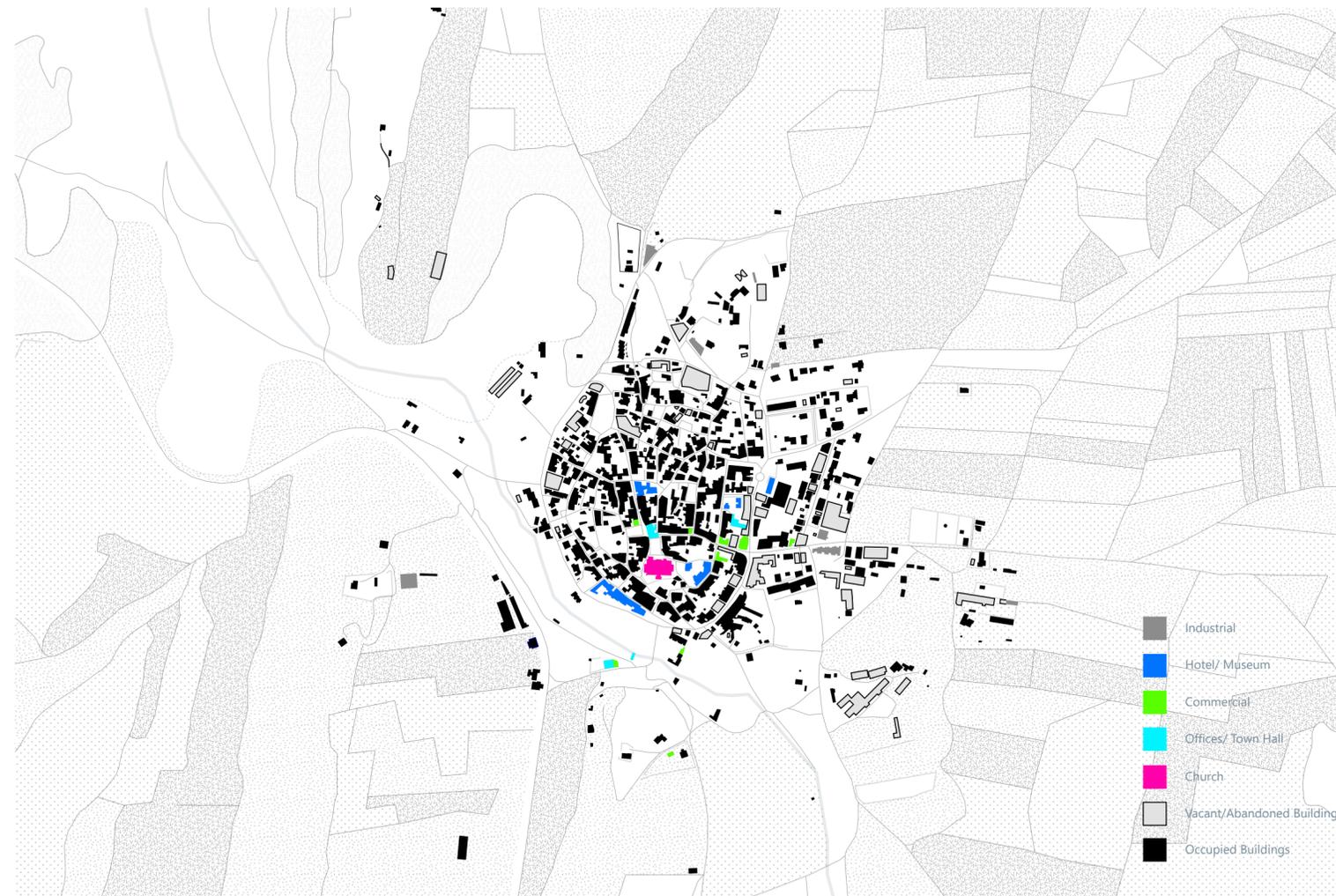
surface area (sq km)



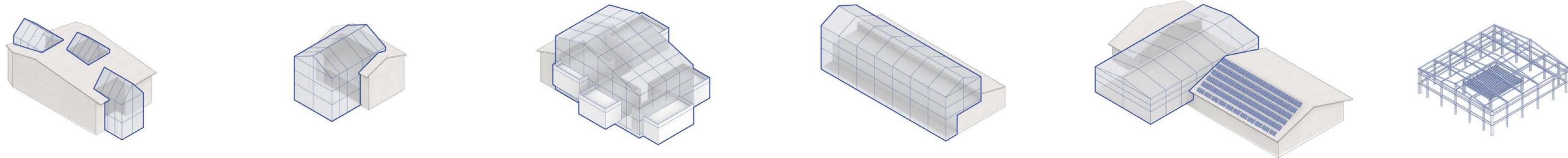
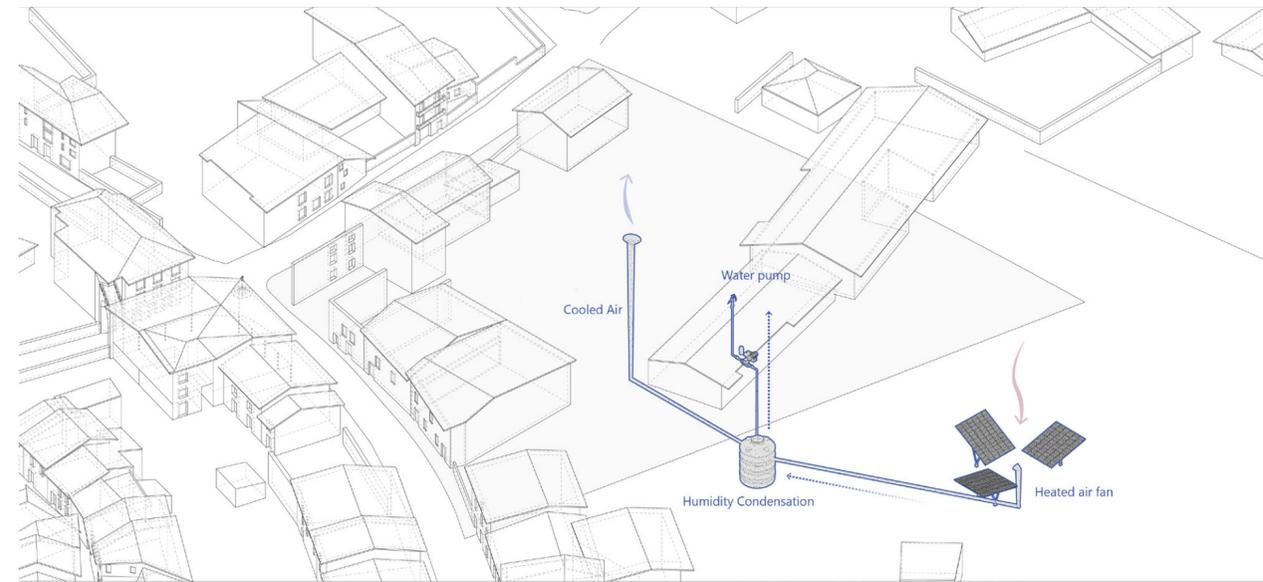
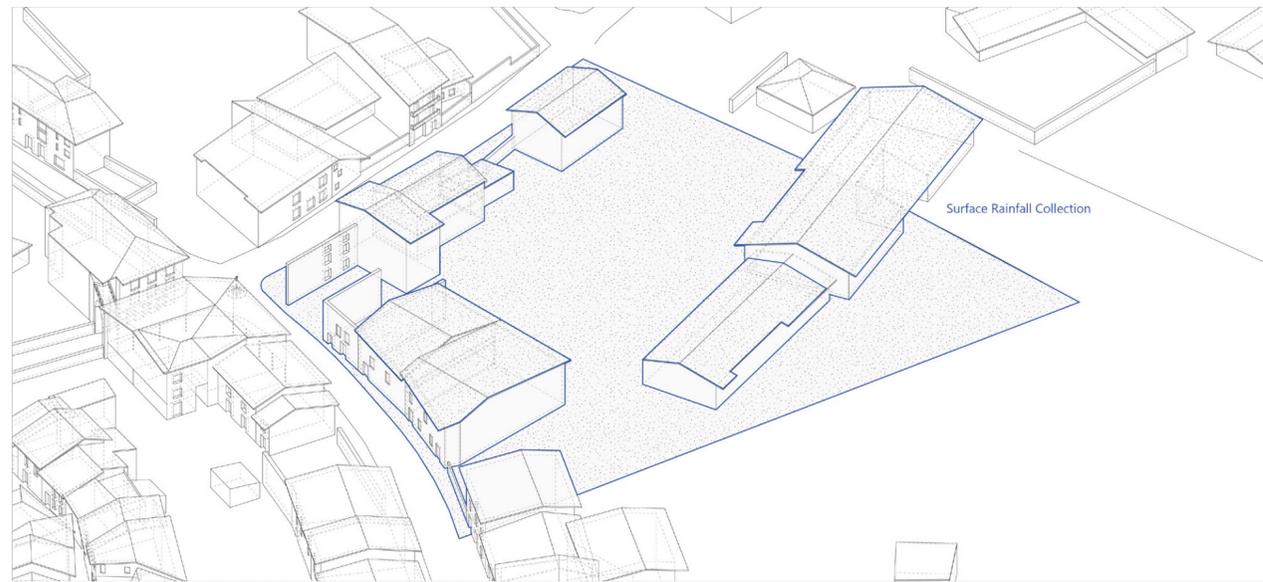
Guardian graphic



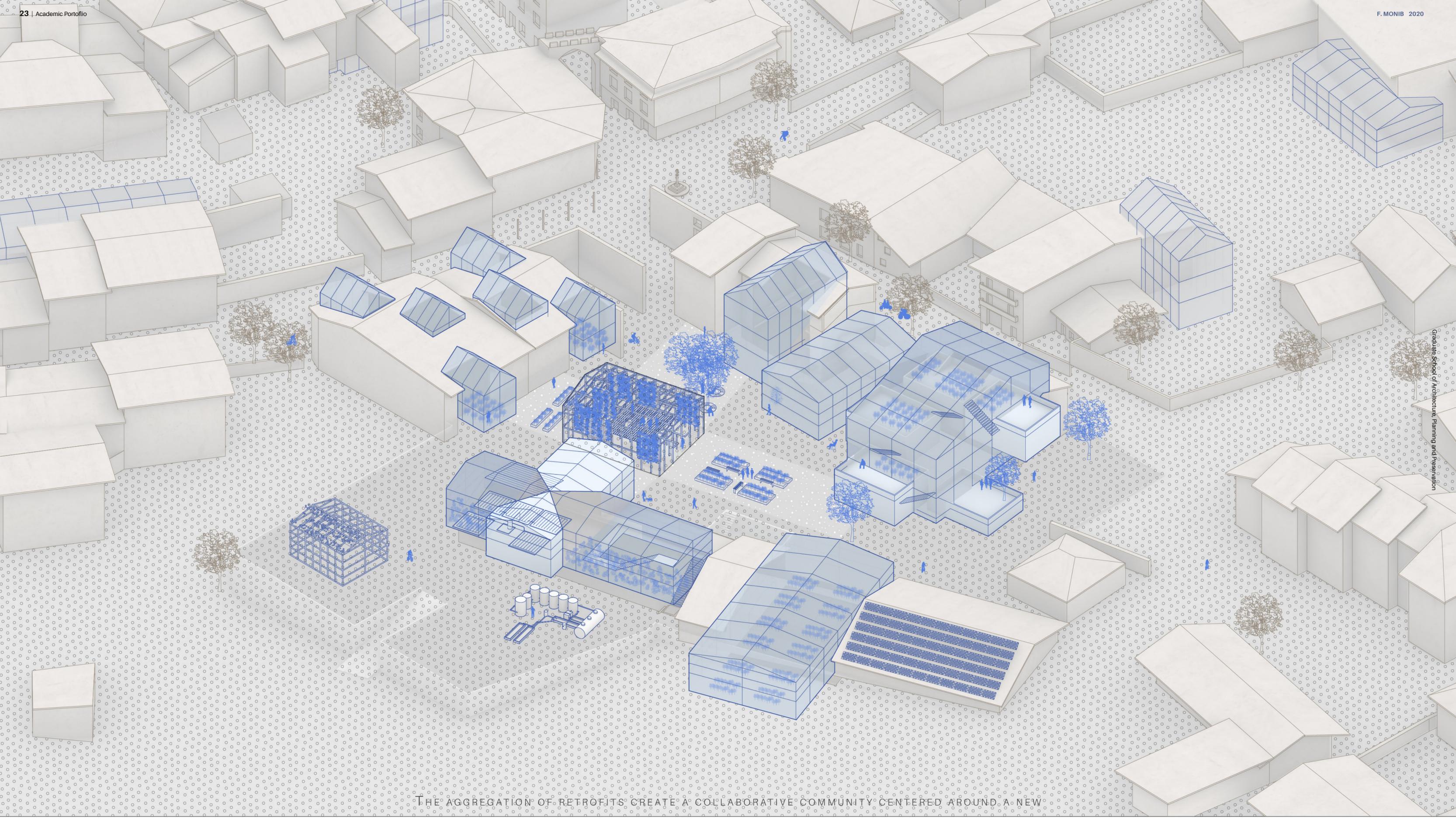
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BUENDIA'S PROGRESSIVE HYBRID BUILDING METHODS DUE TO THE CHANGING ECONOMY FROM FARM-



THE RETROFITS ARE DESIGNED BASED ON THE EXISTING CONDITION AND THE MATCHING PROGRAM TO

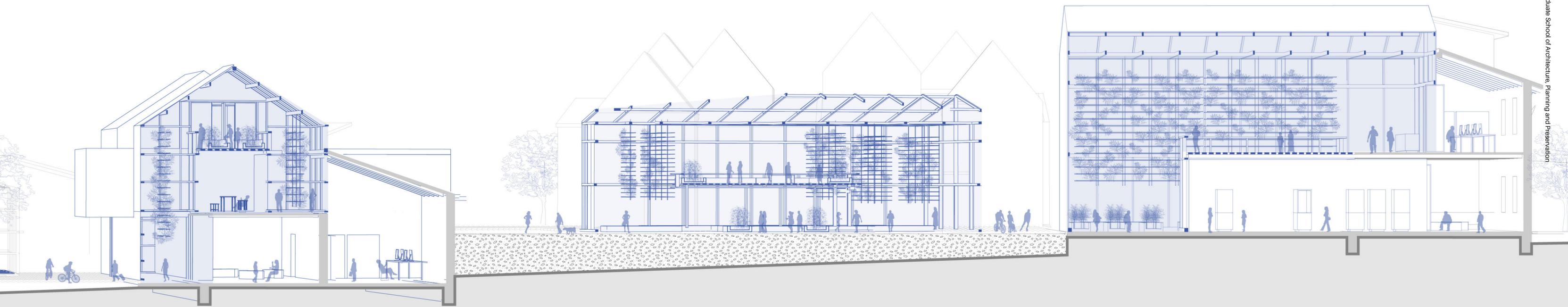


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THE AGGREGATION OF RETROFITS CREATE A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY CENTERED AROUND A NEW



THE EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE USED AS THE BACKBONE OF THE PROJECT WHILE THE SUPERIMPOSED GREENHOUSES GIVE THE SPACES LIFE AND MORE



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THE INTERLOCKING OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE LIGHT GREENHOUSES FORM A GRADIENT OF SPACES THAT MAKE THE AGRICULTURE MORE



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BUENDIA IS TRANSFORMED OVER TIME THROUGH AGGREGATED INTERVENTIONS



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Architecture & Planning  
Urban Preservation

GROSSITY OF INTERVENTION CAPITALIZES ON BOTH THE EXISTING SPACES AND THE AGRICULTURAL



INTERLOCKING BETWEEN EXISTING AND GREEN LIGHT SPACES CREATE A DYNAMIC INTERACTION BETWEEN THE ACTIVITIES

# 05 Ethical Dwellings

The Dodge Fitness Center is founded on the grounds of tension, both within the institution itself, and its immediate surroundings. The 1968 gym proposal was located in Morning-side Park, taking away scarce public park land from the community and only allowing public access on weekends. Angry at the consequences the Morning-side Park Gym proposal would have, the students marched to protest. This project explores the layered history of this one week. It collapses the weeklong timeline of the protest with the centuries long timeline of racism to uncover how the human scale doors become key to this narrative. This case study materializes a moment in a tense history that's a much bigger issue than the architectural drawings they manifest themselves through here. The expansion of the community and the campus bring out deeper segregational injustices that become easier to pinpoint through architectural drawings and construction sites.

**Project Course :** Arab Modernism

**Semester:** Spring 2020

**Professor:** Yasser El Sheshtawy

**Partner :** Reem Yassin

**Site :** Dubai, U.A.E.

## Contextual Relevance

Labour camps in the Gulf are living spaces that worker immigrants are contractually bound to live in for the duration of their employment. However, the Cambridge dictionary definition of a labour camp is “a place in which large numbers of people are kept as prisoners and forced to do hard physical work in bad conditions”. The definition of the widely used term in UAE and the Gulf says something about the intention of these worker accommodations. Sadly, there are immigrants who refer to themselves as prisoners despite having signed the initial contract out of their own free will. This contention points to the issues of both the sponsorship (kafala) system and the living conditions of these workers (Buckley, M., 2013).

Migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates accounted for 80% of the population and 90% of the workforce by 2013 (Ghaemi, H., 2006). Of the 3.3 million people living in Dubai, 0.5 million are unskilled immigrants, many living in the 5000-6000 labour camps, making them a significant part of Dubai’s community.

This type of labour emerged with the discovery of oil in the Gulf and the fast development of the cities to become globally competitive economies whose survival does not solely rely on oil. In the pre-oil Gulf scenario, people either lived in small towns or were nomads, meaning that to have modern cities, they would need to be built almost from scratch. While older cities got built over time, the unique situation in the Gulf meant that entire infrastructures and zones would need to be built simultaneously so that they would function and start producing returns. This rapid growth needed a larger workforce and the expatriate population increased to match it to become 94.9% expatriate workforce in 1980 (Errichiello, G., 2017). This ratio shift caused fear of cultural and political instability, leading laws and regulations on migrant rights to become stricter. Considering that construction workers were poorer men without their families who were not meant to stay long in the country, they were seen as one of the big threats to societal structure and traditional culture, and so they were isolated, segregated and neglected.



Workers walk into the entrance of a large labour camp in Sharjah, Brent Stirton/Getty Images.

## Labor Camps: A recent spatial construct

Labour camps are built to house people on one mission for the limited number of years they are staying in the country: work (Kathiravelu, L., 2016). The rest of their human functions are supplementary to their purpose and this is evident spatially in the design of their contractually assigned accommodation. Labour camps are designed primarily to be efficient and provide the very basic living necessities such as rooms for beds and storage, large communal kitchens and tables for eating. The layouts of the buildings

reflect that in their efficiency with rooms and narrow connecting corridors. They are usually in clusters, each one one to three stories high, with some more recent exceptions. This practical approach combined with strict regulations on the area per person leads to no flexibility and no notion of private space, often with rooms overcrowding.

The labor camp as a typology is a relatively recent product in Dubai. It emerged long after the city became known as a place for the labor force. When Dubai began its accelerated growth towards modernization, Poor workers from overseas arrived in floods and were most often living in what is called “Barastis”, as commonly referred to by British governments officials in historic documents - or “Arish” - in Arabic; a traditional building style made from fastened palm fronds.

In 1957, a fire broke out amidst an informal barasti area occupied by workers, consuming with it more than 400 barastis. (Burdett, A., 2000). British officials took advantage of the tragedy to push their agenda of a municipal organization that can be controlled more easily leading to dispersed barastis where division started to be formalized within the city. 2 years following the fire, a document titled “Dubai Land” emerged functioning as the brief that would later manifest within Dubai’s first ever master plan. The document cited ‘3 classes’ of housing. The first two were envisioned to be concrete buildings, the last was reserved for the poorer class and named “Lodging area”. The structural flexibility of a barasti made it a convenient temporal lodging, and by being officially recognized in the planning document as housing for the third class, the traditional model was pushed to a district beyond the city’s outer ring road and away from the city center.



John Harris's first Master Plan of Dubai from 1960

In 1978, a reporter visiting migrant workers in Dubai related: “facilities provided to Indian labour can even euphemistically be described as enviable. None of the workers I met had any serious complaints.. They live in plywood houses and about three to five workers share a room provided with a fan.” (Times of India, 1978). The use of plywood suggests that the lodgings he saw stood as a transition from the barastis to an early semblance of a labor camp in Dubai.

It was not until the 1990s that the term “Labor Camp” was used in an English newspaper to describe the immigrant workers’ accommodation. The earlier camps were built considering how temporary they were supposed to be so that their construction can be faster and easier. As the phenomena of temporary immigrants became longer term, the building structures became more efficient to fit the needs. The number of floors increased and the overall camp grew in size to accommodate more shared resources, until the point where it started to function as its own independent community (Reisz, T., 2017).

Geographically, the labour camps being located on the periphery of cities and in the middle of crowded industrial areas meant that the drive to construction sites usually located in the center of cities was long and tiring. To make more use of the immigrants’ time and energy, some companies started building the camps on the construction sites. While the proximity to the work site and the rest of the city is attractive, these camps were usually more closely monitored so as not to allow the ‘single’ male immigrants to mix with the public around them. At the same time, this camp typology was usually built out of shipping containers for their low cost and assembly time. The biggest issue with this typology is the lack of insulation

against the sun and heat which makes it unlivable during summers (Masudi, F., 2010).



Shipping container housing in the desert

Newer regulations restricting the number of people per room and requiring more shared facilities per person led to an emerging typology. This typology provides more space per person, bans bunk beds and leaves more space between buildings that creates potential flexible public space in between. “... authorities are beginning to contemplate the building of ‘luxurious labor camps’ which contain shopping and entertainment facilities far removed from the city — in a way discouraging lower-income groups from entering the city in the first place”, (Elshehtawy, Y., 2008). The upside of these proposals is the amenities that immigrants would have access to that they did not have before. The downside is that it exacerbates the segregation and isolation of these communities and makes them easier to monitor and control.



Sakany Masterplan, Dubai South, 2017.

## Case Study: Sonapur

“All around, a city of labour camps stretches out in the middle of the Arabia desert, a jumble of low, concrete barracks, corrugated iron, chicken-mesh walls, barbed wire, scrap metal, empty paint cans, rusted machinery and thousands of men with tired and gloomy faces”

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, The Guardian, 8 October 2008

Two of the largest labor camps in Dubai are in Al Quoz industrial district and Al-Muhaisnah. The latter is the most populated community in the entirety of Dubai with an estimated 200,000 Asian workers, mostly from India followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is also inhabited by thousands of illegal workers with expired work permits. The area is referred to as “Sonapur” which, rather ironically, translates from Hindi to mean “land of Gold”. The road to Sonapur leads past an old graveyard; it is dubbed instead “The city of the sleeping dead”. This is the largest area housing low-wage migrants and is built on the outskirts of developed areas of the city, so it is neither visible from major highways nor easily accessible. Here, there is a strange mix of modern buildings replete with all facilities and improvised camps with poor drainage and sanitation. The Units of production are linked to units of residence; men who work for the same company typically stay in the same block or room with the employer often managing the camp as

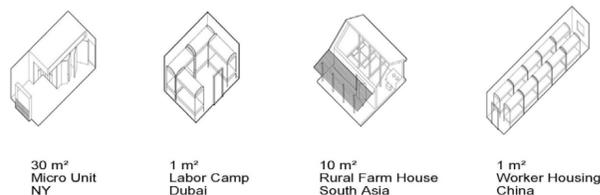
well. This kind of hierarchy situates the migrant worker as completely dependent upon their employer for their livelihood.



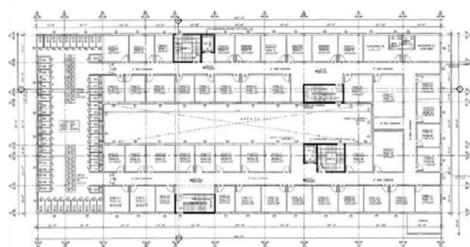
For Rent: 45 rooms in a row available near Sonapur - 6 person capacity per room

The camps are designed in dormitory-style buildings that are often too crowded and lack spaces to socialize. The design of the block consists of several rooms along a single or double loaded corridor. Each room houses bunk beds and in most common cases, there are anywhere between 4 to 10 people to an average sized room. The sleeping rooms lack both privacy and any personal space with only small lockers as means of private storage.

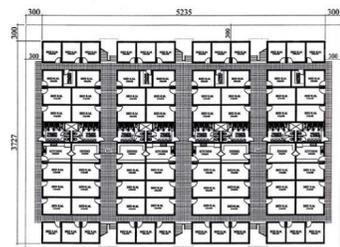
Typical Area Per Person



Each floor usually has bathing facilities which include showers, sinks, toilets, and a space for ablution. The dormitory building also hosts a kitchen and a hall for food consumption. Indoor recreational facilities such as living rooms, communal areas, gyms, are sporadic to non-existent. And open outdoor public spaces for communal interaction are inadequate or lacking. The layout of the building is intentionally rigid and restrictive to limit congregations and gatherings of any sort. However, despite the camp being conceived as a purely functional space, workers are often seen socializing and “hanging out” in corridors that are too narrow and are already congested with clothes lines and other personal clutters, or behind building’s walls on dirt roads and rubble.



Labour Camp in Sonapur



Labour Camp in Jebel Ali

The whole planning strategy of these spaces exclude the human aspect of its occupiers and reduces them to functional beings with only the day-to-day survival necessities provided. This short term housing construct plainly highlights the temporality of immigrant workers.

**Prisons vs labour camps vs dormitories : criminals vs migrant immigrants vs students**

*“Company buses ushered workers between work and employer-regulated residences. Workers were less residents of a city than workers whose lives, inside and outside work hours, were ensconced in companies’ twenty-four-hour organization charts. The labor camp helped make that relationship even more explicit. All scales of a labor camp’s development were linked to the employer, from the site they obtained from the government to the construction of the building to the provision of mattresses (Reisz, T., 2017).”*

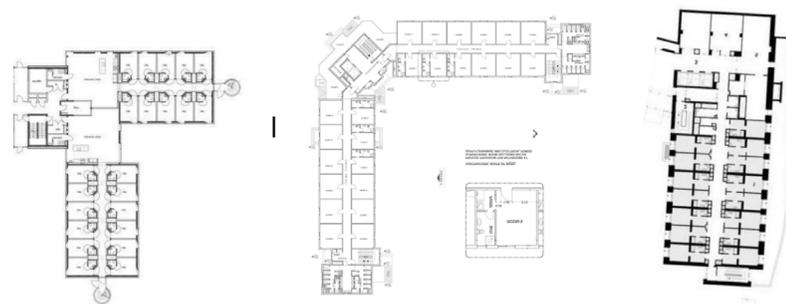
The spatial orchestration of the camps reflect the strict orchestration of its residents’ lives. This relationship is made concrete through the gates, walls, corridor railing and sometimes guardhouses and barbed wire. These elements are just the physical reiteration of the immigrants’ problematic rights limitations. The other side of the narrative is the authority and control that private employers have of their employee’s life conditions. At the same time, they are the same entities building the labour camps that the immigrants live in, which means not only do the employers have control over their employees’ work but also their lives. This power balance is reminiscent of that of prisoners and detention companies.



Laborers queuing for the ride back “home” (photo from moveoneinc.com)

*“When we first came, they had us 20 men to a room. If we did anything wrong, they would cut our salaries. Three months salary, four months salary. They kept us in such conditions that made us think, why did we even come here? We felt it would have been better to die. These techniques of disciplining the low-wage migrant body within the space of the camp can be understood within notions of biopower (Foucault 1975) formalised in institutions such as prisons, schools and mental asylums. Segregation facilitates control and surveillance of what is considered a “deviant” population. (Kathiravelu, L. 2016)”*

These ‘techniques of disciplining’ used are not confined to cutting salaries, but extend to the strict built environment meant to keep certain groups like prisoners and children supervised and in check. This is evident in the similarities between the floor plans of prisons, labour camps and student dormitories. Rooms stacked in a linear fashion only interrupted by shared amenities such as bathrooms with public gathering spaces in easily monitored locations. The differences between the inhabitants of these buildings should include a level of freedom and autonomy.



(Right) Bilkent University Student Residence Typical Floor Plan. Turkey.  
(Left) Halden Prison Floor Plan. Norway.  
(Center) Sakany Labour Camp. Dubai South. Typical Floor Plan. United Arab Emirates

# Domestic Adaptation

The cultural and political scare that the increase in migrant demographic created in the locals caused their regulations to keep built environment cultural expression to the minimum so as not to lose dominance over the country (Davidson, C. M., 2005). This extends to the labour camps where restrictions are put on the freedom of space, mobility and expression of the immigrants. This results in a sterility of the labour camp designs, with spaces to sleep but not rest, emergency meeting spots but no socializing spaces (Reisz, T., 2017). When workers do not have freedom or mobility or security or space or basic needs, they turn to the one place that becomes theirs and that’s their beds.

The bed becomes the most appropriated space in labour camps that allows for semi-privacy, sense of ownership and multi-use. The space under the bed becomes extra necessary storage as the provided lockers are usually never enough. The lower bunk bed resident can take advantage of being able to enclose their small sleeping space by covering the frame with cloth and make it domestic with personal items and objects that can be practical or can just remind them of home. The beds also become a social area where people gather to listen to a radio or watch television. The inner walls against the bed host shelves, ropes holding clothes, flags, storage bags, flowers, family photographs and even drawings the residents make.

The ways that the bed areas are used and reappropriated illustrates the social, cultural and personal needs of the residents. That they make a home out of their small cramped beds means that they need more than just square meters to fit a bed frame. The residents suffer from many larger issues such as unpaid wages, confiscated passports and the inability to quit (Kathiravelu, L. 2016). However, perhaps if their physical environment reflected their needs for ownership over their space, their self expression and the microcultures they create for themselves might inspire a more humane relationship between the immigrants and their socio-political environment, as opposed to reducing millions of people to a “threat”



Sakany Masterplan. Dubai South. 2017.

The betterment of migrants’ lives can begin from us as architects/designers through addressing the physical state of their surroundings thus providing tangible and visible ways of improvements. This can include missing elements that vary from crucial safety measures that adhere with international best practices to a spatial hierarchical system that provides a variety of choices to enrich the personal experience of the inhabitants and creating a shared sense of community that would evolve into a sense of belonging.

Improvements to their built environment and the ownership they have over it can start building better foundations for a fair relationship between migrant workers and their employer company. Changes not only in the amount of space, but the quality and types of it that address the full needs of workers can change the way that the camp communities function to eventually rise and become their home, temporary as it is. Large identity transformations can start with smaller human expression which makes allowing space for that crucial to sustaining a humane environment. However, the grievances do not end with the built environment. The entire infrastructure of the system calls for immediate reformation. As immigrant workers continue to beautify shopping centers, streets, and boulevards of the ever-evolving city, their condition has seen limited, if any, advancement. Addressing the state of fail labor practice calls for the engagement across multiple dimensions; political, economic, social, cultural, and architectural.

## 06 Gradient Economies

Urban violence can wreck havoc on a community, specially if the violence is a systemic one embedded in the social and political fabric of a city. Cairo has had a pattern on poor residents living on expensive land being forcibly evicted and relocated by the government in favour of rich developers. While the luxury developments that erase and replace the decades or centuries of culture bring money short term, they completely transform the residents' lives for the worse

To change the informal living conditions within Cairo that stem from a socioeconomic decline, a symbiotic relationship between the government and the locals can be formed through an economic overlap. On the site of Maspero where there are plans of redevelopment, the luxurious generic hotels on the Nile could benefit from the culture that informal markets can bring while the residents can benefit from the structural housing improvements while remaining in their homes.

**Project Course :** Speculative City

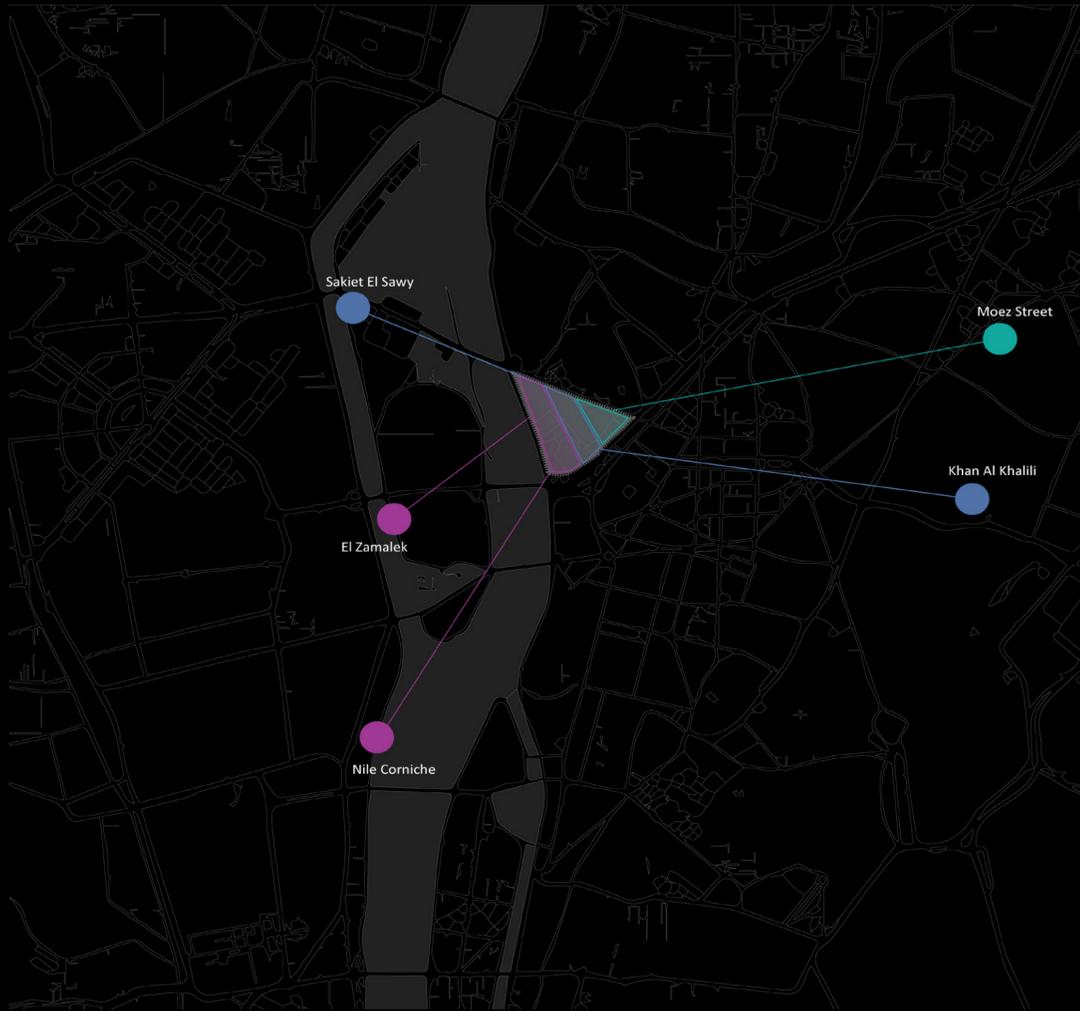
**Semester:** Spring 2020

Professor: David Moon

**Site :** Cairo, Egypt



Planned Luxury Developments



Existing Local Neighbourhoods

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

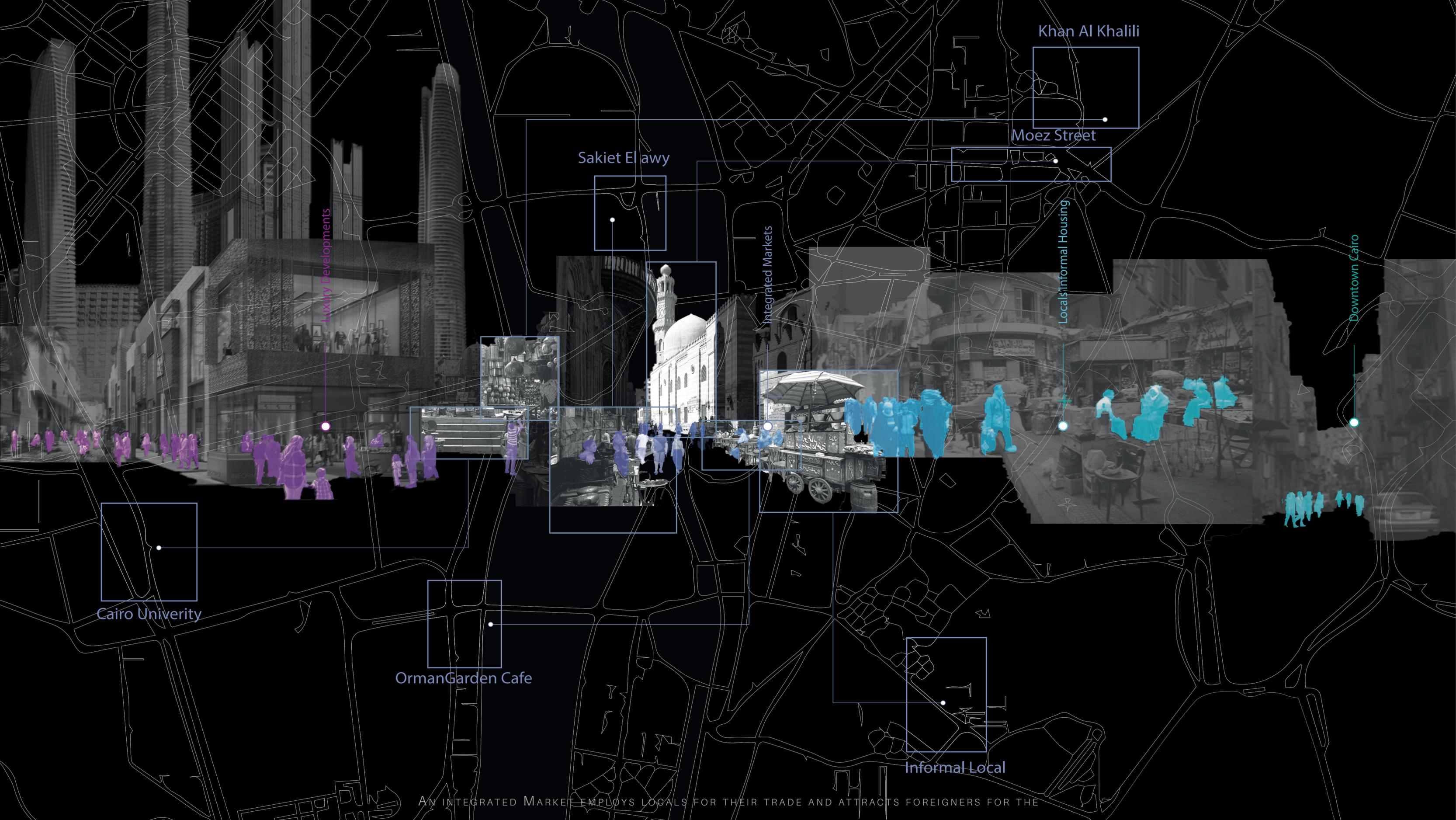




Planned Luxury Developments



Existing Local Neighbourhoods



Khan Al Khalili

Moez Street

Sakiet Elawy

Luxury Developments

Integrated Markets

Locals/Informal Housing

Downtown Cairo

Cairo Univerity

Orman Garden Cafe

Informal Local

AN INTEGRATED MARKET EMPLOYS LOCALS FOR THEIR TRADE AND ATTRACTS FOREIGNERS FOR THE

## 07 Check the Mic!

This web app, available on PC, iPhone, and Android, uses your device's microphone to record audio. Sound is codified and translated into light signals based upon the desirability of that volume level in a given social setting. Blue feedback indicates a desirable noise level, while deep red indicates a problem. If volume exceeds a certain level, the system will "shut-down" triggering an alert system. In this way, the codified system directs the behavior of all participants who have agreed to enter the web app.

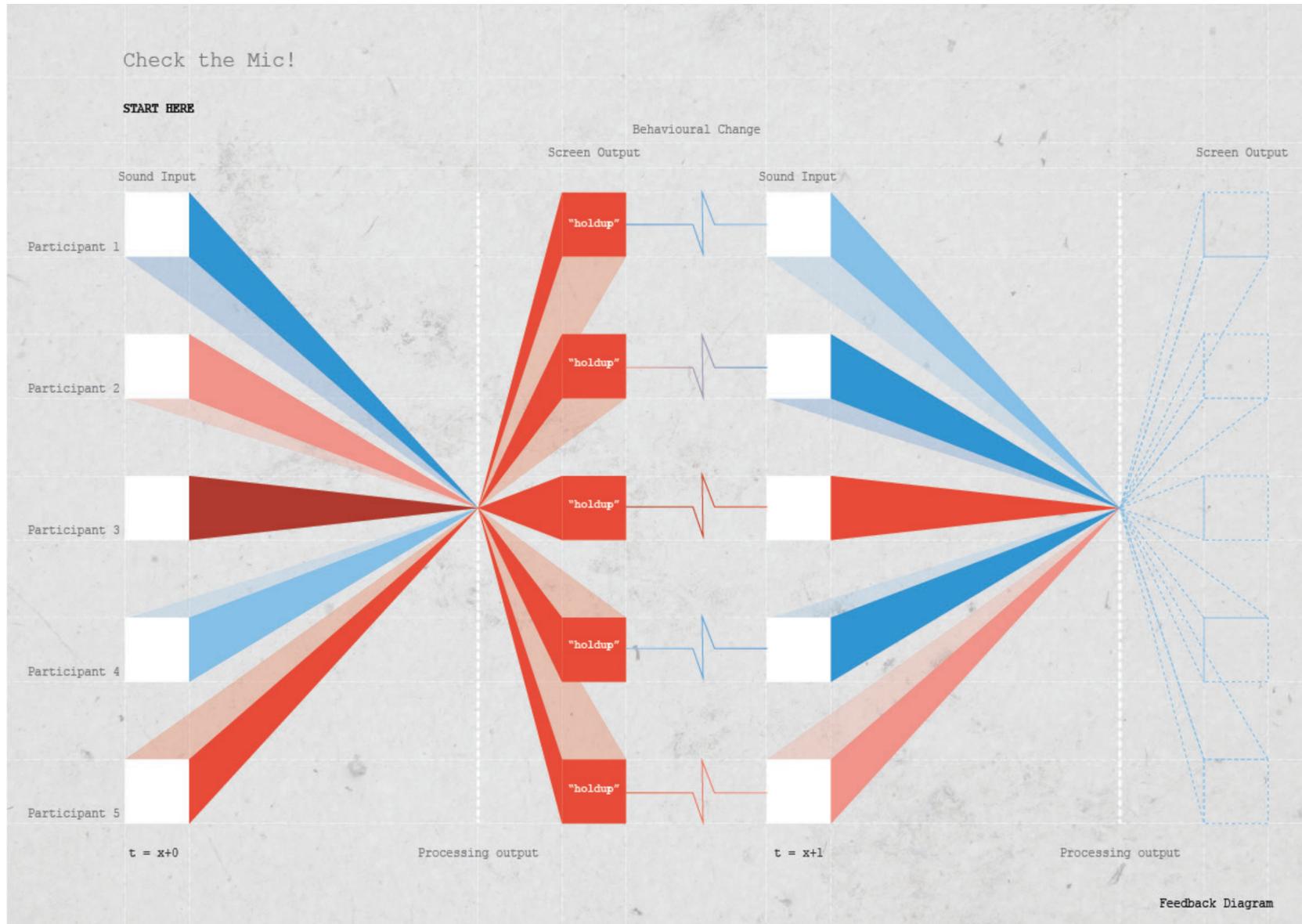
**Project Course :** Metatool

**Semester:** Fall 2019

**Professor:** Dan Taeyoung

**Partner :** Dylan Denton





power-enemy Show public/microphone-v2.js

Share

New File

- assets
- public/
  - index.html
  - main.js
  - microphone-v2.js
  - microphone.js
  - style.css
  - volume-meter.js
  - .env
  - README.md
  - package.json
  - server.js

Format This File

```

25 function checkMicLevel() {
26   // check if we're currently clipping
27
28   console.log("OUR VOLUME IS");
29   console.log(micvolume);
30
31   if (micvolume < 5) {
32     console.log("namaste");
33     window.sendMessage("namaste");
34   }
35
36   if (micvolume > 5 && micvolume < 20) {
37     console.log("shalom");
38     window.sendMessage("shalom");
39   }
40
41   if (micvolume > 20 && micvolume < 40) {
42     console.log("whatsup");
43     window.sendMessage("whatsup");
44   }
45
46   if (micvolume > 40 && micvolume < 50) {
47     console.log("holdup");
48     window.sendMessage("holdup");
49   }
50
51   if (micvolume > 50 && micvolume < 60) {
52     console.log("cmon");
53     window.sendMessage("cmon");
54   }
55
56   if (micvolume > 60 && micvolume < 80) {
57     console.log("imworking");
58     window.sendMessage("imwoking");
59   }
60
    
```

SOUND IS RECORDED FROM EACH MOBILE/LAPTOP DEVICE AND ENCODED INTO MESSAGES THAT ARE



## 08 Decolonizing an Imperialist archive through nature-cultures

The intervention activates both invasive and poisonous species found on site through digital and physical networks to dismantle Rockefeller Jr.'s icon and establish nature-cultures. This project decolonizes the site by dismantling Rockefeller's vision. This is done by putting to work the capacities of the invasive and poisonous plants by creating nature-cultures. The agents on site are activated to allow for an ecosystem that would synthesize the nativity and exoticism of both culture and ecology to eliminate Rockefeller from the landscape.

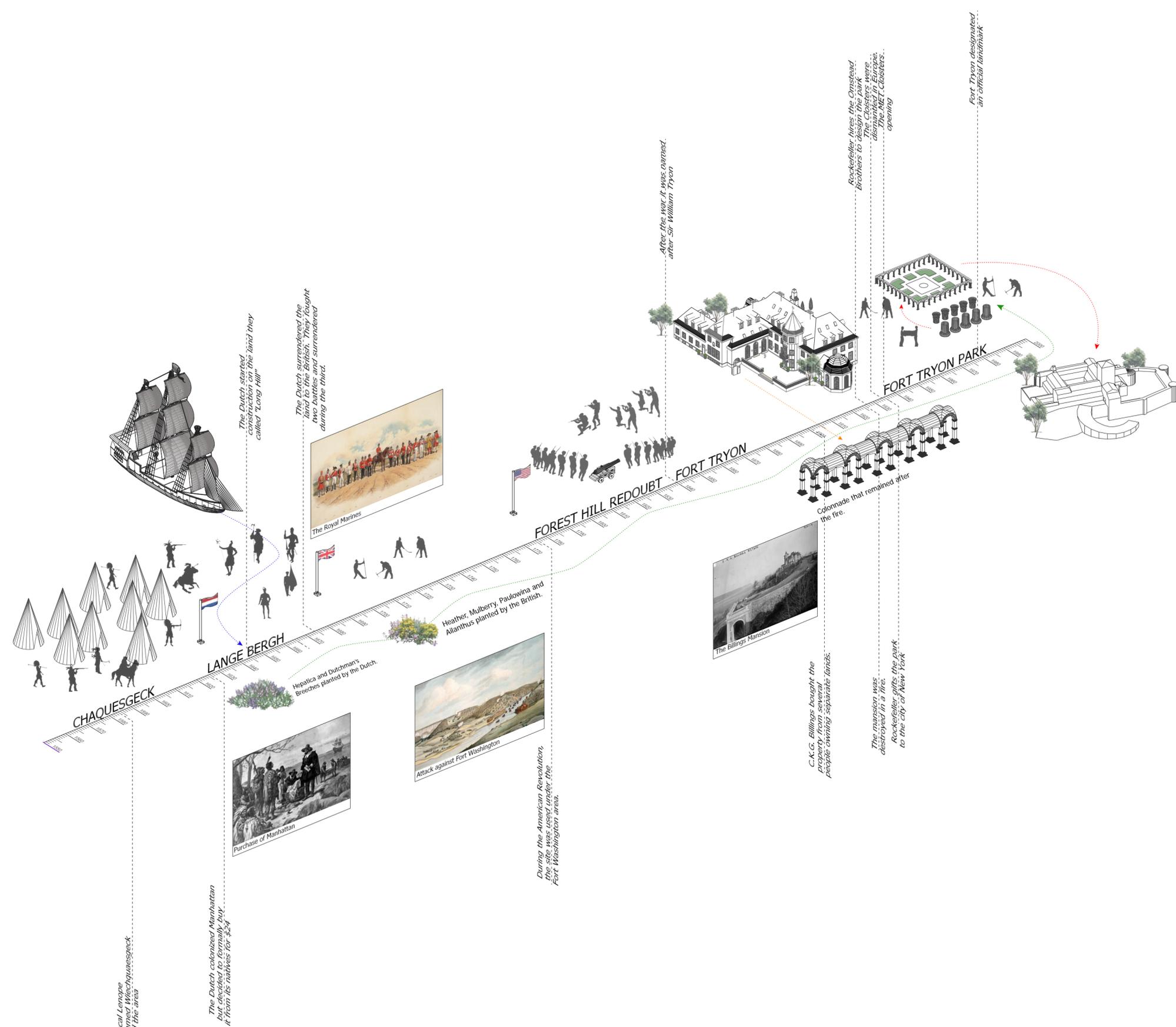
**Project Course :** Studio

**Semester:** Spring 2019

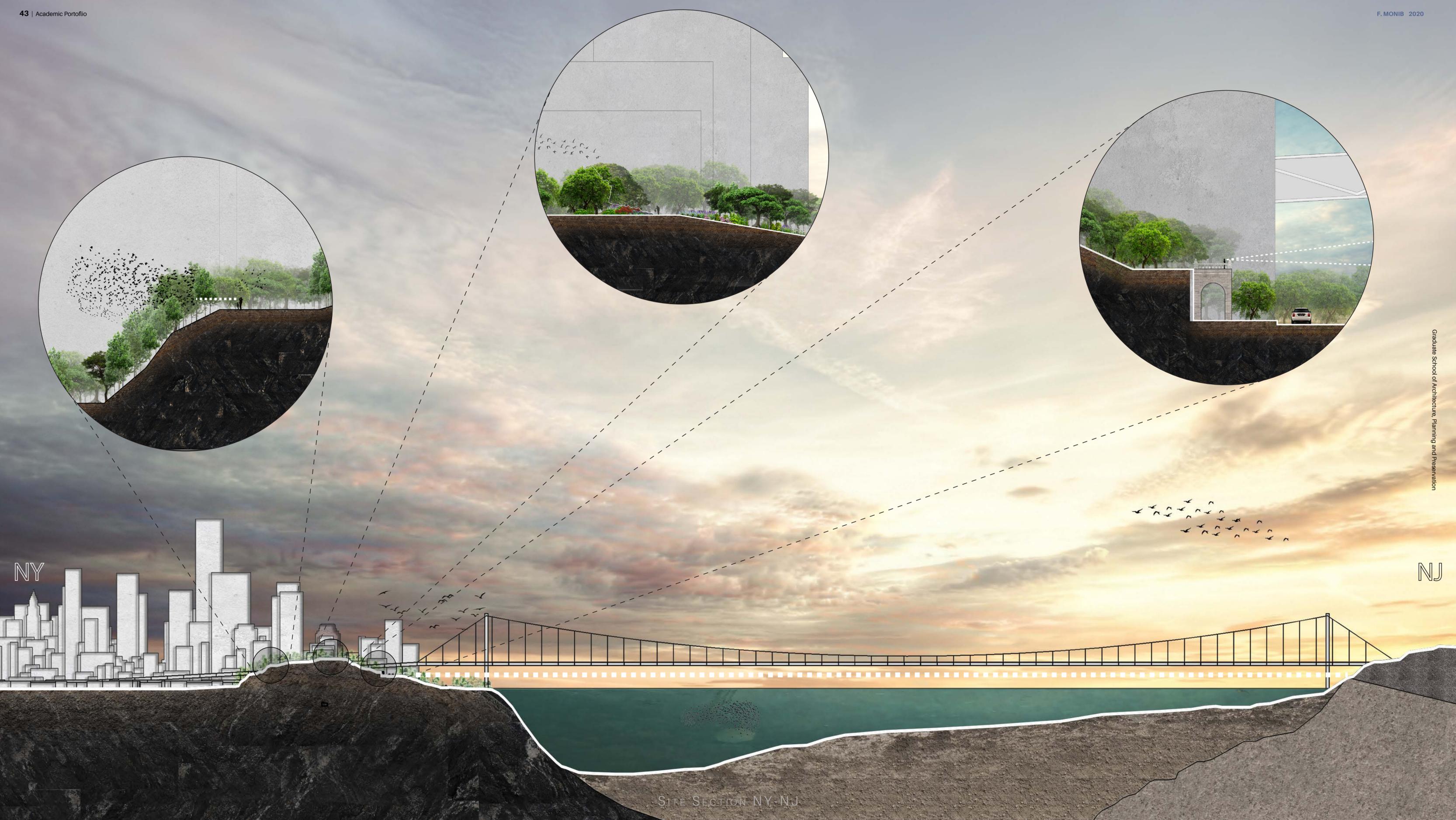
**Professor:** Nerea Calvillo

**Partner :** Uthra Verghese

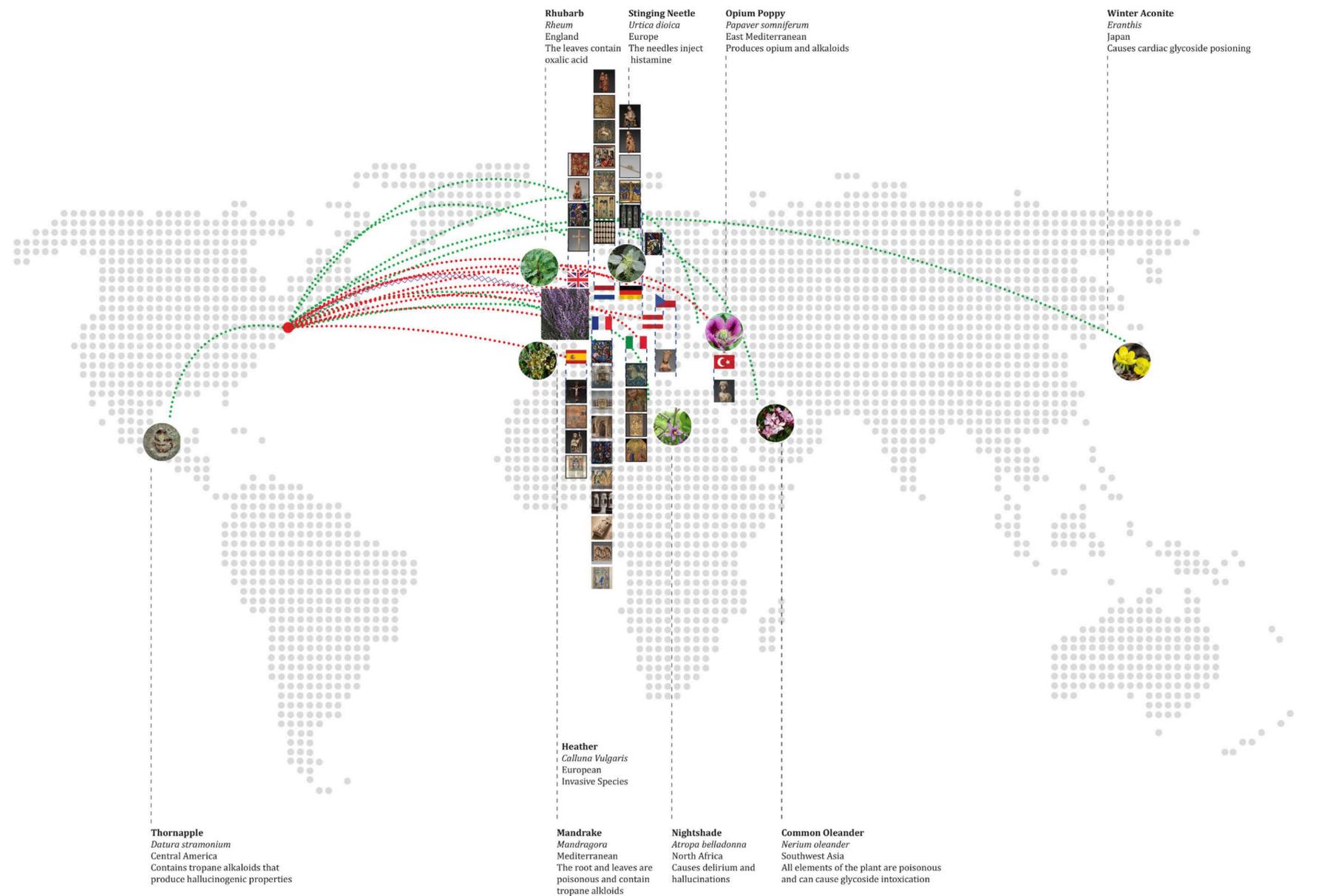
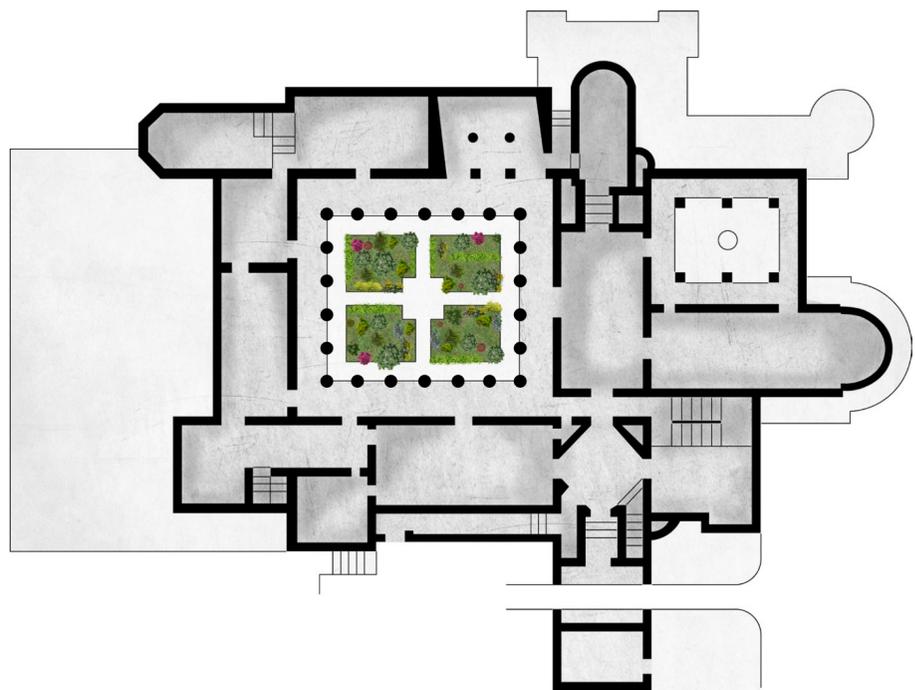
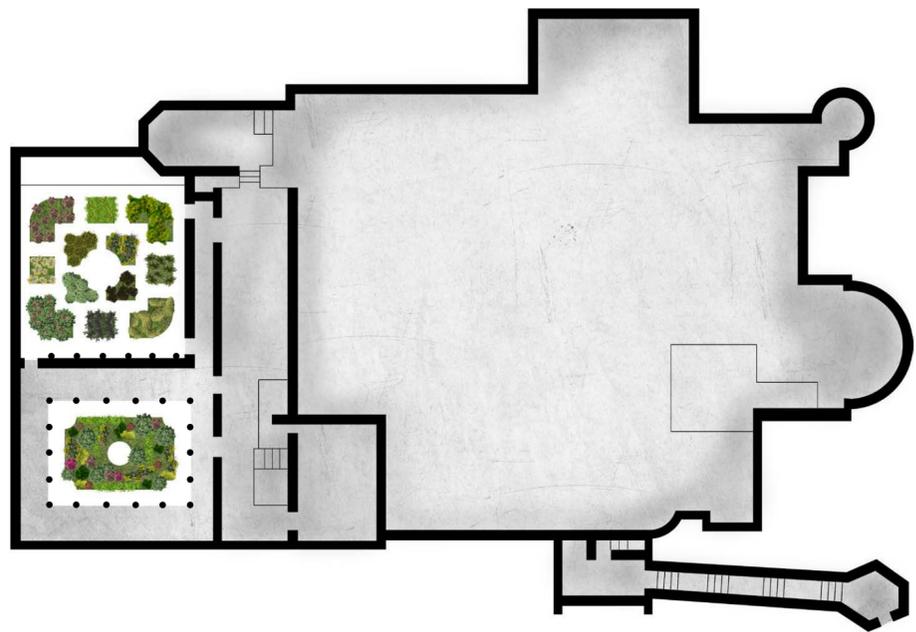
**Site :** N.Y.C., U.S.A



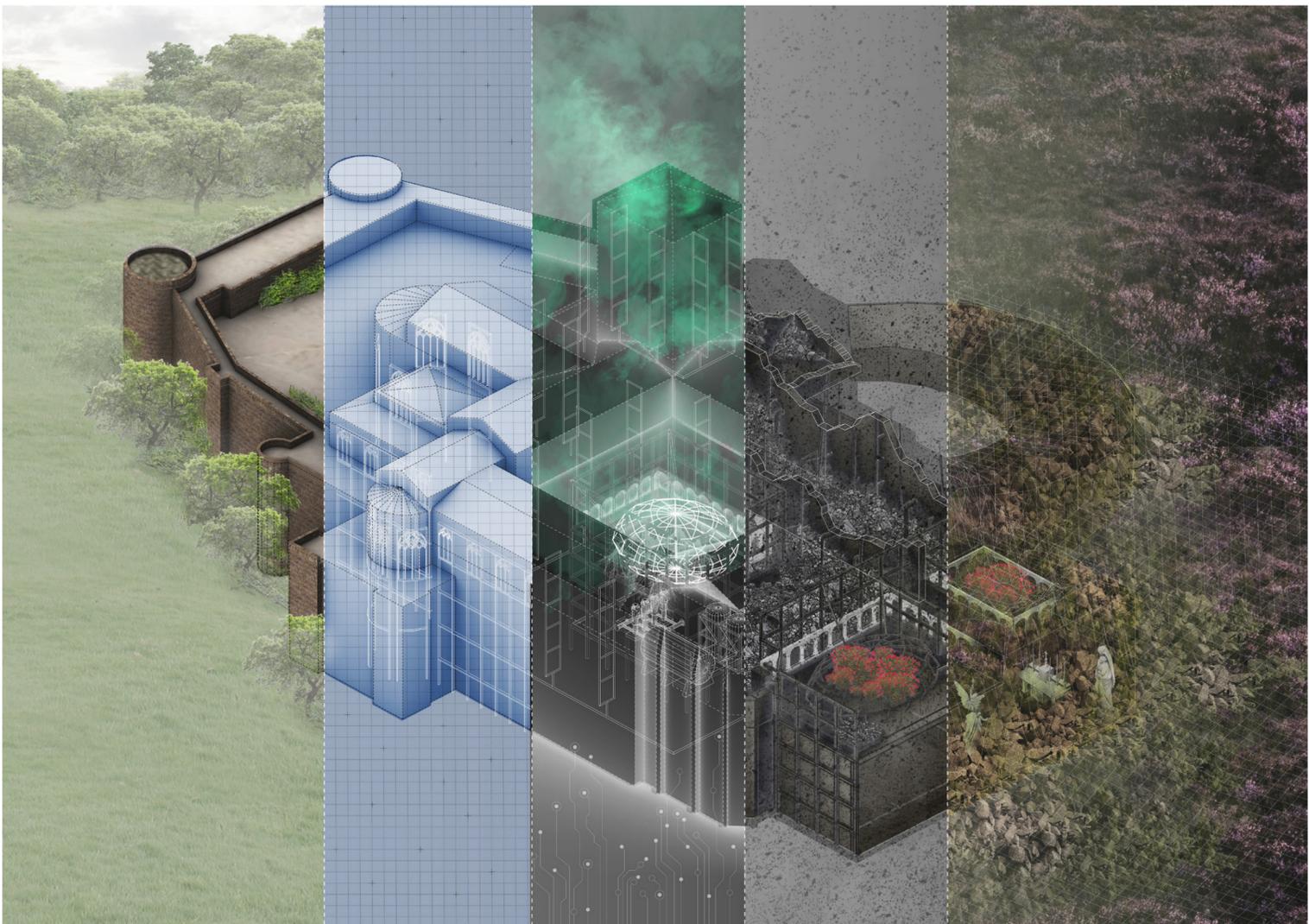
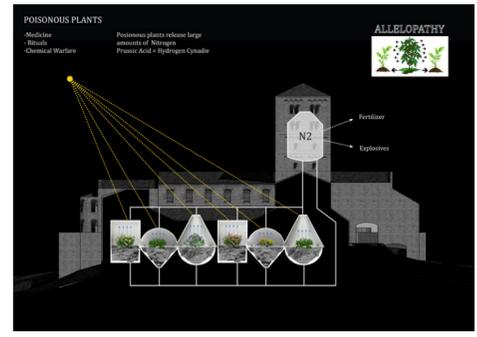
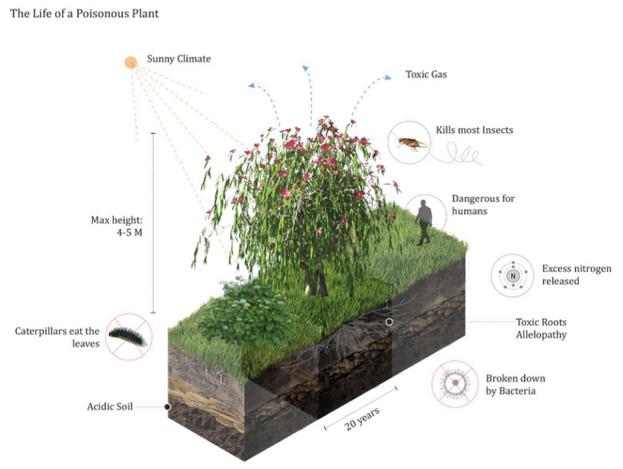
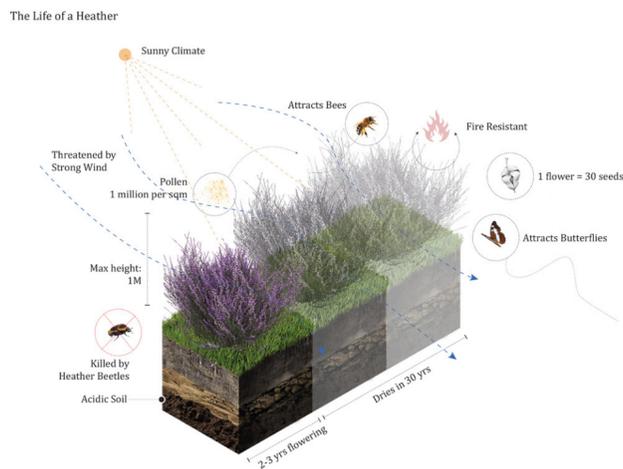
FORT TRYON PARK HISTORICAL TIMELINE

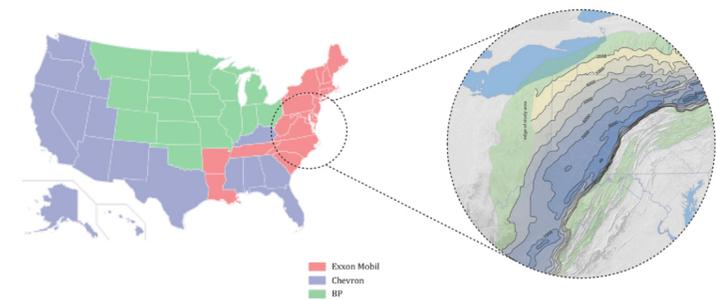
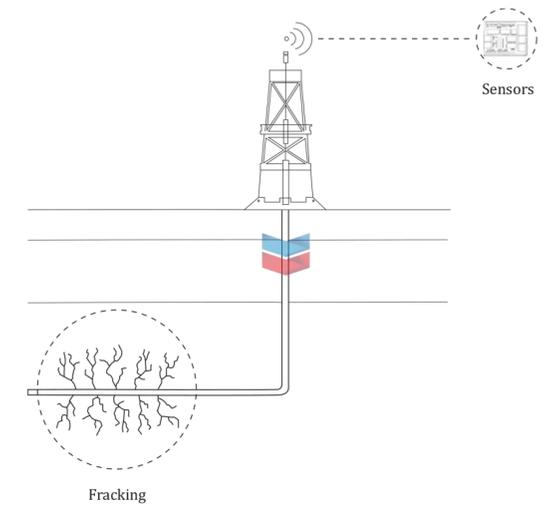
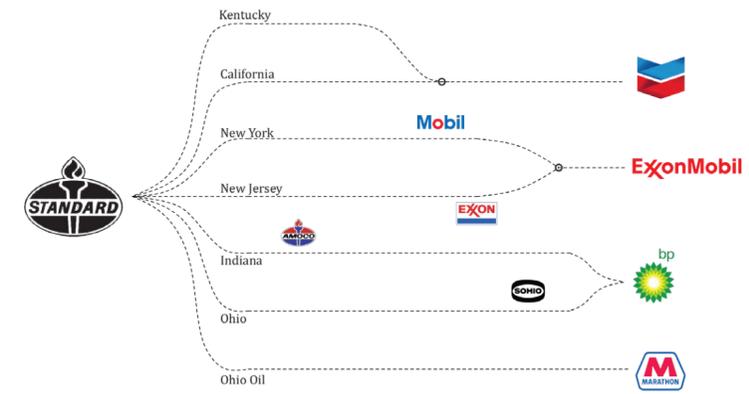
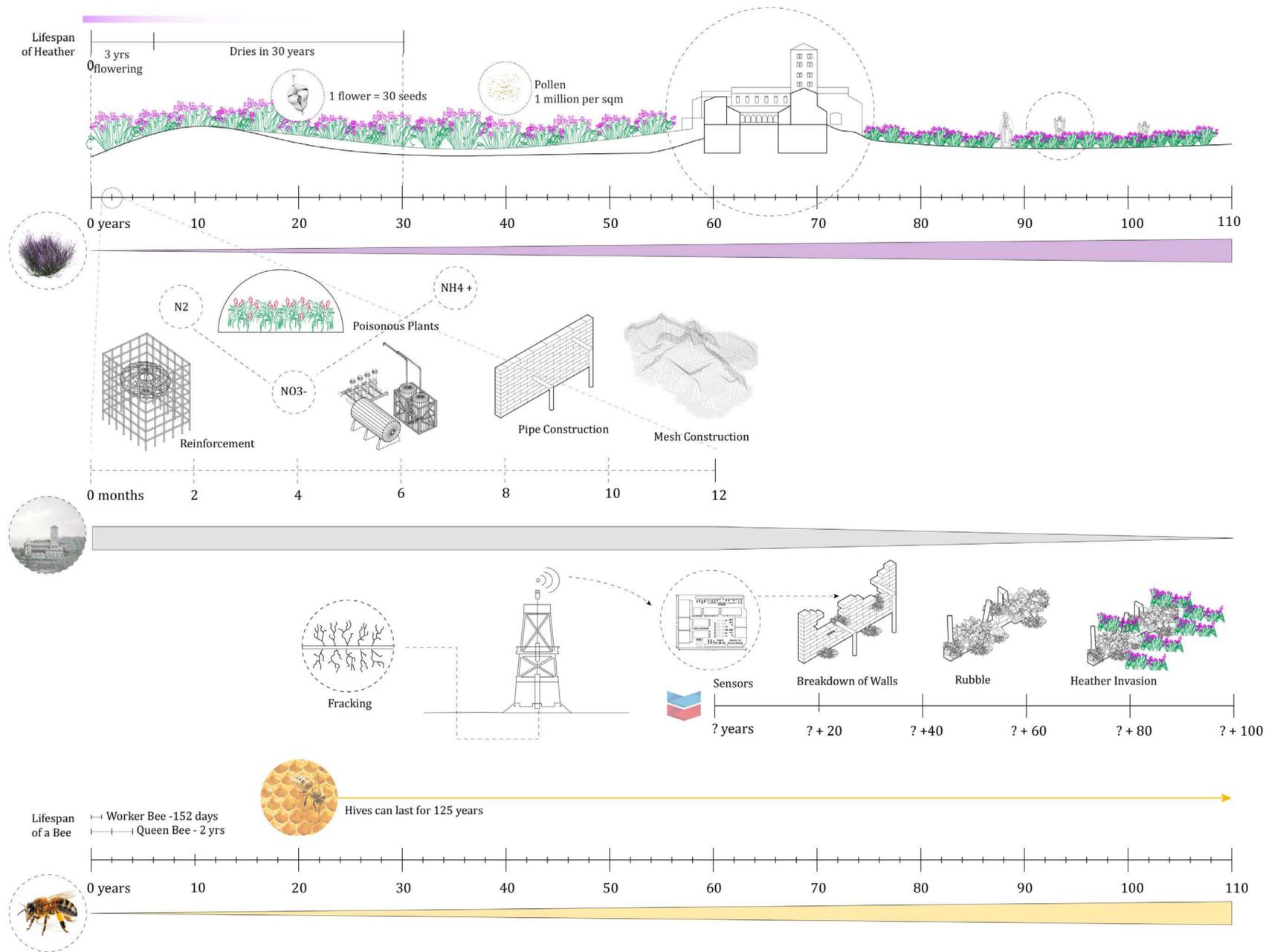


SITE SECTION NY-NJ

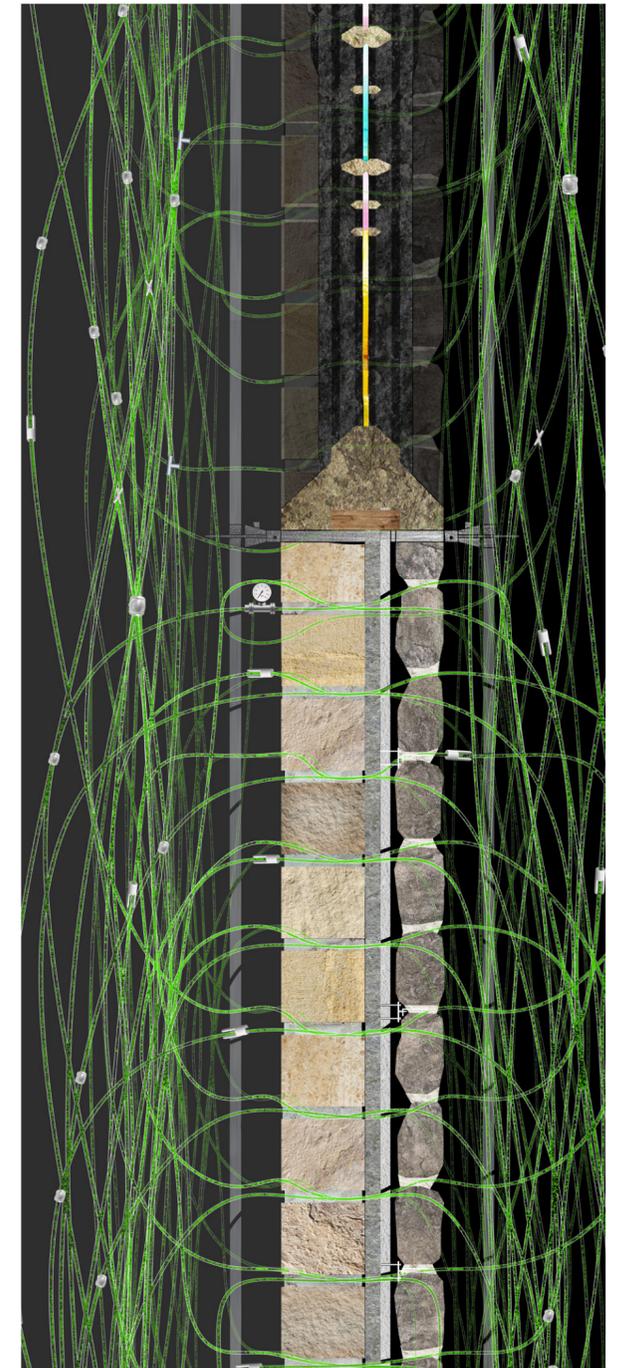
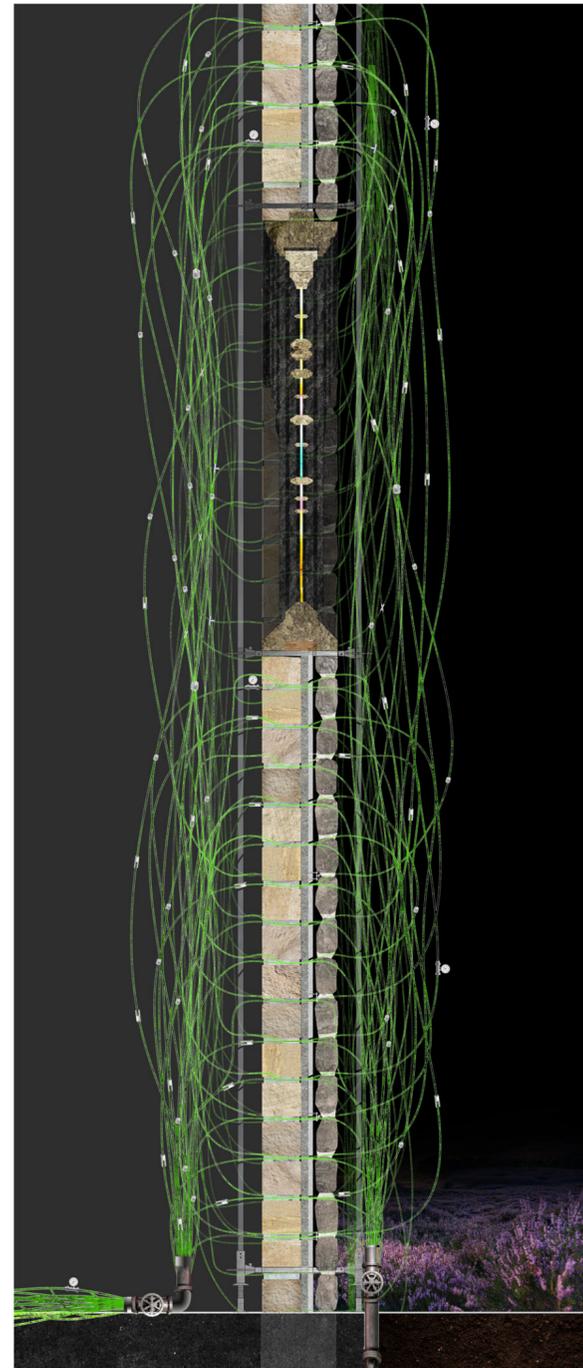
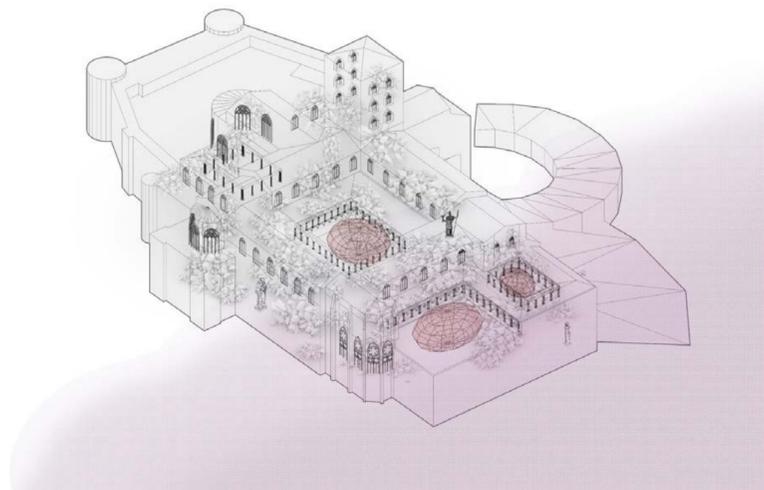
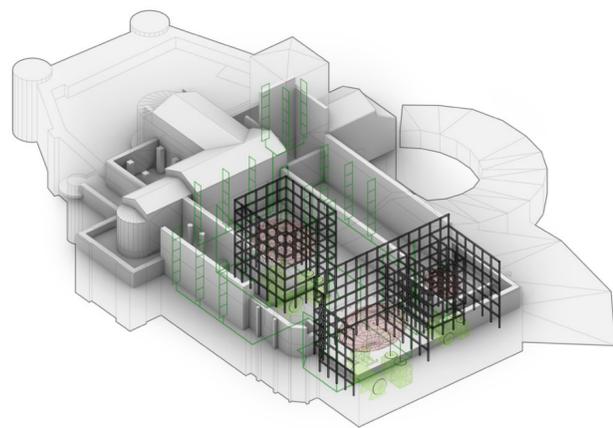
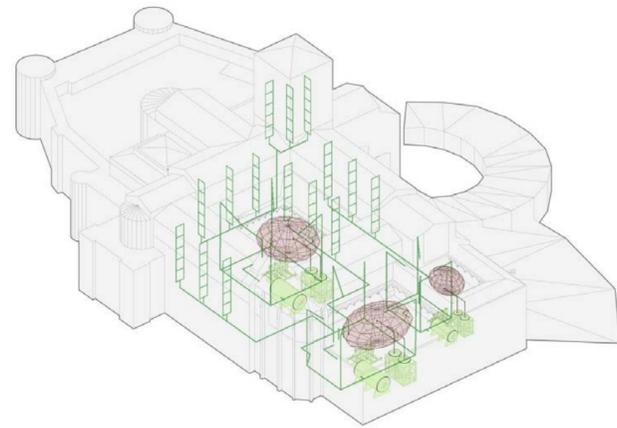
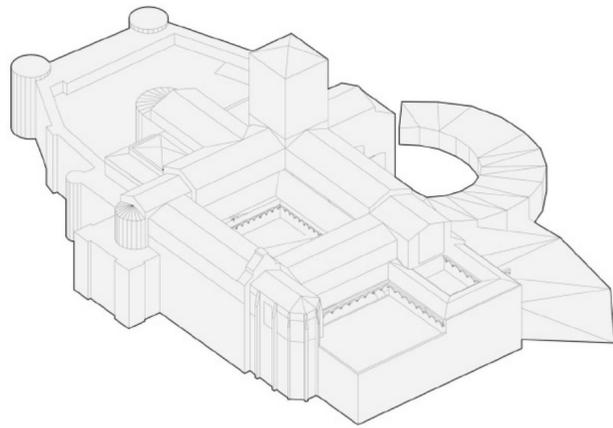


THE MET CLOISTER PLANS + MAP OF ORIGINS

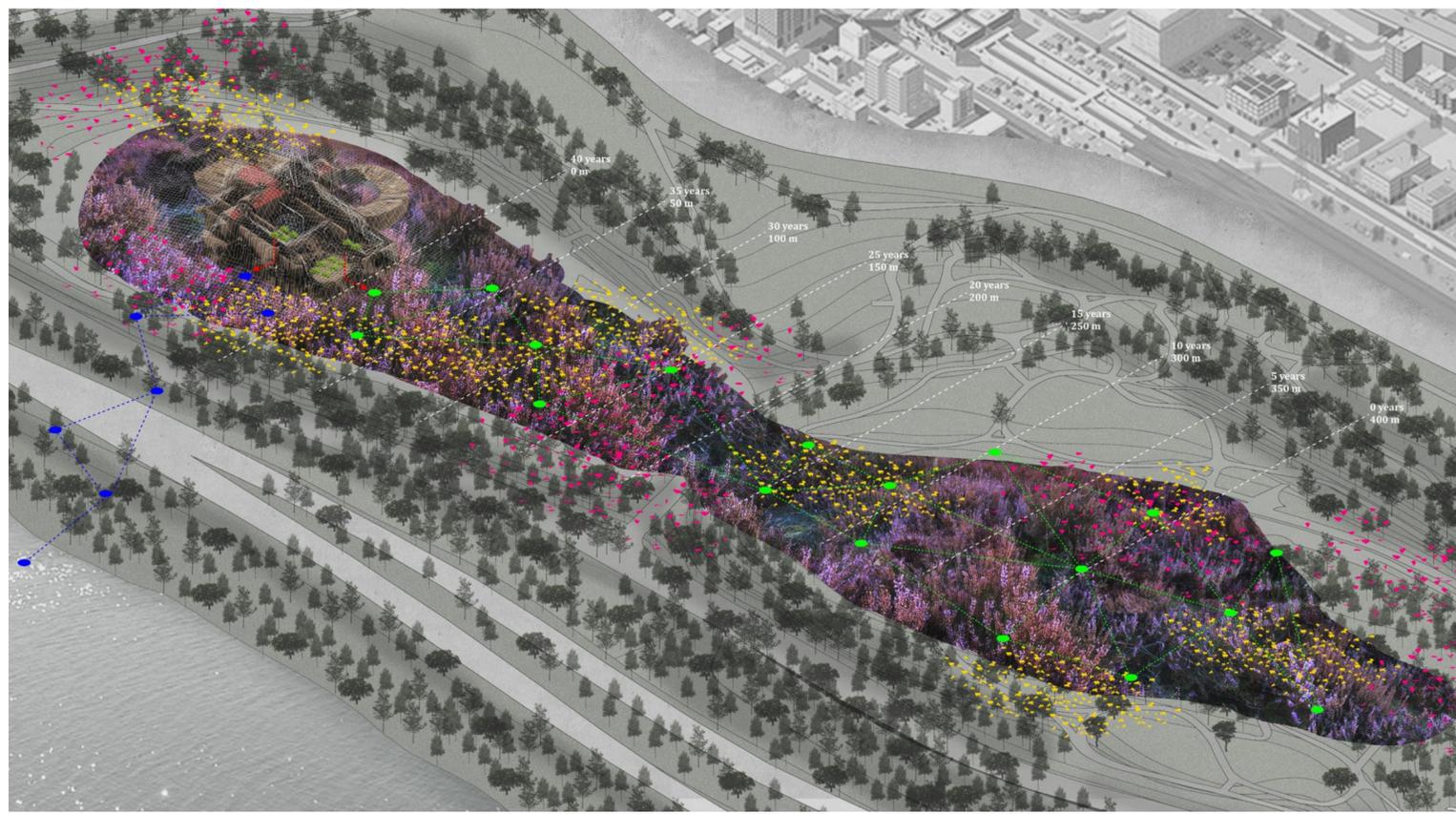




INTERVENTION TIMELINE



METAMORPHOSIS THROUGH DETAIL



HEATHER PLANT INVASION FROM THE HEATHER GARDEN TO THE MET CLOISTERS



Studio: School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

THE MET CLOISTERS BEFORE



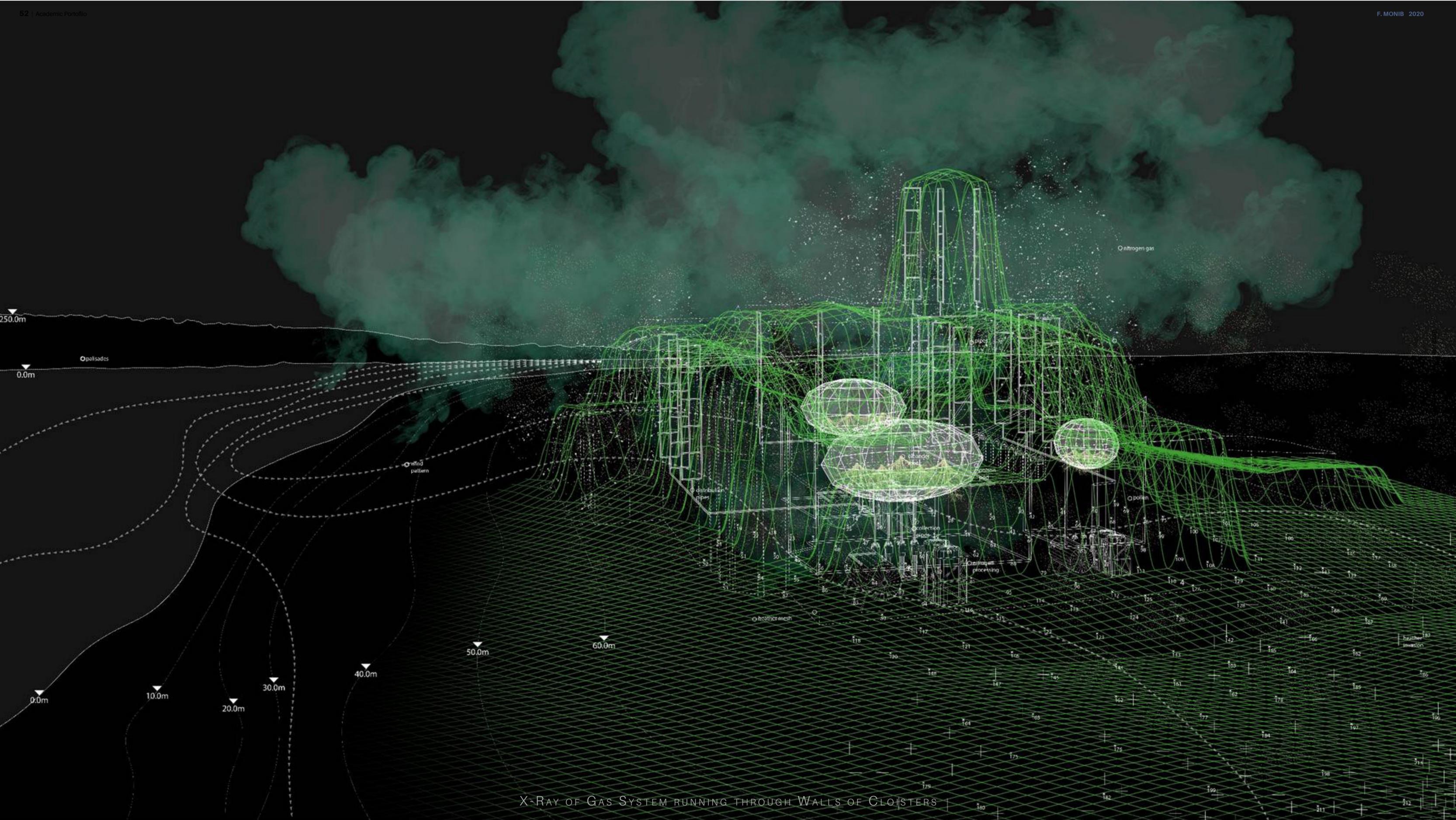
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CONSTRUCTION OF SCAFFOLDING AND POISONOUS PLANT ENVELOPE



Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

POISONOUS GAS PRESSURE ERUPTING TO BREAK BUILDING DOWN WHEN FRACKING SENSORS SHOW



X-RAY OF GAS SYSTEM RUNNING THROUGH WALLS OF CLOISTERS



250.0m

Opalssides

0.0m

wind pattern

exterior mesh

olivander

rubble

60.0m

heather mesh

bees

sensors

0.0m

20.0m

THE MET CLOISTERS TURNING TO RUINS AS HEATHERS TAKE OVER

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250.0m

0.0m

Wing pattern

0.0m  
 10.0m  
 20.0m  
 30.0m  
 40.0m  
 50.0m  
 60.0m

Remaining artworks

pollen

the other museum

NATURE-CULTURES

Graphic: Studio of Architecture and Urban Planning, Cairo, Egypt

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